TIME TRAVELER'S CODEX

A HEROIC SUPPLEMENT FOR MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

20TH ANNIVERSARY
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HEROISM KNOWS NO CENTURY!

Vikings plunder jewelry stores along the waterfront! Killer robots from the future hunt Abraham Lincoln! And the heroes are on trial for crimes they haven't committed... yet!

Time is a toybox for superheroes and villains, filled with colorful characters and convoluted plotlines. Time travel opens up new potential just as much as blasting off into space, with the convenience of all the major players and events already being written for you! With time as a canvas, you can pump up the grim or gonzo in your adventures, or build a whole campaign around protecting not just the world, but everything that has happened or ever will happen!

The *Time Traveler's Codex* is a supplement for *Mutants & Masterminds, Third Edition* that launches heroes into the fourth dimension. *The Time Traveler's Codex* includes:

- A brief history of time travel, and an overview on the structure of time and how it functions in the Earth-Prime setting.
- Tips for deciding how time travel works in your campaign, complete with the consequences and hazards of meddling.
- Advice on creating your own time-hopping series, including optional rules, suggested power levels, and temporal dangers that lie along the way.
- Six causality-shaking villain archetypes who can harry heroes across the centuries, like the Immortal Conqueror and the Future Perfectionist, backed up by dozens of minions from across time and beyond!
- Guidance for players building time traveling heroes, complete with new advantages, powers, and equipment as well as a half-dozen time-sliding hero archetypes, like the Quantum Alien and the Temporal Tourist!
- Over a dozen different historical eras detailed, with rules guidance and statblocks for each, as well as adventure ideas and advice for setting individual adventures in that time period, or an entire campaign!

Catapult your adventures out of the city streets and into medieval French castles, Aztec battlefronts, and the imperial Ming court with the *Time Traveler's Codex*!

TAKE YOUR SUPERHEROIC ADVENTURES INTO THE 4TH DIMENSION!

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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

- THIRD EDITION -

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TIME TRAVELER'S CODEX

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INTRODUCTION

Comic book heroes are rarely limited by the constraints of time and space. Villains from the future travel back to the modern era to challenge heroes born in some distant past, and teams take side-trips to battle cowboys or pirates as part of bizarre plots to change the future. Time travel has been a cliché of comic books almost as long as superheroes have. But introducing time travel also opens a Pandora's box of new storytelling tropes and problem-solving tools that can seem overwhelming.

The *Time Traveler's Codex* is a sourcebook for Mutants & Masterminds that brings all the excitement of time-hopping campaigns and villains to your game. These pages present everything you need to know for running games where time travel plays a role, including character archetypes, new rules, and suggestions for establishing the quantum physical rules for your campaign. With this guide, your heroes might visit famous historical figures, witness great moments in history, and punch history's greatest villains, all to save not just the city, but all of history as we know it!

Time traveling heroes can spend multiple lifetimes protecting causality from self-serving chrononauts and time-hopping villains, but even ordinary superheroes may run up against time travel in their otherwise modern lives. Just because the heroes don't travel through time doesn't mean villains don't, and scientific mishaps can dump Roman legionnaires or the death-dealing machines of a robot-ruled future into their own backyard.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The *Time Traveler's Codex* contains basic and complex looks at time travel in superhero worlds, but it also provides plenty of material for any campaign. It includes lists of new equipment and enemies from all across Earth's history (and the future), as well as overviews of some of the most iconic time periods in the history of superhero comics, making it an invaluable reference for running your own campaigns set in the Golden Age of the 1940s, the Silver Age of the 1960s, or the Iron Age of the 1990s.

This book provides a variety of rules options that you can use or ignore to make the most exciting time travel stories for your table, as well as plenty of advice for designing the rules for time travel in your campaign. You aren't limited to a single model of how to journey into the past in Mutants & Masterminds, or even within a single campaign!

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The *Time Traveler's Codex* begins with the broadest strokes, describing how time works and how time travel factors in to comic book history before delving into increasingly specific topics like player-facing rules, Gamemaster suggestions, and niche details on a dozen different eras.

