

GURPS® WILD CARDS™

ACES ABROAD

A Globe-Hopping Super-Adventure Spanning Five Continents



By Kevin Andrew Murphy

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

This book explores the non-U.S. regions of the Wild Cards universe, touched upon in the fourth *Wild Cards* novel, *Aces Abroad*. It may be used both as a supplement to *GURPS Wild Cards* and as an independent adventure. Game Masters should read *Aces Abroad* first, though this book also illustrates portions of the *Wild Cards* world and history revealed nowhere else to date.

Players take the part of Justice Department operatives, infiltrating the Twisted Fists to prevent an international plot to topple foreign governments by causing wild card outbreaks. Some players (GM's option) may also take the part of Twisted Fist agents or sympathizers, derailing government attempts to defuse the situation.

Player Information

The joker terrorist organization, the Twisted Fists, has claimed responsibility for the May-July 1991 Manhattan outbreak of the wild card virus, known as the "Typhoid Croyd" epidemic. The Twisted Fists say the New York outbreak was just a warning. Unless world governments fully recognize the rights of jokers, there will be outbreaks of a far more virulent nature.

The United States Justice Department needs operatives to infiltrate the Twisted Fists and stop their plot. Of prime interest are patriotic jokers and joker-aces. Aces, deuces and highly trained nats are also being interviewed.

Justice Department operatives will work in conjunction with the Order of the Silver Helix of the United Kingdom (see sidebar, p. 7). Those starting the campaign also have the option of playing British wild carders joining the Justice Department team.

About the Author

Kevin Andrew Murphy was born and raised in Northern California, telling stories before he even learned to read and reading everything once he did — fairy tales, folklore, fiction, medieval herbalism, anthropology and a lot of things even stranger, primarily fantasy and science fiction. He won several high school speech competitions with deranged epic poems dealing with dragons, Catholic girls' schools and gun-slinging nuns before getting his B.A. in Anthropology and Creative Writing from U.C. Santa Cruz and a Masters in Professional Writing from USC.

His work has been seen in *Dragon Magazine*, *White Wolf Magazine*, and *Midnight Zoo*, and he has written part of Bard Games' *Cyclopedia Talislanta* series. Kevin is an active member of the Science Fiction Writers of America, the Horror Writers of America, and the Wild Cards Consortium — look for two of his characters, Cameo (p. 108) and Herne (p. 75), in *Wild Cards XI: Dealer's Choice*. Kevin collects comics, books of folklore and bestiaries. He also snow skis, water skis and wind surfs when he isn't busy writing or playing roleplaying games.



About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the **GURPS** system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

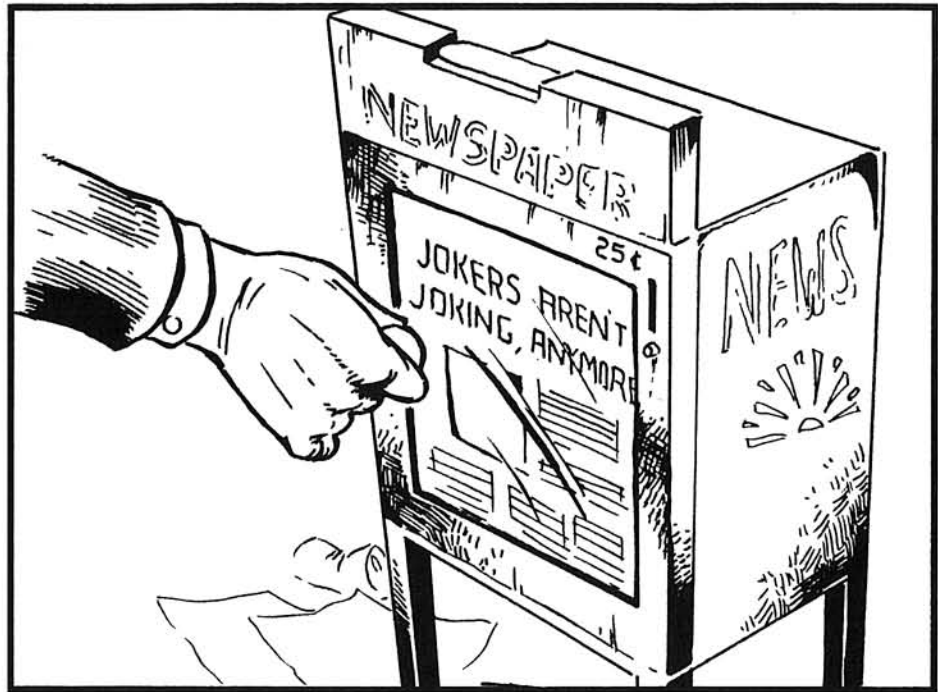
Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including **GURPS**. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set**, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the **Basic Set** — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **Basic Set**, Third Edition. An S refers to **GURPS Supers**, and P means **GURPS Psionics**.



Players may either design their own wild card characters or select from the novels. Since the adventure is espionage-based, however, none of the internationally famous characters would be suitable. Water Lily, Popinjay, Quasiman, Cordelia Chaisson, Troll, Yeoman, Wraith and the Projectionist could all conceivably join (see **GURPS Wild Cards**), as could Snotman or Mistral from the novels. GMs should note, however, that **GURPS Wild Cards** was written for 1st Edition **Supers**, and some adaptations will be required to bring those NPCs into this adventure. Players may run any of the government or terrorist NPCs from this book at the GM's discretion.

Supers should be designed with 500 points, give or take 100 — the Justice Department will recruit those wild cards with the most versatile powers. Lower and higher limits are permissible at the GM's whim. Players should be encouraged not to build characters for "point efficiency" and should purposely spend points on powers that their characters might not use. The wild card, after all, is seldom neat in what it deals its victims. Of the two NPC Justice Department recruits, Yellowman has enhanced speed, mostly wasted on a non-combat teleporter, and Decathlon is a sports whiz, a power with few uses for espionage or combat — one doesn't challenge the Swarm to badminton.

As demonstrated by Dr. Tachyon, Fortunato, the Astronomer and others, the **Wild Cards** universe is heavily psionic. In addition to **Supers**, those wishing to Game Master **Wild Cards** should consult **GURPS Psionics**, which describes the techniques used by Dr. Tachyon and other mentats both in the books and this game. However, player character psis, especially telepaths, should be kept to low power limits, like Linetap (**Wild Cards**, p. 101) or else have significant Achilles heels, like the crippling empathy of the South African Psiguard (see p. 56).

Game Master Information

The Twisted Fists are telling the truth. They have many means to cause wild card outbreaks and will use them all unless prevented. The "Typhoid Croyd" epidemic was not their doing, but they were quick to claim responsibility anyway. The United States gives their claim some credence, not buying Dr. Tachyon's story of the contagious Sleeper. The press has eaten up the threat,

printing headlines such as “Twisted Fists Threaten Second Wild Card Day” and “Jokers Aren’t Joking Anymore.”

Starting a wild card epidemic has long been considered by Twisted Fist radicals. Presently, only Jokertown in New York has a large enough wild card population for jokers to feel safe and comfortable. The joker quarters of Jerusalem and other cities, while large, are still subject to persecution and government harassment. The creation of another Jokertown by a second Wild Card Day would warn governments to either reform policies towards jokers or end up as jokers themselves. A wild card epidemic on an even larger scale would create a joker “Promised Land.” “Joker Zionism” is opposed by most of the Twisted Fists, but the new slogan among extremists is “Unless there are more jokers, the jokers will die.”

The Twisted Fists are not the only madmen on the block. Many of their agents operate from their own agendas and cooperate only in the loosest fashion, such as Fionne MacCoul of Northern Ireland and Rangda of Bali. Others work closely with the Fists, such as Taroque of the Righteous Djinn, who takes his orders directly from the Black Dog, joker leader of the Twisted Fists. Then there are opportunists such as Professor Swift who, while unaffiliated, will use the chaos to further their own plots for revenge and domination.

As the adventure progresses, the world-wide disasters will escalate far beyond the scope of the original Twisted Fists plot. In the end, terrorists switch sides, joining the Justice Department in an attempt to get control of the situation.

In the final Australian segment, the manipulators behind the scenes are revealed: the Murga-muggai of the Australian Dreamtime, and the Astronomer, his psychic impressions possessing the body of the psychometric, Cameo. The final battle in the Dreamtime will determine the future of the Wild Cards universe.

Roleplaying Note

Many of the wild card powers in this book are based upon the powers of gods and heroes of myth. Catalyzing upon the subconscious, the wild card has made these powers exactly as effective or ineffective they were in myth and legend, not pale “point efficient” shadows thereof. Rangda is a world-class villainess with all the powers befitting a plague spirit — even if she really is just a joker-ace. NPCs have been designed as real people with reasonable powers and foibles, not combat villains. Primrose, while exceptionally powerful, is also a shy young girl emotionally dependent on her two pet cats.

Like many characters from the *Wild Card* novels, the NPCs in this book often exceed the 100-point limit on disadvantages. This is done both for balance and realism. A person the wild card changed into a blind, epileptic, hideous mass of tentacles would not be happy, well-adjusted and in perfect mental health. On the average, jokers will have more mental disadvantages than aces.

Game Masters should still encourage players to design characters within the usual limits. The aforementioned mass of tentacles, well-adjusted or not, would not be feasible as an ongoing adventurer. The deranged, maniacal and maladjusted make far better NPCs on the whole. On the other hand, if exceeding the normal limit fits within conception and does not create an unplayable super, it may be allowed.

Due to the outbreaks of wild card in this adventure, players running “super normals” such as the Yeoman will be at a disadvantage. There is a very strong chance of nats being infected, and the odds are that the victim will die. GMs should fudge in such cases, ruling that the character is one of those naturally unaffected by the virus, is infected but as yet displays no symptoms, gets powers and/or deformities appropriate to his or her personality, or just draws from the wild card deck (*GURPS Wild Cards*, pp. 120-121).

Wild Cards Note

Wild Cards, as large a series as it is — books, comics, games, and just optioned for a movie by Hollywood Pictures — makes every effort to keep timelines and characters straight. To that end, only the novels, comics and John J. Miller’s *GURPS Wild Cards* sourcebook have been declared “official.” All other *Wild Cards* material — games, movies, TV shows and cover artwork — has been declared “unofficial,” and may or may not reflect the “reality” of the books and comics.

In this game book are a number of official characters, and a larger number of unofficial characters who may (or may not) appear in novels and comics. Cameo (p. 108) and Herne (p. 75), originally created for this sourcebook, have been adopted for *Wild Cards XI: Dealer’s Choice*, and their revised biographies were able to be included in this volume. There are still discrepancies between their game and novel biographies, however, since in the official universe, they will not participate in this adventure, or be interacting with certain other characters.

This adventure is continuous with the *Wild Cards* timeline up to the middle of *Wild Cards XI: Dealer’s Choice*, after which point the game universe diverges slightly — some characters live who died, some die who lived, and interactions go slightly different throughout. By playing through this campaign, characters will further alter future *Wild Cards* history. The degree of change depends on the individual campaign, but should not overly affect the timeline of *Wild Cards* New York if GMs wish to incorporate events from *Dealer’s Choice* and later novels.



Wild Cards Fan Club

“The Card Sharps,” the quasi-official *Wild Cards* fan club, is now forming and plans to publish a *Wild Cards* fanzine, including news stories, reviews, letters and interviews. (“But please no fan fiction,” stresses George R.R. Martin. “Legal reasons.”)

Interested *Wild Cards* fans should contact Marc Bryant, Rt. 2, Box 622, Newport, TN 37821.

1

NEW YORK AND LONDON – CUTTING THE CARDS

Some think it odd that the Takisian xenovirus, the “Wild Card,” drawing as it is said from the subject’s subconscious, so often takes forms one would consider monstrous, a “joker,” when it might seem that each person might instead view himself as a hero, an “ace.”

I do not find this odd at all. As we may remember, in legend the perfect hero was as rare as he is today. In the story of Bothvar, the hero had for brothers Thorir Houndsfoot and Elgfrothi, a robber who was an elk from the navel down.

The source of the three brothers’ prodigious strength and the latter two’s deformity was a bit of bear meat eaten by their mother, the flesh taken from the corpse of their father, Bjorn, enchanted by sorceress White. Similarly the nymph Melusine, cursed with a serpentine shape for the murder of her father, passed on the taint to her children, one of whom was born with a boar’s tooth, the other a monster in mind as well as form.



This is not to infer that all deformity is based on patricide, but it is interesting that the magical taint follows the line of families after the initial acquisition, just as the Takisian virus is reported to do, occasionally expressing itself in the heroic form, but more often in the monstrous.

A troubling thought for the scholar is that some "aces" report the ability to travel in time, which, if true, makes one suspect the very nature of myth and legend. Was the pathogen that cursed Bothvar and Melusine and all their descendants the same spore that cursed the modern world but scant years ago?

— J.R.R. Tolkien, 1949, "Blood of Heroes and Monsters"

The Adventure Begins

Justice Department ace Lady Black (see p. 14) is coordinating the espionage effort. Prospective recruits are contacted in secret in their home towns. GMs should conduct an interview between the Justice Department representatives and the prospective American agents. Representing the U.S. Government is either Lady Black or Carnifex (p. 10). Captain Flint (p. 9) or Titania (p. 15) represent the Order of the Silver Helix and conduct the interviews with each British hopeful. The Justice Department and the Order of the Silver Helix believe green agents stand a better chance of going unnoticed in international waters than large groups of known operatives. They have devised a series of questions to assure that although the agents are inexperienced, they are not incompetent or unqualified.



The Most Puissant Order of the Silver Helix

On August 1, 1955, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, instituted the Order of the Silver Helix to honor those victims of the Takisian xenovirus whose service to the Empire went far beyond that of ordinary mortals. The first to be conferred this honor was Brigadier Sir Kenneth Foxworthy, GKSH, KSI, DSO, GC, more commonly known as Captain Flint, current Grand Marshal of the Order.

The ribbon of the order is green with a silver double helix. The motto is "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." The rod is silver, of which the present usher is Lady Margaret Alice Haversham, DCSH, publicly known as Titania.

In precedence of knighthood, the Order of the Silver Helix ranks after the Order of the Bath and before the Order of the Star of India. As with other knights, members of the order are addressed as Sir or Dame, unless of higher rank, and the appropriate initials are appended after their names: GKSH, Knight (or Dame) Grand Cross; KSH, Knight Commander; DSH, Dame Commander; or CSH, Companion.

Membership in the order is reserved for aces, along with a few deuces and some joker-aces (Captain Flint the most notable). The one exception to the rule is Professor Niles Swift, OM, KCSH, conferred the honor in recognition of his contributions to the field of wild card research.

Among British Knighthood, the Silver Helix is the only order of a more than ceremonial nature. Knights of the Silver Helix provide most of Buckingham Palace security, as well as aid to the British Army, Scotland Yard and Her Majesty's Secret Service. There is full cooperation between the Order of the Silver Helix and the United States Justice Department.

The Associates of Crown and Empire and The Mace

Wild carders, regardless of ace, deuce or joker status, who use their powers to assist British authorities may be distinguished as Associate of Crown and Empire, adding the suffix ACE to their names. The badge is the initials of the order within a diamond within a rectangle, surmounted by a heraldic crown and attached to a silver ribbon. This honor does not confer any rank or title upon the recipient.

Most Associates of Crown and Empire, while sanctioned by the United Kingdom, are not an official part of government forces and are not required to aid in particular actions, though ACEs with extremely useful powers are often requested for assistance.

ACEs who wish to work for the British government on a paid basis are recruited into Her Majesty's ACEs, popularly known as the Mace. The Mace is subordinate to the Order of the Silver Helix. Trainees take a place below the Knights of the Order that in days past would be defined as page. Wild carders who distinguish themselves in service of the Mace are soon inducted as Knight Companions into the Order of the Silver Helix.

A Wild Card Glossary

ACE: Associate of Crown and Empire.

Acist: Prejudicially disposed in favor of aces and consequently against jokers.

Associate of Crown and Empire: An honor conferred upon aces and other wild carders who honorably serve the British Empire. Recipients may add the suffix ACE to their names.

CAVE: Citizens Against Viral Epidemics. Radical New England anti-joker hate group led by Nelson Hampton.

Mace, The: Her Majesty's ACEs, wild carders in the paid service of the British government. This organization is subordinate to the Order of the Silver Helix. Agents of the Mace work as pages to Knights of the Silver Helix and are elevated to the Order after meritorious service.

Nat: A person unaffected by the wild card virus.

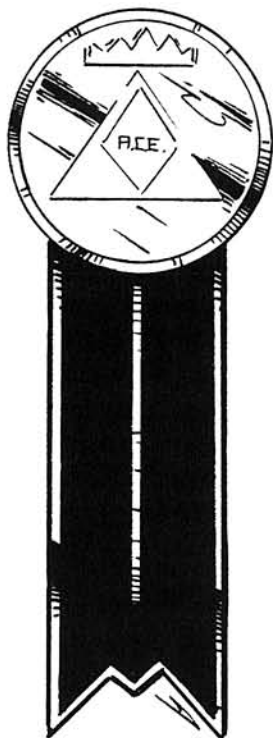
Order of the Silver Helix: A British order of knighthood reserved for wild cards. Instituted in 1955 by Queen Elizabeth, this is the only British order of a more than ceremonial nature.

Psi Psi Psi: A modern fraternity, membership limited to wild carders. Originally reserved for male aces, after rechartering, the Tri-Psis gained a membership of aces, deuces, jokers and joker-aces of both sexes (and a few new ones).

Tri-Psi: A member of the Psi Psi Psi wild card fraternity.

The Questions

1. What qualifies you to work as an operative? What wild card powers do you have that would be useful, or that wouldn't be useful? What are all your powers and abilities, and do you have any special disabilities we should know about?



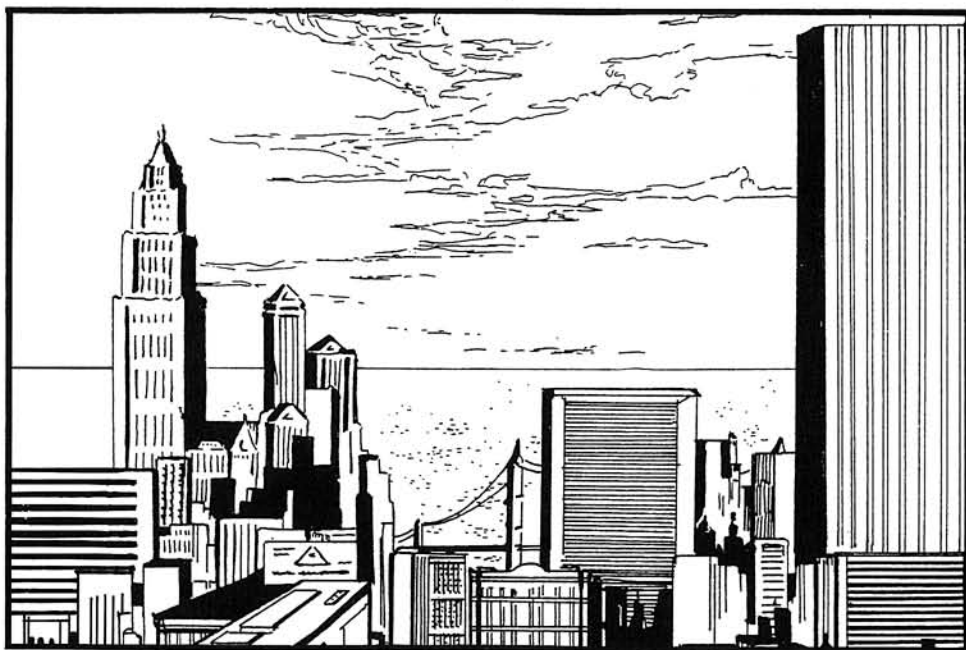
2. Why would you want to do something as secret and dangerous as espionage? Wouldn't you rather be a flashy ace, or joker-ace? If you succeed in this mission, are you willing to remain a hidden operative, or would come forward to take your share of the glory? Are you willing to make an enemy of an international terrorist organization?

3. What are your personal feelings about terrorism? About the Twisted Fists in particular? If you're a joker, why would you be willing to work against the Twisted Fists anyway? If you are willing to work against the Twisted Fists, what are you going to say to get them to let you join and work against world governments? You think they're going to believe you?

At the end of the interview, applicants are thanked in their interviewer's own particular manner. They are then informed that their name will be kept on file and their government will contact them if their aid is needed.

The PCs should take the interview seriously, but unless someone is completely rude or crass, the agents will pass this test. If an interviewee bombs the interview, the GM can keep him in the adventure by having him covertly approached by Twisted Fist operatives, who will recruit him and arrange for him to shadow the agents throughout their mission.

Barring such circumstances, each recruit receives his first assignment three days later. They leave for Peru in mid-July.



Captain Flint (Brigadier Sir Kenneth Foxworthy)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: September 24, 1917, London

Appearance: Captain Flint is a living stone statue of heroic proportions (7' 9", 3385 lbs.), solid gray flint. His voice is a faint whisper, like the crackling of a small fire. His pupils are flames, and he strikes sparks when he speaks or moves quickly. When at Buckingham Palace, he wears a military uniform. When not on official duty, he prefers cardigans and sport coats.

Wild Card Ability: Captain Flint is very strong and nearly invulnerable. His fingers are razor sharp. By snapping them, he can spark fires or shoot flaming stone darts he calls "elf-shot."

Aces Jingle: Captain Flint can strike a spark —
Watch his elf-shot hit the mark.

ST 150 (235 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 5
DX 6 (-30 points) **HT** 17 (100 points)
Damage: Thrust 16d+2 impaling; Swing 18d+2 cutting; Punch 16d crushing; Elf-Shot 16d imp and 1d+1 from sparks

Advantages

Charisma +4 (20 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Common Sense (10 points)
Fearlessness +6 (12 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Military Rank +7: Grand Marshal of the Order of the Silver Helix (35 points)
Reputation: Britain's oldest and most decorated ace +4 (20 points)
Status 3: Grand Marshal of the OSH (10 points)
Strong Will +4 (16 points)
Wealthy (20 points)

Disadvantages

Code of Honor: Gentleman's Code (-15 points)
Gigantism (-10 points)
Honesty (-10 points)
Odious Personal Habit: Captain Flint cannot speak above a whisper, making it difficult for others to hear him. The creepiness of his voice also causes a -2 reaction. (-10 points)
Sense of Duty: To the British Empire (-15 points)
Shyness: Around pretty women (-5 points)
Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Body of Stone, Level 30, PD 6, DR 20 (Unswitchable -25%, 180 points)
Claws: Razor-edged, flint fingers, +2 damage (15 points)
Doesn't Sleep (20 points)
Immortality (140 points)
Increased Density: +3,000 lbs. (150 points)
Invulnerability: Heat/Fire (100 points)
Pressure Support (15 points)
Vacuum Support (40 points)

Super Disadvantages

Altered Time Rate: 1 minute for every 2 (-100 points)
Dependency: Mud and mineral water weekly. Instead of losing HT, Captain Flint loses DX until he's frozen into a statue, but he doesn't die (-20 points)



Super-Powers

Flame Jet-14(2) (Actually shower of sparks and chips of stone, Must snap fingers or clap hands -20%, Uncontrollable, caused by friction, not stress -30%, 18 points)

Skills

Brawling-12 (32 points), Dancing-8 (8 points), Diplomacy-16 (10 points), Fencing-8 (8 points), First Aid-13 (1 point), French-16 (8 points), Gambling-15 (6 points), Guns-10 (16 points), History-15 (8 points), Hobby: Croquet-11 (16 points), Intelligence Analysis-16 (10 points), Latin-12 (1 points), Leadership-16 (8 points), Savoir-Faire-17 (8 points), Seamanship-17 (8 points), Strategy-15 (8 points), Tactics-14 (6 points), Teaching-12 (1 point), Throwing-14 (48 points)

Quirks

Cheats at croquet, but only among friends
Doesn't give jokers special treatment
Embarrassed if anyone sees him eat mud or motor oil
Has crush on Titania, but keeps strictly professional
Maintains love-hate relationship with Prince Edmund

During World War II, Kenneth Foxworthy was captain of the *H.M.S. Valiance*, earning the Distinguished Service Order for bravery at sea. He fell in love with Miriam Halford, an American WAC, and they promised to marry when the war was over.

After the war, he booked passage to America on the Queen Mary. On September 16, 1946, he took ill, along with most of the passengers and crew. After a night of hideous agony, feeling his muscles and flesh stiffen, Captain Foxworthy forced himself to stand and found himself grown into a giant of solid flint.

Ignoring the horror of his transformation, Kenneth set to organizing those passengers who were able and ready, captaining the vessel and bringing it safely into New York harbor despite the increasing stiffness in his joints. During the quarantine, he slowly froze into a solid stone statue. He was aware the entire time.

Dr. Tachyon was unable to help, sending Kenneth's "corpse" back to his family in England. The story of his bravery spread, and King George posthumously conferred

upon him the George Cross for Gallantry and knighted him with the Order of the Star of India. Kenneth was buried, still alive.

Water slowly leaked into the badly made, oversized coffin. His limbs began to quicken, and two years after his interment, he broke free of his grave, gulping down handfuls of mineral-rich water and mud. He was treated like a hero returned from the dead. King George rebestowed the honors which he had been conferred.

Miriam Halford had married after his "death." Sir Kenneth was crushed, spending much time in psychiatric counseling. He recovered, rejoining the Royal Navy and distinguishing himself as one of the Crown's most loyal officers.

In 1955, Queen Elizabeth made him Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Silver Helix, requesting he be the Order's Grand Marshal. He was given an office in Buckingham Palace, coordinating and recruiting British aces for the Crown.

In 1967, Miriam Halford divorced her American husband and came to see Kenneth. They saw each other for two years, but things had changed since the war, and the relationship failed. Even so, it was the happiest time in Kenneth's life. "Captain Flint" devoted himself to his career, trying to forget.

Despite his forbidding appearance and eerie voice, Captain Flint is a great favorite around the palace. He runs a poker game in the kitchen for the servants and bets on croquet during royal garden parties. He's hopelessly in love with Titania, but is too afraid of rejection to broach the subject.

His present assignment is military tutor and personal security to Prince Edmund. This does not so much extend to safeguarding the Prince as it does keeping him out of trouble. Captain Flint moves slowly, however, and Guy Fawkes delights in tripping him or incinerating his clothes.

Typical Dialogue: (Placing hand on shoulder.) "Excuse me. You are being detained for suspected terrorist activity. Don't try to escape. My fingers are very sharp and I'm rather clumsy; you could be badly hurt were I to fall on you."

Carnifex (William "Billy" Ray)

Created by John J. Miller

Born: 1960, Busted Butte, Montana

Appearance: Ray is of average height and weight (5' 10", 165 lbs.) and frequently wears his fighting suit in public. It's white and form-fitting, with a black hood covering his face and head, black gloves and pliable black boots. His face doesn't quite come together. It's lacking a little chin and has too much nose. His green eyes aren't

quite on the same level and his jaw is canted a little. He keeps his dark hair short.

For this mission, Billy Ray has had his appearance altered by a plastic surgeon so that he won't be easily recognized. His hair is now blond, and his canine teeth have been capped with short fangs. He's wearing a black ghi in the place of his normal white fighting suit and goes by the name of Tom "Wildcat" Foster.

Wild Card Ability: Ray is stronger than normal human limits, and much faster. His body regenerates damage and he is a master martial artist.

ST 30 (175 points) **IQ 11** (10 points) **Move: 10**
DX 22 (225 points) **HT 13/20** (30 points)
Damage: Thrust 3d; Swing 5d+2; Karate: 3d+3 punch, 4d+1 kick

Advantages

Alertness +3
(15 points)
Ambidexterity
(10 points)
Combat Reflexes
(15 points)
High Pain Threshold
(10 points)
Legal Enforcement
Powers (15 points)
Patron: U.S. Justice
Department (15 points)
Reputation: +2
(10 points)
Strong Will +3
(12 points)

Disadvantages

Berserk (-15 points)
Duty: Uphold the
law and protect
Senator Hartmann
(-15 points)
Impulsiveness
(-10 points)
Lecherousness
(-15 points)
Overconfidence
(-10 points)
Unattractive (-5 points)

Note: For this mission, Billy's face has been reworked into a handsome look, but it is only temporary and won't last past one battle.

Super Advantages

Extra Hit Points +7 (35 points)
Fast Regeneration (50 points)

Skills

Criminology-13 (6 points), English (native tongue), Football-20 (½ point), Guns (Pistol)-18 (0 points), Interrogation-12 (4 points), Karate-25 (24 points), Law-12 (6 points), Running-10 (½ point), Shadowing-12 (4 points), Stealth-21 (1 point), Streetwise-12 (4 points), Tactics-16 (14 points)

Quirks

Absolutely fastidious about his appearance
Braggart
Wears a "fighting suit" when on duty

A college football star for the University of Michigan in the late 1970s, Ray revealed his ace to the general public



when he broke his leg in three places in the first quarter of the Rose Bowl (on national TV, of course) and tried to return to the game before halftime. Losing his chance for a lucrative career as an NFL running back, he was immediately recruited by the U.S. Justice Department. He's worked for them ever since. He got his nickname, Carnifex (Latin for "executioner"), early in his career. He likes it. He's an authentic bad-ass.

Faster than a cat on speed and infinitely meaner, he has an instinctive sense of aggression that makes him a master at hand-to-hand combat. He's never studied it. Never had to. He just knows what moves to make at any given time. This drives hard-core martial artists crazy because Ray fights to no particular pattern in no particular form. He's the master of free-form mayhem.

The action is the thing for Ray. He lives for the violence, the ultimate head-to-head confrontation. He lusts after opponents who are bigger, stronger and apparently

more powerful than he. He has no compunction about killing, and has been called on the carpet several times for being a bit careless in this regard. Since he usually successfully carries out all orders, his superiors forgive his occasional excesses.

He can take a lot of damage, and his body will eventually regenerate even massive injuries. Unfortunately, his regenerative powers know nothing about aesthetics, which is why his face has become rather peculiar over the years.

He's talkative and boastful about both his exploits for the Justice Department and in the bedroom. Someday, he may talk too much and spill something that should remain a secret. He's also a "neat freak." His apartment looks

sterile, unlivd in — and don't *ever* spill mustard on his uniform. He usually keeps no secret ID and prefers to go by his nickname, but because of the importance of this mission, he is using the alias Tom "Wildcat" Foster. He likes working for the Justice Department because he can legally indulge in his love for combat. He is not a particularly stable personality; someday he may go totally over the line.

Note: Using the *Chambara Fighting Style* optional rule, p. S82, Carnifex gets 4 attacks and parries per turn.

Typical Dialogue: "I've eaten guys bigger than you for breakfast, wimp."

Decathlon (Robert "Robbie" Hampton)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: June 7, 1970, Hartford, Connecticut

Appearance: Varies wildly. Decathlon can change from a Saxon jockey to a Cherokee basketball player in half a second, and does. He wears modified triathlete shorts with suspenders and lots of elastic and velcro, and a tank top which can be anything from a muscle shirt to a tunic. He goes barefoot.

Wild Card Ability: Robbie Hampton shapeshifts within a range about 40% beyond the human male extremes. He may go from a 3' 6" midget to a 9' 6" giant — broad, gangly, hairy, hairless, obese, emaciated, scrawny, over-muscled and all gradations between. Whatever his form, it is always perfectly symmetrical and the human body type ideally suited to his present climate and physical activity. His body adapts instantly to every new condition, but his clothes do not, often leaving him nude. Robbie is unable to control his shapeshifting.

Aces Jingle: Tall, wiry, buff or short,
Decathlon's a real sport.

ST 29 (170 points) **IQ** 17 (100 points) **Move:** 19
DX 28 (375 points) **HT** 28 (375 points) (20 + 5)

(The above ST and DX should be taken as Decathlon's maximum attributes — the limits to which he has pushed his body previously and to which it comfortably readapts. New upper limits may be possible, but only after intense strain and exercise.)

Damage: Thrust 3d; Swing 5d+2; Karate 3d+5 punch, 3d+5 kick

Advantages

Alertness +5 (25 points)
Ambidexterity (10 points)
Charisma +3 (15 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Double-Jointed (5 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Language Talent +2 (4 points)



Musical Ability +5 (5 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Peripheral Vision (15 points)

Very Handsome: Whatever his form, Decathlon is always the masculine ideal of beauty for that race, with sacrifices for athletic function. (25 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior: Keeps up on pro sports (-5 points)

Dwarfism/Gigantism: Depending on the minute, Decathlon may possess either of these disadvantages. Nothing ever fits. (-10 points)

Enemy: Shadow Fist Organization, 6 or less (-15 points)

Honesty (-10 points)

Pacifism: Cannot Kill (-15 points)

Reputation: Grandson of Nelson Hampton. Declares himself to be a joker, though looks and acts like an ace, -6 to some Jokers and sympathizers, +6 to others (0 points)

Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Amphibious (10 points)

Damage Resistance +3 (9 points)

Full Coordination (50 points)

Immortality (Decathlon's Immunity to Poison is actually advanced Mithridatism. Totally new poisons will affect him for a few seconds until his body can create a tolerance. His Immunity to Disease works similarly, rapidly running through symptoms until his body immunizes itself and destroys the invading organism. After the wild card rewrote Decathlon's gene code into its present form, his body destroyed the virus. 140 points)

Increased Speed +6 (150 points)

Morphological Adaptation: Decathlon's shapechanging follows the basic laws of physical anthropology and professional sports: larger bodies and shorter limbs conserve heat; smaller bodies and longer limbs dissipate heat; more sunlight means darker pigment; brown eyes are more color-receptive; blue-green eyes are better for spotting movement; narrower noses and lips for dry climates, thicker for humid; football tackles should be massive; runners should be long-legged and lean; etc. This power has been bought as heightened attributes and advantages which appear as needed. This includes such rare human variations as lobster foot (two toes — confers extra stability) and webbed fingers. All morphological changes remain until they become inconvenient or a new adaptation is necessary. (0 points.)

Perfect Balance (15 points)

Recovery (10 points)

Regrowth (40 points)

Stretching, Level 1 (No flexibility -50%; 15 points)

Temperature Tolerance (10 points)

Super Disadvantages

Uncontrolled Change: Transformation is never horrible, but happens continuously, causing a -3 reaction to whomever notices it (-40 points)

Super-Powers

Mimicry-25(2) (Only human sounds -50%, 38 points)

Psionics

Telereceive-8(5) (Uncontrollable -30%, Untrainable -40%, 6 points)

(Manifests slightly around pretty girls — Robbie's body shifts to the physical type they're attracted to. +4 reaction modifier.)

Skills

Acoustic Guitar-22 (4 points), Acrobatics-30 (includes pole-vaulting) (16 points), Hobby: Baseball cards-18 (2 points), Baseball-30 (8 points), Basketball-30 (8 points), Jumping-30 (8 points), Football-30 (8 points), French-18 (1 point), Karate-30 (16 points), Running-30 (16 points), Sex Appeal-28 (2 points), Singing-30 (4 points), Soccer-30 (8 points), Tennis-30 (8 points), Spear Throwing-30 (4 points), Throwing-30 (16 points)

Quirks

Collects baseball cards

Cries at night, but refuses to admit it

Guns n' Roses fan; mimics Axl Rose

Lactose addict; drinks milk like water

Still loves his family, writes letters to his little brother daily, but doesn't send them for fear of infecting him

Robbie Hampton was born and raised in West Hartford, Connecticut, favorite grandson of Nelson Hampton, president of CAVE (pronounced ka-ve, Latin), Citizens Against Viral Epidemics, New England's radical right-wing, anti-joker hate group. Robbie was a sports fanatic, hoping to get a scholarship to Wesleyan. He sang in the church choir, played guitar and ran CAVE's high school chapter.

On June 7, 1987, his 17th birthday, Robbie's parents took him to New York to see the Dodgers. Dwight Gooden hit one into the stands, and Robbie caught more than the ball — that morning he had been exposed to Typhoid Croyd.

Robbie's greatest desire was to be the world's greatest athlete, but being 5' 9" and of average build, he hardly had the ideal body for major-league sports. His greatest horror was to turn into a joker, something strange and inhuman. The wild card catalyzed upon both these thoughts and the rush of emotion as he strained for the

ball, just out of his reach. He suddenly shot up to over 8 feet tall, ripping out of his clothes as his body changed into the ideal human form to catch the fly ball.

At the Jokertown clinic, the Trump Virus proved useless, but a series of blood tests indicated that Robbie's immune system was wrestling the wild card by itself — and winning. A day later he recovered, fully immune to the virus and all its variants, though wracked by a continually restructuring gene code.

Robbie's parents disowned him, viewing him as a wild card freak no matter what the blood tests said. Homeless, Robbie was approached by agents of the Shadow Fist Society, looking for ace muscle. He worked as a courier and guard, but when given an order to kill, he went straight to the police, earning him the enmity of the criminal organization.

The Justice Department offered him a position as ace trainee till he turned 18. Lady Black gave him the codename Decathlon in honor of his sports ability.

Any form he's in remains constant until presented by a new stimulus, as slight as one degree of temperature change or stepping into a shadow. Beyond posing in a

mirror and pretending he's in a bodybuilding contest, Decathlon is unable to control his shapeshifting. Possibly as a result of his choir training, however, his vocal chords respond to concentration.

Decathlon's mind also responds to strain, rapidly increasing in intelligence when presented with difficult mental exercises. This increase remains even after the stimulus is removed. Frightened by his spiraling intellect, Robbie refuses to use it, hoping it will atrophy like unused muscle. He watches *Gilligan's Island* reruns and spars with Carnifex.

Decathlon desperately wants to be liked. He's torn between his previous beliefs and the new world to which he has been rudely awakened. He loves sports and loves to play against anyone who can teach him anything — not just because it's fun, but because it stabilizes his form and he can forget his troubles. At points he begins to enjoy his power, but Decathlon would give it all up to go back to being Robbie Hampton.

Typical Dialogue: (to pretty girl) "Hi, I'm Robbie Hampton. You like sports?"

Lady Black (Joann Jefferson)

Official Character

Created by John J. Miller

Born: May 11, 1955, Washington D.C.

Appearance: Statuesque (5' 11" 145 lbs.) black woman, early 30s. Her features are handsome rather than beautiful, but all in all she cuts a very attractive figure. If you could see it, that is. She wears a black suit head to toe and an enveloping cloak that is lightless black on the inside and utterly reflective on the outside. She wears her suit whenever she has a remote chance of coming into physical contact with another person.

Wild Card Ability: Lady Black is an energy vampire. She collects and stores radiant and electrical energy and can release it at will. If she remains in physical contact with someone too long, she siphons off the minute bits of electrical energy that run the human nervous system. Her suit both enhances her abilities and protects those around her. Her cloak can be used to help collect energy or to shut it off if she approaches critical.

Aces Jingle: Lady Black flashes light,
If you kiss her, it's goodnight.

ST 10 (0 points) IQ 13 (30 points) Move: 5.75
DX 12 (20 points) HT 11 (10 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2; Lightning up to 10d

Advantages

Attractive (5 points)
Empathy (15 points)
Legal Enforcement Powers (15 points)
Patron: U.S. Justice Department (15 points)

Disadvantages

Code of Honor: Girl Scout's Code (-5 points)
Compulsive Behavior: Uses computer modem services (-5 points)
Duty: To U.S. Justice Department (-10 points)
Mild Shyness (-5 points)
Pacifism: Self-defense only (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Absorption, Level 30: Generic energy (Only to power Extra Fatigue, -20%, 240 points)
Extra Fatigue, 60 points maximum: (Powered by character points received from absorption. 3 points per level)

Super-Powers

Absorb HT-20(10) (Touch only -20%, Always on -40%, 56 points)
Flash-16(20) (Costs 10 fatigue -50%, 60 points)
Illuminate-16(20) (Costs 10 fatigue -50%, 30 points)
Lightning-1 (20) (Costs 10 fatigue -50%, 80 points)
Warm-16(20) (Costs 10 fatigue -50%, 40 points)

Skills

Computer Operation-12 (½ point), Cooking-14 (2 points), Criminology-14 (4 points), Diplomacy-13 (4 points), Hobby: Romance novels-16 (4 points), Intelligence Analysis-12 (2 points), Law-14 (6 points), Writing-12 (1 point)



Quirks

Buys beautiful clothes; wears them at home, alone
 Doesn't like Carnifex; tries to keep him under control
 Makes friends over the computer — keeps ace identity secret
 Reads trashy romance novels

Joann Jefferson had a normal, middle-class childhood until age 12 when her vampiric energy power surfaced and killed her mother. Joann was traumatized for many years,

but fortunately her father was a kind and understanding man. He had quilted clothes made to dampen her power and took her to therapy at the Washington Wild Cards Research Institute.

At 18, Joann was in as full control of her power as she'd ever be. She made a cloak to help her repel and collect energy and did a few minor deeds as an ace. The Justice Department offered her a job in congressional security and she's been working for them ever since.

Lady Black is essentially a nice person cut off from physical human contact by her powers. She longs for normalcy. She's never had a lover and wants one very badly, but is afraid to get involved with anyone. The closest she's come to any sort of relationship is being pen pals over computer modem services. Sometimes friends on the service ask what she really looks like, not believing she's the attractive black woman named Joann she describes. Computer services are popular among jokers, allowing them to be judged by their words instead of their appearances. Sometimes she wants to meet her electronic friends, but never does.

She abhors violence and destruction. An agent for the Justice Department for some time, she's worked with Carnifex, doesn't like him and tries to keep him reigned in. He pesters her sexually, and at times she's whimsically tempted to give in and end his bothering once and for all. At other times she's tempted to give in from sheer loneliness and desire.

Typical Dialogue: "I really hate violence, and I'm much more powerful than you, so why don't you put down the gun and we'll sit down and talk, okay?"

Titania (Lady Margaret Alice Haversham)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: December 17, 1959, Edinburgh, Scotland

Appearance: Titania is petite (5' 3", 100 lbs.) and very pretty with long blond hair and blue eyes. She looks much

younger than her age. Her ace power is manifest in the swarm of Rackhamesque fairies who follow her everywhere.

Wild Card Ability: Titania's fairies are ectoplasmic pro-

jections of her subconscious, acting as her spies and messengers (see *New Abilities*, p. 123). She also has some skill with transformations.

Aces Jingle:

Shakespearian mania? Talk to Titania!
(Watch out, those fairies will drive you insania.)

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 5
DX 13 (30 points) **HT** 9 (-10 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Advantages

Beautiful (15 points)
Charisma +1 (5 points)
Danger Sense: Fairies warn her (15 points)
Intuition: Fairies advise her (15 points)
Luck (15 points)
Military Rank +2: Dame Commander of the Order of the Silver Helix (10 points)
Reputation: Popular London Ace, Peter Pan's sister and secretary for Captain Flint +4, (20 points)
Status 2: Knight and Lady Usher of the Silver Rod (10 points)

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior: Reads literature (-5 points)
Odious Personal Habit: Quotes Shakespeare incessantly (-5 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Invisibility: (At will +10%, Can carry up to light Encumbrance +20%, 52 points)

Super-Powers

Ectoplasmic Projection-20(1) (see p. 123; No Stunning +20%; Always visible -20%; Always tangible -20%; Omnipresent, fairies constantly flocking around Titania, perching on her shoulder and so forth, causing a -2 reaction penalty due to sheer annoyance, -20%; 38 points)

Morph-14(1) (Cannot use power on self -40%, Affects Others +40%, Touch Only -20%, Doesn't require Morph Memory +100%, Only while quoting Shakespeare -20%, 30 points)

Skills

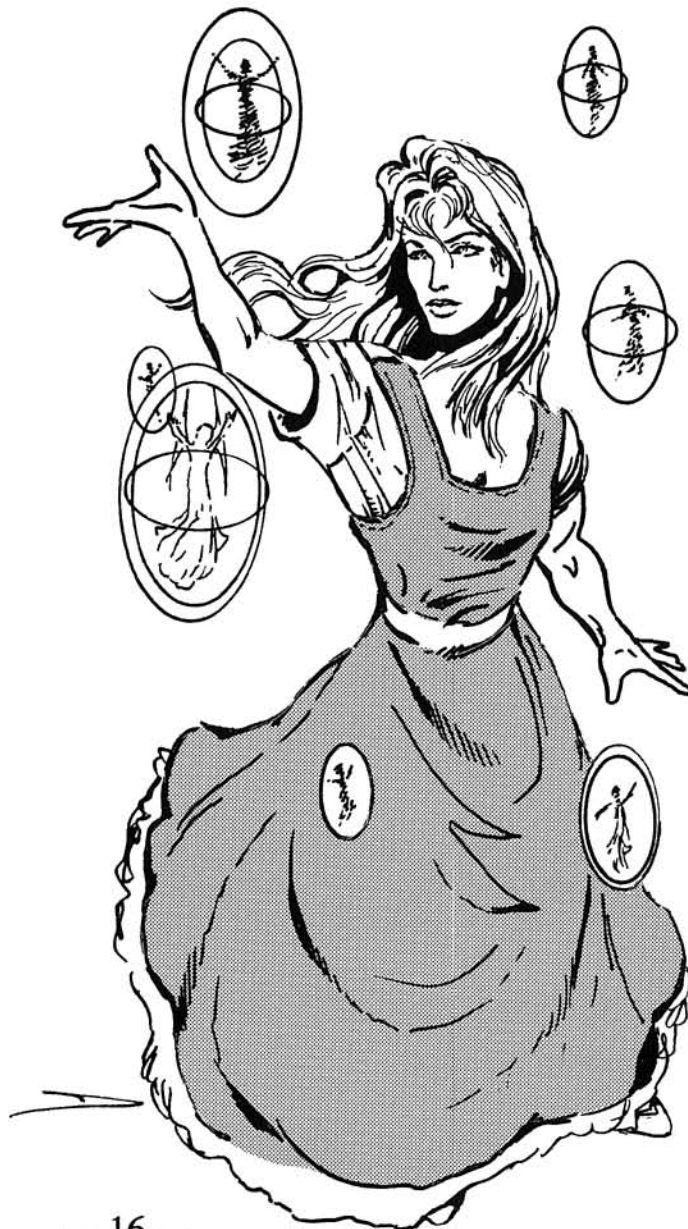
Blowpipe-14 (8 points), Computer Operation-14 (1 point), Dancing-12 (1 point), Diplomacy-14 (4 points), French-15 (4 points), Hobby: Book collecting-16 (3 points), Literature-18 (12 points), Poisons-12 (1 point), Research-15 (4 points), Shadowing-15 (4 points), Writing-16 (6 points)

Quirks

Collects Arthur Rackham prints and first editions
Doesn't like children; mixed feelings about fairies
Loves and respects Captain Flint; wishes he would notice her
Proper young British woman
Thinks of herself as a scholar, not an ace

Titania's Fairies

(The average fairy totals 10 points. No two fairies are alike; each usually has some particular skill or special power, personifications of facets of Titania's subcon-



scious. She has six or seven around her at almost all times.)

ST 1 (-80 points) **IQ 14** (45 points) **Move: 4**
DX 15 (60 points) **HT 2** (-70 points)
Damage: Hairpulling and little else

Advantages

Night Vision (10 points)
Danger Sense (10 points)
Intuition (15 points)

Disadvantages

Absent-Mindedness (-15 points)
Compulsive Behavior: Practical joker (-5 points)
Delusion: Titania is the Fairy Queen (-15 points)
Dwarfism (-15 points)
Impulsiveness (-10 points)
Odious Personal Habit: Insufferably cute (-15 points)
Sense of Duty: To Titania (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Invisibility (At will +10%, 44 points)
Flight (Winged Flight -25%, 30 points)

Super Disadvantages

Permanently Shrunk, Level 4 (-40 points)

Psionics

Autoteleport-16(4) (24 points)

Margaret “Peg” Haversham was a doctoral student at Oxford, specializing in Shakespearian literature. Her wild card turned in the middle of thesis research on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Cobweb, Cowslip, Peasblossom and Mustardseed appeared, exactly like the Arthur Rackham

illustrations, and called her Titania, the Fairy Queen. Numerous other fairies not in the original script soon joined her retinue.

Titania discovered other powers, but tried to ignore them. The fairies were another matter. No academic department wanted an instructor surrounded by a frivolity of fairies. Matters became worse when their next meeting caused her handsome younger brother, Howard, to turn his wild card. He borrowed one of her fairies and gained the ability to make himself and others fly, calling himself Peter Pan as he visited several Wendys through their bedroom windows. Howard's reputation as the rake who never grew up caused Titania no end of embarrassment.

When the Associates of Crown and Empire offered her a job as a non-commissioned administrator, she seized the opportunity. Her uses as a spy became immediately apparent, and after breaking a London heroin ring, the Queen knighted her Dame Commander.

Presently, she works as Captain Flint's assistant, dealing with the mundane affairs of ACE. He's the only man who treats her with the dignity and respect due another person, not as a freak or an ace or a challenge. Peg sees beyond his frightening exterior to the man within, and wishes he would notice her as a woman.

Those who cross her run the risk of having their heads or entire bodies replaced with those of animals. The longest she's ever let anyone stay in such condition is two days.

Typical Dialogue: “Thou elvish marked, abortive rooting hog!” (from *Richard III* — Turns enemy into pig.)
“What is this? 'Tis an idiot's face I see!” (*Merchant of Venice* — Makes someone look like the nutty professor.)
“Thou has grown marvelous hairy about the face!” (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* — Gives someone a donkey's head.)

Yellowman (Evelyn “Evie” Nathaniel Swift)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: March 4, 1962, Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Appearance: Yellowman has a compact, muscular frame, 5' 5" 160 lbs. His entire body is monochrome fluorescent yellow, though his hair and irises are slightly more reflective. His pupils are black. He changes clothes by the hour and is incredibly hyperactive and friendly.

Wild Card Ability: Yellowman is a world class teleporter with enhanced reflexes.

Aces Jingle: New York, Sydney, London, Rome —
Yellowman can call it home.

ST 13 (30 points) **IQ 14** (45 points) **Move: 16**
DX 19 (150 points) **HT 13** (30 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d-1

Advantages

Absolute Direction (5 points)
Absolute Timing (5 points)
Alertness +3 (15 points)
Ambidexterity (10 points)
Attractive (5 points)
Charisma +4 (20 points)
Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Empathy (15 points)
Lightning Calculator (5 points)
Luck (30 points)
Patron: Tri-Psi Fraternity (15 points)
Reputation: Crazy international Ace, +2 to Aceophiles (5 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Code of Honor: Packrat's Code. Thinks nothing of borrowing things, especially if they belong to a friend or fraternity brother. Things "borrowed" must always be returned, however, or replaced with something better. (-5 points)

Compulsive Carousing (-5 points)

Delusion: "I teleport in time! I am the only hope for the future!" — This may not be a delusion, but regardless, everything Yellowman does is dictated by his nightmares or the nightmare future he visits (-15 points)

Gullibility (-10 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Intolerance: IRA (-5 points)

Laziness (-10 points)

Lecherousness (-15 points)

Odious Personal Habit: Talks too fast and too much (-10 points)

Secret: Member of the Twisted Fists (-20 points)

Sense of Duty: Cannot disobey a parental order (-15 points)

Sense of Duty: To Tri-Psi brothers and sisters (-10 points)

Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Increased Speed +8 (200 points)

Psionics

Autoteleport-20(27) (Uncontrollable: usually while asleep -30%, Can teleport to familiar persons and objects in unknown locations +40%, 129 points)

Mind Shield-20(50) (Doesn't protect memories or general ideas, only surface thoughts -40%; Special effect: Yellowman's thoughts are so hard to read because his mind goes as fast as his body; it's like listening to Alvin and the Chipmunks on speed; 76 points)

Precognition-12(27) (Unreliable -20%, Nuisance Effect: Can take damage from bad "dreams" -30%, Only while asleep, -30%; 17 points)

Skills

Bard-14 (2 points), Body Sense-20 (1 point), Carousing-14 (4 points), Dancing-19 (2 points), English (Native tongue), Fast-Talk-15 (4 points), History-13 (2 points), Hobby: Rock and Roll-16 (3 points), Irish-16 (6 points), Savoir-Faire-14 (1 point), Scrounging-17 (6 points), Sex Appeal-15 (6 points), Singing-14 (2 points), Tennis-18 (1 point)



Quirks

Doctor Who fan

Gate crashes anything that sounds fun — anywhere
Hates being called a joker; teleports away with the pants of those who insult him

Sugar addict, always drinking or eating something sweet

Wears clothes that clash with his skin

Evie "Yellowman" Swift grew up the son of Professor Niles Swift (p. 71). Other children teased him for being a joker and being short. Wanting to fit in, he stopped using his teleportation power and it almost disappeared by age seven. He became good friends with Prince Edmund (p. 74) during their stay together, thinking of him as a brother. Prince Edmund began calling him Yellowman after the Irish toffee.

At 16, his father sent him to Eton. The pressures of school caused his teleportation powers to resurface. Within a month he was popping around the globe. He got

into minor trouble and made a name for himself as an ace, doing a stint as a VJ on MTV until anti-wild-card pressure got him fired.

Shortly after, another ace in his hand revealed itself. Sometimes, when he's sleeping, instead of waking up in a new place (a problem he's had since Eton), he finds himself in some past or future timestream until he teleports home — waking up the exact place and moment he left. It might be a dream, it might not, but he's come back with cuts and bruises from his nighttime jaunts, and often his "dreams" have come true.

Of late, the possible futures have become horrifying, especially for jokers. Evie has become a courier and spy for the Twisted Fists, hoping to change the future to a brighter possibility.

The Associates of Crown and Empire have also recruited him. Yellowman operates as a double-agent and will try to sabotage the mission at every turn. He is not a member of the Twisted Fists' inner circle, however, and will know little of the twistings of most plots until just before they happen. He is also not a killer and prefers misleading characters instead of warning local conspirators. If he has made friends with other agents, such as Decathlon, he will be especially loathe to blow their cover.

His only real loyalty is to the future and that is the only reason he is taking such desperate measures. He's told very few of his timeslip/pre-cog power, only those who his "dreams" have told him will believe him and will help him. To that end, he's recruited a high-ranking Twisted Fist operative (Telephoto, p. 92), a government agent (Psiguard, p. 56), and two international aces (Guy Fawkes, p. 74, and Kookaburra, p. 110). They know him, like him and believe him — even though the groups they work for are often at odds. Loosely, they make up what might be called the "Yellowman Conspiracy" — if it were better organized. As it is, they each work for a better world in their own ways

and take suggestions from Yellowman when he pops in.

When he isn't popping around the globe, Evie Swift works as a DJ at Downtown Radio in Newtownards, Northern Ireland, or goes to classes at Oxford, MIT and UC Berkeley. He's a Tri-Psi and sleeps at fraternity houses or friends' apartments, keeping no permanent address.

Yellowman has gotten an international reputation as the ace who kept appearing in Madonna's bed, asleep and nude. Numerous female stars and aces have complained. And some haven't.

Typical Dialogue: "And here's the new one from Mick and his lips. Or is that Mick and his fangs? Oh well, this is Yellowman, your ace DJ at Downtown Radio in Newtownards, here's the new Stones, and while you're listening, I'll go ask the wolfman which he prefers, okay? Here we go and here I go and . . ."