Chapter 1: Into the Time-Stream! looks at what purpose time travel might serve in a story and the common storytelling tropes associated with it that you can incorporate or avoid to create your own unique experience. It also looks at how time itself works (at least in fiction) to explain how time travel, alternate timelines, and similar concepts work. Finally, it introduces some basic rules to use in your campaign and advice to handle the uglier points of human history.

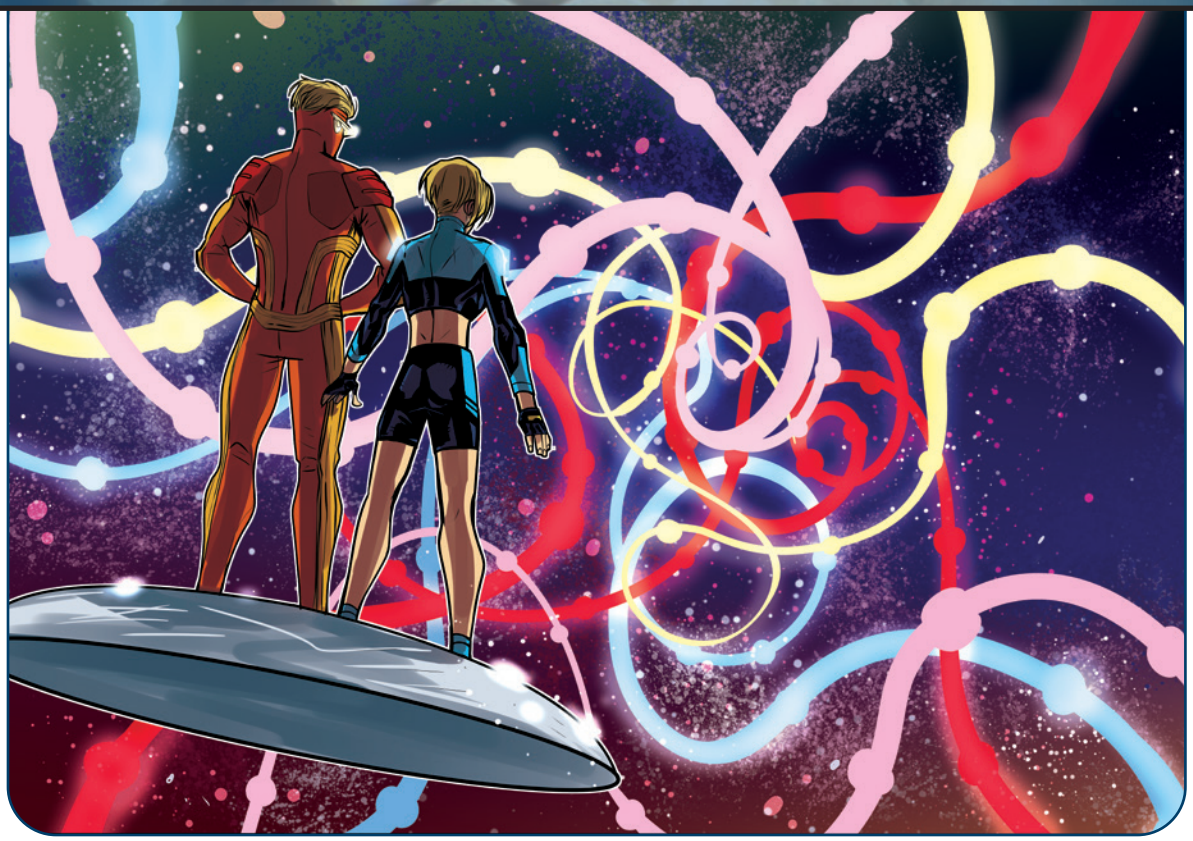
Chapter 2: Time Traveling Heroes looks at time travel from the player side and provides advice on how to build a hero for a time-travel campaign or a temporally-stationary hero who happens to hail from the past or future. It includes advice on how technology-dependent skills might adapt to new eras and new Advantages and gadgets to help travelers get by no matter when they end up. This chapter wraps up with a half-dozen ready-to-play hero archetypes you can use as player characters or supporting cast for your own adventures.

Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Time provides plenty of detailed advice to the Gamemaster when it comes to running campaigns that hop through history and how hero actions might affect the present. It provides numerous options for your campaign's timeline, including multiple methods of time travel so you can decide which one works best for the adventures you want to run. The chapter also includes plenty of temporal hazards and minion archetypes to threaten your heroes in the line of duty, as well as a summary of the major players in the past and future of Earth-Prime. It also provides six common villain archetypes whose powers or origins lie in the distant past or far future and often terrorize chrononauts.

Chapter 4: The Heroic Eras looks at the three most iconic 20th-century time periods for superheroes: The Golden Age stretching from the 1930s to the early '50s, the Silver Age of the late 1950s through the '70s, and the Iron Age of the '80s and '90s. Each section looks at the major cultural, historical, and political events of the time to give context to the heroes and comics of the day before providing game guidance like rules adjustments, new Advantages, and classic equipment. This chapter also looks at three major cities from the past: Golden Age Emerald City, Silver Age Freedom City, and Iron Age New York, as well as the heroes who called those cities home.

Chapter 5: Eras of Adventure looks at some of the most iconic targets for time traveling superhero stories, from dinosaur-rules primordial Earth to the age of high-seas piracy to the dystopian future. Each era provides an overview of the history and suggestions for incorporating superheroes, as well as offering a selection of iconic equipment and statblocks for visiting time travelers to encounter. Each also provides suggestions for Gamemasters looking to build their own historical superhero games set in these evocative time periods of the past!

CHAPTER 1: INTO THE TIME STREAM!



What if we could change the past? What if we could visit and know the future? These are questions humanity has asked itself for as long as we have had a concept of time, and numerous stories have explored these questions and their implications. Time travel was one of the first themes explored in the genre of fiction that would become recognized as "science fiction" in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*.

It didn't take superhero comic books long to latch onto the concept and begin telling stories about characters traveling through time, or even building entire series around the idea. At first, time travel, like space travel, primarily served to expand the range of settings for characters and stories. Heroes could visit the past and interact with mythic and historical figures, or travel into the future to see the "world of tomorrow," such as in 1958, when Superboy became friends with three super-powered teens from the 30th century in the fateful *Adventure Comics* #247, the debut of the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Eventually, time travel stories focused on the question of changing the past, causing the present (and therefore the time traveler's future) to follow a different course. Heroic time travelers needed to be careful not to cause inadvertent changes, and often dealt with unscrupulous foes looking to deliberately change things for their own ends. In some cases, it was possible to repair changes in history, undoing them and allowing things to return to their proper course. In other stories, time is too delicate a fabric to be rewoven, or so complex that any changes create whole other realities.

The alternate timelines approach became so popular, in fact, that it formed a major trope of superhero comics: the concept of a multiverse, where many (if not all) possible timelines coexist and can even visit each other. Although major comic book superhero universes have periodically attempted to rid themselves of the notion of parallel worlds and alternate timelines—with varying degrees of success—the idea is persistent enough to crop up again and again.

This chapter looks at these and other notions about time travel and how to use them in a Mutants & Masterminds game—from time travel as a one-shot plot device to a whole series based around traveling back and forth through the past, future, and alternate timelines.

TIME TRAVEL IN YOUR GAME

Using time travel as an element of your *Mutants & Masterminds* adventures requires consideration of several things about the concept:

- How accessible is the means of time travel?
- Is this a one-time jaunt or an extended journey?
- To what degree can travelers interfere with history?

GETTING THERE (OR THEN)

First off, what are the means of time travel and to what degree do the player characters control them? The *Time Travel Codex* discusses this in more detail later in this chapter and in **Chapter 3**, but if you're going to include time travel at all, the first thing to consider is whether or not your heroes get to drive.