2

PERU – THE DEALER'S CHOICE

Since the release of the wild card, there has been an excess of light in the world, mysteries locked away for centuries exposed and explained, and questions that were never asked, answered. There seems in this age a death of wonder, where marvel and amazement fall down, withered by the light of reason like a rare orchid exposed to the sun. Such beauty can exist only in shadow, the realm of imagination. In ages past, men told tales of strange and exotic lands, filled with the creatures of myth, and then the world was explored and we were given maps in exchange for our dreams. Atlantis sank into the ocean, the dark continent was made light, and nowhere on earth was unknown.



For a time, then, men dreamed of the moon. Even the stories of our new aces, like the tales of the early explorers, only served to whet our imagination instead of dull it, but then the norteamericanos sent up a ship, to show that not just aces but normal men could challenge the Gods. The Eagle landed and met the Gods, not the creatures of myth and wonder but instead fifteen aces, including an American housewife in a shabby robe, just appeared and new, waving to her children. Wonder was dead, and all could see that the moon was just a cold ball of rock.

Critics interpret and dismiss my novel as the tale of an isolated community affected by the wild card with no knowledge from the outside world, but when I wrote of the Buendia family, I did not intend to tell of a family of aces. Remora the Beauty and her fatal attraction, Jose Arcadio and his resplendent animal, Ursula and her unwillingness to submit to death, and the fantastic creature with the tail of a pig who spelled the end of the village were not meant as wild cards. I set out to write a tale by which men might see more of themselves through what they were not, as they have in ages past, but now it seems that the world is bathed in such light that nothing can be said to be so strange that it cannot be explained. I pity the world and I rejoice for it, for if all of our dreams can come true, of what then shall we dream?

— Gabriel Garcia Marquez,

"Thirty-Three Years of Sunlight," The Atlantic Monthly, November, 1969

Wild Cards Peru Since World War II

Peru was relatively untouched by the first Wild Card Day, only a few isolated jokers and black queens dealt to the country. General Manuel Odria took power as a dictator from 1948 to 1956, during which time the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) was outlawed. Democratic elections followed the Odria dictatorship until 1962 when there was a military coup. Then, in January, 1963, came the late Cuzco wild card outbreak.

The exact cause of the Cuzco outbreak is still unknown, though the popular theory is that the viral particles were born by a large swarm of butterflies from the Amazon. The wild card cut across social classes in the old heart of the Inca empire, casting the city into chaos. Religious revivals and miracles of both Catholic and Incan paganism occurred with regularity, and many thought it was the end of the world, as demonstrated by apparent angels flying across the sky and devils in the cathedral.

Perhaps the most astonishing occurrence of the Cuzco outbreak was in nearby Machu Picchu. To avoid the violence in the city, many Indians, including jokers and aces, had retreated to the ancient Incan citadel, setting up squatters camps around the archaeological site. On the morning of January 17, the entire settlement was found rebuilt to its former glory, including gold plaques and alpaca wall hangings.



Psi Psi Psi Coed Wild Card Fraternity

Founded by students at New York University shortly after Wild Card Day, the "Tri-Psis" were originally an all-ace fraternity with a strong "Little Psister" organization. Jokers, nats and women were prohibited from joining.

Psi Psi Psi enjoyed a growing membership until 1950 when anti-wild card hysteria caused most aces to hide their powers. In 1954, the entire fraternity was conscripted, abruptly ending the organization.

In 1978, Manfred Sykes, the Gangbuster, died. A charter member of Psi Psi Psi, he left his fortune to the defunct fraternity. Struggling NYU students with ace and deuce powers organized to cash in on the grant, and Psi Psi Psi was rechartered.

The fraternity soon ran into accusations of sexism and "acism." There was a police investigation concerning a dangerous super-powered hazing ritual, and several fraternity brothers were suspended. The Tri-Psis were in danger of collapse, threatened by unhappy Little Psisters and their lawyers. Worse, the membership was now too low to qualify for the Sykes grant.

Extreme measures were called for. The Tri-Psis offered the Little Psisters full membership, then extended the definition of ace to include anyone who had gotten anything useful out of the wild card deck. Prehensile tails, fangs and extra heads were all deemed "useful" and many jokers joined. Further chapters were founded at major U.S. colleges and universities.

The Tri-Psis are now a wild card pride organization, and most members are joker-deuces. The U.S. Justice Department recruits heavily from the fraternity, and Psi Psi Psi has a strong ROTC faction. A scholarship program exists for wild card students.

The Tri-Psis have a reputation for doing anything to help a fraternity brother or sister, including stationing networks of telepaths and precogs in the middle of exams. On the other hand, the fraternity encourages members to take pride in their wild card heritage, and the Tri-Psi all-wild-card volleyball tournaments offer athletic opportunities for students usually excluded from college sports.

The Tri-Psi insignia is three interlocked Psis, and the fraternity symbol is a red, yellow and blue chimera. The official motto is "Unity Through Diversity." The unofficial motto is "Born to be Wild." A cleaner verse of the Psi Psi Psi fight song goes like this:

"We're the Tri-Psis! You won't believe your eyes! Our volleyballs can knock down walls! Just look at the Psis!"

The Cathedral of Cuzco

Begun in 1560 on the bases of Inca Viracocha's palace, the cathedral is the spiritual heart of Cuzco's Catholic community. It is a museum of Cuzcan school paintings and the altar is plated with silver. The sacred monstrance is solid gold, adorned with nearly 1,000 different jewels.

A popular stop for tourists, the Cathedral is still very much in use. Jokers fill the pews during mass, no doubt due to the documentable miracle of Saint Jude appearing and curing no less than 50 jokers during the Cuzco outbreak of 1963. St. Jude, or the ace impersonating him, has not appeared since, though it is popularly believed that if one lights a candle and prays, St. Jude may cure his afflictions. Only two cases of jokers becoming nats and one of a joker becoming an ace have since been attributed to this, though these odds are enough for many hopefuls.

The present Archbishop of Cuzco, Sergio Rolando Fernandez, is a very public figure, strongly opposed to the rites at Machu Picchu, nominal historical recreations or no. This is not for religious reasons, but because alternative beliefs hurt his pocketbook. Much like the earlier Popes, His Grace is more concerned with fleecing his flocks than shepherding them. He encourages poor jokers, hoping to be cured, to give till it hurts. Many Cuzco jokers, both Ladino and Indian, have died in poverty from this practice, and he has known connections to the drug trade. Only his power and marginal support of certain charities have allowed him to keep his position.

Characters who go to evening mass will see Curari (p. 35) praying for guidance. Telepaths who tune in at this time will discover that the joker-ace plans to wreck the cocaine trade, though he is concerned at the number of innocents who will die. On the surface layers of his mind, the only other thing will be a great amount of Catholic theology.

In a completely unprecedented move by the forces of academia, Professor Harold Ingersol, who had been conducting research at the time of the occurrence, unofficially mobilized the resources of the National Geographic Society, fortifying Machu Picchu with both foreign and native aces to prevent looting by military and anti-military forces. The National Geographic Society declared Dr. Ingersol to be acting under his own directives, despite the involvement of many NGS members.

Under pressure from the United Nations, the military dictatorship collapsed. Fernando Beluande Terry was elected President, declaring Machu Picchu to be the greatest of national treasures. In a settlement with Dr. Ingersol's Machu Picchu Research Society, President Beluande agreed to leave the citadel as a living history museum to be jointly administrated by the Peruvian government and the National Geographic Society.



Beluande's first term ended suddenly in October, 1968, when he was deposed by General Juan Velasco Alvarado, the Army Chief of Staff. Velasco's government nationalized many institutions, including the press, as well as introducing many reforms. The reforms were not successful, and an internal military coup deposed Velasco.

Elections were held in 1978 and APRA gained power. Dr. Haya de la Torre was elected President of the assembly. Major reforms were instituted, including universal adult suffrage, for nat and joker alike. Haya de la Torre died in 1980, and ex-President Beluande, of the conservative *Acción Popular* (AP), won the election.

Beluande's second term was fraught with difficulties, including economic recession, debt, terrorism, the drug trade, floods and a border war with Ecuador. Political shifts began, the most important of which was the appearance of the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path), a revolutionary guerrilla movement with Maoist tendencies. The *Sendero Luminoso* has been increasingly active in the Ayacucho region and Lima itself.

New elections were held in 1985, and Alan Garcia Perez, the APRA candidate, won the presidency. He instituted a purge of the military forces for human

rights violations. Two years later, the Perez government was accused of similar crimes by Amnesty International. Attacks by the *Sendero Luminoso* and other revolutionary groups increased.

In 1987, there was widespread criticism of the government raids on three Lima universities, in search of suspected terrorists. The government's attempts to investigate Machu Picchu by use of military force were firmly repulsed by resident aces. President Perez's call for the National Geographic Society to vacate the living history museum was met by protest from both the Peruvian and world academic community, and there is presently a detente between the Peruvian government and the residents of Machu Picchu.

Real Peru Since World War II

The course of Peruvian history in the real world has been the same as that of the wild card, with the exception of the Cuzco outbreak and the successive incidents at Machu Picchu. In July, 1987, President Perez announced plans to nationalize the banks of Peru, which was accomplished by October, alienating Peru's international creditors.

July 17, 1991: The Adventure Begins

Agents are sent to Cuzco, Peru. Intelligence has indicated that the threat towards the Peruvian government is presently the most serious. Titania will join the group on the second day as an unaffiliated British tourist. If her cover is penetrated, the main group will still be safe. Operatives are to infiltrate the locale Twisted Fist affiliate, *la Alianza de Machu Picchu*, and discover the exact plot, subverting it if possible.

Plane tickets, visas and \$2,000 in travelers' checks are provided to agents before departure. Publicly known characters, such as Yellowman, are using their own names and nicknames, though less well-known wild carders may travel under aliases if they choose. Robbie "Decathlon" Hampton is now Bob "Sport" Hartford. The group cover is simple and effective: American agents take the roles of Psi Psi Psi fraternity members on vacation from college (see sidebar, p. 21). British operatives take similar covers, linking with their American counterparts when they change planes in Mexico City for the trip to Lima. This flight, and the short hop by Aeroperu from Lima to Cuzco, gives characters a chance to meet each other. Americans and British must all wear some version of the Psi Psi Psi fraternity emblem. So as not to blow their covers, the prearranged codeword is to alternate the lines of the sample verse from the Psi Psi Psi fight song — see p. 21.

During the flight, Yellowman pops in and out of the plane, using Decathlon as a point of reference and making a general nuisance of himself. He doesn't have a ticket and drives the flight stewards and stewardesses nuts. GMs wishing to cause additional mischief may place a real Tri-Psi on the plane and have the agents babble code words at the college student, who gives the wrong verse to the fight song. This should tip the characters of that this Tri-Psi is not an agent. However, as running comic relief, agents may be hounded by their erstwhile fraternity brother or sister as they try to spy.

Arrival in Cuzco, July 17-18, 1991

The agents get in at 9 p.m. and probably want to get some sleep. Two day accommodations have been arranged for the Hotel Picoaga, a moderately-priced family establishment. They have the next day to play tourists as they familiarize themselves with the city.

Machu Picchu

Revealed to the world by Professor Hiram Bingham of Yale University in 1911, Machu Picchu was the citadel and center of the ancient Incan empire. On January 17, 1963, an unknown ace rebuilt the ruins to their former splendor.

Residence was immediately taken up by refugees from the violence of the Cuzco wild card outbreak. Professor Harold Ingersol then organized the local aces as well as foreign wild cards to protect Machu Picchu from looting by military forces.

The curatorship of the newly restored Machu Picchu was eventually given over to a joint commission of the National Geographic Society and the Commission on Peruvian Antiquities. The most valuable pieces were removed to museums, replaced with gilt replicas. The new residents of Machu Picchu were allowed to stay, the citadel becoming a living history museum and a thriving pre-Columbian city.

Sparks flew between Machu Picchu and the Cathedral of Cuzco, the Archbishop declaring that the inhabitants were practicing pagan rites. They were, but only in the name of anthropological research declared Dr. Ingersol. As Machu Picchu was a major tourist attraction and a source of income for many merchants in Cuzco, the Bishop was hushed. There were skirmishes between aces of both traditions.

Machu Picchu has an agricultural and an urban sector, divided by a dry ditch which is part of a geological fault. The agricultural sector is terraced, with growing areas for maize, potatoes and other staples. There is a lookout post, a cemetery and an altar sacred to the Incan earth mother, Pachamama, and her daughters, the goddesses of various crops. Propitiary rites are conducted with regularity in a manner similar to the Temple of the Living Gods in Egypt.

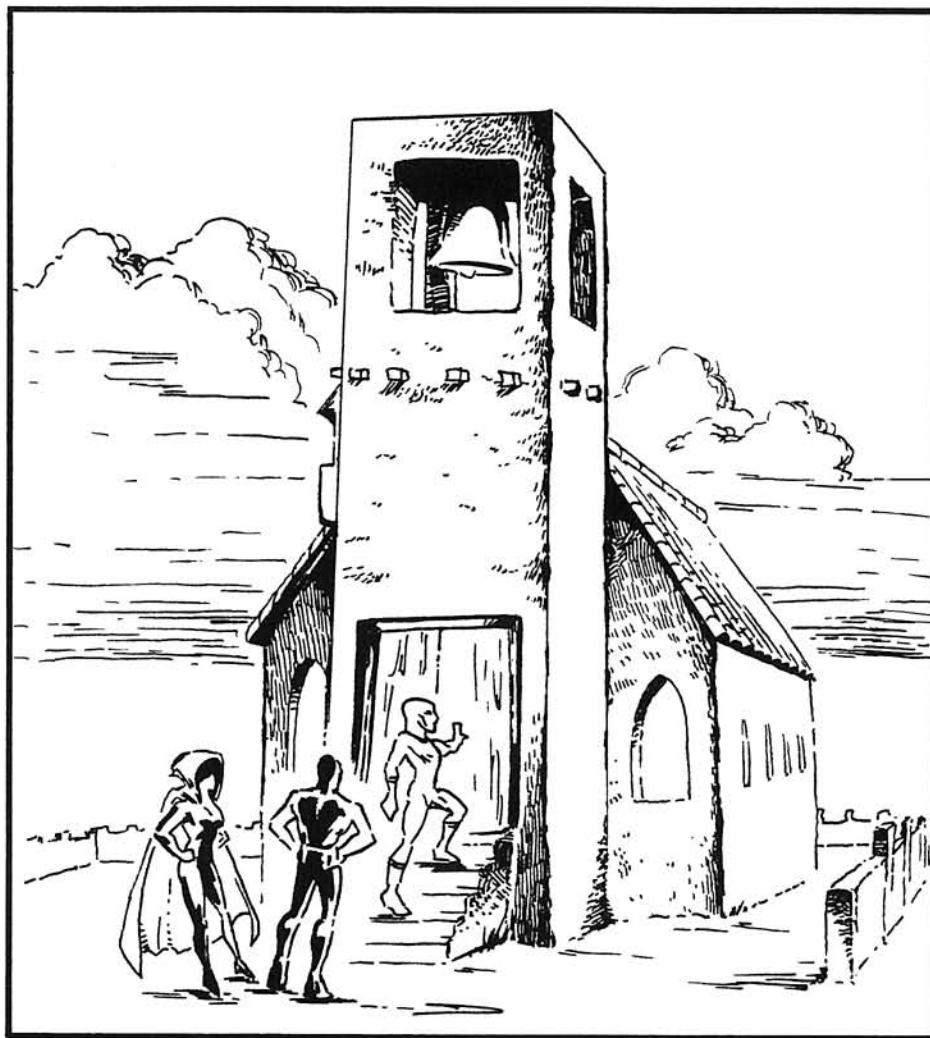
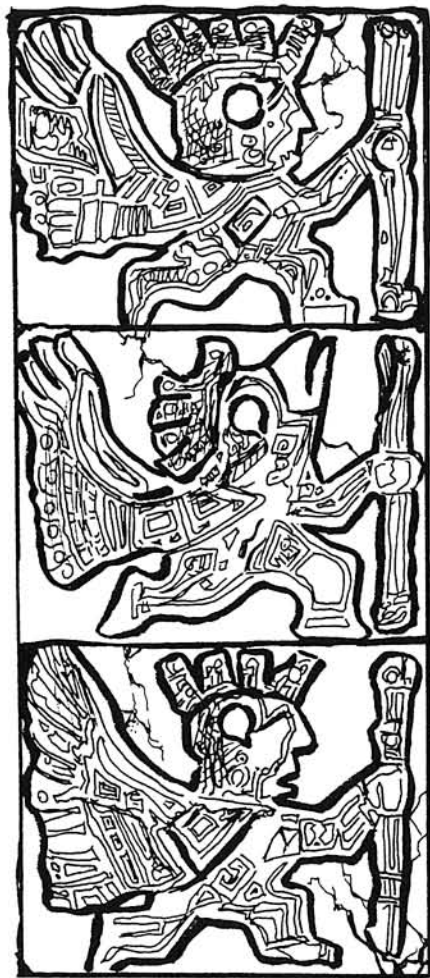
The urban sector is U-shaped, subdivided into the religious sector which contains the Intihuatana, the Sacred Plaza, on which the Temple of the Three Windows, the Main Temple and the Priest's House are set. Across from them is Huaynapicchu (small mountain). A steep path leads to the Temple of the moon goddess, Coya. Machu Picchu is closed to all but researchers and residents at sunset. It has a large population of jokers and a few aces. Except for a few anthropologists, Ladinos and Europeans are almost totally absent.

Continued on next page . . .

Machu Picchu (Continued)

Access to Machu Picchu may be made either by way of the traditional "Inca Walk," a 20-mile hike from Cuzco, or on a modern railway train that travels from San Pedro Station in Cuzco to the Puente Ruinas Station at Machu Picchu. Minibuses then ferry tourists 3½ miles to the tourist hotel. Alternately, tourists may stay at the thriving modern town of Agua Caliente, 20 minutes' walk from the Puente Ruinas station. Sulfur-bearing hot springs offer interest to both the jet set and jokers, the waters reputed to have healing properties (though only one or two instances have been documented). There are several modern hotels, and a youth hostel for those of more modest means. Agua Caliente has a very large joker population, taking the overspill from Machu Picchu.

Beneath the facade of historical recreations for tourists, many real rites are conducted at Machu Picchu, mostly sacrifices of maize and wool to the hermaphroditic high god Viracocha and lesser Inca gods and goddesses. The aclas, or virgin priestesses, maintain a convent, barred to anthropologists and tourists.



Cuzco, sacred city and capital of the Tahuantinsuyo Empire, was founded around the 11th or 12th centuries. Legend has it that the Inca Manco Capac and his sister Mama Ocllo rose from the sacred waters of lake Titicaca and were given a rod of gold by Viracocha, their father/mother and high god of the Incas. The Rod of Gold led them to Cuzco. The principal attractions of the city are as follows:

Plaza de Armas (Main Square)

This area is called Huancaypata in the local tongue. Legend has it that this square was traced by Inca Manco Capac as the symbolic center of the Empire, and therefore the most likely resting place of the Rod of Gold which was supposedly thrust into the ground. The Plaza is busy with tourists, vendors and pickpockets. There are a fair number of jokers as well, most of them beggars. One in 12 is a member of the Machu Picchu Alliance, though not important in the organization.

At sunset, the Plaza is the site of a large dance festival, open to the public. Dancers first perform the *Camiles* — wearing espadrilles, vicuna ponchos, straw hats with ribbons and double knapsacks filled with herbs and home-made medicines, the dancers mimic witch-doctors at work. Several attempt to sell joker characters herbal cures for the wild card. Others sell fresh coca leaves and cocaine, \$50 an ounce. The *Camiles* is followed by the *Sijilla*, the dance of the doctors and lawyers, a Spanish-influenced dance. The festival is enjoyable, but reveals little of immediate interest.

The Churches

Besides the Cathedral of Cuzco (see sidebar, p. 22), there are nine other beautiful and historical churches in Cuzco. The only one of espionage interest is the Santa Catalina Church, built on the Incaic walls of the Acllahuasi, the House of the Virgins of the Sun. The acllas of Machu Picchu use this church as rendezvous point in Cuzco, also addressing prayers to the Sun under the cover of Catholic ritual. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the ace Cocamama (see p. 33) comes to the Santa Catalina while the agents are present. She dresses like the mistress of a drug lord and wears a beautiful solar brooch. Similar, smaller brooches are worn by other women in the church, all acllas. Cocamama confers briefly with the acllas, then leaves. Anyone who makes a hearing roll and knows Quechua discovers that she and Curari will meet the acllas tomorrow at sunset at the Temple of Three Windows in Machu Picchu. Those who can't speak Quechua can only understand "Machu Picchu."

The Colonial Mansions

The Manor House of Inca Garcilaso de la Vega is now the seat of the Regional Historical Museum and the National Culture Institute. Patrons may research the local culture and history. Those with the Research skill and knowledge of Spanish may find information not in the standard tourist brochures, including the violent clashes between the Catholics of Cuzco and the more traditional Incas of Machu Picchu. Visitors with skills in Spanish, Occultism and Research may discover two other interesting facts: Mama Coca, or Cocamama, was both the goddess of the coca plant, the divine plant of the Incas, and an Inca queen named after the goddess. In a book of regional folktales, there is also the story of the Messenger in Black. The Messenger gave a box of plague-bearing moths and butterflies to the Inca Huayna Capac, destroying his empire.

El Palacio del Almirante

This mansion is the seat of the Cuzco Regional Museum. Visitors who take the museum tour and make a Vision roll notice an antique specimen of the solar brooch worn by Cocamama and the acllas of Machu Picchu. Those who have not yet seen either may make a Vision roll when they encounter Cocamama or an acla to notice the brooch and an IQ roll to remember the information from the museum.

Casa de los Marqueses de San Juan de Buena Vista y Rocafuerte

This one-story mansion is built on the bases of the Inca Roca's Palace, located between Jatun-Rumiyoc and Henajes Streets. It is presently the home of Curari and Cocamama, making a show of their wealth. On the evening of the 18th, Curari and Cocamama hold a private garden party. Anyone who makes a Streetwise roll at -2 is told that the joker in the wetsuit is Curari, the new local drug lord, and that the sparkling woman with him is his mistress, the ace Cocamama. The party is for visiting Colombian distributors and is very dangerous to nose around. All counted, there are 20 armed guards, eight Curari's security, and 12 bodyguards of different distributors.

Machu Picchu, July 19, 1991

At 6:30 a.m., operatives go to the San Pedro Station to take the train to Machu Picchu. Titania, playing the part of a British tourist, joins them.

Over breakfast in their private compartment, Titania gives the group their briefing. Intelligence has found very little, except that the linchpin of the whole plot is a joker known only as *el Emisario Negro*, the Messenger in Black. She circulates a photograph of a figure in a full-length professorial gown, his features



A Peruvian Glossary

Aclla: A Virgin (or Bride) of the Sun. A priestess of the modern revival of traditional Incan religion in Machu Picchu.

Ahua Ah Puch: The Quiche Maya Lord of Death.

Cocamama: The Incan goddess of the coca plant. Also the name of an ancient Incan queen and presently a modern ace.

Coya: The Incan moon goddess.

Inca: The sun god of ancient Peru. Also any king of the Inca people. Also the name of the Inca people and empire.

Ixchel: The Mayan cosmic grandmother figure who gave birth to the universe. Related to the Spider Grandmother of Hopi legend.

Ladino: A Central or South American of Spanish as opposed to native descent.

Machu Picchu: An ancient Incan city in the Peruvian Andes, near Cuzco. Miraculously restored by an unknown wild carder in 1963. Now a living history museum and popular tourist attraction.

Machu Picchu Alliance: An Indian/joker revolutionary organization based in the Peruvian Andes. Affiliated with the Twisted Fists.

Pachamama: The Incan Earth mother.

Quiche: The Maya of Guatemala and Central America.

Quechua: A modern Central American Indian language.

Viracocha: The hermaphroditic high God of the Incas. Also an Incan king, and presently the name of a powerful, mysterious Peruvian shaman.

Xibalba: The Hades of the Quiche Maya.



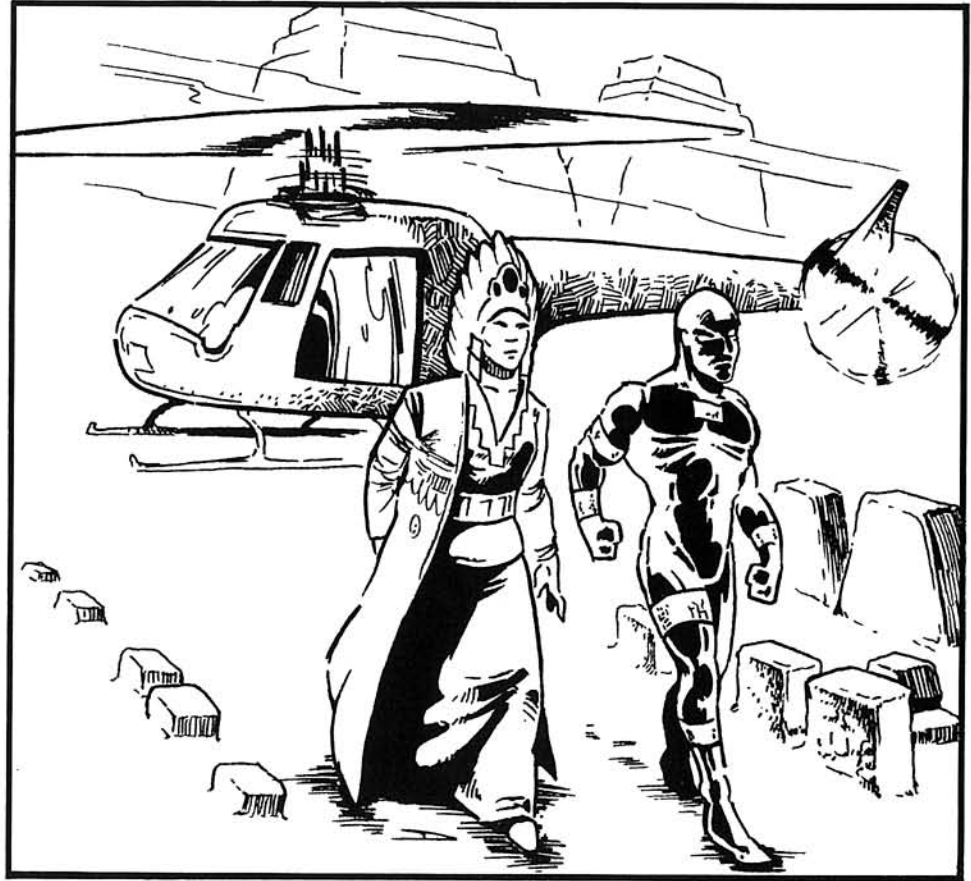
The Peruvian Plot

Curari and Cocamama, with the help of the Messenger in Black, will prepare special shipments of cocaine, poisoned with Curari's venom and chrysalises of the Messenger's disease-bearing butterflies. Once the shipment is divided and sent throughout the world, the poison will take effect, collapsing the cocaine empire and killing many of the corrupt dealers and their servants. The butterflies will also hatch, spreading the wild card. Though many innocents will die, the fear engendered will destroy the present empire, at the same time causing the chaos in the Ladinio world necessary for the Indian revolt.

The Plague Butterflies

Anyone who attempts to identify the Messenger's black butterflies (skill roll Lepidoptery-2 or Entomology-6) discovers that they are a very rare species native to the Amazon, *Vanessa sublimis Montalvo*. A subsequent Research roll at the Cuzco Public Library has the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* reveal a back-issue of *National Geographic*. (The nearest easily accessible source is the University of Lima, though the private library of Machu Picchu also has a copy.)

The article, pictures by Colin Fitzmaurice (aka the ace Telephoto — see p. 92), covers the discoveries of celebrated lepidopterist Dr. Ibrahim Montalvo of Princeton. The article gives a short biography of the good doctor (less the Twisted Fist affiliation — see p. 38). The photographs are a roll call of all the deadly moths and butterflies used by the Messenger in Black.



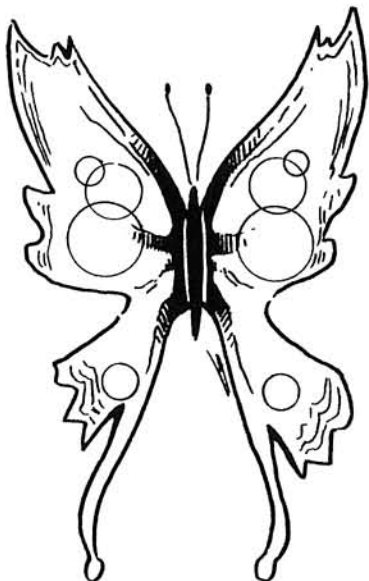
obsured by a gauze butterfly mask. His powers, if any, are unknown, but he has been seen visiting Esteban Akabal, political advisor to the Hero Twins. Titania has no further information. Anyone with an academic background who makes an IQ roll remembers that hood colors of professorial gowns are specific to schools and departments. An academic heraldry roll (Hobby: Academia-5, Heraldry-5 or Research-4 with access to a university library) reveals the colors are specific to the Princeton biology department.

Estelle, the tour guide for Machu Picchu, is a female joker who looks like an attractive South American harpy. Her upper body is the head, arms and breasts of an Incan woman while her lower body has the wings, feet and tail of a giant red and green macaw. Her hair is red feathers, and she alternately gestures with her arms and wings as visitors tour the city (see sidebar, p. 23).

The tour is interesting and educational, but nothing is obviously amiss. The high point of the afternoon is a ritual propitiation of the Moon Goddess, Coya, asking for rain. A few of the women of Machu Picchu wear solar brooches. At the picnic grounds on the edge of the terraced fields, a late lunch is served: *Pepian de Cuy*, guinea pig chunks fried with corn meal and seasoned peanuts, served with boiled potatoes and rice. While there, Titania's fairies become very upset about the presence of some green butterflies. Cobweb and Mustardseed squeak, "Hist away! Get ye pretty flythings hence! Come not near our fairy queen!" The fairies can't say why the butterflies bother them, just that they do.

A gift shop provides maps and pictorial histories of Machu Picchu and the usual tourist niceties. There are museum quality reproductions of ancient Inca pieces for sale at near artifact prices.

Machu Picchu is closed to the public at 5 p.m. On their way out, visitors who make Vision rolls notice the Messenger in Black entering. Unless confronted, he disappears into the city. If confronted, he attempts to brush off the questioner. Empaths sense anxiety if they tune in, while telepaths immediately get images of



black butterflies, Curari and large bags of cocaine. Decathlon has changed into an attenuated Peruvian native with a grossly enlarged chest cavity to deal with the thin air. He, and whoever else thinks it possible, slip away from the tour at the end of the day, going into Machu Picchu. Titania turns invisible once outside the gates and sneaks back in. She assigns a fairy to accompany each spy invisibly, unless there is a telepath to act as com-link. Those who do not stay have reservations at the youth hostel in Agua Caliente.

Docents search the streets near the gate for the half hour after closing, looking for stragglers. Any non-residents found are firmly but politely escorted to the gates. Decathlon looks like a native, and Titania and her fairies are invisible. Yellowman leaves, but teleports back to Decathlon half an hour later.

La Alianza de Machu Picchu

Street sweepers are out with brooms, and lanterns are lit throughout Machu Picchu as sunset approaches. A helicopter flies in, landing in the Sacred Plaza. Curari and Cocamama emerge and proceed to the Temple of the Three Windows. Crates are then unloaded from the helicopter. The crates contain machine guns and automatic weapons and are being taken to individual homes in the city. Anyone who infiltrates the Temple finds a political meeting, filled with Indians and jokers. The acllas of Machu Picchu sit to one side, all wearing solar brooches.

The meeting is conducted in Quechua, the native language. Anyone who understands Quechua easily finds that the Indians are planning an armed revolt. Why a joker drug lord would be involved is less apparent, though the applause given after Curari's speech shows him to be well-liked. He is the financial and military backer of the revolutionary forces and gives a dry lecture on regional politics. The government forces are the most immediate problem, Curari stresses, though in the long run the *Sendero Luminoso* will present the greater threat. He uses a map and pointer, so the gist is easy to understand.

Cocamama then gives a sermon, two acllas standing by her side. The day will come when Peru will again worship the Sun Inca and the Moon Coya, etc. To end the ceremony, the acllas sing, and members of the audience come forward. The acllas give them each a sip of water and a bite of cornbread. Cocamama then kisses them on the forehead. This gives a very small, therapeutic dose of cocaine (see character description, p. 33). Decathlon goes forward so as to not blow his cover, but will not be negatively affected by the drug.

The Messenger in Black takes the podium last and officially dissolves the meeting. The conspirators go back to their homes, while Cocamama, Curari and the Messenger fly back to Cuzco. If none of the PCs has the means to tail the helicopter, Titania will send her fairy, Cowslip, after it invisibly.

Night of Butterflies and Spiders

On return to Agua Caliente that evening — unless a PC has tailed the Messenger in Black back to Cuzco — Titania retires to her hotel while the agents go to the youth hostel. Cowslip is not back from her errand yet.

Everyone is wakened in the middle of the night by frantic fairies: Titania is under attack. When everyone gets to her hotel room, they find her on the floor in the grip of a high fever. Black butterflies litter the floor, the wings pulled off, and her fairies fly about chasing down the remaining 20. Those who make a Vision-4 roll notice that Yellowman frantically avoids contact with the butterflies, blinking away from them. (If anyone confronts him on this later, he will attempt to Fast-Talk, pointing out that Titania's fairies were alarmed by butterflies earlier, and he trusts their instincts — especially when she's passed out and

The Spider Dreams

Agents who have brought themselves to the attention of the conspirators, or who receive the Hero Twins blessing at the ceremony, will have their astral selves drawn into the Dreamtime while they sleep.

Dreams will be muddled — a confused mix of Catholic theology and Incaic myth. They begin in the Cathedral of Cuzco, leading down through the shadows, and there are spiders and spider webs everywhere, covering the faces of the saints. A sense of dread leads the dreamers through the jungle, with yet more spiders everywhere, until they come to Machu Picchu.

The city is deserted, or so it seems — a spider stalks the dreamer. This is a sending of the Murga-muggai, designed specifically with the character's weaknesses in mind. GMs should feel free to design something dangerous and deadly, but escapable.

Anyone who makes a Running roll can escape the spider, waking from the nightmare covered with sweat. Dreamers who battle the spider and win — which they should — awake, fatigued, though all wounds suffered in the dream world will be only half damage. Agents killed in the dream world, however, are dead.

Those who win the battle find a small grass charm in their beds. Though crushed, it is still recognizable as a spider. An Art History or Anthropology skill roll at -2 reveals the charm as Australian aboriginal. Likewise, those with the Botany skill and access to a library identify the grasses as native to the Australian outback. A subsequent Occultism roll at -4 or Anthropology at -8 shows them as herbs used in aboriginal black sorcery.

If anyone loses to the dream spider (a dramatic way to remove a player who has to quit the game), his body will be found unmarked, but an autopsy will reveal that all internal organs have been replaced with bundles of grass. (Occultism or Anthropology as above, to discover it to be the work of a *galka* — see p. 98.)

If GMs wish further interactions with the Hero Twins after they return to Guatemala, the dream world is an excellent place for this to occur. Hunapu knows little of his meeting with "Ixchel," only describing a spider who became an old, dark-skinned crone (an aged aboriginal woman, to those who make their Anthropology rolls). He does not question the reality what has happened, or that Ixchel may be anything other than a goddess.

The Murga-muggai has her spies, but at this point in adventure is still quite distant, only making herself known to Hunapu, the more easily manipulated of the Hero Twins. Like a trapdoor spider, she tends her tunnels and windows, but does not venture far from her lair.

there are butterflies everywhere.) Anyone who comes in direct physical contact with one of the butterflies must roll vs. HT or succumb to malaria (high fever for three weeks, though survivable with proper treatment). The butterflies may be evaded at Dodge-2. They have only 1 hit point each.

After the last butterfly is disposed of, Cowslip reports that she tailed the Messenger in Black to the Hotel Savoy in Cuzco, though was too exhausted to explore much further. The butterflies must have followed her in return. Titania must be taken to the hospital, and will be sent back to England, effectively putting her and the fairies out of the adventure.

Agents present while the butterflies are still alive will be spied on by butterflies and moths in the next two days or may experience the *Spider Dreams* (see sidebar, p. 27). Those who talk about the mission or otherwise reveal themselves are targeted for assassination, either directly by the Messenger's red or black butterflies or indirectly by Curari's hired thugs using blowguns.

Dr. Montalvo's Hotel Room

If the agents break into Dr. Montalvo's room while he is in, they find him asleep on his bed (really in far telepathic rapport with a distant set of butterflies). He wakes if touched or if there are any loud sounds, but otherwise remains in trance for the next half hour.

If Dr. Montalvo is out (or if the agents make Stealth rolls at +6) they may go through his things, finding numerous killing jars, note pads, journals and other props of lepidoptery, but *no butterfly nets*, indicating that he must have a different, more subtle way of capturing them. One of the journals is written in Latin. Anyone who makes a Latin skill roll finds it to be a meticulous account of the daily movements and conversations of numerous Peruvian and Guatemalan government officials. Hidden in the binding is a numbered list of important politicians, the Archbishop of Cuzco, and other notables, and a bizarre stack of Tarot trump cards, each depicting a man melting, dying, exploding, etc. Numbers matching the list have been marked on the backs of the cards in black felt pen.

Anyone who makes an Art History roll (Art or History at -6, or Anthropology at -10) recognizes the black and white arabesques and double-helices on the back of the deck as Islamic with Egyptian influences. The list is headed with the words "despues de embarque" (Spanish: "after shipment"). These are Dr. Montalvo's assassination targets once the revolution begins. The cards are exact depictions of the black queens they will draw if exposed to *el Emisario Negro's* black butterflies, as predicted by the Twisted Fist ace Taroque (see p. 58).

In the back of the closet is a box filled with thousands of black pellets resembling bird droppings. A careful look reveals them to be butterfly chrysalises. These are intended for the plague shipment.

July 20-22, 1991

The stage has now been set. Curari and Cocamama go about their usual daily routines (drug deals, church, more drug deals, dinner at an elegant restaurant, even more drug deals) while the acllas and their fellow conspirators prepare Machu Picchu for the coming revolution.

Agents may contact the acllas or other conspirators during the first two days. Any joker who starts talking about the troubles of jokers and Indians and makes a successful Fast-Talk roll will be welcomed into the conspiracy. They can bring ace and nat friends in with them on Fast-Talk-2.



All the party has discovered so far is a revolution in the making, though nothing overt so far as wild card outbreaks or the involvement of the Twisted Fists. Word has been sent back to Washington and London, and intelligence says the group is to remain on the case.

If anyone returns to Cuzco and talks to Curari, revealing himself or herself as a conspirator, the joker is friendly and affable, but he becomes suspicious of those who pry too far. Cocamama, on the other hand, doesn't like to talk shop while enjoying herself in town, and gives everyone the brushoff.

The Messenger in Black is nowhere to be found, but anyone who goes to the Hotel Savoy to investigate Cowslip's lead (or a lead discovered by the agents themselves) finds a Dr. Ibrahim Montalvo listed in the guest register. Any time the agents are there, there is a 1 in 3 chance that Dr. Montalvo is in the bar, reading a butterfly monograph. The other two-thirds of the time he is either out and about, or in his room, in trance, spying by means of his butterflies.

Dr. Montalvo is quite approachable (in the bar), but will only make light, touristy conversation, or talk about butterflies. On the ironic chance that the agents have kept one of the black butterflies, but not yet identified it themselves, then ask Dr. Montalvo to identify it, he will give them a stern talking to on how not to gather specimens (i.e., squashing them) and says he will get back to them.

If this happens, telepaths may pick up that Dr. Montalvo has figured out they are government agents and desperately wants to lock himself up someplace alone so he may either send pyrotic assassin butterflies after them or white moths to wipe the memory of the encounter from their minds. If the agents do not do something to stop him at that time, later in the day they will have to deal either with the red butterflies or the white moths. (If the agents decide to break into Dr. Montalvo's room, see the sidebar on p. 28.)



The Cocaine Plot

In the event that the agents uncover the plot to collapse the present cocaine cartel and foment a revolution in Peru, there are several possible outcomes. The most obvious is that the agents decide to stop it, in which case the adventure plot proceeds as scheduled.

But what if the agents decide the cocaine cartel is evil enough that it's worth a few wild card outbreaks and poisoned junkies to collapse it? In this case, they have two choices, the first of which is to simply botch their assignment and possibly become double-agents or turncoats (see sidebar, p. 30). However, anyone who makes a Politics or Economics skill roll will realize that the international cocaine trade is based on firm economic principles, and while Curari's plot certainly has a chance of collapsing the *current* empire, a new cartel will surely arise in its place in the next few months.

In the case where the agents decide to contact their controls, then the plotting becomes sticky. The British government and the Mace would want the plan stopped. The United States Justice Department, however, might (depending on the amount of conspiracy and paranoia the GM wishes in the campaign) consider looking the other way in order to destroy the drug trade, then gain control of the new empire that would arise. Agents would be instructed that, if their role in the conspiracy is uncovered, the Justice Department will deny any knowledge of their actions, and declare them all to be Twisted Fist operatives and international terrorists. If, however, they succeed, they will secretly receive U.S. backing, becoming U.S. envoys to Curari's new cartel.

The collapse of the Peruvian government, or the secession of Cuzco, is something both British and U.S. governments would approach leerily, but might welcome if a strong anti-communist stance were taken by the new government, as well as a policy of denationalization of the international banks.

Evening July 22, 1991: The Guest Speaker

As on the 19th, there is a meeting at the Temple of the Three Windows in Machu Picchu. There are guards at the doors, each of whom obviously has a VIP list. If the agents are now friends with the acllas, they are vouched for. Otherwise they are not admitted.

Esteban Akabal is there, accompanied by the Hero Twins (see pp. 36-38 and 39-40), recognized on a successful Politics roll. Akabal speaks to the gathering for three hours, in Spanish, on the need for forming an independent Indian-joker homeland in South America. Anyone who isn't convinced at the beginning of his speech should be by the end, depending on their political convictions and resistance to Mindwipe.

Curari and Cocamama then come to the podium, speaking about the aid they will give the revolution. The plan will be set in motion tomorrow, and the Machu



Turncoats and Double-Agents

Besides Yellowman, there may be one or two members of the Twisted Fists in the party. Their role is to sabotage the mission, wasting the other agents time as much as possible without actually killing them. After all, if the green agents are killed, the Justice Department and the Mace will doubtless send another crew of more competent, more secret agents.

Twisted Fist operatives do not know the full plot, or even much of it. After all, they could be a liability if they were discovered and interrogated. On the other hand, they may try to convert other members of the group to the Twisted Fist cause.

If the Twisted Fist operatives can subdue or drug the other members of the party, they could be held until Esteban Akabal (see power description, p. 32) could convert the entire group. In this case — or if all the agents fall under Akabal's spell at the political meeting — the tenor of the campaign changes drastically, the agents being Twisted Fist double-agents specifically trying to botch their assignments, while at the same time presenting a good enough show to be retained by their governments.

The fly in the Twisted Fist plot is Decathlon, who is desperately patriotic, impossible to drug, club or restrain, and resistant to mind-control. If the rest of the group becomes committed to the Twisted Fist cause, he will prove dangerous, in which case he would have to be killed, kept in the dark or used as a scapegoat if the plot goes sour. Other agents, depending on their design, may also prove immune to subversion.



Picchu Alliance must be ready to move in the next two days. During the entire speech, the Messenger in Black sits quietly to one side.

After Akabal's speech, Hunapu comes forward, telling the congregation of his dream where he journeyed to Xibalba and met a spider, which revealed herself to be Ixchel, the grandmother of the universe. Ixchel told him he and his brother must help the jokers of Peru break free and create an independent homeland like they had made in Guatemala. Cocamama then joins with the Hero Twins, bestowing a blessing on the jokers and Indians: their gods are with them, incarnate in the forms of aces.

After the meeting, the Messenger, Curari and Cocamama get into the helicopter and fly off in the direction of Cuzco. Akabal and the Hero Twins stay, conducting a question and answer session. The helicopter returns an hour and a half later and picks them up, smuggling them north to Guatemala.

Neither Decathlon nor Yellowman speaks Spanish. If no one has understood anything of what has happened, the party is at a severe disadvantage. If anyone mind-reads or interrogates a conspirator, however, they find the same information given during the speech. The precise plan of Cocamama, Curari and the Messenger is not known to any outside their immediate circle, Akabal, and the Hero Twins. These six, however, are a storehouse of information to the invading telepath.

Cuzco, July 23, 1991

Unless the agents have some means to transport themselves to Cuzco, they must wait to take the train the next morning, arriving in the city at 10:30. A successful Streetwise roll informs the group that tonight there will be an even larger party at the *Casa de los Marqueses de San Juan de Buena Vista y Rocafuerte*, Curari and Cocamama hosting even more drug dealers from Colombia and Peru. Also invited are the mayor and the Archbishop. If anyone has befriended Curari or Cocamama, he will receive an invitation, but getting one any other way is impossible. Streetwise at -6 reveals that major drug transactions have gone on at each party in the past week, and the largest and final transaction will be done tonight. The police have been bribed not to get involved.

During the day, Cocamama, Curari and the Messenger in Black (again dressed as Dr. Ibrahim Montalvo) are in the basement of the house, turning flour into cocaine and lacing certain bags with Curari's poison or the chrysalises of Dr. Montalvo's black butterflies. At around four, they go upstairs and clean up, preparing to meet their guests. The house has eight guards, each armed with a Luger. They are playing cards and chatting with the cooks. No one expects trouble.

The party starts at 6:00, with most guests arriving at 7:00. It is a very high-class, black-tie affair. Curari looks somewhere between ridiculous and handsome, wearing a white tux over his wetsuit. Cocamama has a white dress that looks like it came from Cher's old wardrobe. Unless the agents interfere, the evening proceeds smoothly, deals are cut, and Curari and Cocamama are \$500 million richer.

July 23-30, 1991

If the shipment goes out, the plot has succeeded. Two days later there are reports from Cartagena, Havana, Miami and Los Angeles of massive numbers of cocaine-related deaths, possibly due to overdose (actually due to Curari's poison). The next two days, August 3rd and 4th, there are small, localized outbreaks of wild card in all major U.S., European and South American cities, the drug lords' distribution network and the Messenger in Black's spore-bearing

butterflies having done their work. The Twisted Fists claim responsibility and the cocaine empire temporarily collapses from world-wide panic.

The Archbishop of Cuzco draws the black queen, as do many members of the Peruvian government. At this time, the Indians and jokers of Machu Picchu mobilize, taking over the province of Cuzco. Apprehending or killing Curari or Cocamama does not stop the collapse of the drug cartel, though it will put a serious crimp in the Cuzco revolution. The Messenger in Black, however, is a much more serious prize — the direct agent of the Twisted Fists — and if not stopped, he sends butterflies bearing ordinary diseases, such as the bubonic plague and anthrax, against the Peruvian army. If the Messenger is not available, the Hero Twins aid the Incan crusade. Within a week of battles and politics, the Machu Picchu Alliance conquers most of southern Peru.

Final Outcome

If the agents discover and derail the entire plot, they are pulled out, commended, and sent on to the next adventure. If they discover the plot after the shipment goes out, but before the revolt, international narcotics officers contain most of the damage, though there is as much (if not more) wild card hysteria. The Peruvian revolt still goes as planned, but limits itself to the province of Cuzco.

If the investigators fail, and have not (at least publicly) changed allegiance to the Twisted Fists, their governments pull them out. It is not the place of individual agents to fight against armed revolts.

The Twisted Fists tell the press that they have made good their threat of more wild card outbreaks, and publicly announce their next target — South Africa, which is presently in the middle of a heated Parliamentary session regarding jokers' rights, or lack of same. The agents are sent to their next mission.



The Murga-Muggai's Manipulations

Even at this early point in the adventure, the Murga-muggai has her manipulative hands in the works. It will benefit her plot greatly if Montalvo succeeds in tainting the cocaine shipments with the wild card virus. She has worked everything in the Peruvian segment to her advantage, yet her connections are vague and distant enough that no one could possibly deduce that she was behind it.

The core of her control is her appearing to Hunapu in his dreams, taking the form of Ixchel, the spider goddess of the Maya. His encounters with the Mayan gods in Xibalba have made him trusting and gullible in this respect, and she has used his trust to manipulate him. Hunapu, in turn, has confided in his spiritual brother, Xbalanque, who believes him. Together they have recruited Esteban Akabal (who owes his life to Xbalanque).

With Akabal's mind-controlling powers, the Peruvian plot is sure to succeed. Not only will the cocaine shipment cause wild card outbreaks in the U.S. and around the world, but the revolution will, in its limited way, reduce the number of Caucasians in the world — something the aborigine crone is fanatic about.

Akabal, Esteban

Official Character

Created by Leanne C. Harper

Born: July 7, 1954, Guatemalan Highlands

Appearance: Estaban Akabal is a Mayan Indian, tall and handsome (5' 11", 170 lbs.) He has a narrow, refined face and wears glasses. His clothes are very western, with some small touches to emphasize his pride in his Indian ancestry.

Wild Card Ability: Akabal is intensely charismatic and has the power to convert others to his beliefs over time.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 5

DX 11 (10 points) **HT** 11 (10 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Advantages

Charisma +4 (20 points)

Empathy (15 points)

Handsome (15 points)

Reputation: +4 to Indians as revolutionary leader, -4 to Ladinos as same (0 points)

Strong Will +3 (12 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Sight (-10 points)

Fanaticism: Socialism (-15 points)

Intolerance: Europeans (-10 points)

Secret: Akabal is an ace (-30 points)

Social Stigma: Indian (-10 points)

Psionics

Telepathy Power 7 (Only when speaking -30%, Area effect +40%, 39 points)

Mindwipe-20 (Special effect: Affects beliefs, not memories. To completely replace one belief with another, the victim must listen to Akabal for five hours. Someone who is already a partial believer takes only half as long. 14 points)

Suggest-20 (14 points)

Telereceive-20 (14 points)

Telesend-20 (14 points)

Skills

Administration-13 (½ point), Area Knowledge (Central America)-15 (1 point), Area Knowledge (World)-15 (1 point), Bard-14 (½ point), Diplomacy-14 (2 points), English-15 (2 points), Mayan (Native Tongue), Politics-18 (8 points), Psychology-15 (4 points), Savoir-Faire-17 (4 points), Spanish-17 (6 points), Teaching-16 (4 points)

Quirks

Easily angered by anything capitalistic or Western

Loads his speech with socialist catch-phrases

Makes political statements at the drop of a hat

Not as interested in the past as he is in his people's future

Very neat dresser

Esteban Akabal was the teacher for a small Highland village, though he was also the leader of the resistance to the government's program of Indian genocide and author-



itarian control. Xbalanque (see p. 39) saved Akabal from a government execution squad.

Since that time, Akabal has manipulated the Hero Twins into leading the revolution. His dream is of a socialist country open to any American Indian or indigenous person — an Israel for Native Americans. He knows how to use the media to gain attention and sympathy for his cause and how vital that is to its success. Akabal believes that he can control the Hero Twins and use them to create the Indian paradise.

He doesn't believe the brothers' claims to speech with the gods. However, since it favorably affects the Indians who follow them, he is willing to go along with it. For him, this is a purely political struggle and any advantage must be taken.

He is Puppetman's opposite number and equal in political savvy. Both use politics to further their own causes. Akabal plans to be less than reticent in allowing the rule of the Indian homeland to be thrust upon him — but only

because he believes that he is the only person who can successfully lead it. For public relations reasons (and because he thinks it is the behavior of the mad), Akabal tries to stop the blood sacrifices of the Hero Twins.

Akabal has recently visited Peru, an area ripe for a second Indian-joker revolt. He has planted the seeds necessary for a successful overthrow and lends his political advice. As the situation in Guatemala is relatively stable (politically speaking), Akabal will send the Hero Twins to aid in the Peruvian revolt, mostly as a symbol, having Hunapu (see p. 36) teleport them back if there is need in Guatemala. In return, he has received assistance from the Messenger in Black (see p. 38), the ace's butterflies spying on the Guatemalan government.

Typical Dialogue: "The norteamericanos worship these aces. Typical exploitation of the masses by fascist media masters."

Cocamama (Lorra Juarez)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: July 17, 1968, Machu Picchu, Peru

Appearance: Cocamama is a rather plain young Inca woman, 5' 4" 124 lbs., though her skin shines with a white light when her power operates, which is almost constantly. When in New York or Havana, she dresses like the mistress of a drug lord, in dresses chosen for their expense and not their taste. When "undercover" in Peru, she wears traditional Andean clothing. In her role as priestess, she wears a white gown with an elaborate feathered head-dress.

Wild Card Ability: Cocamama is surrounded by a glittering white aura which transmutes any fine, particulate matter or chemical impurity into cocaine along with associated alkaloids from the coca plant. By touching a person, her aura will transmute all chemical impurities in the bloodstream. Depending on the length of contact, this will either relieve fatigue and act as a stimulant or knock the victim into an ecstatic drug high.

Aces Jingle: Cocamama makes cocaine —
Just one kiss and you're insane.

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 5
DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 8 (-15 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Advantages

Common Sense (10 points)
Immunity to Disease (10 points)
Musical Ability +3 (3 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

No Sense of Smell/Taste (-5 points)
Illiterate (-10)
Primitive: TL3 (-20)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +11 (33 points)
Immunity to Poison (15 points)

Super-Powers

Alter-20(1) (Always On -40%; Touch Only -20%; May transmute any substance +80%; May only transmute free chains of molecules or very small particles, dust or chemical impurities in a liquid -40%; May only transmute substance into cocaine -40%; Transmutation is permanent +80%; Doesn't require Analyze +30%, 44 points)

(A special effect of this power is that by briefly touching a person, Cocamama may administer a "therapeutic" dose of cocaine. Those touched immediately recover all lost fatigue, lose fatigue at only one-quarter normal rate, and can go without food or drink for the next day. When they come off the drug, however, all fatigue recovered will be lost, plus 1/3 of the original amount, the subject being head-achy and nauseous and requiring three times the normal time period to recover, six times if they did not eat anything. Victims also acquire a mild addiction to cocaine; see p. B30.)

Skills

Archeology-12 (4 points), English-11 (1/2 point), Hobby: Weaving-13 (2 points), Sex Appeal-10 (6 points), Singing-12 (16 points), Spanish-13 (2 points), Theology-12 (4 points)



Quirks

- Dislikes Ladinos; ambivalent about Curari
- Has the fashion sense and buying habits of Imelda Marcos
- Sees little difference between Catholicism and Paganism
- Sings Andean folk-songs
- Spoiled, thinks the world owes her a living

Lorra Juarez grew up picking coca leaves with her family. Her first night of intimacy, her wild card power surfaced and drove her boyfriend into ecstatic addiction. Her parents took her to the Cathedral of Cuzco to be cured. The

Bishop said she had been cursed by the devil and should enter the convent. While there, the Ladinos exploited her power, using her as a source of pure cocaine for smuggling.

The acllas, the virgin priestesses of Machu Picchu, broke her out of the Cathedral, hailing her as an avatar of Cocamama, the goddess of the coca plant. They whisked her into their own convent and instructed her in the rites of their religion. A seeress of the convent proclaimed that she would lead the Incas to a new empire, free from the power of the Ladinos. Of course, the priestesses intended to be the power behind the throne, and they had her use her power to induce trances and supply cocaine for religious purposes.