Often in comic-book stories, the means of time travel is either an accident or something controlled by an outside force—a plot-device controlled by the Gamemaster. This is most effective for a quick "there and back" adventure that sends the characters to a particular location in space-time and offers them a return trip home if they tackle whatever issue(s) initially sent them chronologically wandering.

Other scenarios grant the heroes the power to travel through time (mostly) under their own direction. This suits the series approach to time travel, giving the players some control in the story's direction and even letting them use time travel as a tool to unravel mysteries or defeat foes, although the GM may still place limits on how the ability functions. A means of time travel that allows the players total freedom to choose when they use it and when and where they go requires a great deal more improvisation from the Gamemaster, given the range of possibilities.

A VISIT OR A TOUR?

Are the characters just going on a brief jaunt to another time? Or will their travels consist of multiple "jumps" and various destinations? Typically, the first is most associated with a one-shot adventure while the latter is more the approach to an ongoing series, but that is not always the case.

The short visit is suitable for a story that takes place in another specific time period, such as having the heroes time-jump back to the Second World War, perhaps to meet and work with their heroic predecessors in the "golden age" of their timeline, or ending up in Ancient Rome, the Wild West, or any of the various other eras detailed in **Chapter 5**.

The definition of "short" is up to you; characters might spend months or even years of their personal timelines in another era before the end of the storyline. A single time-jump could be the start and end to an entire campaign, such as when Doctor Tomorrow traveled back to WWII to prevent an Axis victory, spending the entire war adventuring with the Liberty League before finally returning to the future. Time travel can even allow heroes to return to the present with accumulated memories, but without any physical time having passed, or even return before they left to undo the trip in the first place (see Paradoxes under **Time Travel Tropes** for more on this possibility)!

Alternately, the story might involve multiple time-jumps and a tour through various eras, either with the heroes at the helm or at the mercy of whatever means of time travel they employ. For example, heroes could pursue a time-traveling thief who steals history's greatest treasures, but only have the ability to follow in the thief's chronal "wake"—and possibly to make it back to their own time—but otherwise they can only follow in their GM-controlled quarry's passage through the past and future. Likewise, heroes could be sent on a quest to recover various things scattered across space-time—all while avoiding dangerous alterations to history as they know it—with the ability to move only between those specific eras.

Time travel with multiple destinations can be an element of a single adventure, or of an entire time travel series. For the latter, travelers commonly have some type of "home base" they return to between time-jumps, such as a fixed headquarters or even a time-traveling vehicle large enough to fill this role. Such a place is often located in the time-stream itself, "outside" of ordinary time (see **A Brief History of Time**).

TIME TRAVEL TERMINOLOGY

Comic books play fast and loose with time travel technobabble, but this book tries to use some terms consistently to avoid confusion.

Causality: The basic sequence of cause-and-effect that leads form one event to another. For example: You trip, which causes you to fall, which causes you to skin your knee, which causes you to be in a bad mood the rest of the day, which causes you to fight with your boss, which causes them to fire you. Changing causality—changing the outcome of an event—can change what it effects.

Chrononaut: Another word for a time traveler.

Era: A vague period in time defined by sweeping themes, such as "the Renaissance," or "the Golden Age of comics," or "the lifetime of Lucy Hobbs Taylor, DDS."

Home Era: The period of time where a time traveler naturally exists, and from which they first began traveling through time.

Time-stream: The strange, otherworldly medium that all timelines flow through. Exposure to the time-stream may have unusual effects on creatures, like making them more resistant to changes in time or causing strange mutations.

Time Travel: Moving from one point in time to another without crossing the moment in-between.

Time Traveler: Someone who has traveled through time at least once.

Timeline: A single chain of events leading from the Big Bang to the end of the universe.

CHANGING HISTORY

Consider: Can history be changed due to the time travel in the story and, if so, can any changes be "fixed" or otherwise changed back by other time travelers? One of the most common time travel adventures involves someone either attempting to change history or (from the present-day perspective of the heroes) has already done so. The heroes then need to time-jump to the affected era in order to change things back, or prevent the changes from happening in the first place.