After seven years of being treated as either an untouchable virgin goddess (which she knew she wasn't) or an absolute prisoner, Cocamama escaped the Inca convent. She went back to Cuzco and into the joker underground where she met Curari (see p. 35). Lorra was at once repelled and attracted by the joker. Her power protected her from all poisons, and she found that his altered physiology was partial proof against her addictive power, her touch bringing him to ecstasy but not unconsciousness. They became lovers.

After learning more of the world, Cocamama was sickened by the use to which the Medellin cartel had put the sacred coca plant. Though illiterate, she was also quick to realize Curari's power and connections. Together,

they devised a plot to collapse the drug cartel from within. In the ensuing chaos, it would be possible for an Indian-joker empire to arise, or at least an independent principality, with themselves as Queen and Inca. Cocamama's friends in Machu Picchu had won the power struggle among the priestesses, allowing her to maintain her freedom and count on their support at the appropriate time.

For the past few years, Curari has been playing the part of drug lord, and she his mistress. Though the Customs process becomes unusually sticky with their respective powers, she especially enjoys trips to Cuba and New York. She has some feelings for Curari, but nothing near his devotion to her. Cocamama likes him mainly because he is the one man who does not pass out from her touch, though

she would prefer a normal Incan man and not a Ladino joker.

Through Curari's present deals, she has been showered in wealth and luxuries. She understands little of the differences between political parties, leaving those discussions to Curari and the Messenger in Black. However, listening to her lover talk of politics and history, she knows that

whatever the ideals of the country, the wife of any political leader will be rich. She is quite certain that she will be a queen. However, if she has her way, she will control her own destiny, her own power and her own Inca as well.

Typical Dialogue: "I'd like that ring in the window, Juan."

Curari (Juan Alvaro Leal)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: March 7, 1961, Cartagena, Columbia

Appearance: Curari is tall and lean (6' 2", 160 lbs.); his bone structure is broad-shouldered, handsome and aristocratic. His skin, however, is glistening black, hairless, and patterned with electric blue markings. Curari's eyes are also electric blue, slightly larger than human norm. His mouth is much too wide, filled with tiny sharp teeth, and his fingers and toes are elongated and webbed, friction pads and small claws at the ends. He goes nude at home or in the forest, but wears a thin surfer's wetsuit and diver's mitts and booties when in public.

Wild Card Ability: Curari's skin exudes a venom ten times as toxic as that of *Bufo terrestris*, the poison dart frog. One drop of his sweat can kill 10 men.

Aces Jingle: Touch Curari and you'll be sorry.

ST 14 (45 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 8

DX 20 (175 points) **HT** 14 (45 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d+2; Swing 2d+2 (claws only);
Blow Dart 10d; Venom 10d whenever claw damage is done

Advantages

Combat Reflexes (15 points)
Double-Jointed (5 points)
Handsome (15 points)
Peripheral Vision (15 points)
Filthy Rich (50 points)

Disadvantages

Addiction: Cocaine (-10 points)
Delusion: Believes he has been cursed by God as punishment for the sins of his family (-5 points)
Jealousy: Normal men (-10 points)
Pacifism: Self-defense only (-15 points)
Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)
Vow: To wash clean the sins of his family (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Amphibious (10 points)
Claws: +2 damage (15 points)
Clinging (25 points)
Immunity to Poison (Only organic poisons -40%, 9 points)

Nictating Membrane, Level 1 (10 points)

Poisonous Skin: Curari excretes a deadly muscle toxin. Anyone touched by it must immediately make a roll against HT-4, and then again every hour afterwards for the next three hours or take damage. A critical failure means



death, the venom stopping the victim's heart. Curari's venom is a blood agent doing 10d damage. Touching Curari's exposed skin with bare flesh does 2d. Puncture by any object which has been coated with Curari's poison (such as a dart) will do the same damage as a claw attack. Curari secretes excessive amounts of poison when under stress, the milky venom running down his back like sweat. He showers constantly to remove the excess, but cannot halt its production. No antivenin exists at present. (200 points)

Regular Regeneration (25 points)

Regrowth (40 points)

Sensitive Touch (10 points)

Super Disadvantages

Dependency: Moisture, needed constantly (20 points)

Skills

Blowpipe-20 (4 points), Breath Control-16 (24 points), Dancing-19 (1 point), English-15 (8 points), Jumping-22 (4 points), Literature-15 (10 points), Poetry-14 (6 points), Politics-15 (10 points), Quechua-15 (8 points), Savoir Faire-14 (4 points), Sex Appeal-17 (8 points), Soccer-20 (2 points), Survival-16 (10 points), Writing-14 (6 points)

Quirks

Devout Catholic; says rosaries daily, especially if he's killed anyone

Makes *piropos* (formalized Latin-American pick-up lines) to every woman he meets; one smile makes his day

Partial to insects and gobs of raw meat — can't chew

Passionately in love with and emotionally dependent on Cocamama, the only person immune to his poison

Would commit suicide, except that it's a mortal sin

Juan Alvaro Leal grew up in the Leal family of Colombia. Crime was a way of life, as was religion. To keep Juan safe, his father sent him to boarding school and college in the United States. Juan went to Harvard, studying political science and literature in both Spanish and English. He began to hate the ways of his family, the drugs, the corrup-

tion and the killing. After graduation, he returned home, planning to study law in Colombia, but then his wild card turned, his poison killing his father.

Juan, being a joker, was a dishonor to the family. However, his power was useful and he was allowed to stay as an assassin. Juan could not take it and escaped into the rain-forest, living for two years as a creature of the jungle. He traveled into Peru, where he asked for sanctuary in the Cathedral of Cuzco. Taking confession, he was led to believe that his wild card was a curse from God that would not be lifted until he made restitution for his family's evils.

He met other victims of the wild card, mostly Inca. Then he met Lorra Juarez, the ace Cocamama. They became lovers and co-conspirators with *el Emisario Negro*, the Messenger in Black (see p. 38). Esteban Akabal made a secret journey from Guatemala, speaking to the jokers of Peru on the need to form their own socialist community against the repression of Ladino society. Though a Ladino, Juan agreed with the teacher's message, having seen the politics from both side of the coin. He became firmly committed to socialism and the Indian-joker cause. Juan came to realize that his family's victimization of the native workers was its greatest sin. Almost as great was the drug trade — the sacred coca, which had been used for centuries as a tool of healers and holy men, had now become a cheap street drug. Curari conferred with Cocamama and the Messenger in Black. The plot was intricate and involved (see sidebar, p. 26), but it could ultimately lead to a South American free state for Indians and jokers.

Juan contacted his family. Through Cocamama, he had an unlimited supply of the pure drug. Funds were transferred, and Juan set up a strong part of the family network in Peru, ordering large stocks of weaponry. Cocamama contacted the priests and priestesses of her religion, and the jokers of Machu Picchu were armed and ready.

Curari is essentially a nice person, twisted by a violent world and cruel fate — and Cocamama and Esteban Akabal's mental powers.

Typical Dialogue: "Don't touch me, I'm death."

Hunapu

Official Character

Created by Leanne C. Harper

Born: December 1, 1962, a Lancandon Maya village

Appearance: Hunapu is a Lancandon Maya, small (5' 1", 105 lbs.), with a long aristocratic nose. He used to wear a Mayan ball-player's costume, cotton pads on his elbows and knees, though Akabal and Xbalanque now have him wearing the costume of a warrior-priest.

Wild Card Ability: Hunapu can teleport short distances and may transport anyone or anything he holds. By engag-

ing in Mayan blood rituals, he may also travel in astral form to Xibalba, the Quiche Hades.

Aces Jingle: Hunapu surprises you.

ST 9 (-10 points) IQ 10 (0 points) Move: 7

DX 17 (100 points) HT 12 (20 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Advantages

Alertness +2 (10 points)

Attractive (5 points)



Combat Reflexes (15 points)
 Eidetic Memory, Level 1 (30 points)
 Reputation: Hero Twin, +6 to Indians, -6 to Ladinos (0 points)



Disadvantages

Bloodlust (-10 points)
 Delusion: Operates directly on the orders of Ahua Ah Puc, the Quiche Lord of Death (-15 points)
 Dependent: Maria (Competent, always around, -18 points)
 Fanaticism (-15 points)
 Illiterate (-10 points)
 Primitive: TL3 (-20 points)
 Social Stigma: Indian (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +50 (Only recharged by Mayan blood sacrifice -40%; 90 points)
 Regular Regeneration (Only for self-inflicted wounds -40%; 15 points)

Psionics

Astral Projection-18(20) (Only travels to Xibalba, the Quiche Hades -40%; Requires burning of blood from ritually important area — tongue, lip, palm, septum, ear, etc. -20%; 44 points)
 Teleportation Power 18 (Costs 8 fatigue per use -40%; 54 points)
 Autoteleport-18 (Air makes popping sound when he teleports -20%; 18 points)
 Exoteleport-18 (Touch only -20%; Can only be used to bring object with self -30%; 10 points)

Skills

Agronomy-14 (5 points), Knife-17 (1 point), Mayan (Native Tongue), Spanish-12 (3 points), Theology-13 (5 points)

Quirks

Very naïve about the outside world

Hunapu spent his entire life in a primitive Lancandon Maya village, cut off from the Ladino world. Even as a boy, he had dreams of Xibalba, the Quiche Hades and the Maya gods.

He met his spiritual brother, Xbalanque (see p. 39), in his dreams, and the gods of Xibalba challenged them to a game on the ball courts, playing for their lives. They won and were granted their wild card powers.

Hunapu gained the power to teleport instantaneously, and agreed to meet Xbalanque at Guatemala City. On the way he found Maria, a beautiful joker girl with brilliant green quetzal plumes in place of hair. She is devoted to him, and helps him with his rituals.

Hunapu is a pious man whose religion is based on a mixture of Catholicism and half-remembered Mayan beliefs. He trusts absolutely in the reality of Xibalba and power of the gods. Hunapu would be easy to manipulate except that his faith determines his allegiances, not what

would benefit him directly. Because of his acceptance of the old ways, he is more bloodthirsty than Xbalanque. The



necessary bloodshed incites him to religious ecstasy and manic joy.

Typical Dialogue: "I serve my people and my gods."

El Emisario Negro (Ibrahim Montalvo, The Messenger in Black) ==

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: August 19, 1937, Peruvian Andes

Appearance: Ibrahim Montalvo is a tall, middle-aged man (6', 180 lbs.) of mestizo descent, with iron-gray hair and sharp black eyes. In the academic world, he wears old, well-kept gray suits, though when among jokers, he dresses in a long black robe and hood — a professorial gown with the cowl drawn up. He wears a gauze mask painted with a butterfly to conceal his features. His voice is rich and cultured, and he is obviously well-educated.

Wild Card Ability: The Messenger in Black can control moths and butterflies, using them as spies. Black butterflies may be used to bear any plague he chooses, including the wild card. Other butterflies have other uses, depending on the species.

ST 11 (10 points) **IQ** 17 (100 points)

DX 10 (0 points) **HT** 13 (30 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Move: 5

Advantages

- Attractive (5 points)
- Charisma +3 (15 points)
- Comfortable Wealth (10 points)
- Immunity to Disease (10 points)

Disadvantages

- Fanaticism: Socialism (-15 points)
- Overconfidence (-10 points)

Psionics

Pyrokinesis-16(15) (Must use red butterflies -40%) (36 points)

Telepathy Power 20 (100 points) (All skills except Mindwipe have the following limitation: Affects butterflies and moths only -80%)

Mindwipe-17 (May only erase very recent memories -40%; Must use white moths -40%, 1 point)

Telecontrol-21 (Area effect +40%; 8 points)

Telereceive-20 (2 points)

Telescan-20 (2 points)

Telesend-20 (2 points)



Skills

Diplomacy-19 (8 points), English-17 (2 points), German-16 (1 point), Hobby: Classical music-17 (1 point), Hobby: Lepidoptery-20 (4 points), Latin-16 (1 point), Naturalist-19 (8 points), Quechua-16 (1 points), Russian-17 (2 points), Teaching-16 (1 points)

Quirks

Avid intellectual
Listens to classical music, especially Tchaikovsky
Prefers old, comfortable suits
Quotes Nabokov

Professor of Entomology at Princeton, Ibrahim Montalvo spends half of the year engaged in field work in his native Peru and the Amazon basin. He has discovered 25 new species, making him the most distinguished lepidopterist of the 20th century, and his monographs have appeared in numerous academic publications. He has also worked on pieces for *National Geographic* with the ace photographer Telephoto — and on missions for the Twisted Fists.

Dr. Montalvo discovered his power after his capture by the butterfly hunter tribes of the remote Amazon. He instinctively called the butterflies and moths of the rain-for-

est, bringing a plague of insects down on the strange tribe, allowing him to escape. Dr. Montalvo realized that he had drawn his ace from the stories of his childhood: the Messenger in Black, whose box of plague-bearing moths and butterflies destroyed the Inca Huayna Capac.

He used his powers to facilitate the capture and identification of new species of moths and butterfly. Three years later, on a trip in the Amazon, Telephoto recruited Dr. Montalvo as a spy for the Twisted Fists, reporting on the operations of all Peruvian political factions. Montalvo agreed.

Taking the name and costume of the Messenger in Black, the professor has recently become more active in the Twisted Fists. Of all the groups in the convoluted game, he especially detests the drug smugglers, wishing to see both their destruction and autonomy for the Indian provinces of Peru. To this end, he has joined the plot of Curari and Cocamama.

Typical Dialogue: "If I might be so bold, might I suggest you mind your own business? There are few liberties left in Peru, but one of them is the right of jokers to wear masks and maintain their anonymity. Good day to you, sir."

Xbalanque

Official Character

Created by Leanne C. Harper

Born: May 9, 1959, small Guatemalan village

Appearance: Xbalanque is slightly larger and stockier than Hunapu (5' 2" 140 lbs.) but has the same classic Mayan profile. He wears a jade ear plug in his right ear and dresses like a Mayan warrior-priest of ages past. When alone, however, he wears a T-shirt, jeans and Reeboks.

Wild Card Ability: Like Hunapu, Xbalanque may travel to Xibalba. Xbalanque can also make himself or objects he physically contacts superdense.

Aces Jingle: Xbalanque throws a ball,
Knocks Ladinos through the wall.

ST 12 (20 points) IQ 13 (30 points) Move: 7

DX 14 (45 points) HT 14 (45 points)

Damage: Normal: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2; Charged: Thrust 16d; Swing 18d; Thrown objects see *GURPS*

Supers, p. 80

Advantages

Common Sense (10 points)
Handsome (15 points)
Intuition (15 points)



Reputation: Hero Twin, +6 to Indians, -6 to Ladinos (0 points)

Disadvantages

Mild Hemophobia: (-10 points)
Social Stigma: Indian (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +50 (Only recharged by Mayan blood sacrifice -40%; 90 points)

Enhanced ST +150 (Only while density is increased -40%; 141 points)

Increased Density +2,000 lbs. (Switchable +10%; 110 points)

Regular Regeneration (Only for self-inflicted wounds -40%; 15 points)

Super-Powers

Increase Density-20(4) (Touch Only -20%; Costs 8 fatigue per use -40%; 43 points)

Psionics

Astral Projection-18(20) (Only travels to Xibalba, the Quiche Hades -40%; Requires burning of blood from ritu-

ally important area — tongue, lip, palm, septum, ear, etc. -20%; 38 points)

Skills

Archeology-14 (6 points), English-14 (4 points), Lockpicking-15 (6 points), Mayan (Native Tongue), Span-

ish-16 (8 points), Streetwise-13 (2 points), Throwing-18 (32 points)

Quirks

Loose moral code, especially when dealing with Caucasians

Quick to spot an advantage for himself

Very fond of beer and liquor

Wears a jade earplug



Xbalanque is a Quiche Maya. Because of the accessibility of his village and its proximity to important ruins, he became accustomed to dealing with Europeans, working at local archeological digs. He regularly stole artifacts to sell on the black market and sold fake artifacts as well. One night, drunk on stolen gin, he decided to recreate a Mayan ritual. He pierced his ear with a stingray spine and burned his blood-soaked shirt, calling out to the ancient Mayan gods to summon his spirit.

He passed out, but met Hunapu in Xibalba, where the gods challenged them to a game in the ball courts. The game was fierce; they were told they would never return to the world of light if they did not win. Their concerted efforts and pure Mayan spirits prevailed and the twins were granted their wild card powers. When Xbalanque awoke, he stole a jeep and went to Guatemala City to meet Hunapu as they had agreed while in the spirit world.

On the way he met Esteban Akabal, and Xbalanque saved both their lives, discovering his powers for the first time. Akabal convinced him to become a leader for the Indian-joker revolt against Ladino oppression. He did this, the ranks of his and Hunapu's armies swelling till they met outside of Guatemala City, sacrificing the general of the opposing forces in a Mayan ritual. There have been skirmishes since, but the government of Guatemala and the Indian/joker alliance have been at an impasse.

Xbalanque believes in no religion, although he was raised a Catholic in a somewhat less-corrupted version than Hunapu's. What he knows of ancient Mayan culture, which is actually more than Hunapu, he learned from the archeologists for whom he worked.

He is not unhappy with his powers, even though his relatives would view him as a demon. He sees his wild card power as a means to become important — and to stay alive. He has avoided politics because of the repercussions, like assassination, that are everyday occurrences in most of Central America, especially for vocal Indians. Shedding blood, his own or others, sickens him, and he finds it extremely difficult to perform the rituals necessary to travel to Xibalba.

Typical Dialogue: "We are not Ladino. We do not want a war or more death. We seek only what is ours by right: a land, a country that is ours."

SOUTH AFRICA – A HOUSE OF CARDS

3

Africans and jokers are one and the same. The Whites hate us and kill us, all in the name of separate development and racial purity.

You Whites — look in the mirror and see what you find there. Any one of you could draw the wild card tomorrow and become a joker. Do you want to live in a world where you will be outcast? And you, you traitorous aces who work for the White government, killing your own kind. The only reason the Whites respect you is for your power. You are still jokers to them all, can you not tell? Have you not heard the whispers? What will you do tomorrow when your wild card turns a bit further and you no longer have the same face?

I call upon all people of conscience to end this now. The White policies have murdered for too long. Apartheid means Racism! Apartheid means Death!

*— Nelson Mandela, “The Black Pimpernel”
(from contraband AJNC leaflet)*



Wild Cards South Africa Since World War II

The first Wild Card Day did not overtly affect South African politics. New York was far away and the European cases were mostly material for sensational newspapers. As always, race relations were the major concern.

Before the general election of May, 1948, the moderate United Party appeared to be unassailable. Its main opponent was the strongly racist, Afrikaner-backed Nationalist Party, who promulgated the concept of apartheid and legal restrictions as the solution to South Africa's race relations. The Union Party was unable to produce any coherent alternative, and to the surprise of all concerned, the Nationals won a small majority.

The Nationals then set to consolidating their power. Over the course of the next decade, they passed the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, banning sexual relations between whites and Africans; the Immorality Act, extending the ban to sexual relations between whites and Coloureds; the Population Registration Act, establishing racial classifications; the Group Areas Act, increasing residential segregation for Indians and Coloureds; the Separate Amenities Act, providing for segregation and inequality in public places and services; the Bantu Education Act of 1953, providing for increased control of native schooling so as to not train Africans for positions in white society; the Extension of University Education Act, removing the right of non-whites to attend those predominantly white universities that had previously admitted them (primarily in Cape Town and Witwatersrand); the Prohibition of Political Interference Act, banning multiracial political organizations and killing the Liberal Party; the Bantu Authorities Act, giving greater autonomy to the Native Reserves (though white capital investment was discouraged); and the infamous Suppression of Communism Act, which gave such a broad definition of communist as to include anyone seeking radical change — this was the first step towards the establishment of a police state. Later, the Terrorism Act gave the government the right to jail anyone it pleased, as well as protection for the police from litigation regarding improper treatment of prisoners and wrongful deaths.

Apartheid and the Wild Card

August, 1953, brought about a new era for apartheid. Cape Town, traditionally liberal and a firm supporter of Coloured voting rights, received a large shipment of contaminated goods from New York. Formerly, there had been few wild cards in South Africa, but the Cape Town outbreak brought the nation firmly into the modern age.

Dr. Tachyon's explanation that the wild card enhanced latent propensities in the individuals affected was easily in line with apartheid theory and belief in eugenics. The National Party pointed to the proportionately larger number of Afrikaners and British survivors of the wild card, many gifted with ace powers, using this as evidence for the genetic superiority of the white race. The occasional Coloured aces were attributed to their white ancestry. Actually, all this evidence indicated was the fact that the wild card epidemic occurred chiefly in the white sectors of the city, of which the victims received preferential hospital treatment. Many black aces also hid their powers, or were summarily killed by the South African government.

In 1954, J.G. Strijdom achieved the long-standing Nationalist ambition of removing the voting rights of the Coloured citizens of the Cape. At the same time he instituted the Race Re-Evaluation Act. This act required the genetic testing of all persons in South Africa, classifying the victims into different racial designation and special wild-card sub-categories (see sidebar, p. 44). African jokers, as well as those jokers so mutated that their original race was unguessable, were

A South African Glossary

AJNC: African/Joker National Congress. A black and joker rights organization banned by the South African government, now waging guerrilla warfare on behalf of the people. The AJNC leader is Nelson Mandela, also known as the Black Pimpernel, reputed to be an ace.

Apartheid: A philosophy and political policy separating racial groups from each other, ostensibly to promote individual development, but in practice a tool of oppression, promoting the "white" race at the expense of all others.

Bantustan: An "independent homeland" for the native peoples of South Africa, set up by the white South African government. The Bantustans are situated in the most barren and arid regions of the country, and their political autonomy is only recognized by South Africa.

Black: In South African parlance, a person of pure African ancestry, or any joker no longer recognizable as being from some other race.

Coloured: In South African parlance, a person of mixed white and black or Indian or Asian heritage. Also, any white displaying joker characteristics, but still recognizable as having European ancestry. Similar to the term "black" in modern American usage, whereby a person with three "white" grandparents and one "black" grandparent is still termed "black."

Deev: An evil djinn of Persian mythology. Now a term used by the Righteous Djinn to refer to aces like the Nur and others.

Djinn: In Arabic folklore, any of dozens of the spirits of fire, descendants of the forces of the Shaitan during the revolt of the angels. In modern Arabic slang, any wild carder, though primarily applied to jokers and joker-aces.

Gangwasi: In South African San belief, evil spirits of the recently dead who seek to harm the living.

Malay Quarter: The Jokertown of Cape Town, South Africa.

Pass Book: A combination passport/picture I.D. issued to all South African citizens. In the case of wild carders, it lists wild card powers and specific joker deformities, in addition to arbitrarily assigning a person's racial group and thereby their rights and social status.

Peri: In Persian mythology, a fallen angel who had repented and attempted to regain Paradise through good deeds. Now a term used by the Righteous Djinn to refer to aces and deuces on their side.

Continued on next page . . .

sent to the Native Reserves, where most died from insufficient medical care. Opponents to the policy believed that the purpose of this was to introduce the virulent wild card into the African gene pool as a form of population control. Mild jokers, latent wild carders and African aces were classed with South Africa's Coloured population. White aces, however, were lionized as proof of white genetic superiority.

Wild card victims joined with the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress in protest of the repressive Pass Laws. In 1955 at Kliptown, they met with the Coloured Peoples Organisation and the white Congress of Democrats for the Freedom Congress, drawing up the Freedom Charter with the goal of a South Africa lacking in racial distinctions. In 1956, 156 members of the Freedom Congress were arrested for plotting to overthrow the state. The trial dragged on till 1961.

In 1960, the government began the systematic removal of native peoples into the Native Reserves, now redesignated as "Bantu Homelands." The ANC responded with a series of boycotts against the Pass Laws, joined in their fight by the Joker Peoples Organization. The two soon fused into the African/Jokers National Congress, brought together by the Sharpeville Massacre in which 67 peaceful African and joker protesters were killed outside a police station. Leading the AJNC from then to the present day was Nelson Mandela, known as the "Black Pimpernel." Whether Mandela is an ace or not has never been officially established.

In 1969, Steven Biko formed the South African Students Organization, and went on to develop a black consciousness movement and form a Black People's Convention. African, Indians, Coloureds and jokers were united against white domination. The racial exclusivism of this movement pleased apartheid supporters, and the government encouraged it for a time.

In 1970, the South African government began the system of "Bantustans," whereby the Homelands were declared independent and their residents stripped of South African citizenship. Chiefs were appointed by the South African Government, not by tribal law.

When South Africa attempted to extend this policy into Rhodesia, the former German colony under its administration since World War II, there was violent opposition from the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO). South Africa fought against the guerrilla forces of SWAPO, finally carving up the territory to their liking in 1978. This created several small Bantustans with a large white Homeland in the center. From this base, South Africa made advances on the former Portuguese colony of Angola. Troubles with Zimbabwe and Mozambique exacerbated conditions, and SWAPO forces still wage guerrilla warfare to liberate the region.

In 1976, the government attempted to institute Afrikaans as the official language in black schools. This sparked the Soweto riots, students boycotting school, and violence spread through the country. For three months, an ace known only as "Othello" brought terror to white South Africa. Othello had the power to rewrite the genetic code, permanently changing black to white and white to black. Victims of the ace were all declared Genetically Changed — Non-Wild Card — and placed into the Coloured areas. Before his capture, Othello switched the races of 469 whites and 322 blacks. Investigations into his death showed that the ace had been beaten, starved and manacled to a wall for a long period before his death. The death of Othello brought protest and world outrage. Guerrilla attacks by the AJNC continued.

In 1983, the government, hard pressed for reforms, put forth a plan of suffrage for Coloured, Indian and joker citizens. Three additional houses would be added to the legislature, one for each, though all decisions of the three houses would be subject to approval by the white legislature. 1983 also marked the birth

A South African Glossary (Continued)

Race Re-Evaluation Act: Passed in 1954, legislation by the South African government arbitrarily reassigning race and thus social privilege to individuals mutated by the wild card virus.

Righteous Djinn: A primarily joker, Muslim terrorist organization, in league with the Twisted Fists against the forces of the Nur-al-Allah. In Arabic legend, the term for those djinn who received the message of the prophet and worshipped Allah.

Taroque: A gambling game, popular in the marketplaces of Egypt, played with tarot cards.

White: In South African parlance, a person of pure European ancestry. Identical in usage and meaning to the term for Caucasians in the United States.

Apartheid in South Africa

The word "apartheid" means "separateness." The practice of apartheid is an amalgamation of Calvinist theology, white South African belief in racial superiority, social Darwinism and a certain measure of the "white man's burden."

Proponents of apartheid believe that the culture of each race is genetically determined. All races should remain isolated from one another so as to achieve their ultimate destiny. "Mongrelization" of races leads to a blurring of cultures and the birth of half-breeds or "Coloureds," inferior to either original stock. The "white" race is thought superior to all others, as shown by its many accomplishments (as evaluated by Western criteria) and so must help its genetically disadvantaged neighbors. This is the white man's burden.

In the practice of apartheid in South Africa, the Natives Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 herded the native peoples onto reserves comprising only 13% of the land, generally the most barren wastelands in the country, lacking in essential minerals, workable land or water. The covert purpose was to form labor reserves for white South Africa.

After the National Party's rise to power in 1948, laws and acts became even more restrictive. Blacks who had owned land for years in "white" areas were forcibly resettled onto Bantustans, their homes and townships bulldozed. Only those Africans in white employment were allowed to stay in white areas, and then only in dormitories, their families remaining behind on the Bantustans. Asians and Coloureds, not having a definable "homeland" (though few true "homelands" existed), were forced to stay in ghettos on the edges of white cities.

The Race Re-Evaluation Act of 1954

The Race Re-Evaluation Act provides for the systematic classification and categorization of those infected by xenovirus Takis-A. Those reclassified are considered on par with their new race for the purpose of general laws and living conditions.

Of those infected, the lowest designation is Genetically Damaged. This is reserved for those who drew the joker in any form from harmful to hideous. Persons who are Genetically Damaged, regardless of original race, are considered black for legal purposes, including marriage. Marriages between jokers and nats are annulled, and with few exceptions, jokers are sent to the Independent Homelands where most die from insufficient medical care.

The next designation is Genetically Augmented. It includes those victims who had undergone profound but occasionally useful changes, such as growing to 12 feet tall, sprouting tails or extra arms, or possessing useful powers, but lacking mental control. People Genetically Augmented are defined as black or Coloured, depending on their original race. Though there is no legal distinction between Coloured and joker (and there are in fact many Coloured jokers), in most cities there are definite lines between Coloured and joker living areas.

The third designation is Genetically Changed. This designation is reserved for those victims displaying small, insignificant, easily concealed changes, such as extra fingers or unusual hair or eye color. Those in this category are legally considered Coloured unless already black.

Those who display no negative symptoms and have gained useful powers are designated Genetically Enhanced and allowed to keep their original racial designation. Blacks who draw the ace are redesignated as Coloured and allowed to live in the Coloured areas of South African cities. All aces are allowed to marry within their segment of the Colour Bar.

A person with useful powers as well as physical deformities, a "joker-ace," will be listed under both designations in his Pass Book, but is generally treated as a member of the lower racial class.

Continued on next page . . .

of the United Democratic Front who called for a boycott of the polls. Less than 18% of the Coloured population voted, tallies even lower among Indian and joker constituents. Furthermore, when the ballot boxes were opened, all ballots were found marked with "Death to Botha — Long Live the AJNC!" Apparently an ace or joker-ace with a highly specific psychokinetic power had rewritten all of the ballots. There was panic in the legislature and all votes are presently done by a show of hands.

The situation worsened, violence exploding in the black townships and the jokertowns. On July 21, 1985, a state of emergency was declared, giving sweeping powers to the police and ordering a press blackout. The number of killings increased dramatically, many of them between opposing factions within African communities, the riots fostered by the South African government and the open support of the police. In Natal, members of Inkatha attacked AJNC supporters, while in Soweto violence occurred between followers of the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the pro-ANC "comrades." A common form of execution was the "necklace," whereby a tire soaked with gasoline was put around the victim's neck and lit, his hands cut off to prevent the burning tire's removal.

Chaos has reigned to the time of this adventure, the AJNC and SWAPO joining forces against the Botha regime. Reforms have been discussed by South Africa's government, but there are as many conflicting factions in the white legislature as there are in the freedom forces, and little has been accomplished. Liberals hope to make reforms in the summer of 1991, while Conservatives wish to pass even more restrictive acts.



Real South Africa Since World War II

The history of the present South Africa parallels much of the history of *Wild Cards* South Africa. The Cape Town outbreak of 1953 did not occur, and consequently South Africa did not have to deal with jokers. Nelson Mandela was

jailed in 1964 and not released until 1990. His wife, Winnie Mandela, led the ANC in the interim. Steven Biko, not Othello, died in jail in 1976, chained to a wall, naked.



In the *Wild Cards* universe, Cuba never had a revolution, and consequently never became communist or assisted leftist forces in Namibia or Angola. In the real world, SWAPO has been aided by Cuban forces, and Rhodesia is now the independent republic of Namibia. In November, 1989, the UN supervised Namibia's first free elections.

In South Africa, Indian and Coloured legislative bodies were formed, though their decisions are still subject to approval to the white arm of the legislature. From 1985 to 1991, many of the acts of apartheid were repealed, including the Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Acts and the elimination of statutory racial barriers in hotels, restaurants and public parks. Individual movie theaters and beaches may be integrated on appeal. However, much like the American south before the 1960s, this only allows the possibility of integration, and private owners may still post "Whites Only" signs if they wish. To curtail the use of parks by non-whites, there have been proposals for admission fees, pricing them beyond the means of the poor. The Pass Laws have been repealed, allowing South Africans to move freely within the country and replacing the Pass Book with a computerized identity card for all South African Residents. (Unlike *Wild Cards* South Africa, in real South African history only non-whites were required to carry Pass Books.) Africans from the "Independent Homelands," however, need work permits to be employed in South Africa. Blacks who lost their citizenship by forced removal onto Bantustans are only allowed repatriation as South African citizens on appeal, the requirements of which are highly restrictive and only pertain to those working in white South Africa.

The Race Re-Evaluation Act of 1954 (Continued)

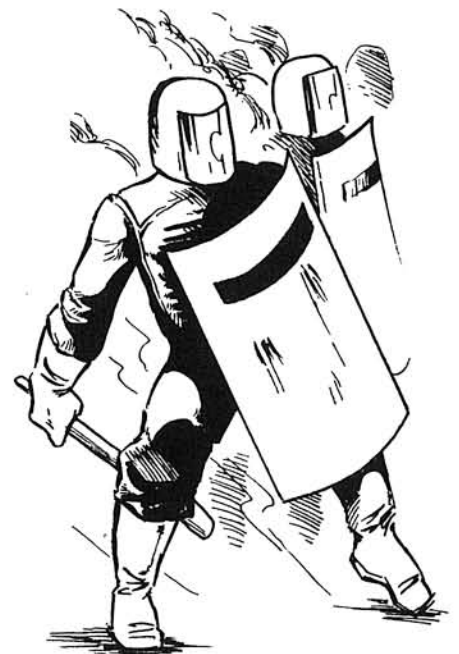
Those carrying the virus in a dormant form are classified as Genetically Imperiled. They are allowed all the privileges of their original race except for marriage to "pure stock" of the white race, whom the proponents of apartheid philosophy wish to keep unadulterated. They are allowed to marry among the Coloured community, however. Any active manifestation requires reclassification.

Children with one latent wild carder parent are designated Unchanged Carriers. They are allowed all the privileges of their apparent races, but are strictly monitored, especially in regards to marriage. Unchanged Carriers are not allowed to marry other Carriers.

Completely human offspring having one joker parent are designated Possibly Damaged Carrier. Their treatment is similar to that of Unchanged Carriers.

Children with one ace parent are listed as Possibly Enhanced Carrier. Their treatment is the same as their parents, though they are looked upon with interest by South African geneticists.

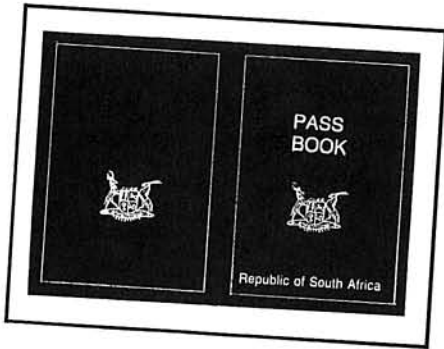
A person's racial and wild card designation have little to do with genetics and may be changed after litigation. In other words, any joker-ace with an attractive appearance and enough white friends in power can have his Pass Book classification changed. However, a changed Pass Book only allows a certain amount of freedom and will not protect from the prejudice of the rest of South African society.



South African Pass Books

Perhaps the most hated symbol of apartheid is the Pass Book. South African Pass Books contain a photograph of each individual, as well as personal statistics, including employers, taxes and other particulars. In the case of wild cards, it includes designations as per the Race Re-Evaluation Act of 1954, along with a simple descriptive of any known super-powers or abilities possessed by the individual, listed on a scale devised by the South African government. (For South African characters, list Power and Skill level as per *Supers*.)

All citizens in South Africa are officially required to carry Pass Books. However, when passing from the Independent Homelands into white South Africa, or between white and coloured districts in cities, only non-whites are ever troubled. Those whites who are unusually tall or short or physically different in any significant way, however, may be asked for their Pass Books on occasion, and treated as jokers if they cannot produce them.



 Nr.: 90389701 Family Name <u>WINTER</u> First Name <u>JOHN</u> Place of Birth <u>JOHANNESBURG</u> Date of Birth <u>01/01/70</u> Tribe <u>afrikaaner</u> Signature <u>[Signature]</u>	A. Employment Bureau	A
	B. Employer Name, Address, Signature	B
	C. Tax	C
	D. Homeland Tax	D
	E. Powers and Deformities	E

Recently, under the presidency of F.W. de Klerk, the state of emergency has been lifted, the apartheid laws eliminated, opposition parties un-banned, and good-faith negotiations have begun with the nation's black majority, represented by Nelson Mandela and the ANC. Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Party, the major black opposition of the ANC, suffered a major setback when financial backing by the white government was revealed. World-wide economic sanctions have been eased, awaiting the last international demands: the release of all political prisoners. To date, South Africa has released about 1,000 political prisoners, saying that those remaining in its jails committed non-political crimes. The ANC contends about 900 political prisoners are still being held. And universal suffrage has not yet come to pass.

As a sign of international approval for the better conditions, South Africa has been readmitted to the Olympics. However, while things are much better than they have been, the trouble is far from over.

August 1, 1991: Arrival in Cape Town

Carnifex is heading up the team this time, though Billy Ray now looks quite different. His hair is bleached blond, a plastic surgeon has reworked his face into classic handsomeness (the improvements shouldn't last beyond a major super-fight), and his eyeteeth have been capped with sharp feline fangs. His alias is Tom "Wildcat" Foster and he wears a black ghi. Billy is still the same old Carnifex, but he likes his new appearance.

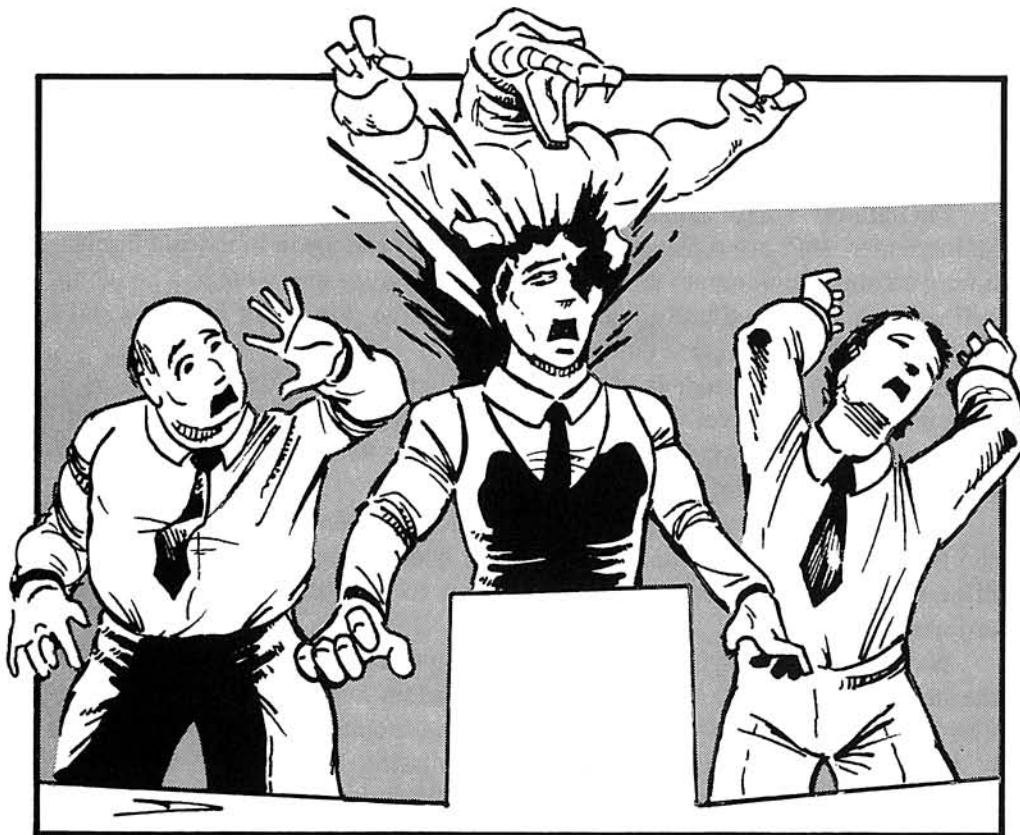
It's wet and raining when the plane lands, winter in South Africa. The joker-ace Psiguard (see p. 56) picks the agents up from the airport, bypassing customs. The South African government formally wishes to thank its allies in helping to combat international terrorism despite recent political differences, etc. He issues Pass Books with aliases to all obvious wild carders, made from information sent by the Justice Department and the Mace. Psiguard is distinctly uncomfortable around other jokers, especially Decathlon (who's become a Zulu giant). There has been increased unrest in the black and joker townships (Psiguard is putting it lightly — Justice Department information reports mob violence and lynchings) and the South African Parliament has called an emergency session to deal with the problem. Presently under discussion are an easement of the Pass Laws and possible abolition of the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts. There is also some talk of integrating South Africa's parks and beaches.

The South African government asks that agents help guard the democratic process. Jokers have to stay in the Coloured Group Areas, of course, though the government will be able to make special dispensations to borderline cases — such as Psiguard's.

A New Deal for Parliament

Psiguard gets a call on his beeper — terrorists have just struck at the House of Parliament. Helmut Steinbrenner, a conservative Parliament member, drew a joker in the middle of Parliamentary debate, shedding his skin to reveal green scales, fangs and a tail. The secret service knows the AJNC is responsible, since yesterday they found a note on the door of the Tuynhuys government office proclaiming, "Rescind the Pass Laws or this will happen to all of you." The note was signed AJNC and was accompanied by a large tarot card with the picture of a strange lizard.

Agents arrive at the Tuynhuys and are ushered into an office of the South African secret service. The note and the card are there to examine. The card matches the ones hidden in Dr. Montalvo's journal in the Peruvian segment. (See sidebar, p. 28).



Obvious jokers will not be admitted by Parliament security; Psiguard suggests they go with him to the hospital to interview MP Steinbrenner. Billy Ray and other nats and aces stay at the House of Parliament, interviewing MPs as to what happened on the house floor.

Steinbrenner's Hospital Room

A doctor and two nurses, all wearing gauze masks, stand around a hospital bed on which there is a 4-foot-long, bright green humanoid lizard, reminiscent of a komodo dragon. About 30 green lizard skins litter the room, each smaller and less human than the last. As they enter, the lizard convulses, skin splitting as his tail grows another 3 inches in length. He then backs out of his shedding skin, clawing it away from his face and making pitiful attempts at a scream. Steinbrenner stabilizes a moment later until he sees the party, at which point he screams, in Afrikaans, "Stay away from me, you freaks! You did this to me!" and so on in the same vein. Psiguard is knocked into shock, as is any other empath who makes the mistake of tuning in to the degree of rage, pain and hatred from the still-transforming joker.

Non-empathic telepaths have to work fast if they want to find anything. Steinbrenner's brain is shrinking along with the rest of his body and soon there will be nothing left to work with. Anyone succeeding in a use of Telereceive and Signature Sniffer (*Psionics*, p. 24) finds the memory of Parliament Member Jaap Marais strongly linked to the psychic tag of Naia Ombassa. (See p. 54 — Marais was her mental illusion over Taroque.)

Questioning Steinbrenner is possible, though time-consuming, punctuated by the attacks of his transformation. He remembers nothing unusual, except that Marais clapped him on the shoulder yesterday, something he would never usually do. An hour and a half later, the rate of sheddings slows to a stop, leaving a two-foot green lizard with fangs, a white belly and a three-foot tail. Stein-

Attention Double-Agents!

Psiguard is a highly-skilled telepath, and while he does not routinely go into people's minds, anyone who acts even remotely suspicious will be secretly mind-searched. Yellowman knows Psiguard — an ally in his own conspiracy — but warns fellow double-agents to be on their toes, citing a Twisted Fist dossier on the South African ace.

Psiguard has his own views on the Twisted Fists, and uses his discretion in telling the government who he's detected and who he hasn't. (As a rule of thumb, anyone with lots of violent emotions goes on his *bad* list.) Those turned in will have a large contingent of armed police and/or aces come to arrest them, depending on the number of Twisted Fist operatives in the party. They will be held in South African jails until they can be sent back for the Justice Department or the Mace to deal with.

Exposed double-agents, depending on the degree of their treachery, may be blackmailed back into line, jailed or, in extreme cases, killed outright.

Psiguard, however, is on-the-fence so far as his loyalties and allegiances go. He believes Yellowman, and if one or two other Twisted Fists *genuinely* like him and try to talk to him, they may be able to get him to switch sides fully.

If this is the case, it's the loyal, government agents in the team who'd better watch out — Psiguard has enough pull to get them arrested, and will. In return, however, Psiguard will need to be smuggled out of the country before the South African government figures out what's going on.



The Twist in the Fists

Since the last adventure, Yellowman has continued to play courier for the Fists. While so doing, he has encountered the Murga-muggai in her maiden form, believing her to be a Twisted Fist operative.

Yellowman is quite gullible, and the Murga-muggai has influenced his dreams so that he believes that there will be a joker massacre *unless* there is a major wild card outbreak in South Africa. (This is separate from his usual precognitive "dreams," a lie masquerading as a premonition.)

To this end, Yellowman has pinched a large supply of Twisted Fist wild card virus and hidden it in a friend's garage in Boston — still easily accessible for him. He'll use it in South Africa, but if he's caught, he'll be on the run from both the Fists *and* the Mace and the Justice Department.

If he has befriended any agents, such as Decathlon, he appears at times and tries to explain everything to the agent — his time-slip/precog ability, his membership in both the Mace and the Fists — and try to enlist them in his cause. If he succeeds, the adventurers will become double or triple agents, members of the Yellowman Conspiracy in addition to everything else.

Yellowman's dreams dictate everything he does, and this becomes doubly dangerous when he's being sent false dreams by the Murga-muggai — or following orders from his father, Professor Swift.

Government Avenue

Oaks line the pedestrian paths of Government Avenue, which is filled with beautiful gardens, fountains, statues and squirrels.

The Houses of Parliament and St. George's Cathedral flank the entrance. Parliament is open to the public, though tie and jacket are required, excluding many jokers. Foreign visitors must present passports and residents must bring their Pass Books.

Tuynhuys, the State President's offices, formerly the State President's alternative residence, is also on Government Avenue, along with the University of Cape Town, the South African Museum, the South African National Gallery, and the South African Library, all of which have large Africana collections and are open to the general public.

brenner's IQ is now 3 and he is unable to do more than recognize faces. He hates jokers, however, and bites the nearest joker character for 1d-2 cutting plus 3d damage from Type C poison (see sidebar, p. 105). His wife comes in a few minutes later and the little lizard dances around, squeaking "Ma-gie! Ma-gie!" Mrs. Steinbrenner needs a sedative.

The Parliament Building

Parliament video cameras have photographed the transformation of Steinbrenner. MPs are replaying the monitor again and again in morbid fascination, watching Steinbrenner say, "And I would divorce any woman who would still want me if I turned into a joker!" just before the skin on his face split and a bloody lizard's head popped out.

A frantic call for order is made by the chairman, F.W. de Klerk, but is of little use. De Klerk gives up and announces that Parliament is adjourned until tomorrow afternoon, when the House will continue its discussion of the Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act.

Outside of Parliament is a mass of television reporters from the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Reporters are questioning frightened MPs. Carnifex is annoyed, as there is nothing obvious to fight or anything out of the ordinary.

Naia Ombassa's psychic fingerprints (if anyone can read them) are all over the steps of Parliament. A couple dozen bystanders from the library and museums have noticed the TV crews and are standing around gawking. Taroque (see p. 58) is also there in the company of the Missing Link (see p. 53) who is outfitted as a young blond Afrikaner investor. With them are two wealthy South African businessmen, Stein and Blanche, who have been showing Taroque the town and trying to get him to invest. Taroque noses around and acts friendly, but does not try to infect any more MPs just yet. Psiguard brings his half of the agents back to Government street where he notices Taroque and the Missing Link and reads their Twisted Fist affiliations from their minds. He telepathically tips agents off, sending them after Taroque and the Missing Link.

Taroque and the Link are not very tough, and should be easy to corner. Capture is another matter. Ali Asheef knows how very valuable he is to the Fists, and how dangerous his predictions could be if they fell into government hands. If captured and given the third-degree, or if *anyone* tries any but the most subtle form of mind-control, Ali bites down on his suicide tooth and leaves the agents with a corpse. However, in his pocket is his special tarot deck and personal journal. (See sidebars, pp. 50-52.)

The Newscast

As the South African government is not averse to showing atrocities committed by the AJNC, the SABC newscast is sent out internationally. It includes the Parliament footage of Steinbrenner's transformation, followed by Margaret Steinbrenner, mascara running down her face, sobbing, "Helmut is dead and that *thing* in the hospital is only a mockery." Commentators then interview Cape joker spokesman, Jeffrey Van der Meere (see p. 59). Van der Meere extends his condolences, then says, "I must stress, however, that the most cruel and inhuman thing about the wild card virus is not what it does to its victims, but the way they are treated by their fellow men. To be abandoned by friends and family during the greatest crisis in one's life is the cruelest thing I can conceive of. If it weren't for my wife Karen's loving support, I don't know if I would have survived. Therefore I beg Mrs. Steinbrenner to put aside her prejudice and remember that her husband now needs her love more than ever." The newscast continues in the same vein.

Operatives can go to their respective hotels. White nats and aces are housed in a beachfront hotel in Seapoint, one of the White Group Areas, while all others are placed in an unrestored Victorian inn in the Malay Quarter, also known as Bokaap. If anyone is nice to Psiguard (see p. 56), he insists on taking him out to dinner, or more likely back to Tuynhuys with Indian take-out. People will find Psiguard impossible to shake until they get angry (whether they show it or not), at which point he slinks off like a kicked puppy.

Unfortunately for the government agents, Yellowman is tightly linked with the South African conspirators and teleports out that evening, warning them. During the adventure, Yellowman acts as interference, stealing joker characters' Pass Books, jamming weapons and generally being Murphy's Law in action, allowing the South African plot to proceed apace. Twisted Fist agents simply help with the fireworks.

August 2, 1991, Cape Town

Conspirators are lying low. Naia Ombassa is in Soweto, astrally projecting to watch events at the Houses of Parliament. Jeffrey Van der Meere and the Missing Link are at his house in Seapoint, watching newscasts and the football match. Taroque (unless captured) is with Stein and Blanche, who are taking him on a tour of Golden Acre Square.

The incident in Cape Town has made the international news with the headline "Only Reforms Can Stop Second Wild Card Day." Parliament has a shouting match and a proposed bill repealing the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts is narrowly defeated, 82 to 79, 1 abstention. Dr. Andries Treurnicht leads the bill's opposition.



Naia Ombassa is prepared when Parliament adjourns. She lays in wait in the gardens of Government Avenue, mind-controlling Treurnicht as he leaves Parliament. He walks to a planter, picks up an envelope and virus ampule she has left among the flowers, bites open the ampule and promptly petrifies into a solid carnelian statue. Unless characters witness the action or psionically interfere

The Righteous Djinn

Arabic folklore holds that alongside this world is another, the world of the djinn. Spirits of fire, the djinn take many forms, from the monstrous to the sublime. The djinn can also slip from one world to another as they will, and a number have other marvelous powers. Many a hero took a beautiful female djinn for his wife, never knowing that she was not a normal woman like any other.

By Islamic tradition, the djinn were angels cast out of heaven for the revolt against Allah. Some, the *deevs*, went with the Shaitan as his minions, but others, the *peris*, sought to regain paradise through good deeds.

Muhammad believed he had been sent as apostle to both men and djinn. In the 72nd chapter of the Koran there is an account of how a tribe of djinn bowed down and listened to the holy message which men had disdainfully refused. This tribe became known in folklore as the Righteous Djinn. As with men, there were also Christian, Jewish and Pagan djinn.

When the wild card was dealt to the Arabian peninsula, many jokers, instead of believing they were accursed by Allah as espoused by prophets such as the Nur, instead chose to believe they were the descendants of djinn at last revealing their true natures. The djinn, while strange and different, by Islamic tradition were no less worthy of Paradise.

Within the Righteous Djinn, jokers and aces are referred to as djinn and peris. Together they fight against the deevs, their term for evil jokers and aces such as Sayyid and the Nur. The Righteous Djinn have formed an alliance with the Twisted Fists to this end.

The Black Dog's Plot

Hidden in Taroque's luggage are 200 ampules stolen from the Israeli army. Each is filled with saline solution and one individual spore of the wild card. The ampules may either be injected or ingested, affecting the individual as would any exposure to the wild card. Taroque uses his cards to predict which MP would be dealt a joker or a particularly graphic black queen. The best ones to infect are those who will have a delayed manifestation to the virus, triggered by the intense emotion of parliamentary debate. Naia Ombassa (see p. 54) then uses her illusion ability to disguise Taroque as he administers the serum to his intended victim, often with a handshake or a clap on the shoulder.

The Wild Card Tarot

The greatest prize the agents can obtain in South Africa is Taroque's tarot deck. The cards match those found on the steps of Parliament and in the Peruvian adventure (see sidebar, p. 28), but the deck is more than complete — in addition to the 78 cards of the Major and Minor Arcana, there are over 50 additional trumps and court cards. Every character described in this book has a card in the deck, showing them as they usually appear. Likewise with all the player characters. While unable to make predictions once out of Taroque's possession, the deck still retains a bit of wild card power, cards switching suit or appearance in the case of double-agents and shapeshifters, though never in plain sight. A few PCs and NPCs appear on multiple cards, reflecting their multiple roles.

The Suit of Rods is reserved for the agents of the Mace. Yellowman is shown as the *Page of Rods*, Captain Flint and Tintania as the *King* and *Queen*. The *Knight* will either appear with the usual tarot symbolism (Occultism skill roll to recognize this, or Hobby: Tarot at +8) or as a British PC. Other operatives receive such titles as *Prince*, *Princess*, *Jester*, *Counselor*, *Prime Minister*, etc.

The Suit of Swords holds the U.S. Justice Department. Carnifex is the *Knight of Swords*, Lady Black the *Queen*, Decathlon the *Page* — and agents as appropriate.

The Suit of Disks belongs to the Twisted Fists. Curari and Cocamama are the *King* and *Queen*, with *el Emisario Negro* the *Scholar*, Naia Ombassa the *Sorceress*, Telephoto (p. 92) the *Inquisitor* and so on as appropriate. The *Page* is absent, but next time the deck is shuffled, Yellowman will appear as the *Page of Disks* instead of the *Page of Rods*, and likewise with all other double-agents.

Continued on next page . . .

with Naia, security is the first to arrive, followed by the press. The envelope contains two tarot cards, one of the petrified Treurnicht and another of an obscenely male, six-armed, apelike giant. The note reads, "Let Treurnicht stand as his own monument to inflexibility and folly. Try another hand or the second card will be dealt. AJNC."