Of course, every point in time is "history" to some future point, so it is equally possible for time travelers from the future to show up in the heroes' present, looking to change their history and rewrite the future they call home. This can be particularly problematic for the heroes if they do not know what future the intervention will cause or prevent. Do they trust people claiming to be from the future who are willing to change history? Is it moral to up-end the lives of billions of people who haven't been born yet without their consent? What if future time travelers reveal they intend to kill a child who is destined to grow up to become history's greatest villain?

While it might seem like the answer to "can history be changed?" must be "yes" for a time travel scenario to work, that's not necessarily the case. Resistant and mutable timelines (see **Chapter 3**) offer some "give" so that it isn't easy to change the past. This can make for a greater challenge for characters hoping to change the timeline, or offer a margin of safety for those looking to avoid altering the present. Alternate timelines (see **Time Travel Tropes**, following) even allow both outcomes to occur! The timeline both changes and does not change, in that intervention simply creates a new alternate branch of time.

A timeline that cannot be changed presents dilemmas and challenges for the heroes, placing some things outside their influence, or exacting a high price for changing them. Even a completely immutable timeline is still not without story potential, allowing heroes to visit past eras as passive observers to gather information, and possibly play out unknown past events. See the **Immutable Time** section of **Chapter 3** for more about this idea.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME

How does time travel work? Obviously, we can only talk about it theoretically, and there are many fictional models for how time travel might work, but the following is a fairly broad and inclusive one that is the default assumption for the nature of time and time travel in this book and in the Earth-Prime setting for *Mutants & Masterminds*.

THE OMNIVERSE

The temporal dimensions—all of the past, present, and future of Earth, alternate timelines, and alternate dimensions—are contained in the "omniverse," the structure containing all possible universes. Just as physical reality has three measurable dimensions—height, width, and depth—the greater omniverse adds three additional dimensions: the past, the present, and the future.

Imagine all three dimensions of space compressed down and represented by a single point or dot. Extend that dot into a line and you have what is commonly known as a "timeline," stretching from the present back into the past and forward into the future. The timeline connects these dots, moving from the past to the future. Every point on this line is "the present" for the universe at that moment. Everything stretching away from that timeline—sideways through the omniverse—are varying states of quantum potential; all the "maybes" of the past, present, and future, the infinite sea of possibilities.

Now imagine that timeline, not as an unbroken line, but as a series of overlapping points, a near infinite number of "present" moments, all connected to each other, like pearls on a strand. Each pearl or bead is the entire universe at that particular moment, the strand is the quantum connection or causality—literally the cause and effect of creation—linking those different moments into a line or chain. Although there's a natural tendency to think of a timeline as straight, it actually bends, winds, and twists like a river, flowing through different possibilities in the omniverse to connect all its various points.

What's more, there isn't just one timeline, but a potentially infinite number of them, like threads in a vast tangle or tapestry. Each thread winds its way through the omniverse, sometimes coming close to—but not quite crossing—another. New lines may branch off from a previous thread and strike out in its own direction. Follow the various timelines backwards into the past and they become fewer and fewer, possibilities collapsing down into a common shared history towards the singularity of the origin of the omniverse. Follow the timelines far enough into the future, and they likewise begin to thin out, consolidate, and collapse towards the inevitable end of the universe, of every universe. What lies beyond that Final Point remains as much a mystery as what lies before that First Point.

THE TIME-STREAM

Now that you have the whole vast tapestry of timelines, winding through the near infinitude of the omniverse, put them into motion. While the past, present, and future coexist "simultaneously" from the perspective outside an individual timeline, those threads are not fixed. Just like you can take a connecting link out of the chain or a bead off a strand and replace it with another one, so too can you take a point—a moment or collection of moments—out of a timeline, replacing it with another. Doing so changes time, just like a landslide might change the flow of a river. From the perspective of those "upriver" from the change, the future has shifted. From the perspective of those "downriver" from the change, the past has shifted. However, from the limited perspective "inside" a timeline, the so-called change seems like it has always been that way—a fish traveling that diverted river would only know it is swimming along the course of the river. The alterations are as much a part of the timeline as anything, so no one is aware that they have been changed along with it unless they watched the process from outside the river—outside time.