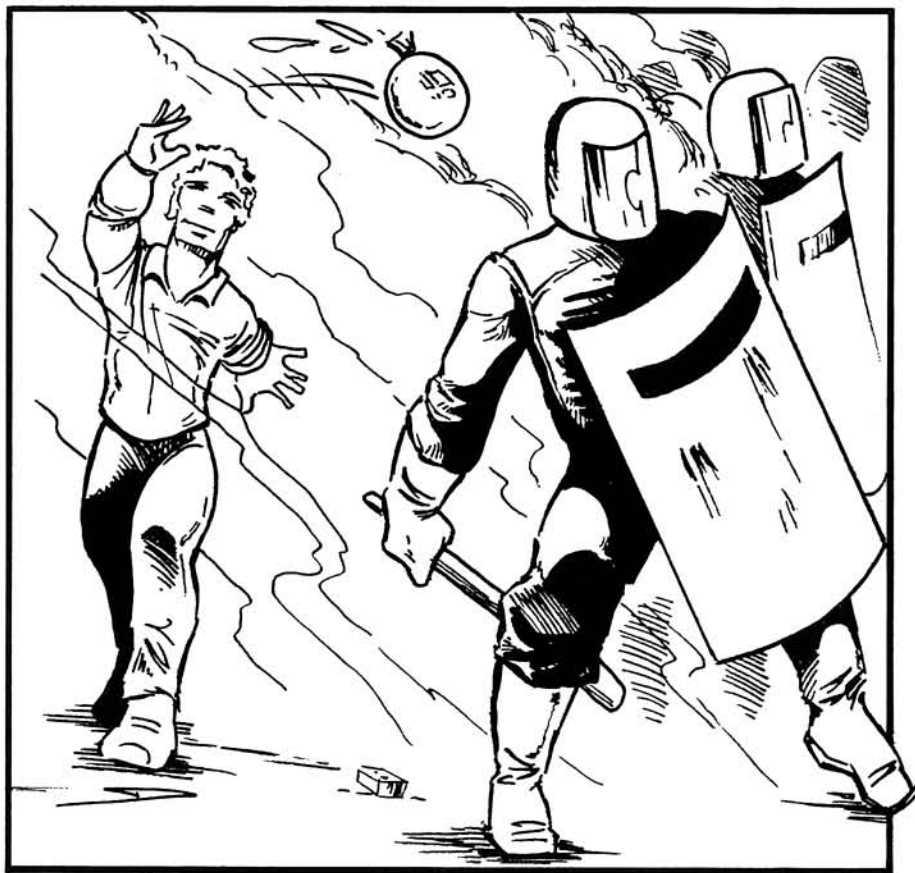
August 3, 1991: Malay Quarter

The morning news reports that Parliament is adjourned until the government apprehends the terrorists responsible for the attacks on Steinbrenner and Treurnicht. Jeffrey Van der Meere arrives in the Malay Quarter at 10 a.m., his wife and children riding on his back. He organizes a peaceful protest march down Longmarket and Parliament Streets to the Houses of Parliament. Yellowman, Decathlon and any other joker who wishes can join in, as this is a preliminary way to link into the AJNC resistance.

Fifty South African riot police are waiting at the Houses of Parliament, with guns. SABC reporters are also there. Van der Meere is told to take his protesters back to the joker quarter. Van der Meere refuses and police open fire on the crowd. What happens next is chaos: (See *The Twist in the Fists*, p. 48)

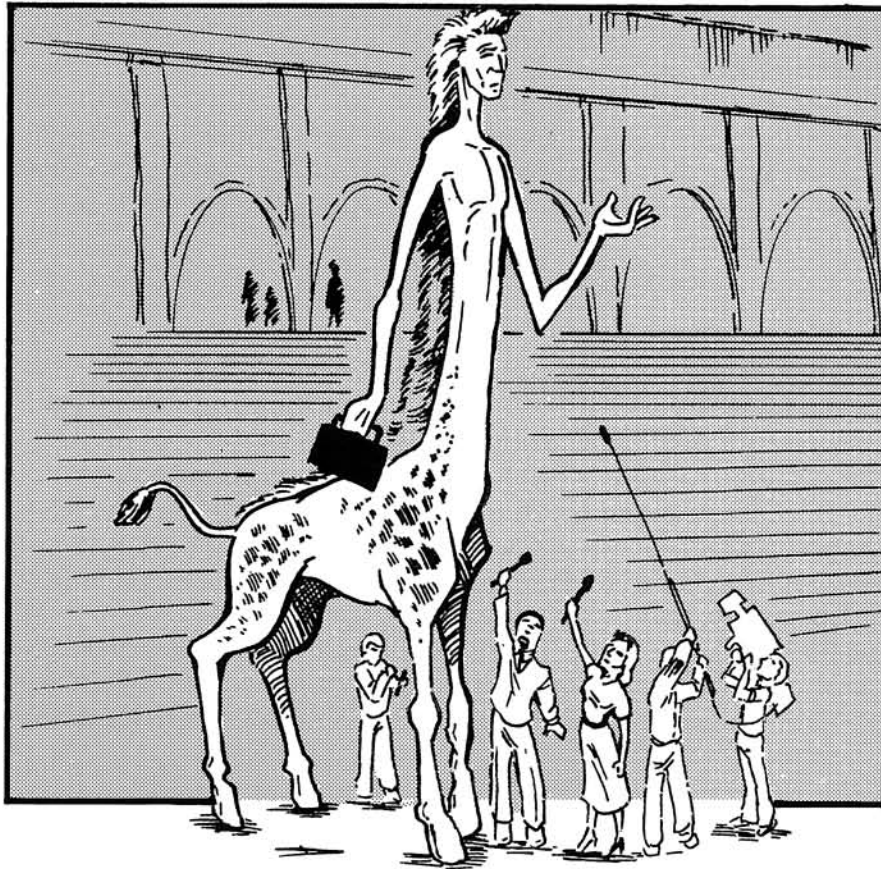
Yellowman teleports out, reappearing a moment later, invisibly, behind police ranks, throwing a water balloon filled with xenovirus Takis-A at them, then teleporting into the bushes of the Houses of Parliament. The balloon bursts and police melt, transform, explode and go into seizures. Those who do not transform or die stop firing. One of Van der Meere's children and several reporters die as well.

Van der Meere has been hit several times, but all his wounds are superficial. Several jokers and even more police have been killed or injured. Some police are still transforming, and jokers alternately help or gloat over them; ambulances



arrive within ten minutes. More police arrive, but are terrified. A few free spores hit the newcomers and three police die while another begins transformation into a joker. Police cordon off the area, allowing the protest to proceed.

Three hours later, police arrive in containment suits, spraying the street with muriatic acid and taking the shattered bits of balloon in for testing. The protesters slowly leave. Van der Meere is placed under house arrest.



August 4, 1991: Parliament

Riots are taking place in Soweto, Johannesburg, Pretoria and throughout the continent. State President Botha calls for Parliament to reconvene at 8 a.m. All available aces and joker-aces are asked to drop whatever investigations they are engaged in and go to Parliament for security. Government Avenue and Parliament Street are cordoned off for two blocks around the Houses of Parliament. Joker PCs are continually hassled for their visas, Pass Books and government IDs (a very opportune time to find out that Yellowman stole them).

Naia Ombassa spies on Parliament in astral form and is sensed by Psiguard, though he is able to do little else. Her body is in Taroque's hotel room. The South African Parliament goes into heated debate on the Immorality and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Acts, the Pass Laws, the Group Areas Act and the Race Re-evaluation Act. At 1 p.m., MP Stanford de Groot, a young conservative member of the National Party, mutates into the six-armed apeman from Taroque's card, having been exposed to the free spores still left in the area by Yellowman.

Parliament almost unanimously abolishes the Race Re-evaluation Act. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts follow, though not by an overwhelming vote. Provisions are made for the repatriation of jokers of white ancestry who were resettled to the Independent Homelands, and the revision of joker Pass Books to reflect their racial status.

Taroque, Naia and the Missing link all lie low and watch the fireworks.

The Wild Card Tarot (Continued)

The Suit of Cups belongs to Yellowman and his allies — the fourth set of minor players in the game. Yellowman appears as the *King of Cups*, while Psiguard (p. 56) is the *Knight*, Telephoto the *Page*, Kookaburra (p. 110) the *Jester*, and Guy Fawkes (in a red wig, see p. 74) as the *Queen*.

The Major Arcana is reserved for the powerful players behind the scenes. Professor Swift (p. 71) is depicted as *The Devil*, holding the chains of Yellowman, Herne (p. 75) and Guy Fawkes, while Wyungare (*Wild Cards*, p. 79) is *The Star*, Rangda (p. 91) is *Death*, David Stewart (p. 113) is the *The Hanged Man*, etc. (Stewart's card depicts him in either koala or human form, depending on the shuffling.)

As presentiment for the next adventure, Herne and the Gabriel Hounds (sidebar, p. 70) are depicted on *The Moon*, while Guy Fawkes is also represented on *The Tower*. In both cases the tower of traditional tarot symbolism is replaced with Big Ben, exploding in flames behind Guy Fawkes.

The cards of utmost importance, however, are *The High Priestess*, which (depending on the shuffling) reveals the Murga-muggai in her crone, maiden or spider form, and *The Hierophant*, which alternately shows the Astronomer or Cameo (pp. 107, 108), wearing his shattered glasses. *The Lovers* depicts Kookaburra and Cameo, with the Astronomer's spirit floating over them in the clouds.

All other cards appear with the standard symbolism (roll as above), though with a definite *Wild Card* flavor to them.

Billy Ray recognizes Cameo if he sees her picture on *The Hierophant* or *The Lovers*, and Yellowman recognizes his father (Professor Swift) on *The Devil*. Unless the agents have discovered Yellowman's Twisted Fist affiliations (and he's subsequently out of the adventure), Evie Swift will attempt to steal the deck — putting it in a safe place for his own reference. If the agents are allied with him in later adventures, he may retrieve it so everyone may figure out their pieces in the puzzle and their places in the big picture.

Game Masters should not point out the suits of the cards or the significance of the Major and Minor Arcana unless players specifically ask — Taroque's deck reveals many clues about the adventure, which the adventurers should discover themselves.

August 5-8, 1991: South Africa

Jokers throughout South Africa descend on the public beaches and services denied them for so long. On the 6th, in response to rioting in Indian and Coloured townships, Parliament passes legislation changing the "Whites Only" designation to "No Blacks." F.W. de Klerk's statement of "After all, if we let the jokers on the beaches, we might as well let in the Indians and the Coloureds" is not well-received by the Indian and Coloured population, but they take advantage of their new rights anyway.

On the 7th, the agents find out part of what the espionage business is all about: secret communiques from the Justice Department and the Mace tell agents to pull out immediately. The changes in South Africa, though violent, are in line with the desires of the United States and Great Britain. All agents are to report immediately to London.

Aftermath

If the above or anything similar comes to pass, within the month new Parliamentary elections are called. Jeffrey Van der Meere becomes the white South African Parliament's first joker representative, not counting Stanford de Groot. Helmut Steinbrenner is institutionalized, as is his wife. After three months of increased violence from and within the rebel groups, Indians and Coloureds are officially allowed into the House of Parliament as full members. A number of illegal joker-nat marriages are made valid, and many other bits of petty apartheid are abolished, including the Pass Book.

If agents succeed in revealing the conspiracy, riots still occur, and Parliament repeals many bits of petty apartheid in the next few months. The major demands of universal suffrage and black rights, however, are not met regardless of either outcome.



Taroque's Journal

Taroque's personal journey is written in Egyptian. It contains a basic overview of his meetings with the Twisted Fist leader, the Black Dog, his assignment, and the plot against the South African Parliament. There is also some mention of sending cards to the Messenger in Black (not that it will help the agents with the previous adventure, except in hindsight).

Beyond that, it goes into Taroque's puzzling over the significance of *The High Priestess*, *The Heiropphant*, *The Devil*, and *Death* (see sidebar, p. 50). Who are they, and what relationship do they hold to each other, and to *The Lovers*? What bearing does this have on the Twisted Fists and the Righteous Djinn? (Taroque does not have any conclusions, just speculations, mostly wrong.)

In the case of *The Tower* and *The Moon*, Taroque has more leads and notes. He has recognized Guy Fawkes, as does anyone from Britain or who is into ace trivia. (Yellowman recognizes his foster brother immediately.) Why would the British Prince blow up Parliament? Is it symbolic or literal? Herne is even more of a puzzle, but Taroque's notes seem to infer that the joker-ace male model has worked as an assassin for the Twisted Fists.

At the back of the book is a torn sheet of paper with a cryptic set of numbers, dates and initials. Anyone with either Economics or Business skill recognizes it as a set of predictions of the opening and closing prices of a number of blue chip stocks over the course of the next week. Any monetary investment made based on these figures will realize a 7,400% increase in value.



Missing Link, The (Rafique Vij, Piltdown Man)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: May 11, 1964, Gembok, South Africa

Appearance: Rafique is a big man (6' 3" 200 lbs.) of Indian descent, with curly black hair, high cheekbones and brows which meet in the middle. He's quite handsome, though he often forgets to shave. When he's using his power, however, Rafique may appear as almost any human or hominid of any age and either sex.

Wild Card Ability: The Missing Link can take the form of any primate by touching the appropriate bone fragment.

The further from the human genotype the specimen is, however, the longer it takes his power to attune.

ST 16 (80 points) **IQ** 18 (125 points) **Move:** 6
DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 14 (45 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d+1; Swing 2d+2 (but see below)

Advantages

Alertness +2 (10 points)
Handsome (15 points)
Rapid Healing (5 points)

Disadvantages

Gluttony (-5 points)
Odious Personal Habit: Practical joker (-5 points)
Social Stigma: Indian (-10 points)

Super-Powers

Morph-25(10) (Needs appropriate bone fragment - 80%; Uncontrollable -30%; Morph Memory not needed +100%; Can't do clothes -10%; Linked to Psychometry +10%; 97 points)

Psionics

Psychometry-20(200) (Linked to Morph +10%; Only to determine morphology -10%; Only works on bone fragments -40%; 128 points)

Skills

Acting-17 (1 point), Afrikaans-18 (2 points), Anthropology-18 (4 points), English (Native tongue), German-18 (2 points), Physiology-19 (12 points), Savoir-Faire-18 (1 point), Survival (Veldt)-17 (1 point), Zoology-17 (2 points)

Quirks

Goes into "Whites Only" bars and restaurants as a white, then shapeshifts back to his normal form about an hour later

Prefers the United Kingdom to South Africa, though stays because it's the best place for field work

Sloppy dresser

Very proper British accent

Rafique Vij grew up in the large Indian community in Gembok, South Africa. His parents sent him to Oxford where he studied physical anthropology. It was during graduate school that he drew his ace. While arguing with a professor over the proper morphological representation for *Zinjanthropus*, he picked up a jawbone and promptly changed into a Zinj specimen, the musculature exactly as he had said.

The popular press dubbed Rafique the "Missing Link."



By touching any hominid fossil or bone fragment, he automatically changed into an exact duplicate of the creature before the time of its death, and retained the form for slightly over an hour. This included changing sex and age if he wished, able to take either the male or female form of any given hominid at any stage in its development, a subject of some debate and embarrassment. When touching more than one fragment, he would shift to an intermediate form. The most extreme change he has effected was into a lemur, which required holding the skull for five minutes. Changing into another human, however, was instantaneous, and changing into a gorilla only took a second. The bone fragment did not need to be from a fossil, and he could take the form of another person by touching their tooth, something which caused problems on dates.

He took photographs of his changes and published them, along with a revised chart of primate and hominid morphological development. Many anthropologists were interested, but the academic establishment dismissed his

work as virus-induced fantasies, denouncing him as the wild card's answer to Piltdown Man.

Rafique went back to South Africa to do field work. The outlawed Indian National Congress recruited him as a spy since he was able to take the form of any white needed. As a silverback gorilla or a Gigantopithecus, he was also formidable muscle.

The Missing Link is presently playing the role of Jeffrey Van der Meere's children's new white nanny. He works as information courier between Jeffrey Van der Meere and Naia Ombassa, since the government would love to find something on the Giraffe. He's a backup in the present plot, but will take a more active role if needed.

Typical Dialogue: (Disguised as a white) "Oh, you're absolutely right, those Indians are going to take over the country. Pretty soon we're all going to be Indian." (Smiles as he changes back.) "Wow, it just happened to me. We must be having a wild card outbreak."

Ombassa, Naia

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: June 12, 1956, the Kalahari, Rhodesia

Appearance: Naia is an attractive African woman of mixed San-Herero heritage, with gold-brown skin, tight peppercorn hair, and small, regular teeth. She wears a traditional Herero costume — full length, brightly colored dress, petticoats and underskirts, and a matching tuku, a three-cornered headdress. She wears a rope of red beads, and down the center of her forehead is the line of a beautifying tattoo.

Wild Card Ability: Naia is a powerful psi, the child of a !Kung trance-healer and a Herero sorceress. As far as blood tests are concerned, she has not been touched by the wild card.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 11 (10 points) **IQ** 19 (150 points) **Move:** 7

DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 12 (20 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1

Advantages

Alertness +1 (5 points)

Attractive (5 points)

Common Sense (10 points)

Reputation: Witch (Modifiers cancel, 0 points)

Strong Will +5 (25 points)

Disadvantages

Duty: To SWAPO (-15)

Enemy: Psiguard (-10 points)

Illiteracy (-10 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Secret: Member of SWAPO (-20 points)

Secret: Non-wild-card psionic (-5 points)

Social Stigma: African (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +50 (Only recharged by dance and drum circle -40%, 90 points)

Super-Powers

Control Animation-18(15) (49 points)

Damage Control-19(20) (68 points)

Send Evil Gangwasi-18(15) (Bought as Animate; Can animate air +20%; 76 points)

Psionics

Astral Projection-18(20) (Rides hyena spirit +0%, 68 points)

Healing-19(20) (68 points)

Psychic Vampirism Power 20 (60 points)

Steal Energy-20 (12 points)

Steal Power-20 (12 points)

Telepathy Power 12 (60 points)

Emotion Sense-18 (2 points)

Illusion-18 (Can effect groups +50%; May make selective exemptions +10%, 4 points)

Mental Blow-18 (2 points)

Mental Stab-18 (2 points)

Mind Shield-20 (6 points)

Psi Sense-17 (1 point)

Telecontrol-18 (2 points)

Telereceive-22 (10 points)

Telesend-19 (Only to establish Telecontrol, -40%; 3 points)

Skills

Afrikaans-18 (1 point), Dancing-19 (16 points), Diplomacy-20 (6 points), English-18 (1 point), First Aid-19 (1 point), Naturalist-20 (6 points), Occultism-19 (1 point)

Quirks

Bears no particular malice toward her enemies
Mediates disputes in her village when home
Proud of her heritage
Thinks herself superior to non-psionics
Wants to have children, but refrains until she can find an appropriate husband

Naia Ombassa was born in southwest Rhodesia at a Herero cattle post. Her mother was a Herero sorceress, skilled in Bantu witchcraft, while her father was a trance-healer of the San bushmen. Her mother's people believed

that one's will-force could work great harm, consciously or unconsciously. Her father's people believed that illness was caused by evil spirits, Gangwasi, who attached themselves to a dying person. Naia was raised in both traditions, learning the richness of two types of magic. Her parents helped to hone her psionic powers, her father prophesying that she would be a great force for the freedom of her people.

Naia's parents died when she was ten, victims of Rhodesia's endemic fighting. When the government came through two years later, searching for the presence of the wild card, Naia tested negative. The most reasonable explanation for this is that her mother psychokinetically altered her genetic code, editing out the xenovirus while enhancing her psionic powers. However, it is possible that Naia is a native psionic . . .

Naia had a wisdom beyond her years, mostly because she pried into the minds of the village elders and used theirs. She kept quiet and learned. There were other sorcerers, but Naia looked into their minds and found that they were fakes — self-deluded fanatics.

At 14, Naia joined a San drum circle, using the trance healing of her father. She also mastered some of the darker sorceries of her mother and gained a reputation as a witch. If Naia ever needed any knowledge or skill, such as the ability to read, she read it from another person's mind. She never learned how to send thoughts directly into another person's mind, but she became skilled in mental illusions, which she used to communicate secretly, psychically whispering in people's ears while not revealing her identity.

Naia became a member of SWAPO, using her powers throughout South Africa. She had no qualms about killing, but preferred work as a spy. Naia has been assigned to the legislature of Cape Town for the past three years, and it was there that she encountered Niko Verwoerd.

She has a grudging respect for Psiguard, viewing him as a worthy opponent in games of mental tag. Beyond that, she has some deeper feelings, seeing him as the only psi in her memory approaching her own power level. When SWAPO and the AJNC win the revolution — something she is sure of — she plans to reveal herself as a psi.

Typical Dialogue: (Projecting Illusion:) "As you can see, everything is completely in order with my Pass Book. I am Esther Van Slyborg, and I'm deeply offended that you could have even mistaken me for a black woman. Good day to you, sir."



Psiguard (Niko Verwoerd)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: June 7, 1962, Soweto, South Africa

Appearance: Niko Verwoerd is very tall (6' 5", 200 lbs.) and lean, with broad shoulders, deep-set brooding eyes, a cleft chin, and sharp, intensely handsome features. His complexion is extremely fair, contrasting markedly with his dark, wavy, metallic indigo hair. He wears dark blue double-breasted suits so his hair looks black by comparison. His eyes are also metallic indigo, but he wears mirror-shades to cover them.

Wild Card Ability: Psiguard is a telepath and telekinetic.

Aces Jingle: (Known in South Africa)

Psiguard can't go every place,
The joker wants to be an ace.

ST 17 (100 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 7

DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 14 (45 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d+2; Swing 3d-1

Advantages

Acute Vision +2 (4 points)

Animal Empathy (5 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Danger Sense (15 points)

Intuition (15 points)

Patron: South African Government (15 points)

Reputation: Bodyguard of P.W. Botha, +4 to supporters, -4 to detractors (0 points)

Very Handsome (25 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Duty: To P.W. Botha (-15 points)

Honesty (-10 points)

Intolerance: Jokers and non-whites (-10 points)

Pacifism: Total non-violence (-30 points)

Severe Shyness (-10 points)

Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Radar Sense, 10 hex radius: Psiguard can extend his awareness telepathically (Must close eyes -10%; Can see inside objects +40%; Can see colors +20%; 90 points)

Super Disadvantages

Weakness: Emotions. Psiguard is unable to control his empathy. Particularly intense, violent emotions cause 1d of fatigue damage every minute. The death trauma of any creature over IQ 3 knocks him unconscious unless he is insulated by other, equally intense positive emotions. If surrounded by mass emotion, he may become possessed



by the feelings of the mob. If caught between two conflicting masses of emotion, as often happens in Parliament, he's incredibly uncomfortable, but can balance one off against the other. Emotions to him are palpable, and too much negative emotion makes Psiguard feel like he's drowning. He often resorts to a mental shout to stop the flow of emotions when they begin to overwhelm him. (-30 points)

Psionics

Clairaudience-20(3) (32 points)

Psychokinesis Power 18 (90 points)

Energy Shield-16 (Affects Others +40%, Area effect +40%, 15 points)

PK Shield-16 (Affects Others +40%, Area effect +40%, 15 points)

Telekinesis-16 (8 points)

Telepathy Power 8 (40 points)

Emotion Sense-20 (Uncontrollable -40%, 10 points)

Mind Shield-12 (1 point)

Psi Sense-16 (8 points)

Telereceive-25 (22 points)

Telescan-18 (12 points)

Telesend-20 (16 points)

Skills

Afrikaans (Native language), Diplomacy-16 (8 points), English-17 (8 points), Photography-14 (2 points), Survival (Veldt)-15 (4 points)

Quirks

Honestly believes in the tenets of apartheid and consequently despises himself

Loves animals; stops to pet stray cats or dogs

Never had a romantic relationship

Wears mirror shades, even indoors

Niko Verwoerd was born in the joker quarter of Soweto (southwestern townships) near Johannesburg. His parents had both been white Afrikaners until the Cape Town outbreak. After seven black queen births, Niko was born, human and physically perfect except for metallic indigo baby fuzz on his head.

Niko had a happy babyhood, his joker parents loving him dearly. However, childhood was a nightmare: jokers hated him because he looked like a nat, Coloureds hated him because he looked white, and whites hated him because he was a joker. Worse, he was an empath and couldn't shut out the emotions around him.

Two years later, the government tried to give school instruction only in Afrikaans, sparking the Soweto riots. The soldiers fired on a group of children Niko was with, and in his panic, Niko's telekinesis broke free and stopped the bullets. Suffused by the anger of the other children, Niko went on the offensive, but then experienced the first psychic attack of his life.

When he awoke in the hospital, Niko was told that he was being reclassified and reassigned to government custody. Other South African aces taught him to use and expand his powers, molding him into a tool of the government. His hair's metallic indigo color was unfortunate, keeping him from a perfect classification of Genetically Enhanced, but couldn't be disguised, especially when he got beard stubble and chest hair.

At 18, Niko went into government service. Assigned to one dignitary after another, he finally came to rest with P.W. Botha. Niko knows the main reason Botha took him on was to appease liberals ("See — I've even got a joker for a bodyguard"), but he also knows that Botha is nowhere near as hateful as some members of the far right, who would see all jokers immediately killed or sterilized. Botha's personal feelings for his bodyguard are practically nonexistent, which is the way Niko likes it.

For political reasons, Psiguard's normal wild card designation, GCA&E (Genetically Changed, Augmented and Enhanced), has been altered to Genetically Enhanced, though he still has metallic indigo hair and lacks control over his empathic power. He now has the same legal privileges as other white aces, able to walk freely in the White Group Areas. Few members of white society accept him, however, and he is very lonely.

Psiguard despises violence and murder, though he honestly believes he is doing the right thing by working for the South African government. Laws are slowly becoming more relaxed, and he fears what would happen if there were a return to the hard-liners of the past or a violent government overthrow. He distrusts the AJNC and other joker groups because of their Marxist associations — he knows what happened to jokers behind the Iron Curtain, and can't believe the AJNC is so blind. Secretly, he helps certain liberal politicians, telepathically tipping them off to plans of conservatives. He's also met Yellowman, and after seeing the joker-ace's memories and the truth of his emotions, he offered to help in any way he could. He's not sure what that entails, but he's desperate to help the world get better — and Yellowman, who likes him, is the closest Psiguard has ever had to a friend.

Naia Ombassa has been flickering around the periphery of his telepathic senses. Every time he's tried to capture her, however, she's knocked him unconscious. His reputation, his job and possibly even his life depend on her capture, and he will do everything short of murder to stop her from her plot, whatever it is.

With his height, sharp features and mirrorshades, most people mistake his shyness for coldness. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who genuinely likes Psiguard will have him following like a puppy. He is starved for positive emotion and will do anything to receive it. He knows the difference between friends and users, however, and hates pity even more than hatred. Any telepath who gets beyond his shields will find a sea of hurt, pain and self-loathing, more than enough ammunition to destroy him — if anyone were that cruel. Psiguard is a genuinely nice person, and what he needs more than anything else is a plane ticket out of South Africa.

Typical Dialogue: "Niko Verwoerd. Pleased to meet you."

Taroque (Ali Asheef)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: September 19, 1947, Cairo, Egypt

Appearance: Of medium height (5' 10", 160 lbs.), Taroque looks the part of the distinguished, mysterious Egyptian and plays it up. Dressed in a red fez, white linen suit and gold seal ring, he could be anything from a diplomat to a drug dealer. His hair is graying at the temples and he wears a neat beard and moustache. He favors mirrorshades in all his transactions and has a gold tooth, his right second incisor.

Wild Card Ability: Taroque is a highly-skilled precog. By use of a regular deck of cards, he may determine what any given person has drawn or will draw from the deck of the wild card — Ace, Deuce, Joker or Black Queen. Using his own special tarot deck, he may determine particulars of the manifestation, including specific ace powers or joker deformities. He may also foresee the general future, though such predictions are sketchy at best.

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 17 (100 points) **Move:** 5
DX 10 (0 points) **HT** 11 (10 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d; Luger 2d+2

Advantages

Ambidexterity (10 points)
Common Sense (10 points)
Eidetic Memory, Level 1 (30 points)
Empathy (15 points)
Very Wealthy (30 points)

Disadvantages

Compulsive Behavior: Devout Muslim — Will not let anything short of an attempt on his life interrupt his daily prayers (-5 points)

Compulsive Behavior: Gambling (-5 points)

Secret: He is the ace Taroque (-10 points)

Secret: Member and financial backer of the Twisted Fists and the Righteous Djinn (-20 points)

Sense of Duty: To the Righteous Djinn (-10 points)

Psionics

Precognition-30(30) (Only matters concerning wild cards, all other predictions at -10, -40%; Must use deck of cards -40%; Only active precognition possible -60%; Actually changes the face of the card to an appropriate picture +10%; 35 points)

Skills

Arabic-18 (2 points), Aramaic-16 (½ point), Diplomacy-16 (1 point), Egyptian (Native tongue), English-17 (1 point), Gambling-18 (2 points), Guns-12 (4 points), Hebrew-16 (½ point), Holdout-18 (4 points), Merchant-22 (6 points), Public Speaking-18 (2 points), Savoir-Faire-19 (2 points), Slight of Hand-14 (32 points), Theology-19 Islam (4 points), Writing-18 (2 points)

Quirks

Devout Muslim, but not a follower of the Nur; readily lectures on flaws in the Nur's interpretations

Insists on doing business over coffee; won't touch alcohol

Very precise, almost effeminate, speech and mannerisms — always impeccably groomed

Wears gold Rolex, set to chime five minutes before the time for each daily prayer; uses compass to find Mecca



Ali Asheef grew up in Cairo. His father was a merciless card-shark at the ancient game of taroque, a marketplace gambling game using tarot cards. Ali learned early and soon surpassed his father at the game.

His mother taught him how to read fortunes with the tarot, and he found that sometimes when he shuffled them, the faces changed, new trumps appearing where there had been none before. He shuffled two decks together and found that half the cards turned into totally new trumps, portraits of the Living Gods and other known aces and jokers. Ali realized he was a wild card, but kept the fact to himself. He was a devout Muslim and he knew that the Living Gods — all pagan heretics — would come after him if he revealed his power.

Ali found he could most easily predict who would draw the wild card and what they would be dealt, often down to the precise joker or horrible black queen. He was also very lucky at cards, especially when he dealt, but he suspected that his power knew what was best for him when it operated. Ali often won at taroque, but never enough to cause suspicion. By age 20, he had his own market stall and a large stash of money. He found that his cards, with effort, could be used to predict stock trends, though as with his gambling, his power never allowed him to earn an unusual amount. He took four wives over the course of the next 10 years, moving to a large and beautiful villa supported by a burgeoning import-export business.

One afternoon a spread of cards revealed that Selima, his beloved youngest wife, would draw the black queen that week, and their daughter would draw a horrible joker a month later. Ali panicked, knowing it to be true but refusing to believe it. He felt it might be a punishment from Allah for abuse of his power. Selima died as he had predicted. Ali took his daughter to doctors, hoping they could do something, but all came to pass as he had fore-

seen. He buried himself in finance, showering his deformed daughter with presents as he sought to make up for his inability to help her.

In 1981, his daughter was killed by followers of the Nur. Something snapped in Ali and he laid spread after spread, concentrating on revenge. The cards led him to the Righteous Djinn (see sidebar, p. 49). Ali took the code name of Taroque, putting his finances and power at the disposal of the Djinn and the Fists. His stock predictions, spread broad across the world, have helped finance the increase in Fist operations.

Though he's an ace, the Fists know Taroque to be loyal. He is incredibly valuable to them as a monetary source, but Taroque has chafed under the lack of activity, wanting direct revenge for the death of his daughter. Consequently the Black Dog has assigned him to South Africa. His occupation as a rich nat importer makes a perfect cover for his work with Naia Ombassa. Like many rich Africans, his wealth also gives him status as an honorary white, and South African businessmen are eager to curry favor with him after divestment by American companies.

Ali's gold tooth contains a cyanide capsule, which he will bite down on if captured and all hope is lost, or if anyone tries to mind-control him. Death occurs immediately. He also has 200 ampules of stolen Israeli wild card serum. Single viral particles in saline solution, the ampules may be injected, ingested or administered in any other usual way. If broken, agents will have to deal with one loose viral particle per ampule. Taroque's seal ring is actually a poison ring, outfitted with a tiny syringe and room for one ampule.

Typical Dialogue: "Good day. I'm Ali Asheef, dealer in Egyptian goods and handicrafts. I am pleased to make your acquaintance."

Van der Meere, Jeffrey (Giraffe)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: December 28, 1957, Cape Town, South Africa

Appearance: Jeffrey Van der Meere is a giraffe-centaur. From the waist down, he has the torso and four legs of a large male giraffe. From the waist up, he's human but incredibly elongated. His chest and abdomen are 40 feet long, his neck 7 feet, and his arms dangle down a ludicrous 48 feet to his giraffe knees. Altogether, he's over 60 feet tall and 32,000 pounds. His face, however, is human, with blond hair, blue eyes and slightly buck teeth. A ridge of blond bristle runs the incredible length of his spine. He's given up wearing clothes because they're prohibitively expensive and look silly.

Wild Card Ability: Enhanced Strength due to his sheer size.

ST 650 (194 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 17

DX 20 (80 points) **HT** 15/50 (175 points)

Damage: Thrust 23d; Swing 25d; Kick 23d + 1

Advantages

Charisma +2 (10 points)

Immunity to Disease (10 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Reputation: Joker spokesman, +4 jokers (10 points)

Disadvantages

Dependents: Wife and two children (-60 points)

Gigantism (-10 points)

Skinny (-5 points)

Unattractive (-5 points)

Super Advantages

- Extra Long Arms: 16-hex reach (150 points)
- Four Legs (5 points)
- Growth, Level 9 (Always on -40%, 54 points)
- Hooves (15 points)

Super Disadvantages

Dependency: Food, must eat huge amounts to support body mass (-20 points)

Skills

Accounting-16 (6 points), Administration-16 (4 points), Afrikaans (Native tongue), Economics-17 (8 points), English-16 (4 points), Public Speaking-16 (4 points)

Quirks

- Admirer of Xavier Desmond; has read most of his works
- Eats leaves off trees
- Knows the law and will quote it to his advantage
- Sharp tongue and caustic wit

Jeffrey Van der Meere managed the accounting department for the Ford Motor Company, South Africa, having an MS in economics from Oxford and an MBA from Stanford. Though from an old Afrikaner wine-making family, he had changed his values somewhat while abroad, being a liberal yuppie by South African standards. He deplored apartheid, but wasn't about to do anything in particular about it aside from move his family to Australia if the situation got any worse. Then he ran into a stray xenovirus spore.

The transformation went on for three days as he stretched out to over 60 feet tall. Luckily, his face and upper body were still marginally human and more importantly white. He could not be deported to the Independent Reserves while that still was the case. The government annulled his marriage and told him to move to the Coloured townships. However, his wife cited that she was retaining him as her live-in gardener, permissible under the law. Officials complained, and Jeffrey Van der Meere told the press that he and his wife fully intended to violate the Immorality Acts — they just hadn't yet figured out how.

Jeffrey had friends and family in high places and numerous strings were pulled and threats were made. The South African government stood back and let him live at his house on Springbok street in the old Signal Hill area, making speeches to the press from his garden. The government preferred having a fly in the ointment of apartheid over a martyr for the South African jokers. He's been under house arrest on occasion, but other than that, little has happened.

The Twisted Fists have contacted him through Yellowman. He's agreed to help the cause as much as he can. He's carefully tailored his speeches to the press to make the most of every incident, stressing the need for change if white South Africa wants to escape death by revolution, or even worse, deformity by the wild card as the AJNC has threatened.

Jeff Van der Meere has a cousin, Jan, who's a member of the Cape Democrats and an MP. Jan is a strong liberal who fought for jokers' rights long before Geoff's infection. He's also one of the few MPs trusted by Psiguard, and receives telepathic information about the plans of the other MPs.

Typical Dialogue: "Listen, you don't call me Giraffe, I won't call you Shorty. Sensible?"



NORTHERN IRELAND— DOUBLE SOLITAIRE

4

On the behalf of His Majesty, I wish to extend the sympathies of the Crown to its subjects in Liverpool and Belfast and to assure them that the utmost will be done to help the survivors of the virus and that they will not receive the maltreatment shown their fellows in other countries. I also ask that they be patient as we requisition the necessary supplies. This is not to say that Britain has not been prepared for this day. On the contrary, we have done our utmost to prepare for this eventuality, but even pounds of cure are insufficient if the cure is still shoddy and we have not found the ounce of prevention needed to forestall this dread disease.



An Irish Glossary

Armalite: A brand of assault rifle. Fully automatic, the Armalite 180 is the weapon of choice for both army and terrorists in Northern Ireland.

Brigid: The Celtic goddess of fire and poetry. Later Christianized into St. Bridget. Presently the name used by a pyrokinetic of the Red Branch.

Changeling: In modern Irish slang, any wild carder. In mythology, an elf of the Sidhe switched at birth or shortly after with a human infant. Most died soon after, though some grew up thinking they were human, only to discover their faerie ancestry later on. Most became sickly and deformed, though others matured to become great heroes.

Club Felix: London's answer to *Aces High*. A gaming establishment located in an 18th-century mansion on Curzon Street (see p. 66).

Cuchulainn: Literally "Cullan's Hound." Greatest hero of Northern Irish legend, Cuchulainn lead the Red Branch of Ulster. Also the name taken by ace Grant Greer until his death, though a new ace of the Red Branch has taken up the name.

FFFF: Fenian and Fomor Freedom Fighters. An Irish Republican guerrilla group lead by Thomas O'Brian, the joker-ace Fionne MacCoul. The FFFF wishes to see Ireland united with Fionne as High King.

Faerie: Irish equivalent of the Dream-time. The land of the Sidhe. Also any creature or person from that land.

Fenian: In modern Irish slang, any ace, or nat fighter worthy of the title of ace. In legend, one of the celebrated members of the war band of Fionne MacCoul. Also a term for any non-joker member of the FFFF.

Fionne MacCoul: Finn the Fair. In Irish legend, a giant warrior and the hero of many battles. Now the name and form taken by the joker-ace leader of the FFFF.

Fomor: In modern Irish slang, any joker or joker-ace. In legend, the children of chaos and old night, beings who lived under the ocean, each of them more twisted and strangely disfigured than the last. Also a term for any joker in the FFFF.

Continued on next page . . .

I also wish to assure the victims of this disease that they retain their full rights as citizens of the Empire. Captain Flint and others have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt the loyalty and humanity of those changed by the virus in the face of those blackguards who would doubt them. If something has happened to you or your neighbor, remember that we have survived war and we can survive this. We did not abandon those wounded or crippled by the Blitz, and neither will we abandon the victims of the wild card virus. The English and Northern Irish people have always shown themselves to flourish in the face of adversity, and I ask no less of you now.

— Sir Winston Churchill, 1952

Wild Cards Northern Ireland Since World War II

Northern Ireland consists of six of the nine counties of the old Irish province of Ulster, set aside from the rest by the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. Roughly two-thirds of the inhabitants are Protestant descendants of Scots and English settlers from the 17th century. The remaining third are Irish Catholic. Traditionally, Protestants have wished to retain ties with Great Britain, while Catholics favor unification with Ireland. The Protestant majority has held power till the present day.

After the release of the Takisian xenovirus, the more superstitious Irish, mainly rural Catholics, believed that wild cards were changelings, elves of the Sidhe switched with human infants after birth, finally revealing their true natures. In rural areas, especially in the southern provinces, many were driven out or killed.

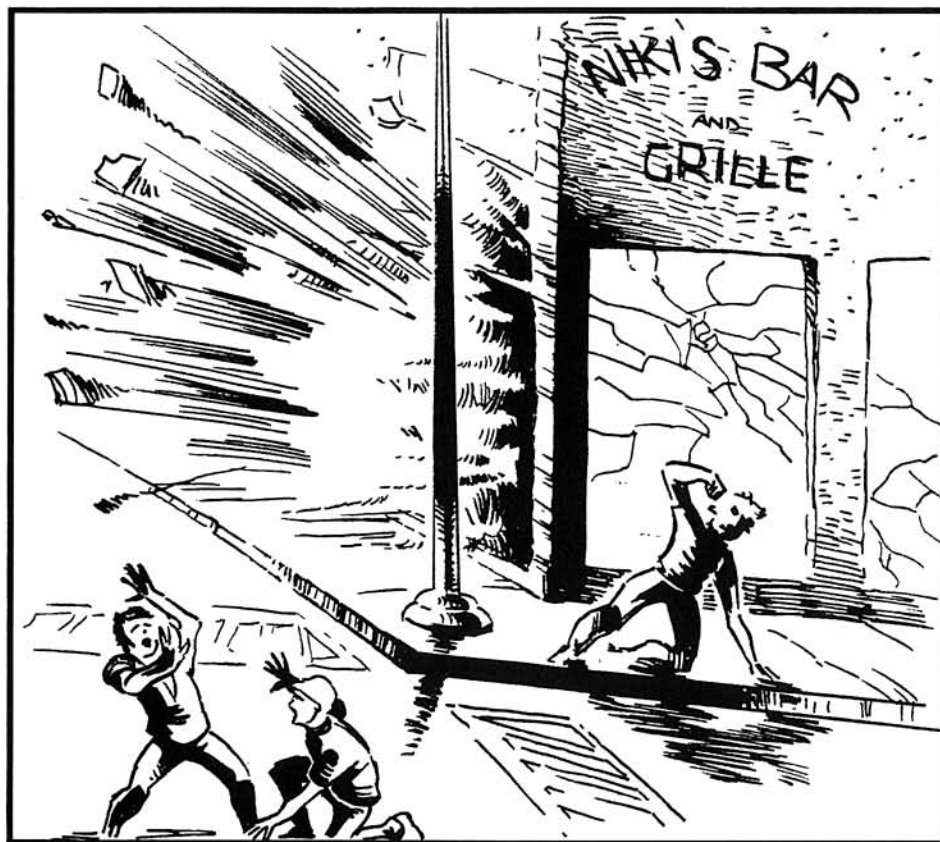
Even in more civilized regions, the Catholic church had trouble dealing with parishioners in the shape of demons. Debate raged (and has still not been settled) regarding whether jokers should be allowed to breed with natural humans, and if so doing constituted bestiality or several other sins. The question of divorce also arose. While strict church doctrine upheld the sacrament of marriage, many priests were unsure when faced with the case of Mary and Jacob McGuire, recent newlyweds. The wild card had changed Jacob into a 30-foot-tall skinless ogre. His mind was still intact, however, and he begged his horrified wife to remain true to him. The church eventually ruled that, regardless of his physical condition, Jacob was still Mary's husband, and the marriage, having been consummated, could not be annulled. The Anglican church was more liberal in its approach to the situation, and Mary McGuire procured a divorce. Tensions between Protestants and Catholics grew.

In 1949, the southern provinces of Ireland, the Irish Free State, became the Republic of Ireland. In 1952, there was a small wild card outbreak in Belfast, linked to the Liverpool epidemic. Northern Irish jokers received better treatment than their southern counterparts, a fact contributed in part to by the hero status of Captain Flint in Great Britain. Conditions became worse, however, and they took up residence in the poorer sections of Belfast.

Political and religious tensions continued to grow in Northern Ireland as the Protestant Ulster Unionist Party retained permanent control of the Belfast Parliament. Catholics suffered discrimination in both civil and political matters. In the late 1960s, a civil rights movement arose which strove to address the Catholic grievances through non-violent means. Protestant radicals saw this as a Republican threat, and violence broke out. The Ulster Volunteer Force and Ulster Freedom Fighters engaged in bombings against Roman Catholics, and atrocities mounted as the Red Branch of Ulster, a Loyalist ace group, joined the fray.

The Irish Republican Army was originally a small faction in the civil rights

movement, but after increasing violence in 1968-1969, a splinter group, the "Provisional IRA," broke away. The PIRA linked with the radical joker-ace, neo-pagan organization, the Fenian and Fomor Freedom Fighters. Together they began their own campaign of murder, bombings and other terrorist activities with the goal of a unified Ireland.



Riots and super-powered battles ensued. In April 1969, British Army units and agents of the Mace were dispatched to quell the disturbance. In 1972, as a result of increasing violence, the British government instituted direct rule from London, an action unpopular on both sides of the confrontation. The Ulster Defense Regiment was formed from citizens from both sides of the community to deal with the violence, though after a campaign of murders and bombings by the PIRA against Catholic UDR men, the Catholic membership decreased to virtually nil. All recent attempts by the government to recruit Catholic citizens for the UDR have met with virtual failure.

An attempt was made in 1973 to set up a Northern Irish Assembly and Executive, but the Sunningdale Agreement was opposed by Loyalists and led to a general strike, the declaration of a state of emergency, and finally, the resignation of the Executive, Brian Faulkner. This also heralded the breakup of the Ulster Unionist Party which had dominated Northern Irish politics for the past 50 years.

All attempted constitutional conventions have failed and violence has continued to the present day. In 1985, talks between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland resulted in the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This document confirmed that there would be no change in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland unless there were a majority vote from the province, while the Republic of Ireland would serve in an advisory capacity in matters concerning Northern Ireland. The agreement, while a significant step toward peace, was (and still is) unpopular with both Unionists and Republicans.

An Irish Glossary (Continued)

Gabriel Hounds: Magical white dogs with blood-red ears, forming the pack of the Wild Hunt (see p. 70)

Geas: In Celtic myth, a mental prohibition placed by a druid on a man or woman at birth. To break geas invited great dishonor and misfortune.

Guy Fawkes: An English conspirator who sought to blow up the House of Parliament by loading the cellar with gunpowder kegs. The "Gunpowder Plot" failed and Fawkes was executed in 1606. On Guy Fawkes Day, November 6th, British burn Guy Fawkes in effigy. Also the ace name taken by Britain's Prince Edmund in honor of his remarkable pyrokinetic and self-immolation powers.

Herne: In Celtic myth, the Master of the Wild Hunt. Presently the name and form taken by British joker-ace Dylan Hardesty.

Lia Fial: The Stone of Destiny, or Kingstone, one of the four great treasures of Ireland. Legend claimed that if the true King of Ireland sat on the stone, it would issue a human cry. Captured by Edward I of England in 1300, it was placed in Westminster Abbey, part of the Coronation Chair. Recently stolen by Fionne MacCoul, it has now been recovered and placed in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Red Branch of Ulster: A Northern Irish Loyalist guerrilla force, comprising primarily aces and joker-aces. In legend, the Red Branch of Ulster was the name of the halls of Cuchulainn and his warriors.

Satire: In Irish folklore, a magical lampoon composed by a bard, bringing an ironic and often well-deserved fate down on his enemies.

Sunlit World: Perversely, the Irish term for this world, bearing the same relation to Faerie as the Shadow World does to the Dreamtime (see p. 115).

Sidhe: Pronounced "Shee." The elves of ancient Irish myth.

Tuatha de Danaan: The people of the goddess Danaan. The gods of ancient Irish legend who fought against the Fomor.

UDR: The Ulster Defense Regiment. A group of citizens formed to deal with the violence of the urban battles.

The Undry: The magical cauldron of the Dagda, high god of the Tuatha de Danaan. In legend it could feed any man according to his worth. The name is sometimes applied to other legendary cauldrons.

Wild Hunt: In Celtic myth, a magical hunt conducted at night by Herne and the Gabriel Hounds, chasing down lawbreakers and tearing them apart.

The Fenian and Fomor Freedom Fighters

The most famous hero in Irish legend was Fionne MacCoul, Finn the Fair. He assembled the greatest band of heroes Ireland has ever known, the Fenians. Besides their great strength and agility, many of the Fenians also possessed strange and wondrous powers.

After the advent of the wild card, it was only natural that those people dealt the ace became known as Fenians, the brave, strong and magical warriors of ancient Ireland. Ireland's most ancient legends, however, were tales of the battles between the Tuatha de Danaan, the People of the Goddess Danaan, and the Fomor, the children of chaos and old night.

In legend, the Tuatha de Danaan came to Ireland, gods possessing magical powers. However, under the seas lived the Fomor, a race of strange people, each more twisted and hideously deformed than the last, though many possessed powers equal to their rivals'. There was Balor of the Evil Eye who could decimate armies with a glance, his grandfather with the cow's face, his hideous mother with a demon's strength and multiple breasts, his strangely handsome father with skin white as sea foam and golden seaweed for hair, and many others. Some, such as Bress the Beautiful, were as physically perfect as the Tuatha de Danaan, though warped in other ways. Strangest of the Fomor deformities, both hideous and beautiful, was that no two were alike.

Continued on next page . . .



Real Northern Ireland Since World War II

The politics of the real Northern Ireland have followed generally the same course as *Wild Cards* Northern Ireland. The Fomor and Fenian Freedom Fighters and the Red Branch of Ulster do not exist, and there have been no persons hurt by super-powered battles, laser blasts or pyrokinesis. Terrorists on both sides, however, have made do with petrol bombs and Armalite rifles, and almost 3,000 people have been killed in the past 20 years. There have been strong attempts to mend differences and rebuild the community, though violence has escalated in recent years.

August 9, 1991: Buckingham Palace

The agents, including Carnifex, are taken by limousine from Heathrow Airport to the offices of the Mace in Buckingham Palace. They are greeted by Titania and Captain Flint, and, depending on their performance in South Africa, either congratulated or consoled. Either is acceptable if they've gotten the names and tactics of Twisted Fist operatives. There's a party and dinner behind closed drawing room doors. Churchill personally congratulates the team.

The Mace expects trouble in Northern Ireland. Jean Dixon's predictions just came in from the U.S. — the Twisted Fists are planning something extreme, and Dixon, the FBI ace Oracle, is seldom wrong. The Mace wants the agents to infiltrate the FFFF in Northern Ireland.

Yellowman has to leave the team temporarily; he's a well-known ace in Northern Ireland and a Protestant with strong links to the British government (Prince Edmund's foster brother). He'll be working as DJ at Downtown Radio in Newtownards, the evening shift, 4-10 p.m. If the agents need his help, they can get him on the request line and he'll be there immediately. If Yellowman has been unmasked as a Twisted Fist operative, he pleads to being mind-controlled



by Naia Ombassa or another psi. His father, Professor Niles Swift (see p. 71), backs him up in this, manipulating any proceedings, if they occur, in his son's favor. If clearing his name is impossible, Yellowman just teleports elsewhere.

The operatives are to take their old covers of Tri-Psi college students (see sidebar, p. 21), traveling their way through Europe and into Northern Ireland. Both to establish their presence as tourists and celebrate the end to a mission (or drown their sorrows), Yellowman, Titania, Captain Flint and Sir Winston suggest they all go to *Club Felix* (see sidebar, p. 66). Formal dress and £100 is provided to each visitor for the evening.

Club Felix

The club scene is high class and trendy, redolent of old money and young hands to spend it. Yellowman pops in, wearing a bizarre but expensive Italian outfit. He'll greet all agents as fraternity brothers and sisters and introduce them to his father, Professor Niles Swift. Blarney psychically checks out every agent and his powers. Titania is also there, and makes some reference to it being so lovely to see them all right after their vacation turned into such a bloody disaster.

Prince Edmund and Herne (see pp. 74-75) arrive shortly after the agents, Captain Flint lumbering after them. The purpose of the evening is a chance for operatives to introduce themselves to their superiors in an informal and non-threatening environment and to make sure they don't reveal their association with Captain Flint or other public agents while in the company of the FFFF.

August 10, 1991: London to Belfast

American characters are given £1,000 in travelers' checks, while British characters receive cash. They all travel to Liverpool by bus, taking the ferry to Northern Ireland. The trip takes all day. Reservations have been made at the Forum Hotel on Great Victoria Street in Belfast. Everyone should be tired by the time they reach it, near 8 p.m. A rental car has also been reserved.

August 11, 1991: Belfast

Agents have been briefed on the FFFF. The UDR does not know precisely where they are based, though believe it may be near either the Giant's Ring (to the south) or Cave Hill (north of Belfast proper). The local poet, Satire, purported to be an ace (see p. 81), is known to have ties to the FFFF. Agents are to befriend him and try to work their way in. Satire hangs out at Tom Kelly's on Short Strand.

The Giant's Ring

Near the Shaw's Bridge carpark is a Neolithic earthwork, 750 feet across with a dolmen in the middle. Primrose (see p. 80) is nearby, picking primroses. With her is her older brother, Laughlin (she calls him Laughie). He's mute and is holding her bag for her. Her cats roam around, chasing butterflies.

Primrose is very curious of any jokers in the party — she knows they're all changelings, and says as much, but knows many changelings refuse to believe they're really elves of the Sidhe. If asked, she politely introduces herself as Eleanor, explains that her brother's mute, and is otherwise very tight-lipped. Kate Kelly arrives about an hour later. They wait for all strangers to depart before they enter into Fionne's Halls through the dolmen.

The Fenian and Fomor Freedom Fighters (Continued)

The similarities did not have to be remarked upon more than once. Ireland's jokers became known as the Fomor, the monsters of ancient myth. Repudiated by the Irish Catholic church, many Fenians and Fomor began to look to the old religions of Ireland, reviving the traditions of the druids. In 1963, a leader came forward, Joseph McBride, a Fomor known as Balor of the Burning Eye. The wild card had turned his right eye into an uncontrollable laser cannon, much like the Fomor king of ancient legend. Doctors cut the muscles of his eyelid so that it could only be opened by physically lifting it.

The Fenian and Fomor Freedom Fighters were then formed, a joker-ace neopagan regiment working with the IRA. Balor led the FFFF until his capture by British forces in 1980. He is presently imprisoned in a special facility in the Tower of London, serving a life sentence for numerous crimes, including the incineration of Lord Mountbatten in 1979.

The FFFF were disorganized until 1984, when Thomas O'Brian drew his wild card and became Fionne MacCoul. For the past three years, the FFFF has again become a strong and militant force for the unification of Ireland.

The Red Branch of Ulster

Northern Ireland's greatest hero was Cuchulainn, literally "Cullan's Hound." Like Fionne and the Fenians before him, Cuchulainn assembled his own band of heroes, fighting many battles.

In 1969, a group of Loyalist aces emerged, led by Cuchulainn, actually an ace weapons master named Grant Greer. His band was the FFFF's opposite and used its powers to terrorize the Catholic residents of Northern Ireland.

Greer was killed in 1974 during a battle with the UDR, the group continuing under a series of minor aces and major terrorists.

In 1985, the Red Branch of Ulster gained a new leader. Whereas Grant Greer possessed the hero's legendary skill with weapons, the RB's new Cuchulainn (identity unknown) is a pyrokinetic. This also fits the hero's myth, the new Cuchulainn creating "sparks of ruddy fire which the seething of his savage wrath caused to mount above him." Brigid, another pyrokinetic, possibly Cuchulainn's sister, often takes his place.

These two aces organize raids by Protestant nats and jokers on the Catholic community. The UDR suspects that Cuchulainn and Brigid are merely figureheads and there is a mastermind behind the Red Branch, but investigations have revealed nothing.

Club Felix

Food: ★★★★★

Service: ★★★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

Cost: very expensive

Located in an 18th-century mansion on Curzon Street, *Club Felix* is London's answer to *Aces High*. *Club Felix*, however, is first and foremost a private gaming club. The tables and fixtures are all gorgeous 18th- and 19th-century antiques that Chrysalis would have given her false teeth for, if she had any. Poker, roulette and all the usual are played amid the grandeur of carved oak panels and exotic pieces from the colonial days of the empire.

Club Felix opens every evening from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Memberships are £50 each and the minimum bet at all tables is £20. All aces and joker-aces are admitted free only once, upon demonstrating their power. Club members may also bring guests on a one-time-only basis.

The proprietor, Felix Marmount, is a ridiculously tall, gawky joker, though he makes a very good try at looking distinguished in a custom-made black tux and tails. The wild card gave all his limbs and digits an extra joint, making him stand somewhere over 8 feet tall, mostly leg. He's also got seven fingers on each hand, each digit over a foot long, even counting that extra joint. Judging by the size of his shoes, I'd suspect the virus did something similar to his feet, though I've heard he takes badly to jokes about prehensile toes.

Marmount, however, is more than just a joker. He's got an ace talent for building gadgets, specializing in gizmos that muddle with psionics. After fears that precogs, telekinetics, telepaths and probability manipulators might be fixing his games — and accusations that he was one of the ones doing the fixing — Marmount installed psi-blockers at every table in the club. (For gaming purposes, treat *Club Felix's* psi-blockers as gadgets producing Psi Static, Power 4, Skill Level 25.)

Marmount's psi-blockers never caught on at other clubs, managers finding it easier to simply ask known aces or suspected aces out, barring all obvious wild carders (i.e., jokers) as well. As a result, all of London's wild cards who wished to gamble began to congregate at *Club Felix*.

To keep his club from degenerating into a freak show, Marmount keeps a strict dress code. Tux and tails or similar attire for the gentlemen, evening gowns for the ladies. If one of a gentleman's tails is his own, this is acceptable, so long as he is properly groomed. Exemptions to this policy are made at the discretion of the club manager.



Tom Kelly's

This pub is a Catholic hang out near the River Lagan and the Albert Bridge. Sentiment at the bar runs high against both the UDR and the Red Branch.

Satire arrives early in the evening. An hour into the singing and poetry readings, there comes a scream that Brigid (Guy Fawkes in drag, see p. 74) is outside. Brigid enters and men scramble for the door and for guns. The ace laughs and lights the bar. Everyone has a chance to get into an old-fashioned super battle. (See sidebar, *Taking Sides*, p. 67)

If the fight goes well for the Catholics, new allies are congratulated for their bravery. If the fight goes badly for the Catholics, Satire motions for everyone to come with him and a few friends, his luck protecting the group.

In either case, the agents have proven themselves as brave fighters. Satire insists they grab all the wounded and slain (especially the slain) and get into a car before the police arrive. Satire affixes a strand of wet seaweed to the rearview mirror and drives the car straight into the River Lagan.

Under the River

Underwater, bubbles come out of everyone's mouths as the car sinks, but no one drowns. Satire drives the car down the river. In a short time, they get to the underwater entrance to Fionne's Halls.

The doorway is guarded by two amphibious Fomor; inside, the caverns are huge and arched like cathedral vaults, pillars carved from living rock covered with Celtic runes and knotwork. Torches and freshets of natural gas illuminate the chambers, which are filled with Fomor and Fenians. The austerity and grandeur are somewhat mitigated by the laundry hanging from the pillars, the

cots set out and the men polishing guns. It's a war camp. A few passages off the main chambers are boarded up.

Fionne greets them all, Satire explains the situation, and Kate Kelly sees to the most badly injured first, then the dead, resurrecting them with the Undry, her cauldron, which takes several hours. Anybody who is not wounded is sent back to the bar to get more bodies before the police and coroners show up.

August 15, 1991: Trouble in Belfast

Due to the time distortion of Faerie Ireland, three days have passed in the underground caverns though it only seemed like one evening. Fionne asks the adventurers to join his war band. A group of the lads plan to go out and snipe at UDR men in retaliation for the attack on the pub, though if anyone wants to return to the Sunlit World, that's all right too. They're welcome any time. All they need to do is contact Satire.

The three exits from Fionne's Halls are the dolmen of the Giant's Ring, Cave Hill (connected by a series of passages and chambers) and the underwater exit in the River Lagan, leading to the Fomor camp in Belfast Lough. Everyone who wants to snipe at UDR from Faerie can. Invisible, it's a turkey shoot. However, the FFFF warn characters, the more superstitious Ulstermen know how to break Primrose's charm by turning their gloves inside-out. Being wounded also breaks the spell (see sidebar, p. 68), making this form of invisibility unfeasible for a large-scale raid.

Jokers who leave the hill are stopped and questioned by the UDR. The UDR is very suspicious of all wild cards, due to the troubles facing Northern Ireland from both the FFFF and the Red Branch. Captain Flint is presently in Belfast, inspecting the UDR. He'll order the agents taken in for questioning, giving them a chance to exchange information while at the same time confirming the operatives' front as anti-British rebels.



Fionne's Halls

Those who stay in Fionne's Halls have the following adventure possibilities:

Taking Sides

In the pub battle, it is assumed that the agents fight on the side of the Catholics to gain Satire's confidence and entrance to the FFFF.

In case the agents help Brigid (really Guy Fawkes, p. 74), they have instead aided the Red Branch of Ulster and managed to infiltrate a Protestant terrorist group (also affiliated with the Twisted Fists).

Just as with the rest of Northern Ireland, religious differences divide the wild card community. Any Twisted Fist operatives in the party knows that Yellowman and Herne are Protestant, but two of the Fists' most valuable members, while the FFFF is Catholic, although still affiliated with the Fists. It's a complete mess, mostly solved by sending them on international missions. At home, they fight each other.

Guy Fawkes (disguised as Brigid or Cuchulainn) and Herne welcome any new crusaders, though their present work is only loosely under the aegis of the Fists.

No one has — or is intended to have — much chance of discovering Blarney's full involvement with the Red Branch. Professor Swift has been secretly plotting his moves for years and manipulates everything to his advantage. Anybody who uncovers Prince Edmund's ruse or Herne's ability to call the Hunt has a doubly difficult task. The Mace will be very interested, but would hush up the issue, pleading that the Prince was being mind-controlled by an unknown evil mastermind — a perfectly plausible explanation and one Professor Swift offers. Agents would be told to do anything non-public to bring the Prince back within the line of the law, since if word ever got out that Guy Fawkes was the leader of the Red Branch, there would be war in the streets. Herne is also more valuable as a government operative than as a dead terrorist, and government agents with Protestant sympathies would want to recruit him for the Mace.

If he discovers that anyone knows anything of the truth, Professor Swift attempts to plant a geas in each agent such that they will never tell this secret, with personality modifications to make them loyal.

If his mental tampering does not succeed, Professor Swift resorts to simple blackmail: no one would believe a tale that he's a secret ace, and killing him would be doubly problematic, leaving the agents open to a high-level murder investigation, possible jail, and it would doubtless estrange Yellowman if they're friends with him. And besides that, revealing any portion of his plot would lead to a civil war. Agents are welcome to try if they wish to cause thousands of innocent deaths.

Anyone who wishes to risk it and tell what they know will discover that Blarney spoke the truth.

Primrose's Faerie Ireland

Those under Primrose's spell are not so much invisible as they are in a slightly alternate dimension. They may see this world and affect it — and be affected by it — though they cannot be seen. Primrose's Faerie Ireland is actually a province of the Dreamtime, with the same laws of space and time applying. (See the *Dreamtime* chapter, p. 105) However, Ireland's land of the Sidhe is less separated than is Australia's Beginning Time. The Belfast Opera House, and Belfast, exist in both the realm of Faerie and the Sunlit World. Those on the Faerie side can see those on the Sunlit side, though the reverse is not true, except for psionics. Time and space in Belfast and other cities is the same in both worlds. However, those in Faerie Ireland who stray too far from civilized lands will encounter bogles, pixies and other far less pleasant creatures from Irish folklore, especially underground or at night. The same is true underwater or in the darkest corners of Fionne's Halls. Time and space are also distorted the further one gets from civilization. The Faerie Side of Ireland is the underground, the underwater and the hidden corners of the land where the old creatures of Irish folklore hold sway. It is the world of darkness, hidden from the sun, which is why those in Faerie are invisible.

People in Faerie may leave for the Sunlit World in four ways. They can exit from the underground (Fionne's Halls) to the surface, but must look straight ahead; they can exit the water for the land, again looking straight ahead; Primrose can release them from the spell; or someone in the Sunlit World can draw blood from them or turn a coat or glove inside-out and toss it at them. Anyone who wishes to go "topside" but remain on the Faerie Side of Ireland must exit through the Giant's Ring dolmen or the Belfast Lough backwards with their eyes closed. The surface in Faerie is cooler, and those under Primrose's spell cast no shadow, sunlight passing through them. (Regular physics of light do not apply — everyone can still see normally.) Those under the spell may only reenter the faerie hills or the enchanted lough with the help of Primrose or by use of one of her posies or seaweed charms. These charms retain their power only so long as the primroses or seaweed stay fresh, and only Primrose can lift the veil between the Sunlit World and Faerie wherever and whenever she pleases.

Dart Contest

FFFF members are having a dart contest. Decathlon joins in automatically, sparking some controversy over fairness. Darts are very popular among the Fenians and Fomor, and all of them have skill levels ranging from 12 to 22. Characters have to bail Robbie out; some of the FFFF think he's cheating, and others think he's the world's best novice — which he is.

Rescue

Someone is missing down one of the closed-off tunnels. Those who go in search go deeper into Faerie and may encounter a Pooka (*Fantasy Bestiary*, p. 55) or something more malign holding him prisoner . . . If the GM wishes to give advance clues to the later plot, the agents may encounter the Astronomer astral projecting in the form of Setekh the Destroyer (see sidebar, p. 102).

Sightseeing

Agents visit the underwater Faerie city of the Fomor in the Belfast Lough. It's beautifully constructed out of seashells and kelp and filled with jokers, many naturally amphibious. Decathlon's fingers become elongated and webbed when underwater, and he loses most of his pigment and body hair, making him almost immediately accepted by the Fomor.

August 18, 1991: The Plot of the FFFF

Fionne MacCoul receives 10,000 ampules of stolen Israeli wild card serum from the Righteous Djinn, delivered through the connecting tunnels (space is warped in the Dreamtime). For administering the virus in combat, there are specially constructed darts made with hypodermic needles. Pressure from a direct hit bursts the ampule and injects the serum.

Fionne makes a speech to his war band of his plans for using the virus to bring back the age of myth to Ireland. Fenians and Fomor must go out on a raid this evening, targeting the UDR and the rest of the British invaders. Those who become wild cards, Fionne assures, will soon realize where their allegiances should lie. In the chaos of the wild card, they will liberate Northern Ireland, reunite with the Irish Republic, and Fionne will be High King. This produces great cheers; Fionne's fanaticism is contagious. Fionne then announces that all members of his war band should be wild cards; he expects all nat fighters to take the serum themselves.

Nat members of the war band are not as happy about this idea, knowing they will probably be killed by the wild card. They are especially displeased when Fionne exempts Satire from their ranks, saying that he knows that the bard is a Fenian. Fionne then proves his point by lobbing a dart at Satire, which breaks its needle on the bard's watch. Seven more darts fail to wound the ace through equally lucky coincidences, proving his wild card heritage.

Fionne's solution to the problem of warriors dying from the serum is for Kate Kelly to immerse each man in her cauldron as they administer the virus, negating the possibility of a black queen reaction. Anyone who doesn't like this idea is viewed as a traitor. Fionne has taken the precaution of arming a large number of Fomor who threaten to shoot those who refuse to go through with the procedure. No one backs out.

Unless the agents manage to somehow stop Fionne and his army of some 500 jokers and aces, the process takes about a day, 192 nats (some already resurrected by the cauldron) undergoing the process, 31 emerging apparently unaffected, 23 gaining various powers, most of which they don't understand, and 138 turning into jokers, displaying anywhere from trivial changes (one man grows

an inch taller and loses 20 pounds) to the extreme (another loses all his limbs and grows over 100 pink tentacles).

The Plot of the Red Branch of Ulster

The Murga-muggai has not put all her eggs in one basket. She has had her agents in the Twisted Fists make suggestions to the Red Branch of Ulster: if Northern Ireland becomes filled with wild cards from a major virus outbreak, Ireland will reject it since wild cards are discriminated against in Ireland while lionized in Great Britain.

Professor Swift (see *The Mastermind* sidebar) has read the Twisted Fist suggestion and views the Murga-muggai's theory as poppycock. Northern Ireland will be a bone of contention regardless of whether it is a joker homeland or not. He knows creating a joker homeland is the secret agenda among extremists in the Fists. However, he believes he can use the Twisted Fist plot to his advantage.

If there is a major wild card outbreak over all of Northern Ireland, then there will be an emergency session of all members of Parliament and other heads of state. If there is an emergency session of Parliament, Guy Fawkes can do the gunpowder plot properly this time and blow the entire British government off the map (as depicted in Taroque's tarot card, sidebars pp. 50-51).

Captain Flint is also presently in Northern Ireland. With a little mental manipulation, his duty to Prince Edmund can be sculpted into absolute loyalty. Together, they may then take over the army and conquer England with very little blood, disguising the military takeover as a perfectly legitimate state of emergency in the face of terrorism. After all, no one will know who blew up Parliament, though the Twisted Fists will be suspected, and because of the press and international threats, the wild card outbreak will be directly attributed to Fist terrorism.

Captain Flint, as head of the Mace, also has access to all the necessary wild cards to pull it off, including the PCs. Blarney will have him use them all.

August 18-19, 1991: The Wild Hunt

Though over a day passes inside Fionne's Halls, only an hour has passed outside. The evening of the 17th, both plots come to a head unless the agents have in some way prevented them: Fionne and his war band emerge from the Belfast Lough and the River Lagan, armed with wild card darts. Meanwhile, Yellowman — on his father's orders — teleports between Belfast, Newtownards and Londonderry spraying the wild card virus everywhere. Herne has the Wild Hunt go after Fionne MacCoul, having a fierce battle.

The night becomes the Northern Irish Wild Card Night and Great Britain declares martial law. The next morning an emergency session of Parliament is called. Guy Fawkes sets the House of Parliament to blow up at noon, setting extra charges just to make sure. In Belfast, meanwhile, Blarney visits Captain Flint, who is coordinating the relief and disease containment effort for Belfast. Blarney tinkers with Captain Flint's mind, making him the loyal slave of Prince Edmund.

The Outcome

Fionne MacCoul stands the greatest chance of discovering the mission. Anybody he has cause to doubt he then checks out with his precognitive powers, possibly discovering their connections with the British government. Fionne kills any British agents he finds. Of all the FFFF, however, Satire is the most imme-

The Queen of Air and Darkness

Fionne has explored the unused tunnels in his halls, which eventually link with those of the Murga-muggai in the Dream-time. She has appeared to him in her maiden and spider forms and convinced him that she is the Queen of Air and Darkness, mother of the Sidhe.

She has told him that if he wishes to free Northern Ireland, he must release the wild card virus over Belfast and other cities. The British invaders will die, she assures him, and all those changelings of Irish ancestry will take their true forms, making Ireland what it was. She has provided him with the ampules of wild card virus stolen by Yellowman.

Any agent who hears Fionne tell of his meetings with the Queen of Air and Darkness may make an IQ roll to correlate the basic description of the spider woman "Ixchel" as described by Hunapu (see p. 36) or the *High Priestess* card from Taroque's deck (sidebar, pp. 50-51).



The Mastermind

The Red Branch of Ulster is secretly led by Professor Niles Swift (p. 71), not that anyone could ever prove it.

With his ability to instill quirks, likes, dislikes and tendencies in his victims, Professor Swift has led Prince Edmund, Herne and his son, Yellowman, to believe that they're all acting from their own motivations. (In the case of Yellowman, his father does not know all his secrets, or what a major player in the game Evie Swift truly is.)

The Red Branch of Ulster is overtly led by Brigid/Cuchulainn, aka Guy Fawkes, aka Prince Edmund, Professor Swift's prize pupil. Prince Edmund has plans and notes and even secret communiques from the Twisted Fists, and he "thought" the best hiding place would be in the crowded library of his old teacher's study — which suits Blarney just fine. He reads through the plans, makes his decisions, then makes sure Prince Edmund makes the same decisions for the Red Branch of Ulster.

Gabriel Hound

ST 15-18 PD/DR: 1/1
 DX 14 Dmg: 1d+4 cut
 IQ 6 Reach: C
 HT 16-20 Size: 1
 Speed/Dodge: 10/6 Wt.: 175-250 lbs.
 Origin: Celtic Myth
 Habitats: The Wild Hunt

The Gabriel Hounds are white hounds with blood-red ears. They appear somewhere between a mastiff and a wolfhound, though larger, about 4 feet high at the shoulder. The pack numbers 80, and their eyes and tongues blaze with green fire.

Once summoned, the Gabriel Hounds run through the sky, gaining corporeality and visibility as they near the ground. The Huntsman must have an object from the victim for the hounds to sniff, or else know the location for a general assault. Once the hounds get the scent, the hunt is on.

The hounds will not stop unless they are blocked — for example, treeing the quarry — or else to make the kill. If the quarry puts up some barricade the Gabriel Hounds cannot get through — such as a warehouse door — they will wait until Herne comes to smash it down. All the hounds have the ability to walk — or run — on water.

If one of the Gabriel Hounds is killed, it dissolves into green mist, gone until the next night that Herne calls the Hunt. Otherwise, the hounds remain until they make their kill or until sunrise overtakes them.

If the Wild Hunt is frustrated in its pursuit, Herne must select an alternate quarry. The Wild Hunt must kill before it can rest, or else it will turn upon the huntsman.

Herne's Horse

ST 70 PD/DR: 1/1
 DX 11 Dmg: 1d+5 crush
 IQ 11 Reach: C
 HT 20 Size: 1
 Speed/Dodge: 10/6 Wt.: 2,500 lbs.
 Origin: Celtic Myth
 Habitat: The Wild Hunt

Herne's horse is a huge black stallion with a braided mane and glowing green eyes. It is highly intelligent and obeys his commands absolutely.

If Herne chooses to ride with companions, he may summon additional horses which appear in the same manner as the Gabriel Hounds. The companions' horses will be smaller, relative in size to their riders (unless someone is as large as Herne!). There are no saddles or reins, but the horses are easy to ride and absolutely obey their riders till they disappear at dawn.



diately dangerous if he discovers the agents. The ace poet can lampoon them as traitors and spies, fixing their fates to something ironic and incapacitating, if not deadly.

The easiest way to spell the end of the FFFF is to kidnap Primrose — without her as key, the Fenians and Fomor are locked out of the Faerie side of Ireland and their entire base of operations. Primrose, however, is discreet about her powers and stays far from combat, but if anyone harms or threatens to harm either of her cats, she can become violent. Her illusions can also become quite deadly on the Faerie side of Ireland when taken far from civilization. (See commentary regarding illusions in the *Dreamtime* section, p. 115.)

Almost as useful as kidnapping Primrose is capturing Kate Kelly or stealing the Undry, as any army rapidly falls apart without its medic.

With the situation in Northern Ireland under control — in actuality, or in appearance — the agents are sent on to their next assignment, Bali, Indonesia. The Twisted Fists have announced their displeasure with the Sukarno regime of Indonesia and the lack of basic human rights for jokers. Sukarno swears that he will not give in to terrorism, from jokers or animals, and the situation could get bloody.

Blarney (Professor Niles Swift)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: May 7, 1923, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Appearance: Professor Swift is bald with a white fringe. A small man (5' 4", 140 lbs.), he dresses neatly in old clothes, slightly too formal. He fidgets constantly with a large "Daddy Warbucks" diamond tie-tack given him by the Queen. His eyes are sharp, and he misses nothing.

Wild Card Ability: Professor Swift is a powerful psi with enhanced genius. This ace is up his sleeve, hidden behind his reputation of being a sweet, silver-tongued old charmer.

Aces Jingle: Who shoves medals in your face?
Blarney, honorary Ace!

ST 7 (-20 points) **IQ 20** (175 points) **Move:** 1
DX 8 (-15 points) **HT 10** (0 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-3

Advantages

Acute Hearing +3 (6 points)

Acute Vision +4 (8 points)

Charisma +7 (35 points)

Comfortable Wealth (10 points)

Common Sense (10 points)

Eidetic Memory, Level 1 (30 points)

Intuition (15 points)

Language Talent +3 (6 points)

Lightning Calculator (5 points)

Reputation: Confidant of the Queen, former tutor of Prince Edmund, +6 reaction British upper-class (10 points)

Strong Will +8 (32 points)

Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Age: 68 years old (-54 points)

Compulsive Behavior: Telling stories. Blarney loves to spin a good yarn, embroidering the truth constantly. People think he's a dear dotty old dumpling, and Blarney likes it that way. (-10 points)

Fanaticism: Staunch Royalist (-15 points)

Intolerance: IRA (-5 points)

Lame: Crippling Arthritis (-15 points)

Megalomania (-10 points)

Reputation: Author of discredited theories regarding Jungian psychology and the Takisian xenovirus (see p. 116), -6 psychologists and wild card researchers (-5 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +50 (Only recharged by telling a story to an audience -40%, 90 points)

Super-Powers

Metabolism Control-20(22) (Area affect +50%, Affects others +40%, Cannot affect self -40%, Special effect: gives adrenaline rush or other hormonal surge +0%, 41 points)

Psionics

ESP Power-10 (30 points)

Precognition-30 (Linked to Psychometry +10%, limited to wild card manifestations -40%, only active precognition possible -60%, time expressed in years instead of days +40%, 20 points)

Psychometry-30 (Linked to Precognition +10%, only usable on wild card virus -40%, only active psychometry possible -40%, 15 points)

Telepathy Power-22 (110 points)

Emotion Sense-20 (4 points)

Facade-22 (8 points) (See description, p. 00)

Mind Shield-22 (8 points)

Mindwipe-20 (May alter personality or implant "geas" +80%; May not alter memories -80%; May tinker with emotions governing the wild card +40%, Special effect: uses emotion sense instead of Telereceive to make contact +0%, 6 points)

Psi Sense-20 (Can detect the use of any super-ability +30%, 6 points)

Signature Sniffer-20 (4 points)

Suggest-20 (4 points)

Telescan-20 (4 points)

Skills

Acting-23 (4 points), **Bard**-20 (1 point), **Detect Lies**-20 (2 points), **Diplomacy**-21 (3 points), **Fast-Talk**-20 (1 point), **French**-20 (1 point), **Gambling**-19 (½ point), **Genetics**-21 (4 points), **German**-20 (1 point), **Greek**-19 (½ point), **History**-19 (1 point), **Hobby: Chess**-20 (½ point), **Hobby: Theater Trivia**-20 (½ point), **Hobby: Traditional Wargaming**-20 (½ point), **Hypnotism**-20 (2 points), **Irish**-22 (3 points), **Italian**-20 (1 point), **Latin**-20 (1 point), **Leadership**-20 (2 points), **Linguistics**-20 (4 points), **Literature**-19 (2 points), **Occultism**-20 (2 points), **Performance**-23 (4 points), **Poetry**-19 (½ point), **Psychology**-22 (4 points), **Research**-18 (½ point), **Singing**-12 (4 points), **Strategy**-18 (½ point), **Tactics**-22 (4 points), **Teaching**-20 (1 point), **Theology**-18 (½ point), **Welsh**-19 (½ point)

Quirks

Brags about his son, the ace; becomes livid if anyone calls Yellowman a joker

Gilbert and Sullivan fan; hums "I am the Very Model of a Modern Major General" when pleased with himself

Loves Earl Grey tea and scones

Still mourns wife and daughter; keeps pocket portraits
Tells everyone about how the Queen made him a knight
and honorary ace; shows off his medals

Professor Niles Swift, or "Blarney," was born in Protestant Belfast. He worked as an actor until WWII. A superb tactician, by the end of the war he had risen to the rank of Major.

After the war, he married Evelyn Morrison. Swift enrolled in Oxford, and they had a child, Natalie, soon after. Then came Wild Card Day.

The Swifts were unaffected, except that the psychological ramifications of the wild card became Niles' obsession. In seven years, he became a full professor of psychology at Oxford, and his research was the subject of much controversy. His theories regarding the psychological interactions of the wild card were discredited in 1960, but still have a few adherents.

In 1962, the family moved to Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Evelyn was seven months along with their second child when a bomb exploded in the marketplace. She and Natalie were killed, and across town Dr. Swift suddenly found a bright yellow, squalling, premature infant in his arms.

He rushed the baby to the hospital, and in the next hours he gathered together what had happened. Possibly through his research, his wife and son had been infected by the wild card, though had displayed no signs. The trauma of Evelyn's death, however, had caused the wild card of her unborn son to turn, giving him the power to teleport. Professor Swift named the strange yellow boy Evelyn Nathaniel Swift in honor of his mother and sister. He raised "Evie" himself, harboring a deep hatred of the IRA terrorists who had killed his wife and daughter.

Professor Swift ran blood tests and found he had a death sentence over his head, an unturned wild card. He delved deep into research, seeking a method to make his wild card turn in a beneficial way. Experiments with LSD and folklore texts revealed the image of the Blarney Stone. He went to Blarney Castle and kissed the stone, finding himself gifted with the mental powers of the ancient druids.

Professor Swift experimented in secret. He found he could read emotions and strong emotional images, as well as manipulate them, restructuring personalities and personae. Most easily he found he could lay a geas, the ancient Irish term for a strong mental compulsion or prohibition. One of the first he laid was his son's inability to disregard a parental order.

To guard against other psionics, he built a mental facade with a trap: those who went farther than the surface layer of his mind were caught in a labyrinth. Professor Swift could hold them and dissect and reconstruct their personalities at his leisure, usually releasing them with the geas that they could never tell any secret, including his. (See *Mind Trap, Psionics*, p.39.)



He also found he had an affinity for the wild card, being able to perceive its interactions with its hosts' psychoses. By modifying these, he was able to increase or decrease the range of others' powers, removing or creating inhibitions. He could also foresee the possible results of an unturned wild card and which stimulus would prompt which response.

His theories regarding the proper upbringing for child aces were still highly regarded, and the Queen requested his presence to help deal with Prince Edmund. Professor

Swift raised the Prince privately for the next five years, manipulating his emotions and nurturing his power.

In recognition of his service to the crown, Queen Elizabeth conferred upon him the Order of Merit. For his accomplishments in the field of genetic research, she also knighted him with the Order of the Silver Helix. This made him an honorary ace, causing protest in both the scientific and ace community. *The Daily Mirror* nicknamed him Blarney, claiming he'd sweet-talked the Queen. Blarney just smiles at the irony. Not even his son knows he's a true ace.

Blarney is semi-retired. Most of his clients are aces and jokers he treated as children. Blarney carefully examines his patients and, if possible, schedules a caterpillar/butterfly metamorphosis to occur later in a joker's life. He also sets up loyalties, and keeps a log of his patients' powers and abilities, both manifest and latent.

An unturned wild card is a great treat to Professor Swift. Depending on the subject, Blarney will tinker with the emotional lattice he perceives as governing the wild card, leaving a post-hypnotic suggestion to seek out the particular trigger. This has resulted in several aces, a few hideously deformed jokers, and five black queens.

Professor Swift wants to see England brought back to a cross between the Elizabethan and Victorian ages, with the bad parts edited out, such as Parliament and the Irish. To this end, he has taken passive control of the Red Branch of Ulster, operating it through Prince Edmund, though the prince knows nothing of Blarney's hand in it. Blarney considers this basic military training for when Prince Edmund reveals himself and takes over the British Isles.

Typical Dialogue: "Let me tell you a story. In the days before the war . . ."

Fionne MacCoul (Thomas O'Brian)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: January 18, 1962, Dingle, Ireland

Appearance: Fionne MacCoul is a true giant, 15' 7" 5,500 lbs. His hair is blond-white and he is almost albino except for emerald-green eyes. He dresses in ragged leather clothing.

Wild Card Ability: Fionne is extremely strong and charismatic. He can become more intelligent and see into the future by sucking his thumb.

Aces Jingle: Fionne MacCoul is big n' darin'
Thinks he'll be High King of Erin.

ST 90 (164 points) **IQ** 10* (105 points) **Move:** 9

DX 15 (60 points) **HT** 15/50 (188 points)

Damage: Thrust 10d; Swing 12d

*Fionne's IQ is 20 when he is sucking his thumb, -40% to point cost.

Advantages

Very Handsome (25 points)
Fearlessness +8 (16 points)
Charisma +5 (25 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Rapid Healing (5 points)
Strong Will +6 (24 points)

Disadvantages

Reputation: Crazy Irish joker -2 (-5 points)
Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)
Gigantism (-10 points)
Bad Temper (-10 points)
Delusion: Believes he is the true Fionne MacCoul (-15 points)
Fanaticism: Irish Nationalist (-15 points)
Intolerance: Ulster Unionists and British (-5 points)

Megalomania (-10 points)

Sense of Duty: To the Fenians and Fomor (-10 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Damage Resistance +5 (25 points)

Growth, Level 2 (Always on -40%, 12 points)

Psionics

Precognition-22(24) (Only while sucking thumb -40%, 37 points)

Skills

(Note: all mental skills are +10 when sucking thumb)

Bard-14 (10 points), Brawling-16 (2 points), Broad-sword-16 (4 points), Carousing-51 (2 points), English-8 (½ point), Gambling-12 (6 points), Gun-15 (1 point), Hobby: Darts-18 (4 points), Irish (Native tongue), Leadership-20 (default), Lockpicking-13 (8 points), Running-15 (4 points), Scrounging-12 (4 points), Stealth-16 (4 points), Streetwise-14 (10 points), Tactics-14 (12 points), Throwing-16 (8 points), Traps-12 (4 points)

Quirks

Dresses raggedly since he can't get clothes his size
Loves Irish whisky, but seldom finds enough to fill him
Thinks he can sing, but can't

Thomas O'Brian joined the PIRA at 17, standing 6' tall with black hair and blue eyes. He worked odd jobs, sniping UDR men and making petrol bombs. At 22, he realized it just wasn't working. Something more had to be done for Ireland to be united.

In the year 1300, Edward I of England stole the Lia Fial, the Stone of Destiny, one of the four great treasures



of Ireland. Legend claimed that when the true King of Erin sat on the stone, it would issue a human cry. Edward placed it in Westminster Abbey, part of the Coronation Chair.

Thomas believed in the magic of the Kingstone and went to London with five young men to steal it. Late at

night they broke in, clubbing the guards with crow bars intended for prying the boulder loose from the other stones. Thomas slipped while prying a stone free and sat down flat on the Coronation Chair. The Lia Fial then screamed (in Gaelic) "All hail Fionne MacCoul, true King of Erin!" The other stones in the chair and the crowbars vanished, sucked into Thomas for mass as he grew into the giant of Irish myth, Finn the Fair. He grabbed the Lia Fial and he and the other lads escaped from Westminster, scattering.

Unfortunately, nude giants carrying boulders that scream in Gaelic attract attention, and Fionne was arrested. The British government was as sympathetic as possible to the insane joker, psychiatrists explaining that he was victim of the wild card virus, but in the end, all they could do was confiscate the stone and deport him.

Back in Ireland, Fionne (as Thomas now thought of himself) realized that he was not fit to be King of Erin until Ireland was unified. By chewing his thumb (which the original Fionne had burnt on the Salmon of Wisdom), Fionne learned the Stone of Destiny's plan: he must gather together both the Fenians and the Fomor of Ireland, and together they would drive out the British invaders. Kate Kelly, Primrose and Satire were among the first recruits, setting up beneath the Giant's Ring, Cave Hill, and the Belfast Lough with Primrose's help. Kate then added to the recruits, using her cauldron and the dead of the Irish wars.

Typical Dialogue: "What? A puny little runt like you thinks he can join my warband? Well, standards have changed, so I'll think about it."

Guy Fawkes (Prince Edmund Alexander James Albert Windsor) ==

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: July 31, 1968, Buckingham Palace

Appearance: 5' 10" 120 lbs. Guy Fawkes is pale and thin, with bright red-blond hair and intense blue eyes. He

prefers Cardigan sweaters and tennis shirts in oranges and reds. As Cuchulainn, he dresses punk with warpaint on his face, hair moussed up and sprayed three different colors.

As Brigid, he wears a padded red dress and a red wig. He makes up other costumes to suit the occasion.

Wild Card Ability: Guy Fawkes is the world's foremost pyrokinetic. He can induce spontaneous combustion in anything and anyone, including himself, but he rises from his own ashes like the mythical phoenix.

Aces Jingle: Fawkes is hotter than J.J. Flash —
— Even burns himself to ash!

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 11 (10 points) **Move:** 6
DX 15 (60 points) **HT** 9 (-10 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1; Explosive self-immolation 10d burn damage

Advantages

Acute Hearing +1 (2 points)
Acute Vision +1 (2 points)
Attractive (5 points)
Filthy Rich (50 points)
Luck (15 points)
Status 6: Prince, 7th in line to throne (25 points)

Disadvantages

Delusion: Believes in Divine Right of Kings (-10 points)
Fanaticism: Red Branch of Ulster (-15 points)
Impulsiveness (-10 points)
Intolerance: IRA (-5)
Megalomania: Wants to unify the British Isles and Ireland into a true monarchy and abolish Parliament, then parcel out territory to the relatives with himself as King. He does not make this public knowledge. (-10 points)
Pyromania (-5 points)
Secret: Member of the Red Branch of Ulster (-20 points)
Sense of Duty: to Professor Swift (-10 points)
Skinny (-5 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Body of Fire, Level 100, 1200° (Harms user -70%, Uncontrollable -30%, Affects others +40%, Explosive effect +40%, Delay: only one hex, up to 24 hours +100%, Delay is unreliable -30%, Only lasts one second -50%; 500 points)

Resurrection (Does not lose points +100%, New body perfect and whole +30%, Special effect: reappears in a flash of fire even if ashes are scattered +0%, 345 points)

Temperature Tolerance (Heat only -40%, 6 points)

Psionics

Pyrokinesis-16(50) (164 points)

Skills

Acting-15 (10 points), Boating-14 (1 point), Carousing-

12 (16 points), Diplomacy-12 (6 points), Disguise-13 (6 points), French-14 (8 points), German-12 (4 points), History-13 (8 points), Hobby: Fireworks-14 (8 points), Irish-15 (10 points), Literature-13 (8 points), Poetry-14 (8 points), Polo-16 (4 points), Riding-15 (2 points), Savoir-Faire-13 (4 points)

Quirks

Doesn't care for the rest of his family; prefers the company of Herne and Yellowman

Finds it hard to get dates

Loves brandy, especially burning

Pyrokinetically lights cigarettes, but doesn't smoke

Regularly incinerates Captain Flint's clothes



Prince Edmund Alexander James Albert, youngest of Queen Elizabeth's five children, had the usual royal upbringing. As a child, his nickname was "Flametop." He lived up to it, setting fire to one stately home, though only with the matches accessible to most seven-year-olds.

At 11, Prince Edmund visited his uncle, Lord Mountbatten. The IRA ace, Balor of the Burning Eye, appeared and incinerated Lord Mountbatten, as well as the Prince. Later, while Scotland Yard inspected the scene of the assassination, Prince Edmund reappeared in a flash of fire.

The *Daily Mirror* carried on for the next year about having an ace in the royal family. Meanwhile, the family had to deal with the blossoming pyrokinetic. The Queen hired Professor Niles Swift as tutor, a man dealing with an ace son of his own, and sent them to a fireproof castle in Scotland. Swift had his own agenda and instructed the Prince in war and conquest, much in the old fashion, while using his telepathic powers to set up mental prohibitions and weaknesses. The Prince is now a key piece in Blarney's plan to take over the British Isles.

At 16, Prince Edmund reentered public life, taking the nickname "Guy Fawkes." He is known to have incinerated three assassins, two innocent bystanders, two undercover policemen, one date and a shopping mall in Coventry. Buckingham Palace pleads that his powers are erratic.

Prince Edmund also joined the Red Branch of Ulster, leading raids against the Provisional IRA. To keep his identity secret, he's devised several costumes to appear as completely different, much weaker pyrokinetic aces. His two favorites are Cuchulainn, who he does as a street punk with a flaming sword, and Brigid, the Celtic Goddess of Fire and Poetry, for which purpose he goes in drag in a red dress and wig. The costumes are degrading to two of Ireland's most sacred myths, something he doesn't mind at all, and he has reasoned that the last thing the press will figure out is that the mysterious red-headed female, ace terrorist is really an English prince in drag. He gets a kick out of the danger and the chaos, and so far no one has guessed. If it is ever necessary, he just incinerates himself and the costume.

Herne rides with Edmund from London to Belfast whenever necessary, helping the prince maintain the double life. Sometimes, the Wild Huntsman joins him in his raids.

Typical Dialogue: (As Guy Fawkes) "Good evening. No, I don't care for champagne — you can't light it. Give me some brandy." (As Cuchulainn or Brigid) "You're going to burn in Hell. And it's going to happen *before* you die."

Herne, The Wild Huntsman (Dylan Hardesty)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: February 19, 1970, Manchester, England.

Appearance: Dylan Hardesty is a huge, massively-built joker, 420 lbs., 7' 9", not counting his antlers, which put him over 10 feet tall. From the waist down he's a giant bipedal stag — part of what adds so much to his height, since instead of leading into feet, his ankles are the joint above his foot-long fetlocks and cloven hooves. Like a stag, Dylan's antlers have two points for every year of his age — a 42-point rack at age 21, etc. — and he cuts the velvet on a new rack every spring. He has a stag's ears as well, while his eyes are green and owl-slitted and his teeth are sharp and pointed like a bear's. A red-fawn mane grows halfway down his back. Otherwise, his body and face are handsome and human, though hairy and muscular. In sum, the wild card has blessed/cursed him with the shape of a pagan fertility god. Dylan wears specially made soccer shorts and baggy T-shirts, usually with England's green lion on the chest. Like an owl, his eyes are daylight sensitive, so he wears sunglasses. He has a perpetual red five-o'clock shadow and has to shave about three times a day. Dylan's voice is at the bottom of the bass register. He's gone to the Liza Doolittle school of speech improvement and speaks BBC British, but lapses into a thick Liverpool accent when he gets drunk, making him sound like Morrissey on steroids.

Wild Card Ability: Herne is incredibly strong. He can also call the Wild Hunt, though only between dusk and dawn.

Aces Jingle: Herne the Huntsman calls the Hunt.
Hear the Horn? It's you they want!

ST 110 (215 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 8
DX 13 (30 points) **HT** 19 (150 points)
Damage: Thrust 12d; Swing 14d; Kick 12d+2;
Antlers 14d+2 impaling

Advantages

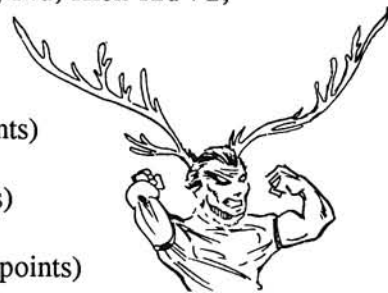
Absolute Direction (5 points)
Alertness +5 (25 points)
Animal Empathy (5 points)
Charisma +5 (25 points)
Patron: Twisted Fists (15 points)
Rapid Healing (5 points)

Reputation: Male model and Prince Edmund's best friend, +6 reaction in the United Kingdom, -6 reaction in Ireland. (0 points)

Very Handsome (25 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Addiction: The Wild Hunt (-30 points)



Gigantism (-10 points)

Lecherousness (-15 points)

Secret: Twisted-Fist Assassin (-20 points)

Secret: Herne really does lead the Wild Hunt (-10 points)

Split Personality: "Dylan" and "Master of the Hunt" (-10 points)

Dylan:

Compulsive Behavior: Soccer Fan (-5 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Odious Personal Habit: Constantly preens himself (-5 points)

Herne:

Bad Temper (-10 points)

Bloodlust (-10 points)

Fearlessness +20 (40 points)

Severe Delusion: "I am a Celtic God!" (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Dark Vision (Can see colors +20%, 30 points)

Infravision (15 points)

Perfect Balance (25 points)

Strikers: Antlers, +2 impaling damage, (25 points)

Strikers: Hooves, +2 crushing damage, (10 points)

Super-Powers

Ectoplasmic Projection-20(200) (See p. 123; No Stunning +20%; Always Visible -20%; Always Tangible -20%; Security Blanket: Must use horn to summon hunt -50%; Indomitable: once summoned, hounds *must* kill, or they will turn on Herne -20%; Only usable at night -50%; Hunt disturbs nature: Wind blows, lightning crashes, waves toss, and electrical devices malfunction +20%; Special effects: Horn transforms into a solid gold horn in the shape of a dragon, covered with Celtic knotwork and green witchfire, and once astride the horse, Dylan appears to grow in stature, his voice drops another octave and his eyes glow green +0%, 340 points)

Energy Spear-20(6) (Bought as Vibratory Blast: appears as an ornate Celtic spear; Only at night -50%; Must summon with horn -30%; Bypasses 1/2

DR +100%, Impaling damage +50%; 112 points)

Psionics

Aspect-20(20) (Only usable at night -20%; Only usable when leading the Hunt -20%; Hunt broadcasts bloodlust to all it passes — bystanders must make Will rolls or join in +30%, 56 points)

Skills

Carousing-19 (2 points), Dancing-14 (4 points), French-15 (8 points), Performance-14 (6 points), Polearm-16 (16 points), Riding-17 (24 points), Savoir-Faire-12 (1 point), Sex Appeal-19 (2 points), Soccer-16 (16 points), Spear Throwing-17 (16 points), Streetwise-14 (6 points)



Quirks

Dylan:

Dreams of being a professional soccer star
Hates conservative members of Parliament
Likes children
Overly fond of ale
Wants to get married

Herne:

Doesn't speak much
Doesn't wear clothes
Laughs when hounds catch someone
Marks fellow hunters with the blood of the kill
Sounds hunting horn, often for no reason

Dylan Hardesty was born to poor, working-class parents in Manchester, the third of four children, not counting a younger sister who drew the black queen at birth. Dylan's other sister and two brothers are completely normal. So was Dylan until age 14.

For Halloween he went as the Wild Huntsman of Celtic myth, wearing antlers he stole from his grandfather's mantel. He and the other neighborhood boys ran wild through the tenements, throwing rocks and drinking liquor pinched from their parents' cabinets.

Dylan felt strange and sick and went home. Over the course of the next week, the wild card wrought its transformation. Jokers were nothing new for the poor section of Manchester, and he attended the public school, same as before. He became the best soccer player, but wasn't allowed to compete in matches. The next year he shed his antlers and grew a 30-point rack. He gained two points a year as he continued to grow in stature and strength.

At 18, Dylan was offered a job by a BBC scout — the part of the Wild Huntsman in an episode of *Dr. Who*. Joker chic was the rage in Paris that year — part of the ace mania — and an avant-garde French fashion designer asked him to model, launching Dylan's brief career as a high-paid clothes-horse. He used Herne as his professional name. During this time he had a well-publicized affair with Susan Strathmore, an American nat model, fathering a son, Ian. (Born January, 1989.)

For his 20th birthday, Susan gave Dylan his horn, saying that the Lord of the Hunt needed one. Dylan blew it, summoning the Wild Hunt, which ran through the south of

France that night, finally chasing down and killing a lone hitchhiker. The blossoming of Dylan's wild card powers also marked the day his world began to fall apart. Susan, terrified by the madness of the Hunt, canceled her and Dylan's engagement. She then moved back to New York, taking Ian with her.

Within the next month, Joker chic went out in Paris, and Dylan was unable to find work except offers from joker-porn producers. He'd taken roles in a few French art films, but after selective editing and new titles like "The Rutting Stag," he found he was suddenly the most celebrated joker porn-star in Europe. Making another movie grated on his self-respect, no matter how much he was offered. However, as the porn producers had noted, he was still growing, and Dylan's wild card specialist discovered that he didn't so much grow older as he did larger and more masculine each year, like a king stag. Dylan is very self-conscious about his appearance, wanting to be admired as one of the most masculine men in existence, while at the same time afraid everyone just views him as a giant hairy freak. He was badly frightened by the thought of what a few more years would do to his body.

Dylan was also deeply disturbed by the unknown man's death. Part of his mind told him it was an accident, the man just another victim of the same alien virus that had made him grow antlers and was continuing to distort his frame. Another part of his mind told him that he truly was Herne, the Lord of the Wild Hunt, and while he believed the former to be true, the latter was far more attractive.

Dylan went on a drinking binge, during which time he fell in with the Twisted Fists. Now, while publicly known only as the star of a few dirty joker films, Dylan has been working as one of the Twisted Fists' best secret assassins. The Hunt is an addiction, and when he's Herne, Dylan gets drunk on the bloodlust and can forget all his troubles. He remembers most of what passes the next morning, but doesn't like to. Instead, he drinks lots of ale and watches football matches on the telly until darkness falls. Only an international tabloid has guessed at his secret, and no one believes them anyway.

Typical Dialogue: "I fly through the air at night with a pack of 'ounds? 'untin' down Parliament Ministers? I read that in the *Midnight Star* too — right next t' the one about Di havin' an affair with the ghost of Elvis. Rubbish."

Kelly, Kate (Airmid, The Cup Bearer)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: April 9, 1950, Newcastle, Northern Ireland

Appearance: A plain red-haired woman (5' 9", 138 lbs.), Kate is in her late 30s. She dresses older than she is, in granny glasses, leather boots, grass-stained skirt and a linen blouse embroidered with herbs. She carries a large leather satchel at all times.

Wild Card Ability: Kate Kelly is a master healer, able to cure any wound or ailment. With the aid of the Undry, the Cauldron of the Dagda, she can also raise the dead.

ST 11 (10 points)
DX 10 (0 points)

IQ 19 (150 points) Move: 6
HT 16 (80 points)

Advantages

Acute Taste and Smell +3 (6 points)
Common Sense (10 points)
Immunity to Disease (10 points)
Intuition (15 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Sight: (Wears glasses, -10 points)
Bad Temper (-10 points)
Compulsive Behavior: Herb and wool gathering (-5 points)
Delusion: "St. Bridget has given me a holy task and my powers. She talks to me daily." (-10 points)
Pacifism (30 points)
Code of Honor: Healer's Code. Tend to the wounded, regardless of nation or creed (-15 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)
Vow: Never refuse any request for aid (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +100 (To recharge, fresh herbs must be gathered daily and kept in satchel -30%; 210 points)

Resurrection (Usable on others +40%; Not usable on self -40%; Costs 10 fatigue -50%; Only works with the Undry -50%; Can bring the long dead back to full health and youth +70%; Touch only -20%; Only takes an hour +40%; Doesn't take away character points +70%; 240 points)

Super-Powers

Alter-20(10) (Only to change air to food -50%; Doesn't require analyze +30%; Must use the Undry -50%; 27 points)

Healing-26(20) (Must use the Undry -50%, Can restore lost limbs +80%, Fatigue loss takes form of necessary herbs from satchel +0%, 114 points)

Skills

Botany-21 (8 points), Diagnosis-18 (1 point), English-19 (2 points), First Aid-22 (6 points), Fishing-19 (1 point), Naturalist-20 (6 points), Occultism-18 (1 point), Physician-16 (½ point), Teaching-18 (1 point), Theology-19 (4 points)

Quirks

Hums folk tunes and lullabies
Never asks unnecessary questions, and listens to anything a patient wishes to tell her
Not interested in men
Tends to the worst injured first, whether friend or foe
Will not take an ace nickname; insists on calling everyone by his given name

Kate Kelly was always a devout child. At 17, she entered a convent, but before she could take the veil, St. Bridget appeared to her in a divine vision, charging her to go out into the world and heal the sick and wounded.

Kate took service as a nurse in Belfast, but it wasn't enough: St. Bridget told her she must study the ancient herbs of healing, the 365 flowers gathered by the goddess Airmid from her brother's grave. Though it sounded strangely pagan, Kate did as she was told, going into the heaths and meadows to gather herbs. She spent the next ten years in this manner, preparing simple home remedies for village folk.

St. Bridget then led her to a cairn, within which was buried a cauldron, made of silver and set with pearls and precious stones. This, said St. Bridget, was the Undry, the cauldron from which the Dagda, her father, had fed the Tuatha de Danaan. It gives food and can heal the sick and wounded, and raise the dead, for it was also the Grail, sent



to feed the Christ at the last supper and to catch his blood after the Crucifixion. She was to be its keeper and use its power to heal the sick and wounded.

Kate studied the inscriptions, spiriting off and secretly healing many of the wounded of Belfast for several years. Fionne MacCoul then appeared, asking her to join his court. St. Bridget told her that if Ireland were to be healed, it must be united. Though many would die in the battle, far more would perish in the long run if the wound continued to fester unchecked. Once Ireland was united, she could use the Undry's power to resurrect the English. She could also bring Christianity to the misguidedly pagan Fenian and Fomor, teaching them the true love of Christ.

Kate therefore agreed and is now Cup Bearer for the FFFF. She speaks little of her past, working softly to bring her patients to the light. She talks to St. Bridget every day.

Typical Dialogue: "Where does it hurt? There? Good, don't talk, let me fix you. No, no, just call me Kate."

(Note: While an authentic Celtic artifact, the Undry is not magical and has therefore not been bought as super equipment. It is simply the mental focus of Kate's wild card power. Anyone who steals it will soon discover this.)

Primrose (Eleanor Breslin)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: May 1, 1976, Rosslea, Northern Ireland

Appearance: Primrose is a 15-year-old girl with pale, shoulder-length, mouse-brown hair. She wears a linen blouse and skirt embroidered with pink and yellow primroses.

Wild Card Ability: Primrose can key into the ancient magic of Ireland. Primarily, she can open the hollow hills, make a gateway into the sea, or lift a corner of the veil of invisibility over Ireland. She also has some talent with illusions, but lacks practice.

ST 7 (-20 points) **IQ** 12 (20 points) **Move:** 5
DX 12 (20 points) **HT** 8 (-15 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-3

Advantages

Acute Hearing +1 (2 points)
Alertness +1 (5 points)
Animal Empathy (5 points)
Attractive (5 points)
Intuition (15 points)
Patron: The Fenians and Fomor (25 points)

Disadvantages

Combat Paralysis (-15 points)
Delusion: Thinks she's a changeling and that wild carders are faeries (-10 points)
Fanaticism: Fionne MacCoul's cause (-15 points)
Intolerance: Protestants (-10 points)
Low Pain Threshold (-10 points)
Sense of Duty: To the Fenians and Fomor (-10 points)
Shyness (-10 points)
Youth: 15 years old (-6 points)

Super Advantages

Manannan's Gateway: Combination of Amphibious, Gills and Nictating Membrane advantages (Affects others +40%; Can affect groups +50%; Touch only -20%;



Those who pass through the Gateway remain dry +20%; Power may be placed into seaweed charm +40%; Linked to Astral Projection +10%; May be broken by someone on the outside drawing blood from the subject or turning a glove or coat inside-out -50%; 57 points)

See Invisible (Only applies to things on the faerie side of Ireland or characters who are astral projecting -60%, 6 points)

Super-Powers

Illusion-10(30) (Takes Extra Time -40%; Animate +20%; 122 points)

Psionics

Astral Projection-14(13) (Affects Others +40%; Physical body is not left behind +40%; Power may be placed into posy which opens "Faerie Hills" +40%; Linked to Manannan's Gateway +10%; May be broken by someone on the outside drawing blood from the subject or turning a glove or coat inside out -50%; 79 points)

Skills

English-16 (8 points), Hobby: Embroidery-16 (5 points), Irish (Native tongue), Naturalist-12 (4 points), Stealth-14 (4 points)

Quirks

Chocoholic, any sort of chocolate
Has crush on Fionne
Picks wildflowers and makes daisy-chains
Sinéad O'Connor fan; certain she's a changeling
Talks to her cats, Heather and Mollykins; carries them in shoulder bag

Eleanor Breslin grew up in Rosslea, youngest child in a large Catholic family, frightened by the bombings and war

around her. Her older brothers were members of the IRA, and two were killed by the time she turned 12.

A shy girl, she spent time in the countryside hunting birds nests, or at home, listening to her grandmother's tales of Fionne MacCoul and the faerie hills of the Sidhe. On an old hill outside town there was reputed to be a faerie stone, which, if it were touched with the correct number of primroses, would open the door to the land of the faeries. The wrong number would open the door to doom. Eleanor became curious and finally took a posy of seven primroses and touched it to the stone. The hill opened.

Inside, the ancient halls of the Tuatha de Danaan were deserted and hung with cobwebs. Eleanor feared that she had opened the door to doom instead and fled the hill, telling no one of her adventure.

She listened to more of her grandmother's stories and discovered a way to lift a corner of the veil of invisibility the Druid Amergin had cast over Erin, separating the sunlit upper world of men from the dark underground world of the Sidhe. She then met Fionne MacCoul on a hill outside town, and explained her powers. He asked her to become his court's enchantress. Eleanor went with him, on the condition that her dead brothers be resurrected by Kate Kelly's cauldron.

She opened the hills and Lough Neagh to the Fomor and Fenians that Fionne had gathered. Satire began calling her Primrose, and she took the name for her own. She is fiercely loyal to the FFFF and does everything in her power to protect them.

Eleanor has two cats, Heather and Mollykins that follow her around when she's not carrying them in a shoulder bag. They are lovable and disobedient, generally taking up much of her attention and most of her love.

Typical Dialogue: "Heather! Mollykins! Come back here!"

Satire (Kevin Murphy)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy (It's a good Irish name . . .)

Born: April 23, 1966, Limerick, Ireland

Appearance: Satire is a big man (6' 4" 195 lbs.) handsome in a knightish way with dark brown hair and hazel-green eyes. He wears linen grandfather shirts and jeans, and carries a notebook and guitar or harp.

Wild Card Ability: Satire has the luck of the Irish, every variety in fact. This includes good luck for himself and his friends and bardic curses for enemies.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 14 (45 points) IQ 15 (60 points) Move: 6
DX 10 (0 points) HT 14 (45 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d; Swing 2d

Advantages

Alertness +1 (5 points)
Charisma +2 (10 points)
Eidetic Memory, Level 1 (30 points)
Handsome (15 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Musical Ability +3: (3 points)
Night Vision (10 points)
Rapid Healing (5 points)
Reputation: Coffeehouse poet and political satirist, +2
Irish Nationalists (5 points)
Ridiculous Luck (60 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

- Compulsive Behavior: Telling stories (-5 points)
- Compulsive Behavior: Writing (-5 points)
- Delusion: Thinks he's only pretending to be an ace (-5 points)
- Impulsiveness (-10 points)
- Mild Cowardice (-5 points)
- Poverty: Struggling (-10 points)
- Weirdness Magnet (-15 points)

Super Advantages

- Super Luck (100 points)
- Irish Satire: Variant of Super Luck and Jinxed. Brings



appropriate ironic fate down on the subject of the satire. Base cost: 200 points. (Must be in the form of poetry -40%; Verse must be truly ironic: can't just say "so-and-so will die" -20%; Always comes true +40%; 160 points) Passive Defense +6 (150 points)

Skills

Acting-15 (2 points), Bard-16 (2 points), Carousing-14 (2 points), English-16 (4 points), Fast-Talk-16 (4 points), Guitar-15 (4 points), Harp-14 (2 points), History-15 (4 points), Hobby: Rock Music-16 (2 points), Irish (Native tongue), Literature-15 (4 points), Occultism-16 Folklore (4 points), Performance-17 (6 points), Poetry-17 (6 points), Savoir-Faire-16 (2 points), Scrounging-14 (1/2 point), Singing-14 (1 point), Streetwise-14 (1 point), Writing-15 (2 points)

Quirks

- Hangs out in coffee houses
- Hates Ulster Unionists
- Jealous of aces; wishes he could be an ace
- Knows he's lucky; thanks St. Brigid and St. Jude constantly
- Loves to talk, even if no one is listening

Kevin Murphy has been lucky as long as he could remember. He went to the University of Dublin, pursuing a degree in history and Irish literature, writing satiric verse in his spare time.

Then Fionne MacCoul appeared, saying he needed a bard for his court. Kevin was not about to argue with a man over twice his height. He packed his things and joined, introduced to the Fenians and Fomor as Fionne's new court poet and good-luck charm.

He set himself up around Belfast and Newtownards as a coffeehouse poet. His satires and poems became well-known, mostly because they started coming true. He thought this was the FFFF's doing. It wasn't.

After one of his political songs raised blisters on the Mayor of Belfast's face, a columnist for the Newtownards Spectator accused the poet of being an ace capable of ancient Irish satire. Kevin laughed it off, taking the name "Satire" as a joke.