These changing quantum connections—the "thread" that strings together all those pearls of the present—is how

timelines can shift, and why time travel allows changes in one part of a timeline to affect the rest of it. Timelines shift and change continuously.

But there is a form of "time" outside time—all the space between those threads, the neck that wears those pearls—known as "the time-stream." Just like planets orbit in the vacuum of space, timelines snake through the time-stream, held in predictable patterns by monstrously complex laws of quantum physics.

The time-stream makes time travel possible. So long as you have a means of moving "outside" of your current timeline into the time-stream, and a means of propulsion within the quasi-matter that makes up this strange fourth dimension, you can travel to another point on the timeline and re-enter it, shifting your place in space-time. If you can navigate further away from your timeline, you can even reach other, "nearby" timelines entering them and shifting, not just forward or backward along your own timeline, but "sideways" into a parallel or alternate timeline.

The time-stream exists as a place outside time, inhabited by strange, alien beings as far removed from human beings as we are from potential two-dimensional life. Entities outside a timeline have no effective "past" or "future" beyond their recollections. Changes to their home timeline won't and can't affect them while they remain outside of it, and some powerful travelers even set up hidden safehouses outside time to protect themselves from major temporal upheavals. Such a strategy is dangerous, however, as time will catch up with them once they return to their timeline, essentially making these castaways into temporal refugees.

CHRONAL ENERGY

For all the loops and twists time takes, it never doubles back on itself. Every timeline flows from start to finish, First Point to Final Point. If a timeline is a river and the time-stream is the world that river occupies, then chronal energy is the force of gravity constantly tugging the water of that river down to the sea. It pushes all the omniverse from the beginning of time to the very end. The river never flows uphill, and while outside forces can transport the water and the fish back up the hill, doing so pushes against this constant force.

Most things inside a timeline share the same pressure of chronal energy, pushing them all downstream at the same rate. If an outside force drains the chronal energy from someone, they move more slowly (or from their perspective, they move normally while the rest of the world rushes past faster than normal). Supervillains who can "stop" time (such as Downtime of Earth-Prime's Freedom City) actually pump themselves full of excess chronal energy, causing their personal time to run faster than the rest of the world.

Chronal energy exists both inside and outside of timelines. Corralled within a timeline, it flows at a steady rate, but drifting free in the time-stream, chronal energy forms strange tides and currents that may run faster or slower than nearby areas, or small eddies where time all but stops entirely. The rapid changes in chronal density can cause strange mutations, aging-related effects, or simply rip physical beings apart as their individual atoms crumble from the pressure of entropy. Consequently, wary time travelers should always bring their own supply of chronal energy with them when they journey the time-stream, just like sailors in a submarine must bring their own supply of air. This is also why many means of time travel simply bore a "tunnel" through the time-stream that their time machine travels through: the tunnel itself is

flooded with the chronal energy from the traveler's point of origin, leaving them safely protected from unexpected chronal pressures. Thrillseekers can even leave the safety of their vessel in these tunnels, insulated as they are from the chaos beyond. But if the tunnel collapses, or a careless soul collides with the wall, they may crash back into a random point of their original timeline or even be cast into the time-stream, trapped forever in an infinite moment.

You may also want to decide if chronal energy is related to tachyons (mentioned in the **Time Powers** section of *Power Profiles*), a theoretical subatomic particle that travels faster than light and violates our current understanding of causality. Chronal energy might represent the movement of tachyons, or tachyons may be the only thing in the omniverse immune to the force of chronal energy (thus making them a key element in how time travel works).

TIME TRAVEL TROPES

The following are some common elements of superhero time travel stories. At the least, they are things to consider using—or deliberately avoiding—because they may be expected to one degree or another. If you're looking to create time travel adventures that feel more like comics, take these tropes into account, either finding ways to use them or to give them an unexpected twist.