Satire works as the FFFF's spy and major link with the outside world. He gets the papers and finds new recruits in the obituaries.

Typical Dialogue:

(Spoken with a thick Irish brogue)
"There once was an ace, Carnifex,
In battle, his muscles he'd flex.
If he enters Fionne's halls,
He'll get hit in the . . . groin,
And he'll sound like he's changing his sex."

BALI - DRAWING THE BLACK QUEEN

5

Always the Isle of Enchantment, Bali has become even more so since the advent of the Wild Card. Characters from the Wayang shadow theater pace the street, their backs hunched with prabus, humps of spiritual power. Tigers and demons talk in the marketplace, smoking spicy clove kretek and haggling over the price of oranges. The leyak of myth and legend have become the ordinary and commonplace. Indeed, with the exception of Manhattan, no other place on the earth has been as cruelly victimized by the Takisian xenovirus.



A Balinese Glossary

Alus: A term for characters from the wayang theater, meaning smooth, refined and aristocratic, as opposed to **kasar**.

Barong: In Balinese legend, the lion-dragon beast who protects the villagers from the widow-witch Rangda.

Chalonnarang: The formal Balinese name for the drama depicting the battle between Barong and Rangda.

Dalang: A puppeteer for the Indonesian wayang theater.

Kasar: A term for characters from the wayang theater, meaning rough, coarse and common, as opposed to **alus**.

Krettek: An Indonesian clove cigarette.

Kurawa: A term for ill-disposed aces and joker aces in Indonesia, particularly in Bali. Taken from the villains of the Mahabharata.

Leyak: A modern term for wild carders in Bali and Indonesia. Originally a term from Balinese mythology referring to elves, goblins and magical creatures. Pejorative among most nats in Indonesia.

Mahabarata: A Hindu epic used as the source of most of the characters and stories popular in the Indonesian wayang theater.

Pendawa: A term for well-liked aces and joker-aces in Indonesia, particularly Bali. Taken from the heroes of the Mahabharata.

Prince Arjuna: A prince of the Pendawas and hero of the Mahabarata. Most popular of legendary figures in Indonesia, recently an ace or joker-ace has taken the form of Prince Arjuna, becoming a terror of the Sukarno government and a folk-hero among jokers.

Rangda: The widow of Chalonnarang, a sorceress of Balinese legend who seeks to spread disease and death. A death spirit, she is opposed by the Barong. The 1947 Balinese outbreak of the wild card is attributed to her.

Wayang: Shadow in Indonesian. Traditionally a puppet theater, there are also live performances. Wayang plays are drawn from mythic Hindu epics, principally the Mahabarata.

The Balinese point fearfully to the hideous tusked mask of Rangda, the Witch, the Widow of Chalonnarang, and say that she is the source of the disease. In the drama of Chalonnarang, Rangda, personification of the forces of evil, fights against Barong, the Dragon who guards the villagers. Kris dancers, driven mad by the power of the Witch, attempt to stab themselves, but are prevented by the Barong. Rangda instructs her disciples to spread disease, but the Barong stops them as well. In all dramas before, in the end the Dragon has banished the Witch, but with every reenactment, there is always the fear that this time perhaps evil will triumph and Rangda will defeat the Barong.

On June 17, 1947, it appears that Rangda won . . .

— Margaret Mead, 1947, "The Triumph of Rangda"

Wild Cards Indonesia Since World War II

At the end of World War II, the Dutch East Indies were under Japanese occupation. On August 17, 1945, Dr. Sukarno and Dr. Hatta declared independence for the Republic of the United States of Indonesia. The Dutch struggled to retain power over their colony. On June 17, 1947, a shipment from New York City arrived on the island of Bali.

The Balinese Wild Card outbreak was the most graphic the world had seen since Manhattan. It is believed that one joker manifested the power and form of Rangda, the plague carrier, spreading the virus over the small island.

On December 27, 1949, the Netherlands transferred full power to the new republic. President Sukarno's regime became increasingly nationalistic and dictatorial, repudiating the West and the United States. Sukarno bitterly opposed the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, sending several Indonesian aces as spies and saboteurs. Inflation, widespread corruption, and Sukarno's Marxist leanings drew opposition from students, Islamic groups and the armed forces. In September and October of 1965, "the year of living dangerously," there was an attempted military coup by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), precipitated by a critical illness of President Sukarno. A mass slaughter of PKI members and supporters followed, including many jokers and aces. Others mysteriously disappeared.

President Sukarno recovered from his illness and set to reconsolidating his power, becoming dictator of Indonesia. The Indonesian armed forces suddenly became fiercely loyal to Dr. Sukarno. Rumors persist that the President's ailment had been the wild card, but if so, it was a hidden ace or a deuce. In 1967, Indonesian forces toppled the Malaysian government, incorporating the country into the Republic of Indonesia. This drew disapproval from the U.N. — left by Indonesia in 1965 — and unflattering comparisons were made between Sukarno and previous world conquerors.

President Sukarno was evidently content with Malaysia until 1975, when Portugal withdrew from East Timor, which Indonesia then claimed, followed by Papua New Guinea. Extreme unease has existed in Indonesia since, with widespread accusations of corruption. The aging President Sukarno passed some of his power to the cabinet in 1979, though still held a tight rein on the government. Insistence on the state philosophy of Pancasila has caused much unrest, mostly arising from the first principle of the belief in the One and Only God. The PKI, Islamic groups and others have attempted revolt, but all have been suppressed.

Indonesia is fiercely independent and operates under the whims of Sukarno and the cabinet. Open trade is in effect with the west, and Indonesia has strong tourism, mostly to Bali.

Wild Cards Bali Today

Bali is Indonesia's dumping ground for wild card victims, the Jokertown of southeast Asia. This is a function both of the 1947 Balinese wild card outbreak and the religious and political realities of the republic. The second principle of the state philosophy of Pancasila states "the Indonesian people's views about human beings do not condone the oppression of human beings." Unfortunately, Indonesia is 78% Muslim, and Islam Indonesia has strong ties to the Nur Al Allah's crusade, believing jokers unclean animals along with pigs and dogs. The humanity of jokers is seriously in question in Indonesia, and they legally have no protection from violent attacks. Army patrols routinely shoot pigs, dogs and jokers so as to avoid offending Islamic dignitaries. Jokers are not allowed to vote in Indonesia, not that voting means much anyway.

Bali, however, has always had a large Hindu population, a religion that holds all life sacred. Consequently, jokers are greatly accepted among the people of Bali, the island becoming a haven for victims of the wild card virus. Belief in racial purity made Hong Kong intolerable for many victims of the 1949 outbreak, who then emigrated to Bali, establishing a strong Chinatown district.



As an additional draw for jokers there is the Barong, the lion-dragon beast in Balinese legend who opposes Rangda. Some jokers have reportedly manifested the form of the Barong and have possessed the beast's curing powers, but investigations have discovered no more than Barong-shaped jokers with no healing ability. Dancers often parade the traditional Barong costumes through the streets, clacking the wooden jaws and selling locks of its beard to hopeful jokers. An occasional miraculous cure spurs hope and brings wild card victims from around the world.



The Leyak

Wild cards in Bali and Indonesia are uniformly referred to as the *leyak*. This is a generic term from Balinese mythology, referring to elves, goblins and magical creatures. Unfortunately, such a term is pejorative among most nats in Indonesia. The leyak, on the other hand, take it as a title of pride.

Aces and some powerful jokers are also termed by the names of the two sides of the Mahabharata from the Wayang theater. Those aces and joker-aces who are well-liked are referred to as Pendawa, from the characters of the right and the light. Ace and joker-ace villains are known as Kurawa, from the dark, left-hand side of the shadow theater.

In the jungles of Bali, there are many leyak who consider themselves magical creatures rather than victims of the wild card virus. Much like their predecessors in mythology, they conduct strange rites and cause mischief for the leyak and nats of the city.

The Wayang Theater

The wayang theater is the traditional theater of Bali and Indonesia. Three forms of wayang exist: the wayang kulit, the wayang golek and the wayang wong.

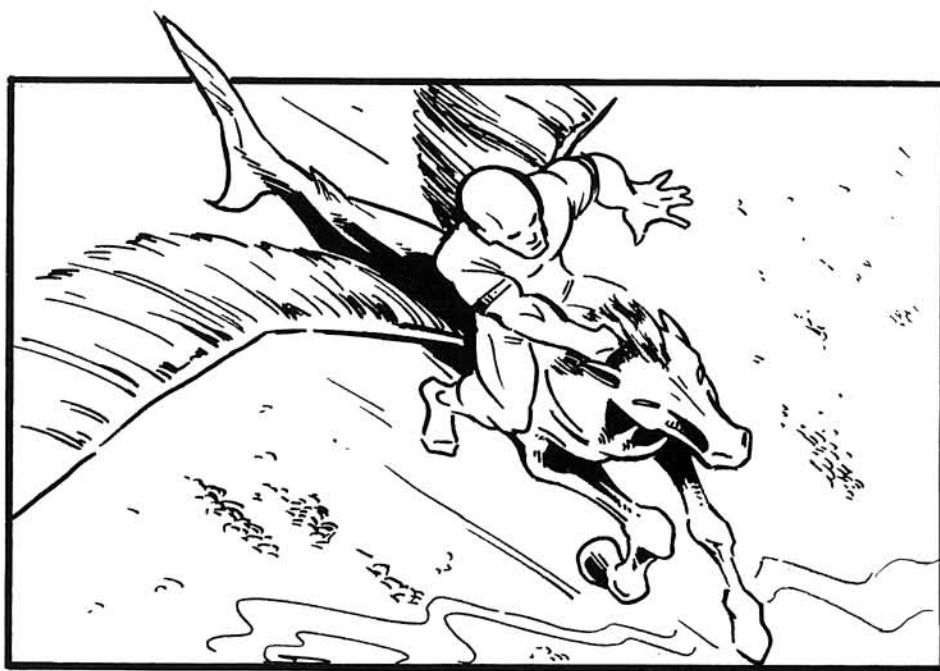
The wayang kulit and the wayang golek are puppet theaters. The puppet master is known as the "dalang." The dalang is most often male, though in modern times there are female dalangs. Dalangs specialize in either the wayang kulit or the wayang golek.

The wayang kulit is the nighttime shadow puppet theater. Flat leather puppets are manipulated before a lantern, the shadows projected onto the back of a screen. The wayang golek is the daytime puppet theater, using carved wooden puppets and dolls.

The wayang wong is the "human wayang." Actors and actresses dress in traditional costumes identical to those of the puppet theaters. Many Balinese victims have drawn their wild cards in the middle of such dramas, the wild card changing them into the likeness of tiger-faced demons or multi-armed Hindu gods.

Rightfully, many nats fear the power of the wayang wong, and a sub-category of the drama has become the wayang leyak. In this form, jokers are selected for their resemblance to traditional characters and monsters. The wayang leyak is very popular, especially among visitors to Bali; it is a completely joker art form.

Continued on next page . . .



Real Indonesia Since World War II

History in the real Indonesia went along the same course as Wild Cards Indonesia, minus the aces and jokers, until March 1966. General Suharto took power from President Sukarno, establishing a military government, and the PKI was outlawed. Indonesia rejoined the United Nations. East Timor was annexed in 1975, though Malaysia and Papua New Guinea continue to have their own governments. President Suharto was re-elected regularly and still rules Indonesia. Efforts in 1984 to have all groups in Indonesia adopt the state philosophy of Pancasila sparked protests and riots among the Islamic community.

August 23, 1991: Bali, Indonesia

Agents are each given \$2,000 in travelers' checks and arrive at the Ngurah Rai airport in the island capital of Denpasar. They are using their usual Tri-Psi covers, with the additional overlay of jokers coming to Bali in search of a miraculous cure. The agents are also there without the official approval of the Indonesian government, making the situation riskier. Only a few ministers know of their presence and none their identities. Sukarno has claimed Indonesia can deal with the joker threat by itself.

Pedal-cart taxis are at the airport, picking up tourists to take them to their hotels, and many of the drivers are jokers. The Denpasar streets are crowded, people in masks everywhere. As in Jokertown, masks are a way of life in Bali. However, most of the masks are traditional, brightly painted hand-carved wood and leather. It is often hard to tell who is a joker and who is a nat in costume.

Leading this mission is Joann Jefferson, Lady Black (see p. 14). She arrives at the same time as the other agents, flying in from Hawaii instead of London. Everyone is staying at the Bali Raya hotel on the edge of the main tourist market.

Intelligence sources say the local liaison for the Twisted Fists is a nat woman known as Tjun Tjun Afiff. She runs a clothing stall in the tourist market and rents rides on a flying joker who looks like a winged heraldic seahorse. Lady Black has a photograph to recognize Ms. Afiff by. After everyone memorizes it, she destroys it. (If agents have obtained Taroque's cards — pp. 50-51 — they may recognize her as the *Knight of Discs*. Her picture on the card alternates with the silhouette of Prince Arjuna; see p. 95.)



The Marketplace

Open-air stalls sprawl everywhere in a chaotic flea market. Vendors sell masks, wood and stone carvings, leatherwork, clothes, fruits and vegetables and lots of cheap plastic knick-knacks from Hong Kong. Two-thirds of the shopkeepers and patrons are jokers. Most of the joker patrons look like tourists.

A wayang golek performance (see sidebar) is being conducted in the market center. Children and tourists stand around watching, and the pickpockets are out. Any agent who takes in the show has a 1 in 6 chance of being targeted by a street thief. Telephoto (see p. 92) is taking pictures of the crowd, especially their masks. Those who read *Aces!* or *National Geographic* have a 50% chance of recognizing him as the famous joker-deuce photographer.

The winged seahorse from Lady Black's picture is easy to spot, one of the few flying jokers in the area. Agents can use him to find Tjun Tjun's stall, and may rent a ride or look through the items Wayang has for sale.

Aerial Tour

Kretek (see p. 90) gives riders an aerial tour of Densapar and the jungle, pointing out temples and other local sites. If anyone is game, Kretek also takes them body surfing joker-style in the Indian Ocean. If anyone asks who the attractive nat woman who acts as his cashier is, he'll say she's Tjun Tjun and go on about her beauty. Kretek has no real information about anything, and certainly nothing he could communicate in English.

Wayang

Wayang (see p. 94) makes and sells custom-tailored clothing, mostly to jokers. She has numerous bolts of cloth, anywhere from cotton batik to Chinese silk. Her prices are high, but much lower than anything comparable in the West. She also has premade clothes, mostly long, loose Balinese coats and pants which she can easily tailor to almost any joker, adding extra sleeves or tail slits as necessary. She is very polite and businesslike and has no fear of even the grossest joker deformities. She doesn't like slimy stuff, but isn't repulsed so long as she doesn't have to get her fingers in it. If anyone asks about the rights of jokers in Indonesia, Wayang is honest and angry. She does not give any information about any plans, however. Her plan is going very well and she has all the conspirators she needs.

Sometime near the end of the fitting session, Telephoto comes by to chat.



The Wayang Theater (Continued)

The classic wayang theater draws its stories from four Hindu epics, chief of which is the Mahabharata, telling the tales of the conflicts between the Pandawas and the Kurawas brothers. Certain stories are considered so magically charged that only a dalang of great experience should attempt to perform them. The most magical is the drama of Chalonarang, telling the story of the battle between Barong and Rangda. As Rangda is thought to be the source of the 1947 Balinese outbreak, this is hardly surprising.

Modern wayang, through the influence of Sukarno, has become increasingly politicized, clowns and other characters espousing political views of both right and left. Like politics, the wayang is divided between the right and the left. The right is the side of Prince Arjuna and the Pandawas, who almost always win. The humans are on the right and the demons are on the left. Characters are defined as either alus (smooth and refined) or kasar (coarse and common).

Popular wayang characters are Siva, the god of gods; the raksasas, tiger-faced demon ogres; Mintraksi, the ogress lady-in-waiting; Hanuman, the monkey king; Sangut and Delem, clown servants of the Pandawas and Kurawas respectively; Sangkuni, the evil counselor of the Kurawas; Bima, the incredibly strong dwarf swordsman; Garuda, the bird-man; Srikanda, Prince Arjuna's aggressive, battle-trained wife; and Prince Arjuna himself, the refined warrior.

Yellowman's Nightmare

As opposed to the false dreams the Murga-muggai has been sending, on the night of August 24th, Yellowman has one of his "true" nightmares: of the future Bali and Indonesia where almost everyone is a joker, the government is gone, and all live in terror of the depredations of the witch Rangda and her followers.

Once he awakens, Yellowman is frantic, telling everyone his dream. It doesn't matter if he was out of the adventure — he'll come back to Bali to warn everyone, including those in prison, helping them to escape to stop Rangda.

Any telepath — Telephoto included — who inspects Yellowman's mind finds his entire catalog of nightmares/precognitions/experiences. Along with those, however, are the false dreams sent by the Murga-muggai — distinct to Telephoto's aura reading or to anybody with the Signature Sniffer skill (*Psionics*, p. 24). In addition, those with Signature Sniffer may discover Professor Swift's mental signature — or at least wonder at Evie's overwhelming compulsion to follow every last parental order.



Telephoto

Telephoto is doing a photospread for *National Geographic*, "Bali, Isle of a Thousand Masks," and he enjoys talking to other Westerners. He's also Yellowman's Twisted Fist contact and immediate superior. If Yellowman is around, he'll mentally tip Telephoto off to which members of the group are Twisted Fist agents and which aren't. If not, Telephoto looks into minds out of force of habit and discovers who's who.

Telephoto won't blink an eye. However, that evening he'll slip a neat set of Polaroids into the slot at the local police station, taking the non-Fist agents out of the action.

The Balinese Police

No matter where the government operatives are, that evening around 7:00 they are approached by the Indonesian military police, four per agent. Any local jokers present are terrified by the uniforms — and the assault rifles.

The agents, including Lady Black, are asked to come to the precinct house for questioning. If they protest, guns are cocked. If they resist, cocked guns are pointed. If they continue to resist, guns are fired. Lady Black, however, goes quietly, as do Decathlon and Yellowman (if, as before, his cover has not been penetrated — Telephoto knows jails are no threat to the teleporter). Twisted Fist double-agents are left out, but may be arrested if they are in company of the loyal operatives.

At the station, they are confronted by a very angry Inspector Soedjiman. He orders them all placed in separate jail cells. If anyone asks why they're being held, he'll say Indonesia does not tolerate terrorists, especially joker terrorists. Any protests prompt Soedjiman to take out a manila envelope and spill about 30 Polaroids of varying quality, though all clearly showing the agents sneaking around some buildings and offices, none of which they've ever seen. "There," says Inspector Soedjiman. "Now deny that you were the terrorists who stole state documents from President Sukarno's office last week and planted a bomb for the Minister of Finance."

Soedjiman does not listen to any explanations. He says he would have shot them all, except that killing foreign jokers would cause an international incident. Also, Indonesia wishes to keep them for questioning. "Answer questions properly, and you *leyak* may save your miserable lives."

Yellowman leaves for England, purportedly to warn the Mace. First, however, he'll notify the Fists. Lady Black shows her Justice Department badge, managing to get a call to the U.S. Embassy. It's a complete mess. Relations between the Indonesia and the West are strained. If there's a tank in the party, the group could bust out, but then they'd be hunted, and there would be no chance of infiltrating the Fists. If they stay in jail, three days of legal footwork later, the embassy will bail them out. Before then, however, trouble occurs.

The Meeting With Rangda

That evening, after the government agents are jailed or otherwise detained, Telephoto delivers his smuggled wild card serum to Wayang. Yellowman and the other Twisted Fists may join them. At midnight, they meet with Rangda (see p. 91), who appears through the floor of Wayang's apartment. Rangda takes the virus and a list of Muslim fanatics and political leaders who have backed the killing of jokers.

Rangda, meanwhile, goes off into the jungle where her *leyak* followers (see sidebar, p. 85) await her. Rangda takes the serum and gives 50 *leyak* the power to spread disease. They scatter over the island, causing a Balinese wild card outbreak to rival the first.

Rangda Takes a Trip

Trusting Bali to her leyak, at 7 a.m. Rangda sneaks aboard the morning Singapore Airlines commute flight to Jakarta, Indonesia's capital. She sits invisible in the back corner of the cabin for the period of the flight. When she gets to Jakarta, she creates more carriers and goes on her own rampage.

August 24, 1991: Uniting the Agents

At 4 a.m., Yellowman wakes all the agents, explaining the situation (see *Yellowman's Nightmare*, sidebar, p. 88). Even if they don't believe him, the next morning, Wayang and Telephoto and the other Twisted Fist operatives notice the wild card epidemic outside and realize Rangda has pulled a double-cross — and Yellowman was right. They need all the help they can get if they want to stop her. Consequently, Wayang sends the shadow of Prince Arjuna (see p. 95) to bust the government agents out of jail, Arjuna breaking bars by breaking their shadows. If they have already escaped, Yellowman can teleport to them, or Telephoto can track them down by flying Kretek and taking Kirlian photographs, pinpointing the agents' auras from above.



Telephoto blatantly introduces himself as a high-ranking Fist and asks for the agents' help. (He excuses himself from the affairs in South Africa and Northern Ireland, saying that the epidemics were none of his planning and he strongly opposed them. The plan was to just target government ministers who backed the killing of jokers.) Regardless, Rangda must be stopped. The news then breaks that there is a huge wild card outbreak in Jakarta.

Wayang's Plan

While it may be possible to kill Rangda in a knock-down drag-out super fight, in Balinese mythology the only creature who could stop her was the Barong. Wayang explains that she has a Barong puppet, but has never used it because the drama of Chalonarang is only attempted by the most experienced dalangs, something she doesn't consider herself. But she would be willing to risk it to stop Rangda.

The agents must get to Jakarta where Rangda is causing chaos and disease, the wild card spreading like wildfire. They may then fight Rangda, attempting to defeat her themselves, or lure her to a place where Wayang may project the Barong. They must protect Wayang as the Barong fights Rangda. Rangda hates the Barong and exposes herself while in combat with him.

Manipulating the drama of Chalonarang and summoning the Barong is actually far beyond Wayang's Ectoplasmic Projection power (see p. 123), her strength being far too low to burn the needed fatigue. However, Wayang pushes herself anyway. She retains consciousness long enough operate the Barong, but whether she wins or loses, the strain knocks her into a coma for 1d months.

Telephoto asks the agents to help him get her out of the country and give them both political asylum. Wayang, as the puppeteer behind Prince Arjuna, is number one on Indonesia's most-wanted list. The Jakarta airport, however, has been quarantined. The PCs may try to take refuge in the American or British Embassies, unless they have some way to teleport the whole group out of Indonesia. It will take up to a week to leave Indonesia through diplomatic channels.

The Plot of Rangda and the Leyak

When the Twisted Fists teamed up with Rangda, they thought she was a miserable joker with some disease-spreading power. They trusted her to use the wild card serum to infect specific Muslim fanatics and political leaders, known for their policies of killing jokers. This plan paralleled that of the Fist agents in South Africa.

Unfortunately, Rangda has her own agenda. She has secretly been meeting with groups of deformed jokers in the jungles (the ones who really believe they are the mythical leyak). She appears to them as Rangda and promises to deliver them to the Bali of legend, where the leyak are free and the widow-witch controls all. She has been planning this move for years, but a mystical dream told her wait until this year to begin the final stages of her plan.

This dream is another example of the Murga-muggai's tinkering with the Twisted Fists and the wild card threat. Her precog ability tipped her off to Rangda's plans, which were much in line with her own. In addition to spreading the xenovirus across southeast Asia, Rangda's double-cross would tie up the agents in Bali, while the aborigine crone and the Astronomer could complete their rituals in Australia.

Rangda doesn't suspect the Murga-muggai's manipulation, but even if she found out, she wouldn't mind as long as she was allowed to keep her rule over the new Bali, joker-ridden and nightmarish.

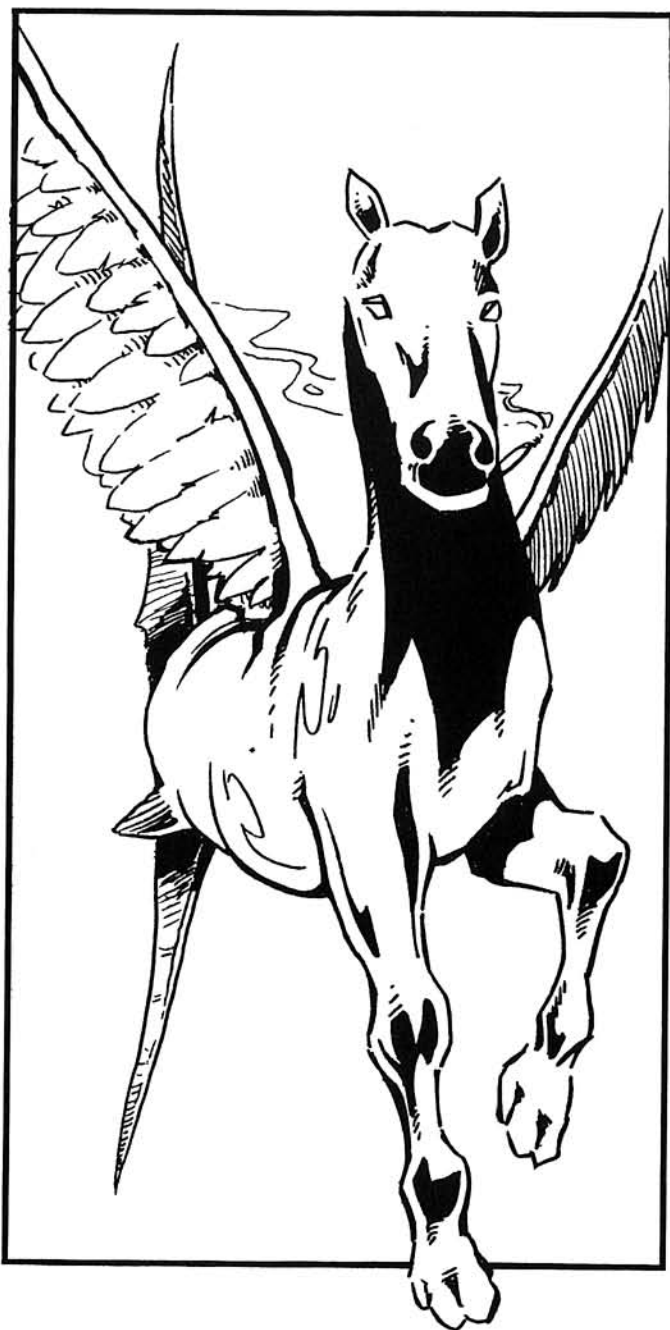


Kretek (Tjarda Raichman)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: October 12, 1971, Bali, Indonesia

Appearance: Kretek is a completely non-human joker. In front, he is a glossy black pony with four-toed hooves and bright red eyes. From the rear, he's a large, black-scaled fish. His chest and belly are patterned orange and gold, hair shading into scales, while on his back are two beautiful pink, green, gold, black and red wings. Taken as an animal, he's a gorgeous creature. Taken as a human, he's hideously deformed. He's usually smoking a kretek, a clove cigarette from which he gets his nickname.



Wild Card Ability: Kretek can fly and swim exceedingly well. He's also unusually lucky.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 16 (80 points)	IQ 8 (-20 points)	Move: 13.5 swimming
DX 17 (100 points)	HT 10 (0 points)	27 flying
Damage: Kick 2d+3		

Advantages

Night Vision (10 points)
Ridiculous Luck (60 points)
Very Beautiful (25 points)

Disadvantages

Addiction: Clove kreteks (-10 points)
Dead Broke (-15 points)
Illiterate (-10 points)
No Hands (-30 points)
Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)
Youth: 15 years old (-6 points)

Super Advantages

Amphibious (10 points)
Flight (Winged -25%; 30 points)
Hooves: +2 crushing damage (10 points)
Super Flight, Level 1 (20 points)
Super Swimming, Level 1 (10 points)

Super Disadvantages

Dependency: Water, hourly, or tail dries out (-20 points)

Skills

Fast-Talk-11 (8 points), Indonesian (Native Tongue), Pidgin English-7 (½ point), Survival (Ocean)-13 (12 points)

Quirks

Curious about sex
Doesn't feel deformed, though he would like hands
Likes smoking clove cigarettes, but can't hold them
Says whatever he thinks; has no tact whatsoever

When he was a baby, Tjarda Raichman's mother hung a traditional Balinese protective charm over his cradle, a winged hippocampus. The wild card changed him into its likeness.

His parents cared for him until he was four, at which point he flew away to live in the ocean. As he grew older, he talked with more people and learned more. An old joker got him addicted to clove cigarettes, and that acted as incentive to stay around humans. He needed people to light

and hold the cigarettes for him. They gave him the name Kretek.

He knows who his parents are, but doesn't particularly care for them. Kretek works in the marketplace, giving tourists rides. Wayang does his bookkeeping for him and buys him all the kreteks and candy he wants. If she needs to go to Jakarta, Wayang flies Kretek. He knows vaguely about the Twisted Fists, but he agrees with their policies

toward Muslims and therefore says nothing about them. Kretek is happy, and helps Tjun Tjun because he likes her and she's nice to him. If she keeps the extra money he makes, he doesn't care. He has no use for money and spends his days enjoying himself.

Typical Dialogue: "I fly you one hour. Twenty dollar American. Much fun."

Rangda

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: ? First appearance June 19, 1947, Bali

Appearance: Rangda is a monstrous joker hag, with drooping breasts, foot-long fingernails, huge tusks and teeth, and bloodshot, red-irised eyes the size of tennis balls. Her body is covered with matted white hair and her three-foot tongue dangles from her mouth, dripping with flame. She wears a long black and white checked coat and a red, white and black banded sash and trousers. Her feet are bare and clawed like a dog's, and she carries a white cloth with red embroidery which she uses to turn invisible. In public, she often wears a mask of her own face.

Wild Card Ability: Rangda is a witch of incredible power. Among the abilities she uses most often are the power to breathe flame, mind control huge groups into committing suicide, turn invisible, turn insubstantial, and grant herself and others the power to spread any disease.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 16 (80 points) **IQ** 18 (125 points) **Move:** 7
DX 11 (10 points) **HT** 17 (100 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d+3; Swing 2d+4

Advantages

Alertness +2 (10 points)
Charisma +4 (20 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Peripheral Vision (15 points)
Strong Will +5 (20 points)

Disadvantages

Bloodlust (-10 points)
Dead Broke (-25 points)
Delusion: "I am Evil incarnate!" (-15 points)
Fanatic: Spreading disease (-15 points)
Hideous Appearance (-20 points)
Megalomania (-10 points)
Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Claws (15 points)
Dark Vision (Can see colors +20%; 30 points)
Immortality (140 points)



Insubstantiality (Can breathe underground +20%; Can turn hands or head insubstantial +20%; 112 points)

Invisibility (Switchable +10%; Up to no encumbrance +10%; Must hold completely still -50%; Must place scarf over head -20%, 20 points)

Radar Sense, 30 hexes (Can see through objects +40%; Only while insubstantial -40%; 80 points)

Super-Powers

Plague Power-20(1): Rangda can infect anyone with a disease by touching them. (Bought as Alter; Touch only -20%; Affects living creatures +100%; Can give this power to her servants for a day, making them carriers +100%; Doesn't require Analyze +30%; Can only change blood into disease agent -50%; Must drink a sample of the disease agent first -30%; 28 points)

Flame Jet-14(6) (Nuisance effect: tongue always covered with flickering flames -10%, 33 points)

Psionics

Precognition-18(5) (14 points)

Telepathy Power 10 (50 points)

Telecontrol-40 (Only to have victims commit suicide -40%, 29 points)

Telereceive-20 (Only to establish Telecontrol -40%, 5 points)

Telesend-15 (½ point)

Skills

Occultism-18 (2 points), Psychology-18 (4 points), Public Speaking-18 (2 points), Scrounging-18 (1 point)



Telephoto (Colin Fitzmaurice)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: September 3, 1956, Melbourne, Australia

Appearance: 6'1", 160 lbs., ginger brown hair, left eye — intense silver-blue, right eye — telephoto lens with camera replacing upper right skull. Telephoto has an engaging smile and dresses in *Banana Republic* photographer's jackets.

Wild Card Ability: Publicly, Telephoto is a joker-deuce with a built-in camera. Secretly, he is an ace telepath who can photograph people's memories. He has invented numerous camera attachments extending the range of his abilities, making him a powerful ace-in-the-hole.

Aces Jingle: Quick! Quick! Need a pic?
Telephoto does the trick!

Quirks

Hates all nats, especially Muslims

Lives underground in a graveyard; snacks on corpses

Makes her clothes out of stolen Rangda costumes

Terrorizes children at night

Thinks jokers are lesser evil spirits, therefore likes them

This Rangda is the Rangda who caused the first Balinese wild card outbreak and disappeared shortly thereafter. In the years since, she has coordinated the leyak of Bali, encouraging them in raids against Muslims. She presently is the center of several cults, using her power to appear out of the ground at will. This is one of her favorite tactics in combat, slashing a victim's hamstrings with her claws before going back underground. When insubstantial and underground, she perceives the surface world very much as if she were under water.

Rangda has been biding her time. She has caused numerous small plagues of cholera and scarlet fever, but all have been curable, and have mostly struck the jokers of Bali, whom she considers her children. What she wants is to cause the most wide-scale wild card outbreak she can, infecting all of southeast Asia. Her sixth sense has told her to wait for this year to accomplish the maximum evil.

Unlike most jokers, Rangda is not even remotely human in her mentality. She delights in pain, suffering and chaos. However, she is very intelligent, and knows when to play the role of a helpless victim of the wild card cursed with the awful shape of Rangda. She has Wayang completely fooled, as well as many of the jokers of Bali. Once she gets Telephoto's sample of the wild card virus, she will unleash her plague in Jakarta, creating carriers at random and sending them throughout the world.

Typical Dialogue: "I am Rangda and I will destroy you!"

ST 12 (20 points) IQ 17 (100 points) Move: 5

DX 11 (10 points) HT 10 (0 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d -1; Swing 1d +2

Advantages

Acute Vision +3 (6 points)

Handsome (15 points)

Gadgeteer (Camera equipment only -40%; 15 points)

Eidetic Memory, Level 2 (Visual images only, -30%; 42 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Reputation: +2 among international journalists, photographers, anthropologists, naturalists, upper-class Western academics and readers of *National Geographic* and *Aces!* magazines. (5 points)

Patron(s): *National Geographic* and *Aces!* Telephoto is usually on assignment for one or the other. Both have extricated him from international legal difficulties. (25 points)

Disadvantages

Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Secret: Ace-up-the-sleeve; Telephoto can “photograph” another person’s memories, using his telepathic ability. He uses these for anonymous blackmailing of wealthy and corrupt people beyond the law, requesting that large sums be donated to certain charities. (World Wildlife Fund, Save the Children, Save the Jokers, etc.) (-20 points)

Secret: Telephoto is a high-ranking member of the Twisted Fists. (-20 points)

Sense of Duty: Must expose the pain and suffering of

the poor and downtrodden through the camera eye, joker and nat alike. (-15 points)

Super Advantages

Polarized Eyes (5 points)

Super Disadvantages

Dependency: Film, photo-chemicals (Usually legal, as needed; -5 points)

Super-Powers

Flash-16(1) (Left eye; No concentration required +20%; Uncontrollable, tends to go off whenever angry -30%, 8 points)

Illusion-17(1) (Right eye/camera; Tiny, non-visible, only usable on photographic film -40%, 11 points)

Psionics

Telereceive-22(14) (Right eye/camera; Must make eye-contact -20%; Visual thoughts and memories only -50%, 63 points)

Skills

Anthropology-15 (2 points), Archaeology-13 (1 point), Artist-13 (1 point), Carousing-10 (2 points), Chinese-12 (1 point), Cooking-15 (1 point), Diplomacy-21 (5 points), Fast-Talk-16 (2 points), First Aid-15 (1 point), German-12 (1 point), Japanese-13 (2 points), Lip Reading-18 (1 point), Naturalist-19 (4 points), Photography-20 (4 points), Savoir-Faire-17 (2 points), Scuba-16 (2 points), Tennis-12 (4 points), Writing-14 (1 point)

Camera Attachments

Lens Advantages

Peripheral Vision: Wide-angle lens (15 points)

Telephoto Lens Super Advantages

Microscopic Vision: 16× magnification (16 points)

Telescopic Vision: 256× power (48 points)

Lens Base Cost: 81 points

Breakable: -15 %

Can Be Hit: -20 % (-2 to hit)

Can Be Stolen: -30 % (requires Contest of ST to unscrew)

Lenses not usable together: -10 %

Lens Final Cost: 21 points



Filter Super Advantages

Infravision (Switchable +10%, 17 points)

Kirlian Photography Filter:

Sense Aura 16(4) (8 points)

Astral Sight 16(4) (8 points)

“Emperor’s Clothes” Filter:

Penetrating Vision, level 1 (Only able to see through cloth and fiber -40%, 6 points)

Base Cost: 39 points

Breakable: -15% Can Be Hit: -20% (-2 to hit)

Can Be Stolen: -30% (requires Contest of ST to unscrew)

Filter Final Cost: 13 points

Camera Attachments Total: 34 points

Quirks

Aussie accent usually quite mild, except when he’s being sarcastic

Noisily and aggressively “politically correct” on green issues

Perfectionist; never satisfied till he gets something just right

Refuses to answer to “Cameraman,” but doesn’t mind “Telephoto”

Swallows film in public, especially if anyone is staring

Colin Fitzmaurice always loved photography. His junior year at the University of Sydney, a thief broke into his apartment and stole his camera equipment. As a final blow, the mail then arrived with the latest issue of *American Photographer*. Colin was crushed. He paged through the magazine, looking at the cameras he hadn’t the money to buy, and faced the prospect of failing school from lack of equipment. He fell asleep on the floor of his empty apartment with the magazine as a pillow.

Things *could* get worse, and did. When he awoke, the wild card had dealt him a joker. The right half of his head had turned into a camera.

After an adjustment period, Colin found he’d also been dealt two small deuces — he could swallow any film, take pictures, and spit out developed negatives or even Polaroids, and his left eye had become a photographic

flash. He also found himself craving photo-chemicals which he eventually drank and found harmless.

Colin had always had a good memory, but over the following weeks he found it sharpening until he had total recall of all the events in his life, a perfect photographic memory, but only for visual images.

When Colin looked into his girlfriend’s eyes, he saw her visual memories laid out before him in chronological order in the same manner as his own, with mental “flags” to all the images of emotional importance — including her new boyfriend. Colin realized that, along with the joker and the deuces, the wild card had dealt him an ace, telepathy. He knew the general opinion of telepaths and decided to keep his ace “up his sleeve.”

Over the next year, he modified and invented several new camera attachments for himself, extending the range of his powers fully into the ace spectrum. He kept these secret as well. Colin then tracked down the thieves responsible for his transformation and sent the police an anonymous portfolio of them engaging in various real and imaginary crimes.

Digger Downs of *Aces!* magazine offered him a position as staff photographer. Downs put the byline, “Telephoto, Ace Photographer,” on Colin’s first feature, even though the telepathic photographer had identified himself as a joker and signed his own name to the piece. Colin accepted the ironic nickname, but has been suspicious of Downs ever since. Telephoto still works for *Aces!* though has done more and more work for *National Geographic* in recent years, at the same time sending photographs to various law enforcement agencies — and selling negatives to those beyond the law. Disgust and hatred for corrupt people beyond even blackmail led Fitzmaurice to meetings with the Twisted Fists. Telephoto deplores activities which harm innocents and is one of the few voices of reason within the organization. They’ve kept him on because his journalistic status and marginal joker-hood have gotten him into places closed to other members. Telephoto screens the auras and memories of the members of different governments, targeting bad apples and remembering good ones. He then passes this information to the Twisted Fists.

Typical Dialogue: “Am I a joker or an ace? Well, that depends. In ‘Stralia, I’m a joker. In South Africa, I prefer t’be an ace. Get the picture?” (FLASH! Removes photograph from mouth.) “Here y’go, mate. Free Polaroid. Never mind the spit, washes off.”

Wayang (Tjun Tjun Afiff)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: September 12, 1960, Jakarta, Indonesia

Appearance: Wayang is petite (4’ 10”, 85 lbs.) and quite beautiful, with small breasts, large, wide-spaced

eyes and a short, flat nose. Her figure is very much the archetype of *alus* from the wayang — slim, graceful and refined. She wears her hair back mid-length and dresses in modern Indonesian fashions.

Wild Card Ability: Wayang is a female dalang, a shadow puppetress. She animates the characters of the *wayang kulit*, the Indonesian shadow theater, sending forth the shadowy figures of Prince Arjuna and other heroes of legend to do her bidding.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 7 (-20 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 6
DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 8 (-15 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-3

Advantages

Ambidexterity (10 points)
Night Vision (10 points)
Very Beautiful (25 points)

Disadvantages

Secret: She is the source of Prince Arjuna and the other wayang shadows (-10 points)
Sense of Duty: To jokers (-10 points)
Vow: To avenge her brother's murder (-10 points)

Super-Powers

Ectoplasmic Projection-16(35) (See p. 123; Full Telepathic Communication +40%; Catalog +200%; Always Visible -20%; Only While Asleep -50%; Security Blanket: Needs appropriate shadow puppets and lantern -50%; Special effect: Instead of being insubstantial, projections have permanent shadowform with the enhancement of being able to do physical damage if they can attack their opponent's shadows +0%; 474 points)

Skills

Dancing-18 (8 points), English-16 (4 points), Merchant-16 (4 points), Performance-20 (12 points), Savoir-Faire-15 (1 point), Sewing-16 (4 points), Teaching-14 (1 point)

Quirks

Categorizes people into good and evil
Christian, but only moderately so
Idolizes Western culture; wants to leave Indonesia
Loves dancing; teaches the Legba to young girls
Wears Japanese perfume

Favorite Projection: Prince Arjuna (350 points)

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 15 (60 points) **Move:** 9
DX 16 (80 points) **HT** 15/25 (60 points)
Damage: Thrust 4d-1 impaling; Swing 6d+1 cutting

Advantages

Reputation: In Indonesia +6 to jokers, -4 to Muslims (0 points)

Disadvantages

Mute (-25 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Hit Points +10 (50 points)



Psionics

- Telepathy Power 35 (Always on -40%; 105 points)
- Mental Blow-12 (½ point)
- Mindword-17 (8 points)
- Telesend-12 (½ point)

Skills

- Force Sword-19 (16 points)

Quirks

- Always gives targets a chance to realize he's there
- Flips back and forth on the wall when fighting, like a shadow puppet
- Kisses the hands of ladies' shadows
- Very refined, almost feminine *alus* features

(All of Wayang's other shadows conform in most respects to Prince Arjuna, being mute and having shadow form. Her two other favorites are Garuda, the bird man, and Bima, the dwarf. Garuda has the advantage of flight, while Bima has stealth, super-strength and the ability to pick up objects while in shadow form. She uses these two as spies and document thieves.)

Special Projection: The Barong (969 points)

- ST 41 (163 points) IQ 15 (60 points) Move: 18
- DX 10 (0 points) HT 20 (175 points)
- Damage: Bite 5d cutting

Advantages

- Reputation +8 to everyone in Bali (40 points)

Disadvantages

- Gigantism (-10 points)
- Mute (-25 points)
- No Arms (-40 points)
- Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

- Extra Hit Points +20 (100 points)
- Growth, Level 1 (Always on -20%, 8 points)

Super-Powers

Healing-20(100) (Actually cures wild card virus or any other disease and restores lost HT, but only in those cases which are crippling — a man who grew a tail would still keep the tail, but would lose crippling allergies to metals or other substances, and a joker with a crippled tail would have it straightened and made usable +60%; Touch Only -20%; 448 points)

Psionics

- Psi Static-40(10) (Only interferes with Telecontrol -70%; 60 points)

Bali

Tjun Tjun Afiff was born in Jakarta. When she was 13, her younger brother Icu drew a horrible joker, turning into something resembling a sea anemone. To protect him, her family moved to Bali. Icu was killed four years later by Muslim soldiers, and the family had no legal recourse.

Tjun Tjun swore revenge. A year later, she dated a young man who was an apprentice dalang, a puppeteer for the traditional wayang theater. She borrowed a puppet, and that night the shadow of Prince Arjuna slipped forth and killed the two soldiers who had murdered her brother.

Though the wayang was usually reserved for men, Tjun Tjun became one of the modern class of female dalangs. She also knew that her brother's murder had been generic, not personal. There were a dozen joker murders a month in Bali, and the perpetrators were well-known. Though she was able to use many puppets, her favorite was Prince Arjuna. He became a folk hero among the jokers of Bali and a terror among their murderers. Conditions greatly improved on the island as a result.

In 1983, Tjun Tjun received a visit from Telephoto, acting as agent of the Black Dog. The Twisted Fists had been monitoring her activities, and although she was an ace, she had proven her loyalty to the joker cause. They gave her the code name Wayang and asked her to help coordinate the Balinese chapter. She has seen Telephoto from time to time since, and while nothing has happened between them yet, they are both strongly attracted to each other.

Wayang runs a booth in the marketplace where she sells dresses and suits, made to order for jokers and tourists alike. While she takes measurements, she passes on information to jokers in the Balinese Twisted Fists, acting as information coordinator. If any joker in the Fists asks her why a nat is so committed to their cause, she will tell of her brother's murder and leave it at that. She carefully keeps her ace power secret from even her joker allies, not wishing to see them become complacent in having the strength of an ace on their side. In many ways, Wayang is the Great and Powerful Turtle of Bali. Everyone wonders who the shadow of Prince Arjuna is, and where he comes from. Both joker and government forces think he's a joker-ace of some sort. The last thing they would expect would be that he was the creation of a beautiful female ace.

Wayang, unfortunately, has been duped by Rangda. She thinks the hag is merely an unfortunate joker-ace who wishes to help assassinate key political and religious leaders who have encouraged the genocide of jokers. Wayang is dead wrong, and southeast Asia may pay the price.

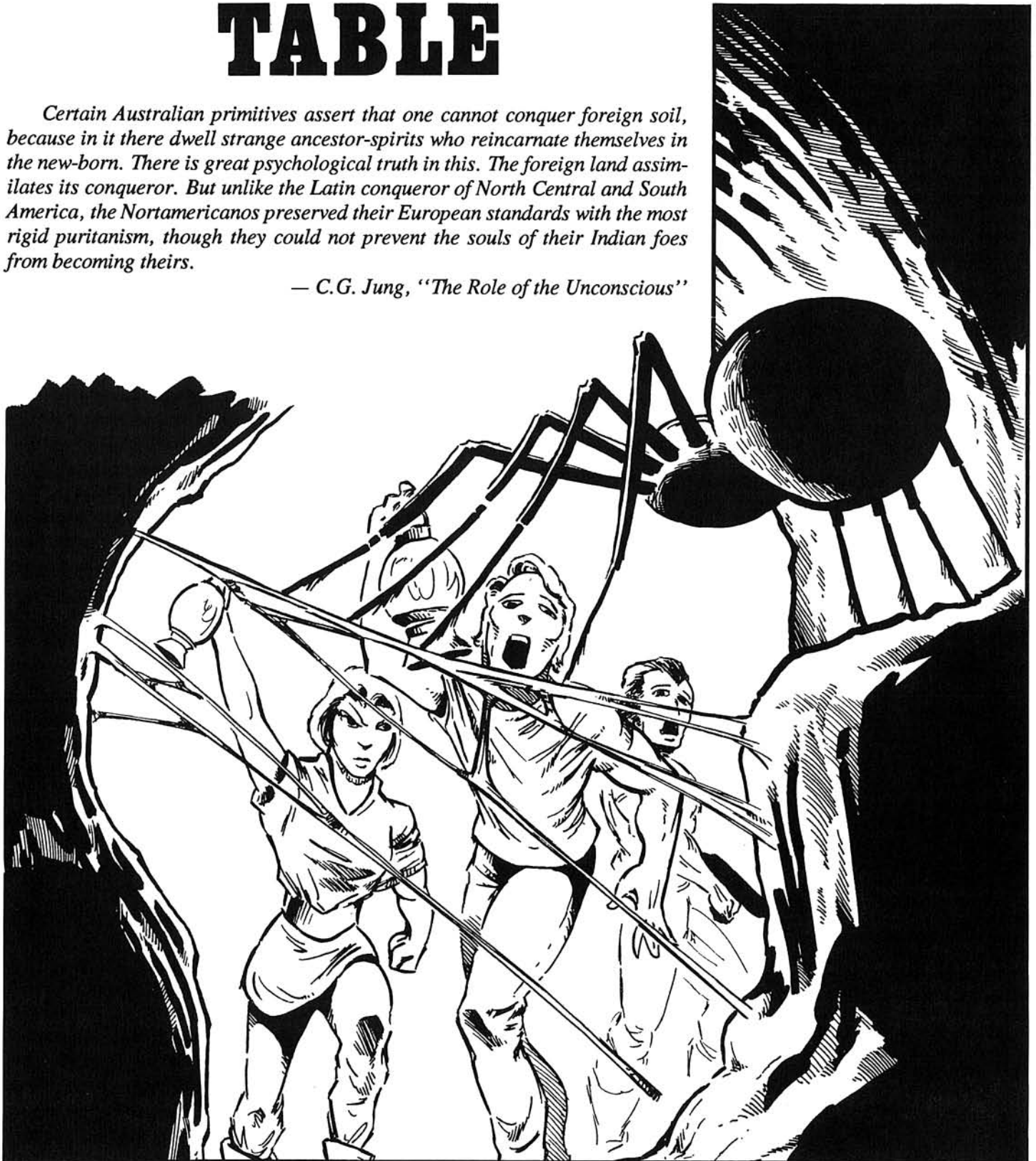
Typical Dialogue: (Taking measurements) "Dr. Pical, the new cabinet minister, just stated that the leyak are lower than pigs and dogs. Would you like his itinerary for next week?"

AUSTRALIA – CARDS ON THE TABLE

6

Certain Australian primitives assert that one cannot conquer foreign soil, because in it there dwell strange ancestor-spirits who reincarnate themselves in the new-born. There is great psychological truth in this. The foreign land assimilates its conqueror. But unlike the Latin conqueror of North Central and South America, the Nortamericanos preserved their European standards with the most rigid puritanism, though they could not prevent the souls of their Indian foes from becoming theirs.

— C.G. Jung, “The Role of the Unconscious”



An Australian Glossary

Baiaime: The aboriginal high god who created the Shadow World and the Dreamtime.

Dreamer: In aboriginal belief, anyone who has precognitive or otherwise real dreams. The Hero Twins are both dreamers, as is Yellowman.

Dreamtime: The mythical Beginning Time of aboriginal belief. The true world of which this world is but a pale shadow.

Dreamweaver: An ace, such as the Revenant or the Murga-muggai, able to induce specific dreams in a victim.

Ectenic Force: A term from Victorian spiritualism used to describe the virtual particles manipulated by a mediumistic ace.

Ectoplasmic Projection: A visible, tangible hologram created out of virtual particles, controlled by the conscious or subconscious mind of the ace who creates it.

Galka: An aboriginal black sorcerer or sorceress, the opposite of a healer.

Gate-Maker: An ace, such as Primrose, who may make a permanent or temporary rift between alternate realities.

Gurrunggurr Nuts: Australian nuts, the burning smoke of which is believed by aborigines to cause plague.

Mood-jin-garl: In aboriginal belief, a totem spirit, an animal who is a person's patron spirit. The ace Wyungare's totem is Warren, the wombat, while David Stewart's is Koob-barr, the koala.

Kings Cross: The Jokertown of Sydney, Australia.

Lucky: A pejorative for aces in Australia and New Zealand.

Lucky Ugly: The ironic pejorative for joker-aces in Australia and New Zealand.

Murga-muggai: In aboriginal folklore, the trapdoor spider woman, a powerful and evil sorceress who drank men's blood.

Setekh the Destroyer: A god from Egyptian mythology appearing as a cross between a greyhound and scorpion. Notably, one of the Astronomer's favorite forms for astral projection.

Shadow World: In aboriginal belief, this world, as opposed to the true world or Dreamtime.

Stigmata: Physical wounds from psychic battles.

Ugly: A pejorative slang term for jokers in Australia and New Zealand.

Uluru: The name of the Dreamtime side and of the sacred watering hole of Ayers Rock.

World-Walker: A powerful ace, such as Wyungare, who may travel dimensions by stepping from one to another.

Wild Cards Australia Since World War II

Alone among the continents of the world, Australia has been spared any major wild card outbreaks. The main reason for this, historians grudgingly concede, may be attributed to the Liberal party. The Liberal party won the election of 1947, opposing plans by the ruling Labor party to immigrate new blood from war-torn Europe. Outbreaks of the wild card in those areas, Liberals cited, were a potential health hazard. When in power, they not only scrapped the immigration plan but instituted a ban on all imports from New York and other affected cities. An additional act banned all known carriers of the wild card from entering Australia, joker and ace alike. The lack of trade hurt the post-war Australian economy, but the Auckland, New Zealand, outbreak of 1950 vindicated the Liberal Party and reaffirmed their policies.

The action, while motivated by genuine health concerns, became more unpopular as the years went by, opposition coming to a head in 1966. Due to the United States' use of the Joker Brigade in Vietnam, along with rumors that the U.S. was using the wild card for biological warfare, Australia refused to honor their portion of the ANZUS pact and send troops. This badly jeopardized Australia's military protection, a fact which the Labor Party used to its advantage. Using the slogan "No Continent is an Island," the Labor Party won an overwhelming majority. Australia opened its ports to all international shipments, and reaffirmed its position in the ANZUS pact by sending a token force to Vietnam.

The Labor party, led by Whitlam, was determined to improve the standard of living for all Australians, particularly women, aborigines, jokers and the poor. Reasoning that Australia already had wild cards from isolated outbreaks, which had happened simply from spores in the jet stream, the anti-wild card act was repealed, allowing jokers and aces to enter the country. A large number of jokers immigrated from New Zealand, setting up jokertowns in Sydney and Melbourne. Immigration controls were loosened, but the European survivors of World War II had resettled by this time.

Unfortunately the Labor party was involved in too many financial and moral scandals. The anti-labor factions prevented financial reform, and on November 11, 1975, the governor-general dismissed the Prime Minister and dissolved parliament. Malcolm Frazer led the Liberal party in a landslide election.

But things went downhill for the Liberal Party over the years. In March of 1983, in an attempt to strengthen his hold on Australia, Frazer abruptly called for an election and was overwhelmingly defeated by Labor party candidate Robert Hawke. Over the next few years there was much speculation regarding what had possessed Frazer to make such a gross political blunder or the election to go so incredibly in Hawke's favor. Jokes and half-serious rumors were circulated that Hawke was an ace with mind control powers, but the only people susceptible were idiots, like voters and Liberal politicians. An unofficial smear campaign was instituted against Hawke with the slogan "First they let Ugliers into the country, now they've made one Prime Minister! No to Labor!" The only result of this, however, has been increased violence against jokers and profound embarrassment to the disarrayed Liberal party.

Presently there is extreme unrest among the aborigines over the issue of land rights. The Murga-muggai and others are using this to their advantage.

Real Australia Since World War II

The course of real Australian history has been relatively the same as that of *Wild Cards* Australia. There have been no wild cards, and consequently the Liberal party did not take power till 1949. The Labor party's immigration plan

succeeded and there are presently large Italian, Greek and Asian communities in Australia. Australia's British population is still strong, but has nowhere near the absolute majority it does in *Wild Cards* Australia.

The Liberal party aided the United States during the Vietnam War, defeating the Labor party in the 1966 elections. Labor defeated them, however, in 1972, and ensuing history has remained the same.



August 25-September 2, 1991: Washington, London and Jerusalem

The agents slip out of Indonesia through one means or another with Telephoto and the comatose Wayang. Justice Department, Mace, and Twisted Fist operatives all receive orders from their controls to parlay. The Fists want Telephoto back, and the Justice Department and the Mace want information. Meetings are set up in Jerusalem.

Agents have a chance to hash thing out, masks coming off the double-agents. Yellowman spills all about his timeslip/precog ability, including his actions in South Africa and Northern Ireland (if he hasn't already).

Billy Ray represents the Justice Department, Titania the Mace, and Telephoto is there for the Fists. If Taroque was not killed in the South African section and agents — or Yellowman — do not have his cards, he also officiates at the meeting. He can cast additional divinations, but has not been on the international adventure so he does not know the role of all the players in the game or the faces on many cards. Jean Dixon, the Justice Department Oracle, corroborates his prophecies, and the GM may use her and Taroque's predictions to nudge the PCs into figuring out the plot if they have not discovered enough, or if they can't collate it very well.

With access to Mace, Justice Department and Twisted Fist dossiers, agents should be able to discover the identity and power of Cameo (p. 108) and Wyungare. The Astronomer is also in the files, but listed as dead — but agents should be able to deduce that will not stop Cameo's power.

Wild Cards in Australia

As a function of the policies of the Liberal party after World War II, Australia has the lowest per-capita number of wild cards of any continent or country. Jokers consequently experience more prejudice and misunderstanding than they do in areas of greater wild card concentration.

The unflattering New Zealand term of "uglies" is applied to Australian jokers as well, though with even more vehemence. Aces are referred to as "luckies," a slightly less pejorative term, though still said with little fondness. Joker-aces are of course "lucky uglies," a term relished for its irony.

The Grand Plot

The Murga-muggai (see p. 111) wishes to see all the whites gone from Australia and New Zealand. From the Astronomer she understands something of the nature of the wild card virus. They have manipulated the Twisted Fists into causing the smaller localized outbreaks around the globe, from which they have drawn power and gained knowledge of the disease. They are now ready to perform a grand ritual, involving the plague-causing smoke of the gurrungurr nuts and elements of Aboriginal and Egyptian magic, pumping the smoke through the Murga-muggai's tunnels throughout the Dreamtime (see sidebar, p. 100) to issue from her trapdoors throughout the white cities of the shadow world, modern Australia. Of the survivors, few will be European, or even human for that matter.



Tunnels of the Spider Woman

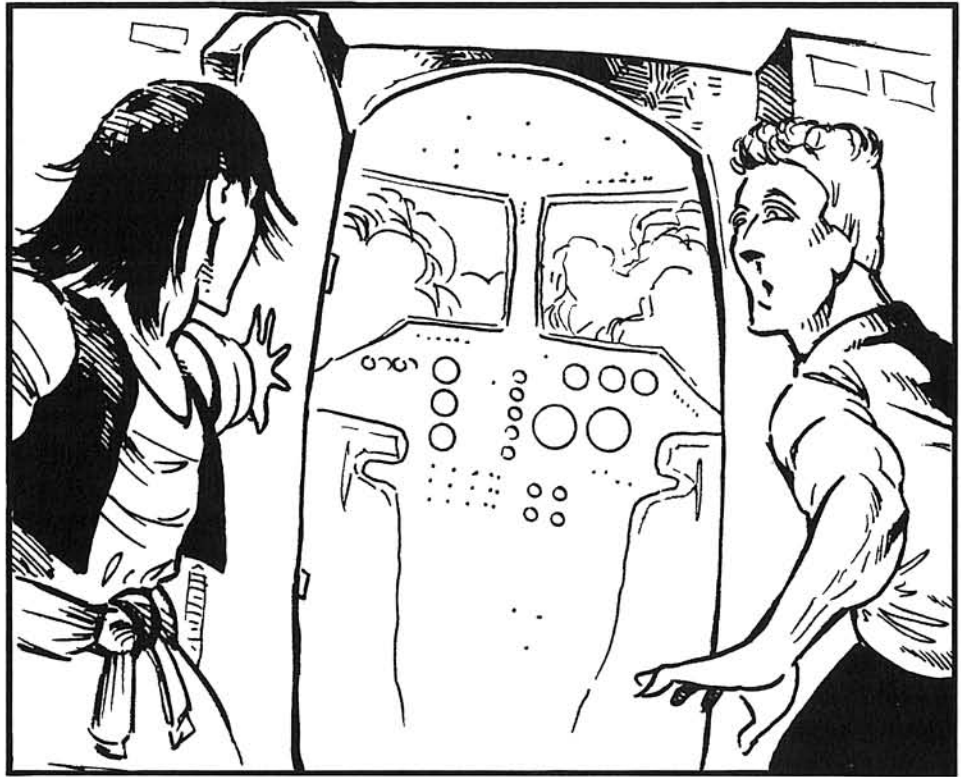
The Murga-muggai's domain is grand and extensive, a network of underground passages spreading throughout the Dreamtime. The nexus point of the tunnels, her central lair, is underneath Uluru, the Dreamtime side of Ayers Rock.

The Murga-muggai's passages have numerous "trapdoors," leading out in places throughout the Dreamtime and the Shadow World (modern Australia and New Zealand). A few even connect with Fionne's Hall in Ireland and Xibalba in Central America (and other locations around the world at the GM's option).

The tunnels are about 10 feet tall, coated in smooth and glossy silk. Travel in them goes at the same speed as the rest of the Dreamtime, though they are free of the usual monsters. However, like any spider in the center of her web, the Murga-muggai can sense when anyone sets foot on the silk of her tunnels, and will soon come to deal with the trespassers. If hard-pressed, she can wall off or collapse a tunnel to keep away powerful invaders.

In the Dreamtime, it requires a successful Vision roll to find the entrances to the tunnels, and a ST of 20 (individual or combined) to open one. In the Shadow World, the entrances are invisible, though could be discovered with See Invisible, Psychometry, Kirlian Photography or any number of super or psionic abilities. Forcing one open from outside of the Dreamtime requires someone with a world-walking power or some form of interdimensional rift-making capability.

Once in the Dreamtime, however, invaders are in the trapdoor spider woman's territory.



No one has a dossier on the Murga-muggai, however, though a check through Interpol cross-referencing "Wild Card," "Female," and "Spider Powers" reveals a number of jokers and aces (including Jokertown's own Arachne). However, anybody with a successful Anthropology roll while examining the *High Priestess* card or who dealt with the Spider Dreams in the Peruvian section should discover the Murga-muggai's aboriginal roots. This leads to a short file: "Murga-muggai, trapdoor spider woman, purportedly dangerous Australian joker-ace with pocket-dimension powers. Source: Wyungare."

Yellowman may mention his own meetings with the Murga-muggai, but says he thought she was a high-ranking Twisted Fist agent for Australia. Nothing could be further from the truth, explains Telephoto, but Yellowman doesn't know her whereabouts — she always contacted him.

Taroque and Oracle are to work together, trying to discover more information, but both are sure that precog is not enough — the world is doomed unless there is action. (A confrontation with Professor Swift may very well be instigated — though if his plot has succeeded, agents may not wish to provoke a conflict with the new power behind the British throne. GMs should drop hints from Taroque and Dixon that while Professor Swift is definitely dangerous, he's not the threat to the world that the Murga-muggai and the Astronomer are.)

All groups want in. So important is the urgency of this mission, and the danger of conflicting teams, that the group is formed from joint government and terrorist forces. The Twisted Fists have been working for peace and equality in their own twisted ways, not for the death of the non-wild card world. Unless something is done, and done soon, there will be a disaster of global proportions. Yellowman will operate as relay between the Fists, the Justice Department and the Mace. Carnifex, Titania and Telephoto join the mission, as does Guy Fawkes (if not busy running Britain), and South Africa sends Psiguard to be part of the team (or else he comes along with the Twisted Fists, if he defected in the South African segment). Any of the NPCs now in the team may be used as PCs for the final adventure.



The team is sent to find Wyungare and ask him for help in understanding and confronting the Murga-muggai (see p. 111).

September 3, 1991: En Route to Sydney

Unfortunately, the Murga-muggai and the Astronomer are precognitive and know the agents are coming. The Murga-muggai sends three Keen Keeng (see *Dreamtime Bestiary*, p. 119) to the Quantas airliner everyone is flying in on, juxtaposing the Dreamtime and the shadow world at the precise moment. However, the Keen Keeng don't go to attack the agents — they just kill the pilot, co-pilot and navigator.

Psiguard is the first to notice something wrong, feeling the death agony of the flight crew — he bolts up in panic, screams like he's being murdered and passes out, pointing at the cabin.

If anyone breaks into the cabin in the next minute, they see the Keen Keengs fading back into the Dreamtime. There are no other pilots on board. Yellowman goes into altruistic panic, screaming, "Oh my god, you're all going to die!" popping in and out as he goes to notify the Mace. This blatant demonstration of his personal escape route makes few points with the passengers, though he pops back in shortly after and says he might be able to rescue a baby. He can carry up to six pounds besides himself; two of the babies are light enough, a third isn't.

Agents are not necessarily dead in the air. The plane is on automatic pilot and there are 20 minutes till their scheduled landing in Sydney. Once awakened, Psiguard, while nowhere near able to telekinese a plane, can cushion the impact somewhat (+4 to the current pilot's Piloting roll to land), increasing the PD of the plane by a factor of 18. The panic of the passengers has him nearly insane, but has not prevented the use of his powers. If there is a total crash, his power can shield unarmored allies, who then have to drag him out as he passes out from the dying agonies of other passengers.

Yellowman tries to get help sent to the airport to stop the incipient plane crash, but Australia has very few aces, and none with the right powers are able to get there in time.



Cameo's Artifacts

By wearing or using an object strongly tied to a deceased person's emotional pattern or in his possession at his time of death, Cameo can channel that person's psyche. Her ST, DX and HT remain the same, though her IQ becomes that of her "guest." She also gains all the mental and psychic abilities and disadvantages of the person she's channeling, including all wild card abilities not linked to physical form (i.e., Cameo could fly and bounce bullets if she wore Black Eagle's scarf, but while she would be possessed if she wore Howler's fighting suit, she would be unable to use his sonic scream, Cameo not having a mutated throat). When channeling, Cameo becomes the secondary personality in her body, able to see and sense but without any control unless the dominant personality allows it or she wins a Contest of Will. The psyche remains until the object is removed or she runs out of fatigue.

The Australian Secret Service

The survivors are met at the airport by David Stewart (p. 113) before they can be mobbed by the press as heroes. He takes them to the offices of the Australian Secret Service.

Waiting there is Wyungare (*Wild Cards*, p. 79). Stewart is somewhat annoyed with him, since the aborigine keeps calling him "Koob-borr" (the aboriginal name for the koala). Wyungare explains that the Murga-muggai is an evil one, the trapdoor spider woman, and she wishes to see all Europeans dead. She is a very powerful black sorceress and may slip back and forth from the Dreamtime as he can. She lairs at Uluru, known in this world as Ayers Rock. His new information is that she is teamed with a new evil one he does not know, the scorpion man. (Anyone who's read the file on the Astronomer may make an IQ roll to realize that Setekh the Destroyer fits this description.)

Stewart's news is that he has been tracking the Murga-muggai for the past two years, following a trail of blood-drained bodies. She switches randomly from city to city, but for the past few months she's limited herself to Sydney, specifically the Kings Cross area. Kings Cross and Darlinghurst have become the Jokertown of Sydney, taking in Australia's few native jokers and most of the joker immigrants from New Zealand. Kings Cross is the Bohemian heart of Sydney, always filled with artists, writers and other unusual sorts, which is consequently why it attracted the jokers. By day, it has shops and restaurants,

but by night it turns a darker face, filled with strip joints and skin shows amid the more usual businesses. Bodies have been found in dumpsters or dropped in nearby Woolloomooloo Bay.

Setekh the Destroyer

ST 20 PD/DR: 3/4
 DX 17 Dmg: *
 IQ 20 Reach: C,1
 HT 15 Size: 2
 Speed/Dodge: 8/7 Wt.: 150 lbs.
 Origin: Egyptian Myth
 Habitats: Desert, wastelands

Setekh the Destroyer appears as a cross between a greyhound and a giant scorpion, an impossibly thin and limber monster with short gray fur stretched tight over wiry muscle and bone with a long, fine scorpion's tail arching over its back. In combat it prefers to taunt its victims, paralyzing them with wicked words before impaling them on its tail, though if hard-pressed, it may also bite with its razor-sharp teeth. Fangs do 1d+4 cutting; tail does 2d-1 impaling and 3d+2 from type A venom (see sidebar, p. 104). There is no antivenin.

Setekh is the favored form of the Astronomer when he uses his astral and ectoplasmic projection powers, the ancient god an efficient and brutal assassin, though he may take other forms, a ram-headed man being the most common.



Kings Cross

It's night by the time the briefing is done. Stewart has a lead, police investigations having staked out a section of Baywater Road in Kings Cross near where most of the bodies have been found. Someone has reported a thorn-covered joker talking to the victims shortly before their murders.

The team arrives at the stake-out around 9 p.m. The bust has been reserved for the aces because of the extreme danger from the quarry. It's an upstairs apartment near a comedy club, *The Laugh Attack*. Stewart shakes his head when he sees the name "Kookaburra" on the marquee. If pressed, he'll explain about the lunatic ace comedian (see p. 110). Yellowman recognizes and knows him, but hasn't seen him in a while.

Psiguard is nearly in overload from the street, but when the group approaches the apartment he closes his eyes and almost goes into shock as he sees what's going on in the apartment. Acacia (see p. 106), covered with blood, is reading a fashion magazine on the couch. Cameo (see p. 108) has a young man strapped down on the dining room table and is doing unpleasant and traditional aboriginal rituals to him with a stone knife and the Astronomer's own perverse flair. Psiguard relays the images to Telephoto, who spits out a wad of Polaroids so non-clairvoyants may see for themselves precisely what is happening.

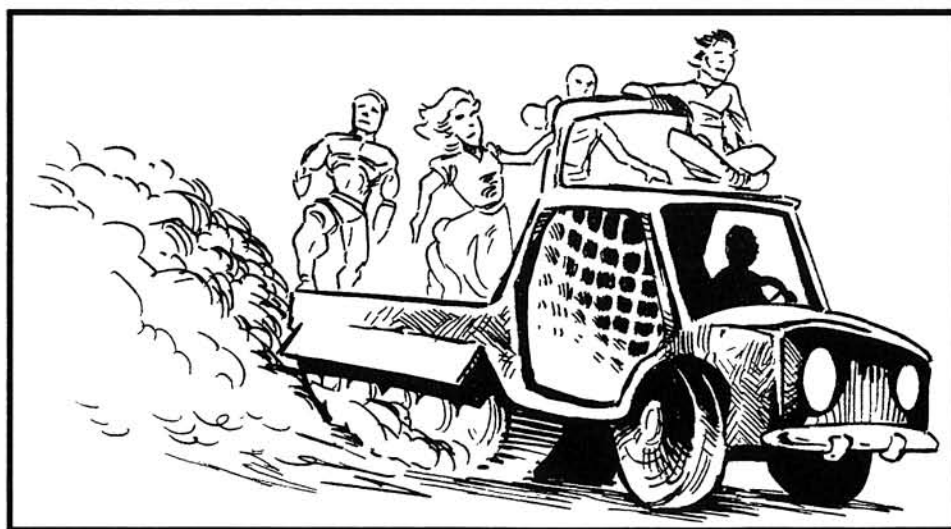
If anyone gives Telephoto's relayed Kirlian Polaroids a strong look, they will notice two distinctly different auras on Cameo. Her body generally has a pale green and gold glow, surrounded by little blue sparks, but her glasses blaze with vivid black, mustard yellow and a sickly crimson. Telephoto can't understand the diametrically opposed auras on the same person, but he knows that both auras are strongly psychic, especially the one on the glasses. Billy Ray knows about Cameo, however, and will realize she's possessed on a successful IQ roll.

There's a main door on one side of the apartment and two windows in back. When the heroes break in, Acacia attacks, trying to protect the Astronomer/Cameo. The Astronomer, broken glasses askew, takes the better part of valor and turns insubstantial, phasing through the floor.

Covered with blood, she runs into the club next door where Kookaburra is performing. She screams, "They're going to kill me!" The Astronomer does not even need to use his mind control ability to get Kookaburra to use his laugh to protect her. The team has to get through the chaos of the club and Kookaburra's contagious laughter to get to them. The Astronomer meanwhile astral-projects to the Murga-muggai in the Dreamtime, requesting aid.

The Murga-muggai shifts the Astronomer/Cameo and Kookaburra to the Dreamtime, sending Keen Keengs to fly them to Uluru. How quickly the agents follow them depends on whether Wyungare has been knocked-out by Kookaburra's laugh. Five minutes after the Astronomer and Kookaburra are safely away, she will send six bugeen and two malingee to kill the agents and anybody else who's around (see *Dreamtime Bestiary*, pp. 119-122). Those who are unconscious find themselves in the Dreamtime awake, though they see their unconscious bodies on the floor in the Shadow World, the two worlds existing like two slides held together. Those who are conscious are only in one place, whether Wyungare has shifted them to the Dreamtime or they are in the Shadow World, since the two worlds are the same for the moment.

If Wyungare is killed, it will be a great loss for the team, as he is the only ace besides the Murga-muggai familiar with the aboriginal Dreamtime. (GMs with overly competent PCs may wish to take him out to challenge the players.) If Wyungare is out of the action, there are other possible entrances to the Dreamtime. Simplest would be to send Yellowman to Ireland to get a posy from Primrose, then use it on aboriginal rock carvings — or the Murga-muggai's trapdoor in the King's Cross apartment — but these should be left up to the PCs to devise.



The Dreamtime

Game Masters should first read at the *Dreamtime* chapter (p. 115).

If the team has not discovered the direct tunnel, the Australian Secret Service provides Land Rovers, a map, food and camping supplies. Wyungare transfers all to the Dreamtime, and the agents trek across the outback towards Uluru, the Murga-muggai's stronghold. Along the way they see the Australian Beginning Time, the land of Baiame. It's very much like the modern Australian outback,

Defeating the Astronomer

Any telepath who attempts to mentally battle the Astronomer will notice Cameo's captive psyche. Anyone who attempts to Telecontrol the Astronomer or force him from Cameo's mind gets +14 on his Will roll, Cameo aiding in the attack. If at any time she regains control of her body and the Astronomer does not have time to erase her memory, Cameo will fling away the Astronomer's glasses and scream for everybody to destroy them. This also happens if the Astronomer's glasses are knocked away in a fight.

Once the glasses are destroyed, the Astronomer is gone — hopefully. Game Masters who wish him to return may decide that the traces of his psyche in Cameo's subconscious are enough to allow him to reappear, maybe as a split personality, maybe as the *only* personality. If this is the case, it will take a psi with powerful Mindwipe abilities to exorcise the demon from Cameo's soul.

Of those aces the agents may know, only Professor Swift has the necessary power, but then perhaps some things are better left undone . . .

Venom Types A, B and C

Type A

Anyone injected must make a roll against HT-4 immediately, and then again at the beginning of each day for the next three days. A failed roll means the venom does the listed damage — critical failure means death. Apply the following modifiers to the HT roll: +1 if the venom is sucked out within five minutes, +2 if an antivenin (TL 6+) is used for treatment. Effects occur within 15 minutes of the injection if the initial HT-4 roll is failed, or upon arising on the day of the failed HT-4 roll if the initial roll was successful. If all rolls are successful, the venom has no effect.

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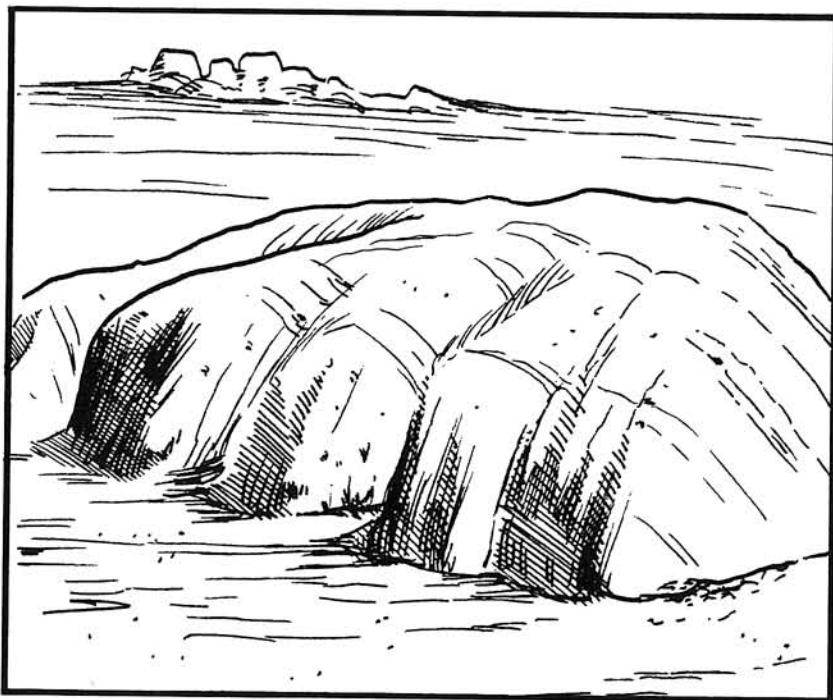
hot and dusty by day, cool at night, with large expanses of dry grass and scrub brush, here and there an occasional billabong or acacia thorn. However, in the Dreamtime the animals talk, and agents have a chance to discover their totem animals. (For a bit of comic relief, a Tasmanian devil might take a liking to Carnifex.) For a more in-depth description, see the *Dreamtime* chapter, or refer to Ed Bryant's "Down in the Dreamtime," *Wild Cards IV: Aces Abroad*.

Whether the team proceeds through the tunnels or by the surface route through the Dreamtime, the Murga-muggai and the Astronomer are working to complete their ritual before the agents arrive and are too busy to notice, which is why the trapdoor spider woman is not throwing everything she has at them. Like a spider, she prefers to set traps and lie in wait.

If the agents travel on the surface of the Dreamtime, the Keen Keengs (p. 120) and the Ninya (p. 121) send small forces against them on general principle, though no suicide squads. Those who are too powerful are left alone. One or two bugeen or malingee (pp. 119-120) may be encountered that night, who like true monsters attack with no thought for their own lives. Tuckonies (p. 121) and many totem animals — notably the wombat and the koala — may help characters. (For a touch of whimsy, the shape-changing David Stewart may not be the only koala with a gun, the creatures of the Dreamtime imitating their human tribe member. The koalas might bring Stewart fresh ammo.)

The team arrives at Uluru just in time. A group of kookaburra birds are flying around, very upset. If asked why, they declare that the Murga-muggai has captured one of their brothers. Agents not traveling through the tunnels must then pry open one of the Murga-muggai's trapdoors (see sidebar, p. 100).

At the nexus point of the spider woman's passages are the Astronomer, in Cameo's body, and the Murga-muggai, in her crone form. Kookaburra is bound and gagged in spider silk, dangling upside down in the corner, though from his struggles, obviously very alive. From the look of things, the Astronomer and the Murga-muggai were just putting the finishing touches on their ritual. There is a large pile of poisonous-looking nuts in the center of the chamber, smeared with dried blood and littered with bones and other ritual paraphernalia. A lit torch stands like a wick in the middle of the pile, almost ready to light the nuts when it burns down.



The Astronomer and the Murga-muggai have spent most of their power on the ritual and only have 25 extra fatigue left apiece. The Murga-muggai takes her giant spider form for combat, trying to protect the pile, while the Astronomer clutches his glasses and sinks down on the floor, the form of Setekh the Destroyer flowing out of Cameo's body, which he guards fiercely. (See p. 102. Setekh's HT is equal to the Astronomer's fatigue, losing 4 points per minute from the Astronomer's mental effort. By wounding opponents, the Astronomer regains fatigue equal to twice the damage done.)

In two minutes, the torch burns down, lighting the pile of plague-causing gurrunggurr nuts unless removed. This must be done carefully (DX-2) or risk lighting the pile prematurely. If the nuts catch fire, choking grey smoke billows forth rapidly, blinding all in the area. This smoke also carries the wild card, psychokinetically created from free molecules of carbon and other ele-

ments, and if the fire is not extinguished within six minutes, the Murga-muggai's plot succeeds.

If at any time during combat the Astronomer's glasses are removed from Cameo, Setekh begins to pale, losing 8 fatigue per minute and only regaining fatigue equal to the damage done to opponents. Psiguard, able to sense emotions, may realize the exact situation with the glasses and telekinetically remove them, though this should be reserved for a PC (unless someone is using Psiguard for a pregenerated character).

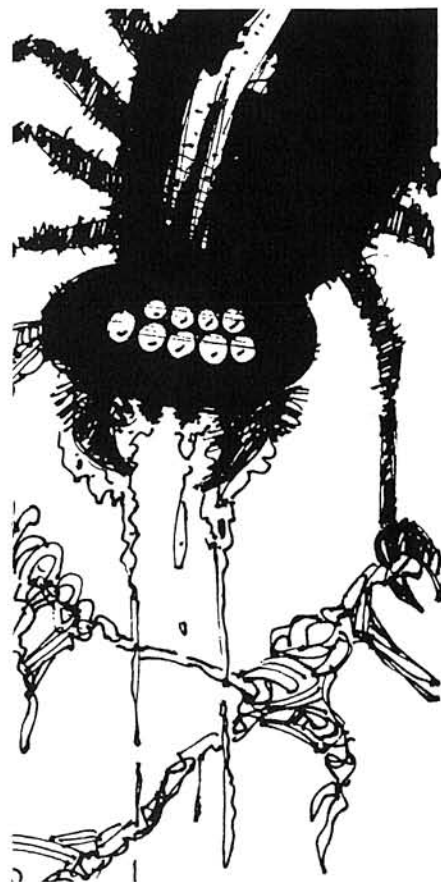
If it looks as if Murga-muggai and the Astronomer are losing, the trapdoor spider woman exits down one of her numerous trapdoor passages, losing pursuit in the labyrinth of connecting tunnels. If strongly pursued, she may enter the interconnecting Dreamtime tunnels and emerge in the Halls of the Sidhe in Ireland (see p. 68).

The Outcome

The agents emerge from the Dreamtime a week after they entered. If the whole pile of gurrunggurr nuts was successfully incinerated, there have been horrendous wild card outbreaks in all cities in Australia and a cloud of viral particles has been released into the jet stream, wind currents carrying them over Alaska and the west coast of the United States and Canada, causing major outbreaks, and then causing localized disasters all around the world. If the nuts were lit, but extinguished after a time, there have been notable outbreaks all over Australia, causing a national but not a worldwide disaster. If the nuts were not burned at all, the mission was completely successful and disaster has been averted. If the nuts were burned for two minutes or less, there have been no outbreaks anywhere in Australia — yet. The smoke pressure was not sufficient to break the seals on the Murga-muggai's trapdoors, but the adventurers themselves have been contaminated and consequently their clothes, skin and hair are permeated by viral particles. They cause their own wild card outbreaks when they emerge until they realize what's happened to them and get into quarantine. (Anyone not already infected with the wild card will need to draw from the Wild Card deck, *Wild Cards*, p. 120-121. This is why nat heroes are so strongly discouraged from participating in this adventure.)

If the agents are coated with gurrunggurr soot, they cause about 25 cases immediately and 50 more in the long run from free particles, assuming they agree to get immediately into quarantine for two weeks and wash and scrub with every detergent known to man. If they split up when they emerge, they cause the same ratio per person per half hour until they get in quarantine. Unless there has been an international disaster, government agents are commended for a job well done, praise appropriate to their exact accomplishments. The international crisis has been averted and they will be contacted again when their countries need them. Twisted Fist members are also commended, though far less warmly, the gist being, "Nice to see that you've rehabilitated yourself so well." Now that governments know who they are, though, they try to recruit them just as actively — the best spies are the ones who work for you.

Every successful government agent receives roughly \$50,000 in a Swiss bank account, adjusted for the operative's exact contributions to the adventure. Each successful terrorist gets an unofficial pardon for all his previous deeds. (In other words, all charges and evidence against them are shelved and sealed, but may be reopened if they are caught in any further terrorist activities.) They get about \$20,000 each — just a taste of what's to come if they work for the Justice Department or the Mace, they're assured. They're also contacted by the Twisted Fists, who are eager to have them continue as spies in those agencies. Thus, the lives of agents and double-agents go on.



Venom Types A, B and C
(Continued)

Type B

Anyone injected must make a roll against HT-6 immediately, and then at the beginning of each day for the next three days. If any of these rolls are failed, the venom does the listed damage — critical failures mean death. Modifiers to the HT roll: +2 if antivenin (TL 6+) is used for treatment (suctioning the wound has no effect on this type of venom). Anyone injected with the venom is at -2 DX for three days (or at -4 DX for the remainder of the three days if any of the HT-6 rolls are failed). Effects occur in one minute if the initial roll is failed, or upon rising the day of a failed roll if the initial HT-6 roll is successful.

Type C

Anyone injected must immediately make a roll against HT-6. Failure means that the venom does the listed damage immediately, and the character is at -4 DX for the next three days — critical failure means instant death. If the HT-6 roll is made, the victim takes ½ damage, and is at -2 DX for the next three days.

Other venoms are described in *GURPS Bestiary*, pp. 50-51.

Acacia (Mandjinga)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: June 12, 1949, Australian outback

Appearance: Acacia is small (5' 1", 100 lbs.) and made of wood, covered with large hollow thorns. Large red ants live in the hollows and crawl from one body orifice to another or climb through her twiglike hair. She goes nude everywhere but the streets of Sydney, where she wears a loose cotton print dress.

Wild Card Ability: None, though her thorns are sharp and her symbiotic ants can bite and sting.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 14 (45 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 5

DX 10 (0 points) **HT** 18 (125 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d impaling; Swing 2d cutting; Ants attack as a 1-hex swarm doing 1 hit per turn, dispersed by 12 hits

Advantages

Immunity to Disease (10 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Disadvantages

Hideous Appearance (-20 points)

Bully (-10)

Delusion: "I am a spirit of the Dreamtime" (-10 points)

Duty: to the Murga-muggai (-20 points)

Jealousy: Beautiful women (-10 points)

Primitive: TL2 (-25 points)

Sadism (-15)

Social Stigma: Joker (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Body of Wood (Bought as Body of Metal, Level 3; Non-ferrous +10%; Non-crystalline +30%; Unswitchable -20%; PD 1, DR 3; 33 points)

Thorns (Bought as claws, +2 to swing damage; 15 points)

Super Disadvantages

Vulnerability, Level 3: Fire (-30 points)

Skills

Brawling-13 (8 points), Survival-16 (8 points)

Quirks

Doesn't eat normal food, but addicted to sugary drinks

Fiercely loyal to the Murga-muggai

Forces nat men to be intimate with her

Secretly reads Western fashion magazines

Thinks of her ants as her children

Acacia was struck by the wild card as a young girl. It changed her into a living acacia tree. Ants soon were attracted to her, nursing from the lipids in her hollow thorns. She was driven from her tribe and found by the Murga-muggai, who took her to the Dreamtime. Acacia was raised to think of herself as a spirit, aiding the Murga-muggai in her blood rites.

Acacia has worked faithfully for the Murga-muggai to the present day. Presently, she acts as bodyguard for the Astronomer. She does not perfectly understand what he and her mistress are planning, but she is very jealous of Cameo, whose youth and beauty are shown as the ideal in Western fashion magazines. Sometimes the Murga-muggai and the Astronomer let her be intimate with one of their intended victims first, and Acacia enjoys that very much.

Typical Dialogue: "My ants are my children. They feed on my blood and they will feed on yours, too."



Astronomer, The

Created by Lewis Shiner

Born: 1925 *Died:* Sept. 16, 1986

Appearance: Short and very thin (5' 5", 110 lbs.), the Astronomer wears thick, rimless glasses, has a mole-like appearance, and is sometimes confined to a wheelchair. For this adventure, the Astronomer is inhabiting the body of Cameo (see p. 108), and thus takes her appearance. When he's astrally projecting in the Dreamtime, he can take many forms, though he prefers the form of Setekh the Destroyer (see p. 102).

Wild Card Ability: The Astronomer has a catalog of mental abilities, chief among them telepathy, astral projection, telekinesis, precognition, ectoplasmic projection and the power to induce amnesia.

ST 6 (-30 points) **IQ** 20 (175 points) **Move:** 1;
DX 10 (0 points) **HT** 8 (-15 points) wheelchair
Damage: normally Thrust 1d-4; Swing 1d-4

Note: The above statistics are the Astronomer's normal statistics in his own body. Since he is presently inhabiting Cameo's body, he takes all of her physical stats and advantages, but keeps his own mental ones.

Advantages

Alertness +1 (5 points)
Eidetic Memory, Level 1 (30 points)
Strong Will +3 (12 points)
Very Wealthy (30 points)

Disadvantages

Age, 66 years old (-48 points)
Bad Sight (-10 points)
Bad Temper (-10 points)
Bloodlust (-10 points)
Enemy: Fortunato on 9 or less (-20 points)
Fanaticism (-15 points)
Lame: Confined to a wheelchair (-35 points)
Megalomania (-10 points)
Sadism (-15 points)
Unattractive (-5 points)
Vow: To avenge the raid on the Cloisters (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +100 (Only recharged by bloody ritual -40%; 180 points)

Super-Powers

Ectoplasmic Projection-20(46) (See p. 123; Linked to Astral Projection +10%; Catalog +100% (Dieties of the Egyptian Masons); 580 points)

Psionics

(All skills except Precognition have the following limitation: Costs 4 Fatigue per minute or use -20%)

Astral Projection Power 50, 105 points)

Astral Projection-18 (1 points)

Precognition-23(10) (Limited use: 1 per day -40%; Emergencies only -30%; 17 points)

Psychokinesis Power 30 (105 points)

Levitation-18 (1 point)

PK Shield-18 (No concentration required +20%; 2 points)

Telekinesis-18 (1 point)

Telepathy Power 15 (53 points)

Mind Shield-18 (1 point)

Mindwipe-18 (Touch only -20%; 1 point)

Telereceive-18 (1 point)

Telescan-18 (1 point)

Telesend-18 (1 point)

Skills

Astronomy-20 (2 points), Interrogation-15 (0 points), Mathematics-20 (2 points), Occultism-20 (1 point), Physics-18 (1/2 point), Psychology-14 (0 points), English (Native tongue), Ancient Greek-20 (1 point), Cuneiform-19 (1/2 point), Egyptian hieroglyphics-19 (1/2 point), French-19 (1/2 point), German-20 (1 point), Latin-20 (1 point)

Quirks

Giggles when he fights or kills
Toys with his victims
Holds grudges

The Astronomer first appeared at a meeting of the New York chapter of the Egyptian Freemasons in 1962, after mentally contacting the Swarm Mother that was approaching the Earth. Balsam, the chapter's senior Mason, realized from what the Astronomer was able to tell him about the Swarm Mother that she was TIAMAT, the deepest and darkest Masonic secret. Balsam initiated the Astronomer into the secret society, and they came to realize that the Masons had been founded to prepare the Earth to defeat the Swarm.

The Astronomer, however, saw TIAMAT as a way to world domination, realizing an Earth exhausted from fighting the creature would be easy to conquer. To achieve this end the Astronomer built the local Masons into a powerful organization using wild card agents such as the scientist/joker Kafka, Kim Toy, Judas, and the ace assassin Demise. The Cloisters became their secret headquarters.

The Astronomer has six basic powers: telepathy, astral projection, ectoplasmic projection, telekinesis, precognition, and amnesia projection. His astral projection ability is very strong, enabling him to send his consciousness

virtually instantaneously throughout the galaxy. When he combines his astral projection with ectoplasmic projection, he can take the form of Setekh the Destroyer or any of ten other Egyptian deities. His precognition ability, on the other hand, is weak, enabling him to see only vague images of the future that are often very difficult to interpret. His telekinesis is also limited. He can levitate and form a force-shield to protect himself against both physical and mental attacks. Amnesia projection is one of his most important tools, enabling him to remove the memories of individuals without their realizing it. To use this power he has to be in close physical proximity to his target.

A sadist who feeds on death, the Astronomer renews his psychic energy through human sacrifice. He slowly and excruciatingly drains the energy of his victims, usually beautiful young women, by dismembering them. When his energy is used up, he becomes no more than a feeble old man confined to a wheelchair.

When his depredations became impossible to ignore, Fortunato, the Astronomer's sworn enemy, attacked the Cloisters in 1986 with a group of fellow aces. Among those who participated in the raid on the Cloisters were the Great and Powerful Turtle, Kid Dinosaur, Modular Man, Jumping Jack Flash, Dr. Tachyon, the Howler, Peregrine and Water Lily. The attack was successful. The raiders

destroyed the Cloisters and broke the power of the Masons, though the Astronomer and some of his agents managed to escape.

The Astronomer, vowing vengeance against those who destroyed his dream of world domination, bided his time until Wild Card Day, September 15, 1986, then attempted to assassinate the aces who contributed to his downfall. His plans for vengeance met with a certain measure of success, but the Astronomer lost a climactic duel with Fortunato, fought with fireballs of psychic energy over the streets of Manhattan. The Astronomer ended up falling into the East River. When he finally managed to drag himself out of the water, he was killed by his one-time henchman, Demise, and left half-embedded in a brick wall.

In this adventure, the Astronomer was accidentally re-incarnated by Cameo, who found his broken glasses in the mud of the Hudson River. Her channeling ability allowed him to take control of her body. Quick to capitalize on this unexpected turn of events, the Astronomer fled to Australia to recoup and take stock of his situation. It was there that he met and allied with the Murga-muggai, whom he helps manipulate events behind the scenes.

Sample Dialogue: "Shut up, hold still and let me enjoy myself."

Cameo (Ellen Allworth)

Official Character

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: December 6, 1971, Nantucket, Massachusetts



Appearance: Cameo looks like she stepped out of an Art Nouveau illustration — Polychrome from the Oz books, or maybe something by Maxfield Parrish. She's slim and lithe, with large brown eyes and long, wavy yellow-blond hair down to the middle of her back. She's 5' 5", and weighs about 125 lbs. When at Club Dead Nicholas, she's partial to wearing twenties hats and flapper dresses (recreations, not vintage). Around her neck, on a ribbon choker, she always wears an antique cameo in a gold setting.

Wild Card Ability: Cameo is a psychometric trance channeler, able to read psychic impressions, or even channel the psyches of the dead by touching a powerfully charged object. If channeling a dead ace, Cameo can use any of the ace's mental powers.

ST 9 (-10 points) **IQ** 13 (30 points) **Move:** 6
DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 13 (30 points)
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1

Advantages

Very Beautiful (25 points)
 Empathy (15 points)
 Strong Will +1 (4 points)

Disadvantages

Shyness (-10 points)
 Pacifism: Self-defense only (-15 points)

Super-Powers

Ectoplasmic Projection-20(50) (See p. 123; Channel enhancement, own psyche resident spy +40%; Security Blanket: must hold or wear psychically charged object -50%; Indomitable -20%; 246 points)

Psionics

Psychometry-20(30) (Touch only -20%; Drawn to particularly powerfully charged objects, such as those belonging to dead psionics +10%; Special effect: visions manifest from the mental viewpoint of the person who used the object +0%, 45 points)

Skills

Boating-14 (2 points), French-15 (6 points), History-15 (8 points), Hobby: Vintage Clothing-15 (4 points), Savoir-Faire-15 (4 points)

Quirks

Carries a cellular phone and her own silverware
Hates all criminals, especially murderers
Loves the seashore — the changing sands and waters don't retain impressions
Uses upper-class New England speech and mannerisms
Wears vintage clothes, originals or recreations

Ellen Allworth was born and raised on Nantucket Island. Until age 14, she had a very nice, upper-class upbringing, with lots of yachting, private schools and lobster salad. Then her mother was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer. Ellen and her brothers were packed off to boarding school. Ellen was a good B+ student who could have done better, with the usual teenage crushes and a passion for collecting antiques. This was interspersed with the harsh reality of weekends and summers home — chemotherapy went badly, the cancer had been caught too late, and when Ellen was 16, her mother died.

On her deathbed, Ellen's mother gave her a family heirloom, a cameo brooch passed down from mother to daughter for generations. Ellen put on the cameo only moments after her mother died, and her grief triggered her wild card: Ellen suddenly channeled her mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and every female ancestor who had worn it back to its creation. She was overwhelmed at first, but soon learned to control her power.

Dealing with her father was another thing altogether. Ellen could channel her mother's psyche whenever she wanted, whole and complete. The emotional stress between her and her father made it necessary for Ellen to go back to boarding school. Unfortunately, the old school had too many impressions for her to sleep well, and she kept getting calls from her father, wanting to talk to her mother.

Ellen went to see her eldest brother, who was studying business at NYU. They took a new yacht from the family shipyard and sailed it down to New York, mooring it in the

yacht harbor. Ellen could now get some sleep, and stay away from her father.

Ellen knew it would be difficult to finish her formal education, and now that she was an ace, it seemed rather pointless. She always preferred self-education anyway, and was free to read anything she liked and check out antique shops. She extended her collection of vintage clothes, finding several with interesting and useful psyches. In one shop, she was drawn to the fedora of Nick "Will-o'-the-Wisp" Williams, a young (but now dead) ace private eye.

When Ellen put on Will-o'-the-Wisp's fedora, she channeled him, and they discovered that they could still play his ace. Ellen then realized she had a potential career, but she was smart enough to know that her relative innocence and inexperience could get her eaten alive if she stepped into the wrong case. To guard against that, she used her wardrobe of vintage clothes and psyches as psychic training wheels, learning from the experts. Of everything, her most valuable artifacts are Will-o'-the-Wisp's fedora and the cameo containing the memories of her ancestors.

Ellen's mother and grandmother were both New England socialites. Her great-grandmother Marie, however, was a gun moll and flapper back in the twenties, helping her great-grandfather build an empire of rum-running. Ellen's cameo has Marie recorded up to age thirty-three, the last time she wore the cameo. Great-grandmother Marie knows the Charleston, and more than that, knows how to move in shadier circles.

To that end, she had a table reserved in the back of *Club Dead Nicholas*, where the regulars took to calling her "Cameo" after her brooch. She worked as a consultant, performing seances. However, after a job for the Justice Department (*Wild Cards XI: Dealer's Choice*), Cameo decided to lay low. She procured Black Eagle's scarf in a trade deal from Charles Dutton of the Bowery Wild Card Dime Museum. Then, on a hunt about town for interesting artifacts, she was drawn to the mud of the Hudson.

There she found a pair of broken glasses which had belonged to the Astronomer (see p. 107), taken and shattered by Roulette Brown-Roxbury the night of his death. (*Wild Cards III: Jokers Wild*.) The Astronomer immediately recognized the usefulness of Cameo's power, erasing her memory of having found the glasses and leaving a post-hypnotic suggestion to go to the Cloisters and put them on there. She did, and the Astronomer retrieved one of his trophies, the badge of Harry Mathias (Judas), a useful power source for Cameo.

The Astronomer then recharged much of his and Cameo's energy by engaging in bloody rituals. She fought against him, but the Astronomer had the much stronger will, carefully erasing all memories of his presence whenever he had to leave.

Through blood rituals, the Astronomer hopes to permanently imprint his consciousness upon Cameo, after which he can wipe her mind and keep her young body for him-

self. Fearing that Dr. Tachyon or Fortunato might sense his presence, however, the Astronomer took the first flight out of the country, to Australia as it happened.

As the plane entered Australian airspace, the Astronomer became aware of another powerful psychic entity, the Murga-muggai (see p. 111). She sent bugeen against him, to which he responded by astral projecting in the form of Setekh the Destroyer, the greyhound-scorpion of Egyptian myth. As the scorpion was related to her own totem of spider, the Murga-muggai recognized a kindred spirit. They parlayed, finding that her goal of removing the whites from Australia and his of revenge on the aces of New York and world domination were perfectly compatible, especially since both their powers required blood rituals.

The Astronomer set up in the back parlors of a strip joint in the Kings Cross district of Sydney, receiving aid from the Murga-muggai and learning the ways of the Dreamtime and aboriginal blood ritual. He began to explore the ritual uses of the female body. Nothing if not creative, the Astronomer invented his own perversions, variants on the aboriginal coming-of-age ceremony.

He has succeeded in partially engraving his mind on Cameo's subconscious, but still needs her to wear his glasses for him to spring fully to life. He acts as a psychic vampire, sitting in the back of her mind and occasionally prompting her to unwittingly set him free. He has complete control of her power when he is dominant, and may use Black Eagle's and Judas's powers at will, though channeling their personalities drains additional fatigue. The

Astronomer is always careful to erase Black Eagle's memories of his presence as well, so he cannot alert Cameo. He keeps Judas's badge well hidden, along with the broken glasses.

Will-o'-the-Wisp and Ellen's grandmother, however, proved far too strong-willed and troublesome for the Astronomer in his weakened state, and he left the fedora and cameo behind in New York until he can gain full control of Ellen and go back and subvert them to his will. For the time being, he's erased Cameo's memories regarding them both.

Cameo herself is bewildered and unsure how she came to Australia, thinking perhaps she was flown there by Black Eagle. She always seems to have money, and the apartment she lives in is pleasantly, if unusually, furnished. She keeps Black Eagle's scarf with her in case there's ever need of another ace. Still, she is uneasy, not knowing what's going on and unable to explain the gaps in her memory.

Cameo has recently met Kookaburra, who performs at the comedy club next door. The Astronomer has quietly watched the proceedings and encouraged the relationship. If Kookaburra loves Cameo, the Astronomer will have a powerful ace to corrupt once he takes complete control of her body.

Typical Dialogue: (Cameo) "Um, excuse me, could you tell me where I am? I'm not sure how I got here." (Black Eagle) "Just glad you're all right. And while I know it may sound strange, you can tell your friends that Black Eagle's back."

Kookaburra (Gary Sanders)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: May 29, 1963, Sydney, Australia

Appearance: Kookaburra is a medium-build ace (5' 7", 130 lbs.) who tries to look like a joker. His light brown hair is grown out and swept up with styling gel into a kingfisher crest. His eyes are blue, but he wears prescription theatrical contacts to make them bright yellow. He wears a leather jacket embroidered with his ace name and the picture of a kookaburra bird.

Wild Card Ability: Kookaburra can create an incredibly loud, infectious laugh. People who hear it will be overcome by laughter until they pass out, as will anybody who can hear them. His power is based on the emotional response to certain frequencies, and his voice puts people in a good mood.

Aces Jingle: Kookaburra, crazy bird,
Makes you laugh when he is heard.

ST 10 (0 points) **IQ** 9 (-10 points) **Move:** 6

DX 10 (0 points) **HT** 14 (45 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d

Advantages

Absolute Timing (5 points)

Acute Hearing +3 (6 points)

Attractive (5 points)

Charisma +2 (10 points)

Reputation: Australia's most public and obnoxious ace (Modifiers cancel, 0 points)

Ridiculous Luck (60 points)

Voice: Silly, keeps changing tonal register like a cartoon character, but anyone who hears it will be put in a good mood (10 points)

Disadvantages

Bad Sight: Wears contacts (-10 points)

Compulsive Behavior: Telling jokes (-5 points)

Compulsive Carousing (-5 points)

Gullibility (-10 points)

Truthfulness (-5 points)

Psionics

Telepathy Power 13 (65 points)

Aspect-20, +3/+6 reaction bonus (Double bonus vs. opposite sex +50%, Only when speaking -30%; 48 points)

Sleep-20 (Must laugh -10%; Affects groups +100%; Not immediate takes ½HT seconds to pass out from laughing -20%; Uncontrollable -30%; Laughter is contagious and power affects everyone who can hear original laughter, echoes or live broadcast +100%; Special effect: Victims wake up happy +0%; 63 points)

Telereceive-15 (16 points)

Telesend-15 (16 points)

Skills

Carousing-16 (8 points), Driving (Motorcycle)-15 (24 points), Fast-Talk-13 (10 points), Hobby: Ace trivia-14 (6 points), Performance-14 (12 points), Sex Appeal-16 (6 points)

Quirks

Fascinated by jokers, especially female (+2 reaction)

Generous to a fault

Impulsive shopper, spends all his money

Strong proponent of the homelands movement

Tries to look like a joker, though acts like an ace

Gary Sanders drew his ace on amateur night at a stand-up comedy club in Kings Cross. His delivery was okay, but his jokes were worn out. No one was laughing, and he wanted them to laugh more than anything. Then his voice cracked, sounding very silly, and when he laughed at himself, his voice boomed and everyone else laughed until they passed out. His laugh had become loud enough to be heard for half a mile, disrupting a sizable section of Sydney. Gary took the name Kookaburra, from the loud laughing kingfisher of the outback.

Kookaburra found that his timing and delivery had improved to the point where he could get laughs from even the stupidest jokes like "I just flew in from Melbourne and boy are my arms tired!" He hired writers and made a comedy album, though luckily even digitized recordings were unable to reproduce the full strength of his delivery and contagious laughter. He got several gigs and a TV spot on a live talk show, where he found that his contagious laughter could also be transmitted by live broadcast. This caused chaos in Australia and he received numerous lawsuits, which to date remain unsettled.

Australia's government offered him legal protection if he would become an operative. However, the secret service soon pronounced Kookaburra too immature, too disruptive, and just too stupid for an agent, but kept him on call for riot control. Kookaburra, however, believed in the

homelands movement, and knocked out several police stations with just a phone call. The government has considered arresting him, but is unsure of how to hold him. He is a popular public figure, and arresting him would be impolitic. Kookaburra has also quelled numerous riots of a non-aboriginal nature, so the authorities wish to keep on his good side. They also fear what he could do if he made the right phone call to the wrong place.

When on the international ace scene, he met Yellowman and heard the teleporter's stories of a nightmare future. He's not sure if he believes him, but it certainly didn't hurt to make a few phone calls and laugh at people.

Kookaburra hangs out in the joker bars of Kings Cross. Many resent him when he's not there, but can't help liking him when he's around. Kookaburra himself is fascinated by jokers, and is strongly attracted to those joker women who look different rather than diseased. He's a dingbat, but a likable one.

Recently he's linked up with Cameo, whose apartment is on the same street as the comedy club where he performs. He's not immune to the charms of ace women, either. The one or two times he's had cause to be suspicious of her and Acacia, her bodyguard, the Astronomer has wiped the memories from his mind.

Typical Dialogue: "Did you hear the one about the telepath and the vacuum cleaner?"



Murga-muggai, The

Official Character

Created by Edward Bryant

Born: 1869, Australian outback

Appearance: The Murga-muggai varies in appearance.

Her natural form is a withered crone, but her preferred form is that of her youth, a beautiful young aboriginal woman with tawny gold hair. She may also take the form of her totem animal, the trapdoor spider, in any size from

a small arachnid to a giant horror-movie monster the size of a Volkswagen.

Wild Card Ability: Besides being a shapeshifter, the Murga-muggai is a *galka*, an aboriginal black sorceress, able to control animals and implant suggestions in men's minds. Her powers come from aboriginal blood sorcery, and she must feed on the blood and internal organs of living beings if she is to retain her power. She prefers Europeans for these rituals. She is also a powerful Dreamer (precog) and can fade the boundary between the shadow world (this world) and the Dreamtime.

Aces Jingle: None.

Crone/Maiden Form

ST 12 (20 points) **IQ** 20 (175 points) **Move:** 9

DX 20 (175 points) **HT** 16 (80 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+2

Advantages

Alertness +3 (15 points)

Comfortable Wealth (10 points)

Intuition (15 points)

Strong Will +2 (8 points)

Very Beautiful: Maiden form only (25 points)



Disadvantages

Bad Temper (-10)

Bloodlust (-10)

Fanaticism: Aboriginal power (-15)

Intolerance: Whites (-10)

Megalomania (-10 points)

Sadism (-15 points)

Ugly: Crone form only (-10)

Vow: To rid Australia of Europeans (-15)

Super Advantages

Extra Fatigue +100 (Only recharged by blood rituals -40%; 180 points)

Invulnerability: Generic psionic (150 points)

Multiple Forms: Spider form (See below, 5 points)

Super-Powers

Blood Drain-16(20) (Bought as Dehydrate; Requires special bone talisman to use from a distance, or she must bite her victims -40%; The Murga-muggai regains fatigue equal to twice the damage done +80%; 289 points)

Morph-20(1) (Can only morph into younger self -50%; Doesn't require Morph Memory +100%; 60 points)

Psionics

Astral Projection-22(20) (Affects others +40%; Physical body may or may not be left behind +40%; Travels to the Dreamtime only +0%, 40 points)

Steal Energy-20(20) (44 points)

Precognition-20(20) (44 points)

Telepathy Power 25 (Costs 4 fatigue per use -20%; 100 points)

Suggest-23 (Usable only on Dreamtime monsters and spiders -40%, 8 points)

Telereceive-20 (Usable only on Dreamtime monsters and spiders -40%, 3 point)

Telescan-20 (4 points)

Skills

Dancing-20 (1 point), Naturalist-18 (1 point), Occultism-20 (2 points), Psychology-18 (1 point), Sex Appeal-16 (2 points), Shadowing-21 (4 points)

Quirks

Calls all whites Europeans

Loves the taste of blood, especially European

Protective of aborigines who don't cross her

Speaks formally

Toys with her victims

Spider Form

ST 171 (221 points) **IQ** 20 (175 points) **Move:** 15

DX 20 (175 points) **HT** 21 (180 points)

Damage: Thrust 7d-1; Swing 9d; Bite 7d impaling + 4d from venom

Disadvantages

Hideous Appearance (-20 points)

No Fine Manipulators (-30 points) (All other advantages and disadvantages as per crone/maiden form)

Super Advantages

Catfall (10 points)

Clinging (25 points)

Damage Resistance +6 (18 points)

Eight Legs (15 points)

Growth, Level 1 (Always on -40%, 6 points)

Perfect Balance (15 points)

Shrinking Level 6 (200 points)

Tunneling (Only to build and line trap door spider tunnels -50%, 30 points)

In 1946, the Murga-muggai was a *galka*, an aboriginal black sorceress. Shortly after the release of the Takisian xenovirus, she gained the powers of the Murga-muggai, the trapdoor spider woman of Australian legend.

Like her legendary predecessor, the Murga-muggai could take the form of a beautiful young woman, as well as the trapdoor spider of her totem. She also had to feed upon blood to maintain her powers, but that was little problem. As an aborigine witch, she knew sorceries to dry up the blood in men's veins by pointing a broken bone at them, and had heard of powerful sorceresses who could replace a person's internal organs with bundles of grass. She became one of these notorious sorceresses in truth, feeding directly on her victims as she came upon them in their sleep.

She hated whites and chose to feed upon them, using the Dreamtime as conduit to tunnel from city to city. The Murga-muggai gathered wealth from her victims, lining

her nests and setting up apartments in Sydney and all other major Australian cities.

When the homelands movement began, the Murga-muggai joined in, believing strongly in the rights of her people. The riots were also a perfect cover for her feeding. For muscle, she has used her wealth to hire Maori gang members. She pays well and they don't question her orders, thinking she's simply a rich crime boss. For simpler tasks she uses the Bugeen and Keen Keengs (see *Dreamtime Bestiary*, p. 119).

Her long-time adversary is Wyungare, known to her as Warreen, the Wombat. (*Wild Cards*, p. 79.) They both believe in the Homelands movement — the removal of all Europeans from the aboriginal lands — but the Murga-muggai is a bit more *extreme* in her dedication to the cause. She and Wyungare clashed at Uluru, the Dreamtime side of Ayers Rock, and the Murga-muggai would have triumphed if not for Cordelia Chaisson, who knocked her from the sacred stone.

She survived the long fall, but while nursing her wounds, the Astronomer entered the Dreamtime as a scorpion creature. The Murga-muggai recognized him as kin to her own totem, the trapdoor spider. He aided her healing by use of his psychic surgery power, bringing her back to full health, but making her owe a great favor.

She does not trust the Astronomer, but respects him, and knows that placing him in Sydney can do little harm to her people and great harm to the Europeans. Their feeding habits are also compatible, she drinking the blood of victims as he takes their psychic essences, together making the ritual all the more pleasurable and powerful for both. There's no shortage of victims anyway.

Typical Dialogue: "You will die, imperfect cousin."

Stewart, David (Koala)

Created by Kevin Andrew Murphy

Born: August 26, 1958, Sydney, Australia

Appearance: David Stewart is tall and broadly built, (6' 3" 280 lbs.), though his legs are unusually short in relation to his torso. His upper body is hugely muscled, making him appear almost a giant when seated. He has light brown hair and hazel eyes. His voice is surprisingly high for such a large man, and he seldom speaks or smiles. His shirts always need ironing and seldom match his pants.

Wild Card Ability: Stewart is a shapeshifter able to take the form of a koala.

Aces Jingle: None.

ST 18 (125 points) **IQ** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 8

DX 14 (45 points) **HT** 18 (125 points)

Damage: Thrust 1d +2; Swing 3d; Punch 1d; Pistol 2d +2 crushing

Advantages

Acute taste and smell +4 (8 points)

Alertness +2 (10 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

Common Sense (10 points)

Danger Sense (15 points)

Double-Jointed (5 points)

Handsome (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Intuition (10 points)

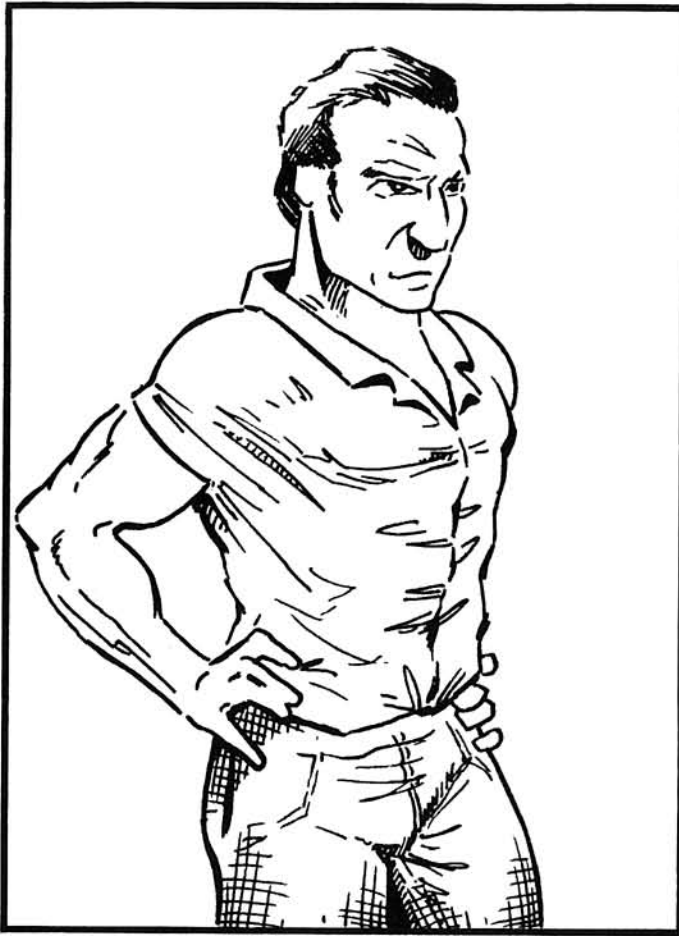
Legal Enforcement Powers (15 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Peripheral Vision (15 points)

Rapid Healing (5 points)

Toughness +2 (10 points)



Koala Form

ST 4 (-50 points)

IQ 14 (45 points)

DX 14 (45 points)

HT 10 (0 points)

Speed:

Move: 6

Damage: Claws and biting 1d-4 cut; Pistol 2d+2 crushing

(All other abilities and skills as per normal form)

Super Advantages

Clinging (25 points)

Damage Resistance +4 (12 points)

Super Disadvantages

Permanently Shrunk, Level 2 (Retains normal hit points +30%, -14 points)

David Stewart loved koalas as a child. His mother took him to the zoo and bought him koala posters, koala books, koala stuffed animals, even koala wallpaper for his room. When he was four he became seriously ill with fever, and when the wild card passed he had the power to take the form of a koala at will.

David's power was the envy of every child in the neighborhood for years. By the time he was in junior high, however, he was profoundly embarrassed by his deuce and seldom used it. Worse, he was addicted to eucalyptus cough drops, and everyone knew why. He was teased shamelessly and beat up often by students who wanted to see him shapeshift.

He took up weight training and boxing, but being a known wild carder, he was never allowed in school competitions. David didn't care and became very good anyway, trouncing several of his former tormentors.

Stewart married after college and took a job with the Australian Secret Service, who thought his deuce would be useful for a spy, especially in the outback. It was; few criminals expected a koala to possess a gun and a badge. Koala's form also provides a useful escape over the rooftops of Sydney, though Stewart has to leave his clothes behind. He wears a rabbit-fur pouch around his neck with his ID, a customized Glock 17 automatic and a spare ammo clip.

David Stewart was divorced six months ago, and his ex-wife got the house and custody of their two sons. Partly out of machismo, partly out of ignorance, he doesn't know how to cook, clean or do laundry for himself, and it shows. He lives in a small apartment in Sydney and is presently putting all his energy into investigating the Murgamuggai, interspersed with bouts of weight training.

Typical Dialogue: "Don't laugh, mate. This shoots real bullets, and I've shot plenty of people who refused to be arrested by a koala. So put your hands over your head and come quietly."

Disadvantages

Addiction: Eucalyptus cough drops (-5 points)

Bad Temper (-10 points)

Compulsive Behavior: Weight training, uses gym to work out frustrations (-5 points)

Duty: To the Australian Secret Service (-10 points)

Gluttony (-5 points)

Unluckiness (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Transformation (15 Points)

Skills

Boating-14 (2 points), Brawling-16 (8 points), Carousing-18 (2 points), Climbing-18 (24 points), Criminology-14 (2 points), Detect Lies-14 (4 points), Fast-Draw-16 (6 points), Guns-17 (8 points), Hobby: body building-19 (ST based, 2 points), Interrogation-14 (2 points), Shadowing-16 (6 points), Speed-Load-17 (8 points), Stealth-16 (8 points), Tracking-17 (8 points)

Quirks

Seriously embarrassed by his power; keeps it a secret for as long as he can around new friends

Speaks with a thick Australian accent

Vegetarian, not for moral reasons, just doesn't like meat

7 THE DREAMTIME

The following passages are excerpts from two essays about the Dreamtime. The first was written by Dr. Carl Jung, noted psychologist and wild card researcher; it deals with how the wild card affects and is affected by the collective unconscious. The second, written by the secret ace psionic Dr. Niles Swift, reinforces Dr. Jung's theories and details the three types of wild carders who visit the Dreamtime in its many forms.

From "The Collective Unconscious and Its Interactions with the Wild Card"

"The role of the collective unconscious in the turnings of the wild card is unquestionable. The plumed serpents of Mexico, the Siegfrieds and Lohengrins of Germany, and the unfortunate devils in Italy and other Catholic countries, all point to a complex synchronicity. Also indicative is the fact that some victims, instead of taking the form of their personal demons, have taken those of their neighbors, as evinced by Jews sprouting hooves and tails in Rome and Christians changing into pigs in Jewish and Islamic lands.

"Equally significant is the correlation between descriptions of Valhalla given by dreaming mentats, and my own personal experiences when taken there by one of my patients, a young woman whom I shall refer to as Brunnehilde. This woman could summon a winged horse, by means of which she could transport herself and anyone she carried to Valhalla, or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

"Brunnehilde's Valhalla was distinctly Wagnerian, and seemed much more strongly tied to the operas than to strict mythology. The collective unconscious apparently responds to the changing zeitgeist, and popular conception fuses with classical conception in mapping the regions of the human mind. Doubtless the original myths still exist somewhere, and in Valhalla I observed numerous classical elements, but the classic is seldom the popular, or the most easily accessible.

"The primitives of Australia believe that this world is an illusion, a shadow cast by the real world, or Dreamtime in their beliefs. But it seems, as in the fairy tale of Schlemiel, the shadow has more truth than the reality, and reality will shift to conform to changes in the shadow. The collective unconscious, while still reflecting the basic archetypes common to all mankind, patterns itself like a skillful storyteller into the forms most easily accessible to the people of a region. As in ancient legend, this explains why there are now werewolves in Europe and werelions in Africa, and while there have been many brave men outside northern Europe, only the heroes of Teutonic ancestry are to be found in Valhalla.

"The question then arises that if mythology is now real, how is it tied to humanity? I answer that certain greater archetypes are tied to a people and a region much in the same way that psychic impressions may be said to be tied to an object. Since the appearance of the wild card, an occasional ace power has been psychometry, the ability to read the history of a place or object by simply touching it. (This power, as with telekinesis and telepathy, has long been reported, but only since the appearance of the wild card has it been present in sufficient degree to be scientifically substantiated.) In some way, the psychic history of the object must inhere in its structure for it to be read in this manner. Just so may the history of a race be present in its land and its people.

"Many victims of the wild card virus have displayed aspects distinctly recognizable in the pagan myths of their ancient ancestors, even though they themselves professed Christianity or even agnosticism or extreme atheism. Others have apparently drawn from more recent archetypes, as demonstrated by the saints, angels and devils appearing throughout predominantly Christian nations. Still more seem tied to the present zeitgeist of our rationalist age, exhibiting powers and deformities to one degree or another limited to the constraints of modern science and a perverse understanding of physiology.

"If then there is truly a Valhalla, linked to the people and land of northern Europe, where then is the Heaven that many others in the same region claim to have visited, or for that matter the still uncharted and unplanned mythology of our present age? I must say that they are all present in the collective unconscious. Just as one object may have more than one shadow if there is more than one light, different regions of the collective unconscious may reflect different beliefs of the same people. The disparities between the Valhalla of ancient legend and that of Wagner are greatly evident, but even in Brunnehilde's Wagnerian Valhalla, I found elements from older myths. The two similar beliefs may be viewed as two closely spaced lights. Currently the light of Wagner's Valhalla is brighter, so it casts a darker shadow, altered and blurred, however, by the shadow cast by ancient myth. Two radically different beliefs, such as Paganism and Christianity, would by nature create two completely different regions in the collective unconscious, such as Valhalla and Heaven. Still, as light is the same regardless of the nature of the lamp, so are the lesser archetypes from which these greater archetypes are formed.

"Other researchers may scoff, dismissing my experience as a wild-card-induced mass hallucination, which it very well might have been. Regardless, the evidence re-

mains, and I now say that it is irrelevant whether the collective unconscious existed before the advent of the wild card. It does now, and my colleagues in the field of psychology must be prepared to accept it.”

— C.G. Jung, 1960

(Published shortly before Dr. Jung's disappearance.)

From “*Dreamers, World-Walkers, and Ectoplasmic Mediums: Three Suits of the Wild Card*”

“Dr. Jung’s work on the collective unconscious presents an interesting perspective on the study of the Takisian xenovirus. When observing those fortunate victims of the wild card, the rare ‘aces,’ whose powers strongly corroborate Dr. Jung’s theories, three distinct types emerge: the dreaming mentats, the world-walkers, and the ectoplasmic mediums.

“Mentats, a Takisian term referring to persons possessed of psionic abilities, occasionally report exceptionally vivid dreams or visions. Most of these involve the present world, and may thus be termed astral projection, a spatial displacement of the conscious mind. However, a significant portion of these dreams and visions are based upon well-established mental realities such as Heaven or Hell. This in itself would be unremarkable, except for the fact that the dreamers’ reports regarding the nature of such realities correlate with each other, and with such noted authorities as St. Augustine and Dante. Mentats also report meetings with other mentats in these psychic realms. Subconscious telepathic contact can adequately explain this phenomenon, though if such is accepted, this then affirms the existence of the collective unconscious, at least in the case of mentats. As mentats may contact those unable to sense others telepathically, the ‘psi-blind’ as the Takisians refer to them, this might also explain similar dreams and visions by those not directly affected by the wild card virus. Two rare but reported wild card powers are the ability to broadcast one’s own dreams to other sleepers — a joker or a deuce depending on the degree of control — and the more useful ace ability to induce specific dreams in others.

“Giving moment for pause, however, is the appearance of stigmata, physical wounds from psychic battles, experienced by some participants — both ace and ‘nat’ — in these unusual dreams. Some dreamers have even died from these mysterious injuries, while others have returned from their dreams with ‘aports,’ small physical objects taken as trophies and souvenirs. Aportative teleportation can explain the appearance of most of these objects, but some are so unique — such as the solid gold harp that appeared with little Jenny Marsdale after a dream of Heaven — that one must wonder whether these objects are created out of whole cloth from virtual particles, or if they have, in some way, been taken in a physical form from the realm of what before was the purely mental.

“The equation becomes more complicated in the case of

those rarer aces whom I shall refer to as ‘world-walkers.’ Instead of mentally traveling to the realms of myth, the world-walkers are able to do so physically, even returning with items from these other worlds. This power may in some ways be linked to time travel, as in the case of the much celebrated Sir Bedivere, a young London stockbroker, Walter Pomerance, who on weekends and holidays disappeared, claiming to journey back to King Arthur’s court in search of the Questing Beast. Friends scoffed until the day he returned with a dragon’s head and was promptly arrested for the murder of an unknown joker. Strangely, no body was found, no murder was reported, and when Scotland Yard demanded that he demonstrate his purported ace power and transport himself back to King Arthur’s day, he responded that he no longer had any reason to do this — his quest was over. Only a positive blood test for the wild card virus saved the recalcitrant Sir Bedivere from a murder charge. His story, however, indicates the possibility of physically walking into the realm of myth, and even fitting oneself into the carefully scripted play of legend.

“Walter Pomerance’s case is unusual in that he traveled not only into the realm of legend, but also back in time. All of the other world-walkers who have visited the lands of Arthurian myth have done so at the end of the cycle — Lancelot and Guinivere, Tristan and Isolde, and the death of Arthur all taken as history — and even then, all that could be accessed was the Isle of Avalon, or, in the case of Marilyn Howard, the ace Morgan le Fay, Castle Chariot. The green hills and forests of ancient England are barred from all but time travel, and even in the case of Walter Pomerance it is doubtful that he traveled sheerly in time — dragons are not found in even ancient England, and King Arthur was a documentable corruption of an earlier solar myth.

“A rare subset of the world-walkers are the gate-makers, who may create portals into the realms of myth, much like Alice and the looking glass. Like the creations of other gadgeteers, the magical doorways of the gate-makers do not require the presence of the maker for them to operate. However, like other super-gadgets, these gateways are notoriously prone to malfunction. Gate-makers conform in most other respects to their fellow world-walkers.

“The third category of aces supporting Dr. Jung’s theory are those whom I will refer to as ectoplasmic mediums. Instead of mentally or physically traveling into the collective unconscious, these aces seem able to make it manifest in this world. With many, this may be explained as psionically induced mass hallucination, the insane aces projecting their own personal psychoses into the minds of others. This power is similar to that of the dreamweavers, but it affects the waking conscious as opposed to the dreaming conscious. However, in many cases this explanation is inadequate, the ‘hallucinations’ able to inflict painful stigmata, and in some cases — notably Catherine

'Tiger-Loose' Colier — having the power to kill in a very physical and bloody fashion. Miss Colier's magically produced tigers ate a charwoman and three bobbies.

"Many of these projections seem capable of independent thought, with intellectual abilities far in excess of the medium, as in the case of Jeremy Hargrave, a child ace who had fairy godmothers appear at his christening and had yearly visits thereafter by Father Christmas. That a child would have no reasonable knowledge of fairy godmothers or Father Christmas is obvious, unless one accepts that Jeremy's ace drew from the collective unconscious and the body of folklore, as well as language and knowledge. Father Christmas, however, was no mere hallucination, as admirably proven by the toys he left and Jeremy's mother's reported conversations with the saint. While it may be possible that Father Christmas and the godmothers were independent aces acting from their own motives, from their lack of appearances elsewhere it should be postulated that they were actually projections of ectenic force from Jeremy, produced in much the same manner as reported by the mediums of the past century. In modern parlance, this ectenic force or ectoplasm would be said to be composed of virtual particles, held together psychically by microscale telekinesis, conforming in general to the patterns set down in the collective unconscious. The

winged horse summoned by Dr. Jung's patient, Brunnehilde, could be explained in a similar manner.

"Of the ace powers directly linked to the collective unconscious — whether mentatic dreaming, world-walking, or the projection of ectenic force — almost all are strongly tied to particular mythologies as a function of the culture of the possessor. Sir Bedivere could only travel to King Arthur's court, Dr. Jung's Brunnehilde went solely to Valhalla, and Jeremy Hargrave seems limited to popular British children's folklore, though as he is only seven, he may display more versatility with age. Marilyn Howard, however, the ace Morgan le Fay, has reported gaining access to Olympus on a visit to Greece, and to the Venusberg when visiting the Harz mountains of Germany, though had little knowledge beforehand of either of these legendary realms.

"In conclusion, I must stress that Dr. Jung's theories are the only acceptable explanation for this data, other than accepting that both Heaven and Valhalla exist, despite the theological predication that the existence of the one precludes the truth of the other. There is no longer the question of the tree and the forest. The tree has been heard and the forest has been visited, and the task now is left to the naturalists of the subconscious to identify and name the many and varied specimens to be found therein."

— Dr. Niles Swift, 1961

The Dreamtime of Australia and Other Psychic Realms

One of the most unusual parts of the *Wild Cards* universe is the Dreamtime of Australia, explored in Edward Bryant's "Down in the Dreamtime" (*Wild Cards IV: Aces Abroad*). In this story, Cordelia Chaisson (*Wild Cards*, p. 35) gained access to the mythological Beginning Time of the Australian Aborigines with the help of the aborigine, Wyungare.

The Dreamtime of Australia is the land of Baiame, the Aboriginal high god. Aborigines believe the Dreamtime to be the origin of all things, the first world of which this world is but a pale shadow, a belief similar to the Platonic Ideal.

Geographically speaking, the Dreamtime conforms to the general shape of Australia, except, as in ancient times, New Zealand is connected by a land bridge. Major geographical features are the same — Ayers Rock becomes Uluru in the Dreamtime, though the rock formation is the same. However, the chain bolted to Ayers Rock for tourists is absent in the Dreamtime, as are all other recent structures.

The animals in the Dreamtime are intelligent and can talk, having originally been men in aboriginal legend. Monsters, however, vary in intelligence, some quite sophisticated and others operating on the brute level. Most creatures will be polite, but will still act in accordance with their basic natures.

Every person entering the Dreamtime will have a *mood-jin-garl*, a totem; that is, an animal who is his patron spirit. Wyungare's totem is Warreen, the wombat. Cordelia's is Kurria, the crocodile. The Murga-muggai takes the name and shape of her own totem, the trapdoor spider, while other shapeshifters, such as David Stewart, take their alternate forms as totems. Game Masters should assign totems to those entering the Dreamtime, reflective of the individual's basic personality. Totem animals may give their kinsmen aid and possibly food or weapons. Humans, in turn, will be expected to help their totem animal if it is in distress. Totem animals are also members of greater animal tribes. Wyungare, as a wombat, is also a member of the marsupial tribe, and therefore receives special consideration from kangaroos and wallabies. Cordelia would be a member of the reptile tribe, and could expect help from lizards and blacksnakes.

Time and space are both warped in the Dreamtime. Like a dream, a journey of hours may take only minutes, while a minute's task may be found upon waking to have taken hours. When in the Dreamtime, visitors will have no way of knowing whether time is running fast or slow relative to the real world. (One idea is to have the player's watches reflect real time instead of Dreamtime time.) Likewise, distances may be greatly longer or shorter than they are in reality. A visitor might walk the 1,000 miles from Sydney



to Alice Springs in an hour's time, or an hour's journey might take a week. Game Masters may use any means to determine in which direction and to what degree time and space are being warped at any particular moment — dice, coins and sheer whim are all appropriate. Dream sequences are of course limited to a maximum of eight hours sleep real time, though may be any length in the Dreamtime. Physical journeys may take anywhere from years to no time at all. Rather than offering complex charts and tables, Game Masters should use the distorted nature of the Dreamtime to manipulate the adventure into the most dramatic time sequence. Characters may access the Dreamtime either physically, with the help of world-walkers such as Wyungare, or psychically, via their own mental powers or by means of the Murga-muggai's or another NPC's dream-inducing abilities.

Those who astrally project into the Dreamtime will be wholly physical in that world, and may use any powers which they normally possess, plus others which may be inferred. The Astronomer (see p. 107), for example, is able to change his astral form to any mythological form he pleases, making him a powerful shapeshifter in the Dreamtime, as would any character who could modify their astral body. Upon waking, anyone who has taken damage to his astral body will retain half of the HT lost in the form of stigmata, and these wounds take twice as long as normal to heal. However, anyone killed in the Dreamtime is dead in reality as well. Any small, physical object tightly held by

a person waking from the Dreamtime will be retained as an apot, at the GM's option.

Regardless of the means by which access is gained, mentats capable of projecting illusions will be exceptionally powerful in the Dreamtime, being able to alter reality. Aces capable of projecting ectenic force in this world will find it wholly real in the Dreamtime, and will retain whatever relationship previously held with any imaginary creatures they might usually summon. However, if the creatures have their basis in another mythology, there is a strong probability that their Dreamtime analogues would be summoned instead. For example, if Herne were to call the Gabriel Hounds while in the Dreamtime, he might instead get a pack of dingos, or even the Eer-moonans (see p. 120). Titania, however, drawing her fairies from a literary basis, might just attract a Mimi or Tuckonie to her retinue.

Psychically speaking, the Dreamtime is the collective unconscious of Australia. Part of the reason the Murga-muggai so strongly opposes Western preachers is that their beliefs impinge upon the Dreamtime and her power within it. Belief in another psychic realm, such as Heaven, takes away a degree of power from the aboriginal peoples' beliefs and their territory of the collective unconscious. However, the active disavowal that the Dreamtime ever could, did or will exist negates a great degree of the Dreamtime's reality, in addition to destroying the culture of the aboriginal people. If the aborigines were to stop believing in the Dreamtime, it would die. The Murga-

muggai is attempting, in a very violent manner, to make people clap their hands and say, "I believe."

Unlike many other places of myth, the Dreamtime is directly tied to the soil of Australia. The present Dreamtime, accessible by way of Wyungare and the Murgamuggai, is set temporally after all of the major creation and heroic myths, though some things are muddled. The Keen Keengs still exist, not totally destroyed by the Winjaring brothers, and there are numerous minor differences.

New Zealand is particularly unusual, for while it is tied to the Dreamtime, it is also linked to the myths of Polynesia and Maori legend, the borderline between the two blurring. Other regions of the world have their own realms of the collective unconscious set up in roughly the same manner as the Dreamtime. These mythological realms, generally speaking, are set directly after all of the major creation and heroic myths have come to pass, myth and legend being taken as history. Some sections of the collective unconscious are directly adjacent to each other, allowing characters to cross the borders of mythology, while others regions may only be accessed from the earth.

For example, if Wyungare were to travel to Guatemala and attempt to enter the Dreamtime from there, he would most likely appear in Xibalba, the Quiche Hades, described in Leanne C. Harper's "Blood Rites." (*Wild Cards IV: Aces Abroad*.) Talking animals are found both in Xibalba and the Dreamtime, though in Xibalba, the gods take a stronger role. By the same token, if the Hero Twins were in Australia and attempted rituals to gain visions from Ahua Ah Puch, the Quiche Lord of Death, they would more likely reach Marmoo, the aboriginal Spirit of Evil.

The temporal and spatial distortions found in the aboriginal Dreamtime will also be found in the Mayan Xibalba. Likewise the hills of the Sidhe in Ireland exhibit

the same effects, and many animals on the Faerie side of Ireland can speak intelligently. The faeries of the British Isles, the alfar of Northern Europe, and the peris of Persian countries are all derived from the same basic legend and root word, the consonant that became F in Germanic languages becoming P in Persian. The parallels between the Sidhe of Ireland and the Djinn of Arabia are particularly strong, including the belief that they hide themselves in an invisible, parallel world.

This belief affirms the existence of a parallel realm in the collective unconscious and promotes the possibility of aces from such cultures possessing the powers of world-walking or gate-making. In effect, this means that any culture with a strong belief in alternate realities will become an access point for dreamers and world-walkers to enter the worlds of their beliefs. The myths of the Aztec, Hopi, Navajo and other Native American cultures are thus open to exploration, as are the halls of Valhalla, the Spider stories from the Gold Coast of Africa, and numerous other bodies of religion and folklore.

This also implies that if a someone drew the right ace in the middle of a Southern Baptist revival meeting, he might find himself in Heaven — either the white or the black Baptist version, depending on the congregation — and a world-walker might step into the classical Catholic interpretation if he pulled his ace in the middle of the Vatican. This is something which has not been explored in the *Wild Cards* novels, and most likely won't be, but could become the basis of an interesting adventure.

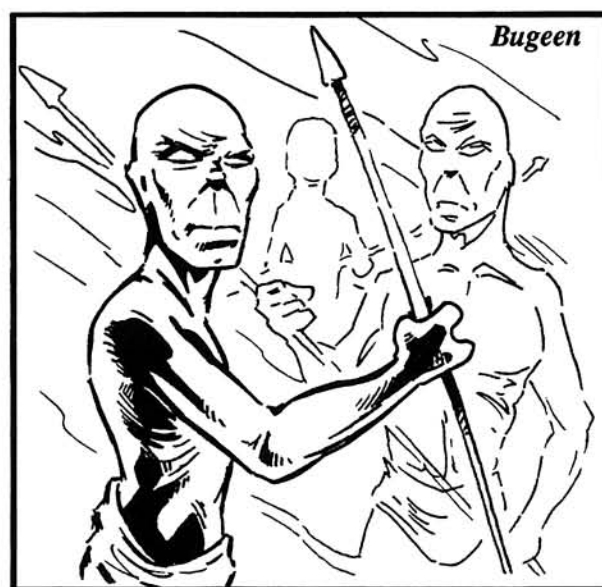
To approximate the realms of myth for the purposes of roleplaying, Game Masters should refer to the appropriate folklore texts and creatures from the *Bestiary* and *Fantasy Bestiary*. What follows here is a supplementary Dreamtime bestiary, for use within the *Wild Cards* universe and other campaigns.

A Dreamtime Bestiary

Bugeen

ST 20	Speed/Dodge: 7/5	Size: 1
DX 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 200-220 lbs.
IQ 6	Damage: 2d cr	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 15	Reach: C	Habitats: All

Bugeen are evil spirits of the Dreamtime, mostly encountered at night. They are silent, stealthy and completely homicidal. They are also one of the Murgamuggai's most important tools, being easily manipulated into attacking anyone. Bugeen appear much like aboriginal men, but have unusually small heads, enlarged genitalia, three-fingered hands, and have only three toes on their feet but two on their heels. They commonly attack with their bare hands, though occasionally use weapons. Bugeen can speak, but only crudely.



Bunyip

ST 30	Speed/Dodge: 9/7#	Size: 2
DX 11	PD/DR: 3/3	Weight: 300-350 lbs.
IQ 5	Damage: 1d+2 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 15	Reach: C	Habitats: Lakes, billabongs

The bunyip is the most feared of Dreamtime monsters. It has four legs, an oval body with a head like a horse's, and no tail. It is very shy, but will protect its territory if it feels that travelers are evil. Bunyips only live in the remotest areas, far from human habitation.

They are very stealthy, cautious animals, and will carefully watch a group of humans. While not intelligent, a bunyip seems to be able to sense if intruders respect the lake it lives in.

The bunyip attacks by seizing its victims with its powerful jaws, then dragging them under the water of the billabong to drown. The bunyip is mammalian, but can hold its breath for a long period.

Other bunyips have been described, however, having the heads of emus or the hooves of horses, making it possible that there are several species of bunyip, many even more dangerous than the common sort.

Eer-moonan

ST 16	Speed/Dodge: 10/6	Size: 1
DX 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 85-150 lbs.
IQ 5	Damage: 1d+3 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 14	Reach: C	Habitats: Shadows

Baiaime's dog gave birth to the Eer-moonans, the long-toothed monsters of the shades. The Eer-moonans have the bodies of dingos and the heads of porcupines. They attack with a slam, then bite in close combat thereafter. Their spines are extremely poisonous, and anyone bitten will also be stuck by 1d spines per bite, and 6d per round if someone is stupid enough to grapple an Eer-moonan. The spines do 1d-2 each from type A poison. (See sidebar, p. 104.)

The Eer-moonans are savage and bloodthirsty, and are completely silent and invisible when in shadow. Luckily they are very rare, and Cordelia Chaisson killed most of the adults of the pack. The Murga-muggai uses her suggestion power to put them on the scent of an enemy, psychically riding the pack leader so she may bring her victim into the Dreamtime at the right moment.

Gurangatch

ST 30	Speed/Dodge: 6/4	Size: 2
DX 7	PD/DR: 4/4	Weight: 1,000 lbs
IQ 10	Damage: 5d+2 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 30	Reach: C	Habitats: Rivers, billabongs

The Gurangatch is an enormous monster, equally sired of lizard and fish. He has a bad temper, a bad attitude, and will eat anyone if he's hungry.

Presently, however, he's had both his eyes put out by Wyungare and Cordelia and has gone underground to hibernate and heal his wounds. In legend he was wounded by Mirragen, the cat, the greatest hunter of the Dreamtime. Like many amphibians, the Gurangatch is regenerative, and will be back.



Keen Keeng

ST 10	Speed/Dodge: 12/9	Size: 1
DX 15	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 70-80 lbs.
IQ 13	Damage: 1d-3 cr	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 10	Reach: C	Habitats: Mountains

The Keen Keeng are the bird men of the Dreamtime. They are very tall and thin and have only two fingers and a thumb on each hand. Their wings are actually feathers which retract into slots on the back of each arm. The Keen Keengs worship the volcano god. Most of them were killed by the Winjarning Brothers, but there are still a few left. They are wicked and will act as agents for the Murga-muggai anywhere in the Dreamtime.

Malingee

ST 15	Speed/Dodge: 8/6	Size: 1
DX 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 90-110 lbs.
IQ 13	Damage: 2d+3 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 12	Reach: C	Habitats: Plains

The Malingee is an evil spirit who only travels at night, killing anyone he meets. Looking like an emaciated aborigine, he has sharp stone knives on his elbows and carries a stone axe. His eyes burn and he has the face of a devil.

Mimi

ST 2-4	Speed/Dodge: 10/9	Size:
DX 16	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: ½ lb.
IQ 12	Damage: 1d+2 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 5	Reach: C, 1	Habitats: Arnhem Land rocks

The Mimi are rock spirits, mostly female, about 3 feet tall and so thin they look like stick women. They are greatly afraid of the wind and will not venture out if there is even the slightest breeze, fearing it will blow them away or snap their necks. They live in the cracks of the rock and are nearly two-dimensional. If there is no crack upon a rock, a Mimi can trace a line with her finger and a fissure will appear. This may also be done to those who try to harm her, the Mimi's finger splitting the skin with the precision of a scalpel. Some carry weapons, spears and arrows as thin as the Mimi themselves. It is rumored that Mimi are man-eaters, but the rock spirits much prefer yams. They are shy even around aborigines, and very frightened of Europeans because of their mining. Many are artists and paint their images on the rock of Arnhem Land.

Ninya

ST 11	Speed/Dodge: 9/7	Size: 1
DX 11	PD/DR: 2/2	Weight: 140-160 lbs.
IQ 14	Damage: 2d+2 cold	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 14	Reach: C	Habitat: Mt. Conner

The Ninya are undead ice-men. They appear as aborigines, covered with a rime of frost, hair and beards spiked with crystalline ice. They are the creators of frost, ice and cold winds. They come out during the winter and play, but during the summer they live in huge underground caverns, the walls covered with flows of ice. The only entrance to the caverns of the Ninya is on an island in the Unagatja Salt Lake in Central Australia, Dreamtime side. They are wicked, cruel and cold-hearted, and will cooperate with the Murga-muggai if it suits their interests. Presently it does.

Tuckonie

ST 2-3	Speed/Dodge: 7/9	Size:
DX 16	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 5-6 lbs.
IQ 16	Damage: 1d-4 cut	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 5	Reach: C	Habitats: Mountains

Tuckonies are aboriginal gnomes. They are small, about a foot tall, with glowing green eyes and high, squeaky voices. Many are skilled magicians. They are helpful and friendly, especially to those wounded or in need of aid. Besides looking and dressing like aborigines — and not wearing pointed caps — they correspond in most respects to their Western counterparts. They hate the Murga-muggai, though they believe in the homelands movement. Many are friends of Wyungare.

Wanambi

ST 40-200	Speed/Dodge: 11/8	Size: 40-200 feet long
DX 16	PD/DR: 3/3	Wt.: 1,000-20,000 lbs
IQ 12-18	Damage: *	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 20-100	Reach: C	Habitat: Watering holes

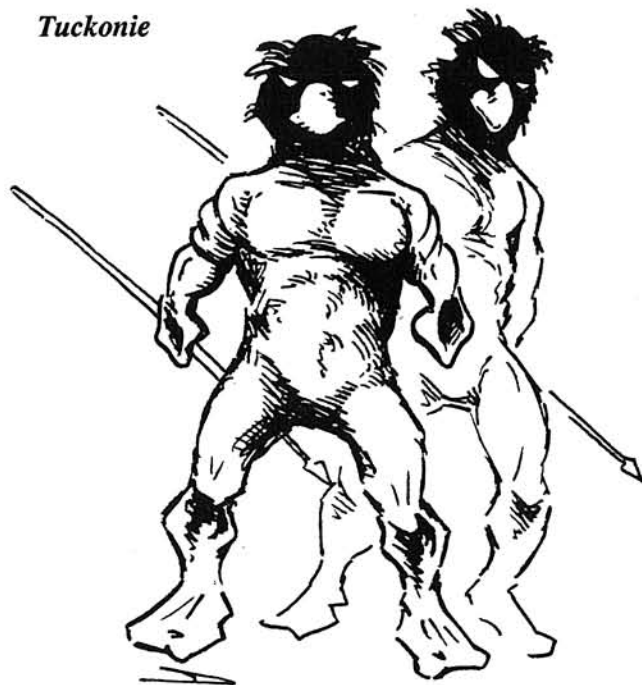
Wanambi is the Rainbow Serpent, the oldest of the Dreamtime's creatures, though there are many lesser rainbow serpents in the Dreamtime. Their skins are patterned the same colors as the rainbow, and they have long projecting fangs and beards. When they wish, Wanambis may take the form of rainbows. All who see a Wanambi in this form will be paralyzed (roll vs. Will at -2) for as long as the rainbow is in the sky, and for 1d turns thereafter.

The grandfather and largest of all Wanambi lives in a huge cavern under the waters of Uluru, the watering hole for which the Dreamtime side of Ayers Rock is named. Any who drink from the waters of Uluru must first light a small fire or risk offending Wanambi, who will kill the intruder. Even the Murga-muggai makes this propitiation, knowing that she is allowed to stay at Uluru only through the grace of Wanambi.

The Wanambi is a servant of Baiame, as are all the lesser rainbow serpents. They may carry plagues to those who have broken tribal law, at the will of the creator. The Murga-muggai has long been trying to convince the Wanambis to spread disease to the Europeans, but they have maintained that whites are not members of the tribes and are therefore outside of tribal law.

Wanambis, depending on their size, bite for 4d+3 to 21d+2 cutting damage *plus* 12d+2 from type B venom.

Tuckonie



Wandjina

ST 12	Speed/Dodge: 7/5	Size: 1
DX 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 120-140 lbs.
IQ 16	Damage: 5d+2 cr	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 15	Reach: R	Habitats: Rocks, Rivers

The Wandjina are potent spirits of the Dreamtime. They appear as men, but their heads and eyes are much larger and blaze with psychic energy and electrical power. Each Wandjina has its own special name and is responsible for distributing the baby spirits of the inhabitants of Australia (Europeans included). Every person's secret name is that of the Wandjina he came from, though few know them. The images of Wandjina on rocks in the Shadow World mark the spot where the spirit died and entered the Dreamtime. Each of these individual spots may be used to access the particular Wandjina to whom it is linked.

The Wandjina do not hate the Europeans, but are upset that their spirit children forget who they were in the Dreamtime. They are the monitors of Australia, wishing to maintain the status quo, but opposed to violence. However, if they or one who they are protecting is harmed, they may respond with bolts of psycho-electrical energy (SS 14, Acc 1, 1/2D —, Max 11). They can also call rain from the sky.

Whowhie

ST 200	Speed/Dodge: 2/1	Size: 32
DX 4	PD/DR: 7/7	Weight: 10,000 lbs.
IQ 7	Damage: 21d+3	Origin: Dreamtime
HT 16/200	Reach: C	Habitat: Murray River



The Whowhie was a singular monster which lived in the Murray River. It looked like a goanna 20 feet tall with a long tail, six legs and the head of a frog. It ate anything it could catch. Luckily, because of its great bulk, it moved very slowly. However, the Whowhie never slept, and could move with perfect silence, at night sneaking up on its prey. It was finally killed by the people of the Murray River. However, things are strange in the Dreamtime, and there might be a second Whowhie, or someone may have drawn it for their joker.



Other Dreamtime Creatures

There are many other inhabitants of the Dreamtime. Among these are the Water Lubra, aboriginal analogues of the water nymphs in Western mythology. There is also Cheeroonear, the dog-faced man; Kinie-ger, the cat-faced man; the Doolagarl, huge, hairy ape-like men (use the stats for Hsing-hsing, *Fantasy Bestiary*, p. 33), the tribe of

emu-legged men, of whom it is told that if they touch a man's feet, they will also become emu feet (perhaps a mutant strain of the wild card?); the roly-poly people, who are human in front and roly-poly bushes behind; the Wurrawilberoo, the mischievous spirit of the willy-willy, the whirlwind; and many other spirits and monsters.

8 NEW ABILITIES

Ectoplasmic Projection (Ranged/Mental LC:6)

This super-power allows a super's imaginary friends, spirit guides, guardian angels, et cetera, to come to life and aid him. Imaginary friends are astral projections of a PCs' fragmented subconscious, acting out hidden desires, while other guardians may be actual supernatural entities sent to help a witch or medium get on with her life. Projections can be tangible or insubstantial, and the super might not even know that the power exists — only that the projections exist (see enhancements and limitations below).

Projections can range from giant, invisible rabbits to wispy incarnations of dead relatives to full-fledged supers. A super's projections are built as separate characters using 10 points per Power level; summoning one costs ½ the super's Power level in fatigue, but a projection remains for as long as the super (or the projection) wants it to. This excludes combat, which is limited to 5 seconds per level of Power per projection. For example, if Molly Muffet has Ectoplasmic Projection at Power 10, she can call "Captain Plasmatron," and upon making a successful skill roll, the 100-point super will appear, take her for rides on the Plasmascooter, or do whatever else Molly likes. For Molly, this power costs 60 points and drains 5 points of fatigue per use. Combat, however, is far more exhausting, and Captain Plasmatron can only turn on the bullet-deflecto-field or fire her cosmic raygun for 50 seconds total before dissipating — unless Molly has another 5 fatigue and chooses to spend it.

While the power can only be taken once, there is no limit to the number of projections a super can have — but the points must be divided among the projections, *and* the projections must be developed at character creation. If projections change later, the player must have a very good rationale. To illustrate, Ninjaman spends 72 points on Ectoplasmic Projection, giving him Power 12; he can create two 60-point ancient samurai bodyguards; or one 120-point super; or one 10-point dog, one 30-point masseuse, and one 80-point nail technician — any combination totaling 120 points is possible. If Ninjaman wants all the projections, just not all at once, he should take the "catalog" enhancement, listed below.

If an ectoplasmic projection takes any damage, its projector must make a Will roll to avoid being stunned. If he remains stunned for 3 rounds or more, the projections will dissipate. They can be called again once the projector makes a successful IQ roll to shake off the stun, but each successive use of the power within an hour is at a cumulative -2. If a projection is brought to 0 HT, the super takes 1d of damage from the mental shock (DR does not pro-

tect). The projection is not actually killed; it dissipates and cannot be called again for 2d hours.

The default for ectoplasmic projections is for them to be invisible, insubstantial astral bodies only the PC can hear, though individual projections can be personalized. Listed below are special enhancements and limitations. Unless specified, they apply to all projections created with this power. Regardless of the number of limitations taken with this power, the point cost can never drop below 10.

Special Enhancements

Astral Link

+20%

Ectoplasmic Projection is "linked" to Astral Projection (p. P10). When a character steps out of his body, he has a new body to step into. This is very much like Transformation or Multiform, except that character's original body is left behind, unprotected. The new body can, however, risk death with only the fear of the 1d of mental shock damage to the original. (As this can invite abuse, GMs may wish to assess heavy psychological penalties to characters who experience death while in their ectoplasmic forms, or just rule that ectoplasmic death is the same as astral death and the character's mind is *dead*.)

Catalog

+10% Per Entry After First

The character can summon more than one projection, just not all at the same time. Example: Sister Mary Inez has a copy of the Book of Angels. She has ectoplasmic projection at Power 8 and can summon any angels up to a total of 80 points. The Book lists 4 20-point cherubim (1 entry), 2 70-point seraphim (2 entries, round up), and one 100-point elohim (counted as one entry, though in excess of the good sister's ability) for a total of 4 entries (1 free + 3 additional) and +30% to the cost of her power. If Sister Mary Inez decides to summon the 100-point angel before she can buy up her Power, she'll need extra effort (see *Psionics*, p. 7).

Channel

+20%/+30%/+40%

The character can let "friends" take over his body — useful if they have different skills, though there are dangers. This enhancement is +20% if a "friend" is an alter-ego, acting as one-half of a split personality. If the character's psyche is still awake and aware during "possession," he or she can communicate with the guest at the speed of normal speech, worth +30%. If the channel can read (and remember!) any of the "guest's" knowledge, this enhancement is worth +40%. The channel and the

guest may also engage in *Full Communication*. (*Psionics*, p. 36) (If a PC can't keep alter-egos out of his body, or is a frequent victim of demonic possession, this is -20% limitation.)



Giant-Sized +20%

Normal projections are human-sized, but with this enhancement, the projections are five times larger than normal. This does not give any bonuses to ST or HT, but it can make the projection very intimidating and may necessitate a Fright Check for the super's opponents. This enhancement only pertains to mental constructs and is incompatible with the *Natural Medium* enhancement.

No Stunning +20%

The creator is not stunned if the projections are injured. If the projections are killed, the projector does not take any damage, but the creations still cannot be called again for 2d hours.

Natural Medium +40%

The PC produces an excess of ectoplasm, spiritual energy, allowing astral creatures to take on a greater degree of reality. Spirit guides are real and may call in friends of their own if the PC really needs help. Spirits are also not limited by the range of the power; they just stick around because they can only manifest (affect substantial objects, become visible, etc.) around the PC (or another medium). If spirit guides are killed or driven away, the medium is unharmed but will suffer the same emotional crisis as the loss of a tangible friend. The medium can always hear the spirits, but if he wants to see his friends, he should take the *Visible* enhancement, and if he wants them to be able to move things, he should take the *Tangible* enhancement. (If a PC wants to see her friends whether they want to be seen or not, Astral Sight allows this, see p. P11). The recommended powers for spirit guides are precognition, possession (Telecontrol) and empathy. PCs must take this advantage with the *Indomitable* limitation; otherwise the medium is actually a necromancer, forcing ghosts to do his or her bidding (which can make you very unpopular in the spirit world).

Tangible +10%/+20%/+30%

Same as *Visible*, below. The projections are tangible to whom they want to be, when they want to be. Ghosts can pick things up and imaginary friends can punch people. Self-aware, in-control PCs must take *Always Tangible* limitation below, or have their projections pay the cost for insubstantiality.

Telepathic Communication +30%/+40%

The PC can communicate telepathically with his projections, giving directions and receiving messages at the speed of normal speech. This is not considered a telepathic Skill, and no roll is required; however, range is affected by the super's Power level (see the *Telepathy Range Table* below).

For +40%, a character can have complete telepathic rapport with his projections (see *Full Communication*, p. P36). The creator knows everything that a projection is thinking, seeing or hearing. All communication is 10 times faster than normal speech. This enhancement can only be used with one projection at a time.

Telepathy Range Table

Power	Distance	Power	Distance
1	Touch only, and required time is multiplied by 10		
2	Touch only	12	400 yards
3	1 yard	13	½ mile
4	2 yards	14	1 mile
5	4 yards	15	2 miles
6	8 yards	16	4 miles
7	15 yards	17	8 miles
8	30 yards	18	15 miles
9	60 yards	19	30 miles
10	100 yards	20	60 miles
11	200 yards	21	125 miles

Further increases in Power continue to double range. These ranges are for contact with a single target.

Visible +10%/+20%/+30%

This enhancement is best taken with the *Natural Medium* enhancement or the *Ignorant* limitation. For -10%, a character can see his "friends" — if they want to be seen. Ghosts and imaginary friends appearing to the PC's close personal friends (or old enemies) is worth +20%. Finally, if the "friends" can reveal themselves to everyone, and commonly do, this is +30%. Characters aware and in control of their power must take the *Always Visible* limitation, or have their projection pay the cost for invisibility.

Special Limitations

Indomitable -20%/-40%

The projections come when called, but do not necessar-

ily follow orders. If able, they will defend their projector from imminent harm, but other than that they act in whatever way the GM decides. This reduces the cost by 20%.

For -40%, the creator cannot control *when* his projections will show up. Again, the creations will show up to save a PC's life, but might not show up to search a building, etc. The projections definitely *will* show up when not called (maybe a projection doesn't like the projector's new girlfriend and pops in during dinner to wreck the date — or likes her so much he decides to ask her out himself!) This is not the same as *Ignorance*, below — the super knows he or she has the power, but the projections control when it is used. *Note: this limitation cannot be used if the projections have the Sense of Duty (to projector) disadvantage, which many will have.*

Ignorance

-30%

The character is unaware of having any special power. He really believes that he has special "friends" who show up to help him sometimes. People who talk to walls or insist their toy tigers are alive receive a -4 reaction when anyone discovers this, but keeping imaginary friends a secret can be just as much trouble, if not more so. With this limitation, stressful situations will prompt an appearance, but the super has no control over the projections, and the projections believe they are independent of the creator. In any stressful situation (like combat), roll a Will roll for each of the projections. On a success, the projection appears and renders aid. Remember, however, that the projection decides what kind and how much aid is needed. This limitation is incompatible with the *Natural Medium* enhancement, since spirit guides will usually tell a medium that he or she is "special."

Always Visible

-20%

Projections are always visible and cannot turn invisible.

Always Tangible

-20%

Projections are always tangible and cannot turn insubstantial.

Facade (New Telepathy Power ★2)

You have the psionic power to create mental constructs within your own mind — artificial thoughts and memories or even whole personality templates.

First level Eidetic Memory gives +2 to this skill; +4 if you have true photographic memory. Use of this power gives a bonus of +4 to Acting or Performance skills, allowing you to relive experiences and emotions you've never actually had. This is unlike the advanced mental technique "Temporary Mindwipe" (*Psionics*, p. 41) in that it is only usable within the user's own mind, and he does not lose track of his true identity, any more than an

Security Blanket

-50%

The PC's "friends" are tied to physical objects, which can be stolen or destroyed. Stuffed animals and mannequins who come to life and Volkswagens that drive themselves are some of the classics.

Only While Asleep

-50%

The character must be sleeping, unconscious or in trance before he or she can generate ectoplasmic projections. "Elves" do the dishes, etc. Combined with the *Indomitable* and *Ignorant* limitations, this may be especially problematic — a character's alter ego may be living a completely different life while he's asleep on the sofa.

Omnipresent

-10% to -60%

This limitation should be taken with *Always Visible* or *Always Tangible*. "Friends" are constantly flocking around the character, perching on his shoulder and so forth. Reaction modifiers range from -1 to -6, depending on the appearance and actions of the projections. With this limitation, the projections disappear when the super is unconscious and he pays the fatigue cost each time he awakens. During combat, projections last the specified time, depending on the power level.

Guardian Angel

Special

The character's "friends" will not be around forever. "Guardian angels" typically stay until they accomplish an exceptionally good deed, after which point they get to go to Heaven. When this happens, the PC can buy off a limitation or buy an advantage with the points from the guardian angel.

Malevolent

-60%

The projections are poltergeists or minor demons, general nuisances to the creator as well as anybody around him. They show up at odd, often embarrassing times. They will reluctantly protect the creator from imminent danger, but in so doing will cause as much damage as possible to nearby people and objects.

actor or actress believes he or she is a character — but others may be fooled into believing so.

The main use of Facade is psionic espionage. A high-level Mind Shield can guard from someone discovering that the owner is psionic, or even "cloak" thoughts with a likely set of thoughts appropriate to a non-psionic, (p. P22.) and advanced use of Mindwipe can convince the psi he or she is someone else. However, by use of Facade, you can set up psionic "window dressing" at the front of your mind *designed* to fool the invading telepath after a contest of skills, Facade vs. Telereceive, in same manner as a Mind Shield.

Example: Dmitri, the psionic spy, wishes to infiltrate Psi-Tech and applies for a job as a janitor. During the interview, the psi interviewer tries to invade his mind. Dmitri has set up a Facade as defense and they roll a Contest of Skills. She fails, but thinks she succeeds as she finds a way into his mind's front room where Dmitri has prepared an elaborate set containing thoughts, loves, childhood traumas and other mental bric-a-brac appropriate to "Phil," the non-psionic janitorial applicant. Thrilled with her success, the interviewer approves "Phil's" job application, and Dmitri can now infiltrate Psi-Tech.

With Facade, crazed psychic vampires can masquerade as Little Mary Sunshine, and otherwise weak telepaths can fool invaders into believing they are much more powerful than they truly are. Unlike Temporary Mindwipe, psis can use a Facade to lie to others without lying to themselves. It's also a perfect way to leak false information: "Of course this is the access code — I read it from her mind myself!"

Effects of Skill

The user's skill with Facade governs what the construct may contain:

8 or less: Mere surface thoughts appropriate to a non-psi, or perhaps misleading thoughts appropriate to the user to hide what he or she is *really* thinking.

9 to 11: Thoughts and one or two emotions.

12 to 14: Surface thoughts, emotions, and a significant memory.

15 to 17: A number of significant memories and a good number of quirks and mannerisms.

18 to 20: A strong false personality with an almost complete — or just very faulty — set of memories.

Over 20: A complete artificial personality construct, complete with loves, hates, etc. Alternately, the psi may create a heavily edited "authorized biography" persona of him or herself, designed to be read by invading psionics.

Constructing a Facade is a time-consuming procedure, requiring hours, or days or months at the highest levels, to

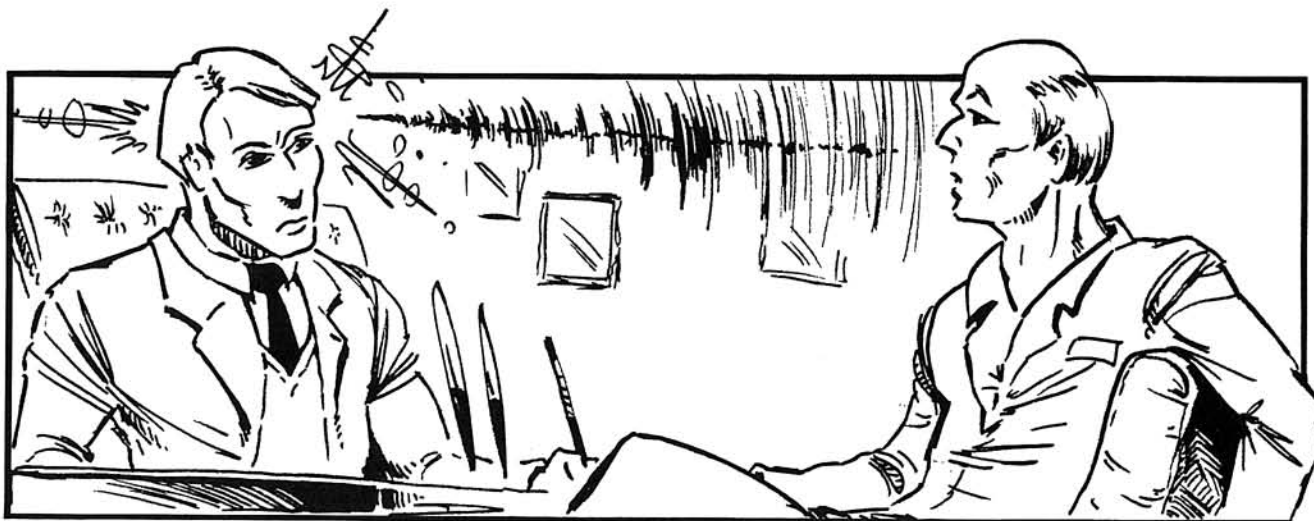
construct the false memories and personality templates. However, once constructed a Facade is a permanent addition to the mind, like an actor or actress remembering a beloved character or role.

As a rule of thumb, it takes 10 minutes to construct a memory of an hour in length, an hour to construct one day's memory, and a day to construct two weeks of memory. Personalities and memories constructed must bear some relationship to the psionic's own memories and abilities. For example, a psi with the quirk "Ladies man," could construct a persona with a believable lecherousness disadvantage. Alternately, a psi telepath could base their facades on friends and close acquaintances, in much the same way that an author can draw a character with knowledge and beliefs far different from his or her own.

Advanced Mental Technique

If a psi possesses both Telereceive *and* Facade, he or she may combine the two, the ability operating at the lower skill level. The psi may then read *and* record a subject's memories and quirks into his or her own mind. On a critical success, the psi may "Xerox" the victim's entire mind into his or her own — a complete set of memories and personality template, allowing the psi to hold the copy prisoner, interrogate it, make use of its skills, or flawlessly impersonate the original. On a critical failure, the psi copies the victim's memories and personality template *overwriting* his or her own psyche. A psi with Mindwipe at skill level 20 or higher can carefully reconstruct the original personality and memories, but the mind's new resident, having full knowledge of his or her predicament — and access to the memories of the brain's original occupant — will be less than willing to undergo such a procedure! Lesser failures may afflict the user with a minor quirk or habit of the victim.

Attackers with the Mindwipe skill who discover a character with the Facade power may use their attack to strengthen a facade and weaken the original personality such that a successful attack can convince the victim that he or she is actually the false personality.



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