THE ACCIDENTAL TRAVELER

For some reason, time travel happens by accident a lot, resulting in time travelers who are not particularly prepared or well-suited for the experience. It's almost never a trained historian or quantum physicist who travels through time, but a bystander, con-artist, criminal, or underage family member. This often includes superheroes, who happen to stumble into the time-stream because of super-science devices, magic spells, cosmic conjunctions, accidents involving their powers, or weird explosions. It is even the case with deliberate time travel technology: An experimental time machine may be stolen, hijacked, activated by accident, or used in desperation, resulting in time travelers who don't really know what they're doing or even how to steer their chronological conveyance.

Accidental time travelers have a tendency to mess up the timeline, simply because they don't know what they're doing. Most stories involving them focus on the travelers finding a way to get back to their own time while either avoiding changing the timeline or restoring the timeline they screwed up before they return home. Sometimes accidental travelers manage to get back only to discover they have accidentally changed their present, and now must go back again and fix it.

Accidental travel also applies to characters ending up in parallel timelines, although in those cases there is typically less onus on them avoiding changing things. Though they may sometimes wish to refrain from revealing the reality of time travel to the inhabitants of any parallel timelines to prevent them from traveling to (or invading) other universes.

ALTERNATE TIMELINES

The structure of time contains both branching and alternate or parallel timelines, as well as the potential for travelers' actions to place them in—or even create—whole new universes.

A branching timeline is one that splits into two or more separate timelines due to a major event or "nexus point" that can turn out two or more ways to produce two or more very different futures. Theoretically, only one timeline exists at the very beginning of the universe, and it rapidly splits into multiple timelines, over and over again, as time moves forward and the field of possibilities expands wider and wider.

Alternate timelines might exist naturally—with every major event spinning off two different timelines with different results, or even minor events creating a near-infinite number of parallel timelines with only the most subtle of differences—or may only result when the actions of time-travelers change the results of the otherwise predetermined course of history. Some alternate timelines are similar to their previous configuration, except for small differences (like the life events of a single person) while others are radically different (like an Earth where the dinosaurs never died out). In some cases, an alternate timeline may also be distinguished from a timeline's "proper" configuration (see **Proper History**, following).

A parallel timeline is a branching timeline that runs very closely to another, such that the differences between them are relatively small—again, an Earth where historical events took a slightly different course, as opposed to a universe which might lack an Earth or human life altogether. The further "sideways" one ventures out from their home timeline in the time-stream, the less overall similarity there is between timelines.

DIMENSIONAL LAYERS

Time travel tends to focus around the timeline of Earth, and other timelines with some variation of an Earth. However, the omniverse may contain a vast variety of other dimensions, some of them quite different from any variation of Earth's universe. Some of these can be considered parallel or branching timelines in their own right, just ones that diverge much earlier, such that they share even less in common with Earth's timeline. Such parallels might not even have the same physical laws as the prime timeline. This is particularly true of realities where magic holds sway over science and rationalism.

It's up to the Gamemaster whether or not particular dimensions "beyond" Earth's timeline are parallel or branching timelines of the omniverse, or different "layers" of an even greater dimensional structure beyond the concept

of time as the universe knows it. This is particularly the case for seemingly timeless mystic dimensions: heavens, hells, limbos, and the like. They might lie in a "direction" above, below, or beyond the omniverse of space-time. Can heroes (or villains) use the same time travel method they use on Earth to leap into the past of Heaven, for example, or are the physical laws of such a world too alien to allow that kind of travel?

FAMILIAR FACES

Despite the sheer vastness of the omniverse, time travelers have a tendency to intersect with the same people—or versions of the same people—in different time periods and timelines. Versions of a hero's supporting cast show up in alternate timelines, even ones where they are cartoon dinosaurs rather than people. Time travelers run into their own ancestors or descendants, or those of people they know, who tend to bear a remarkable resemblance and inexplicably carry the same grudges. There may be some kind of unseen quantum connection between people causing this "attraction" across space and time, but most often it's just an odd coincidence.

This trope is one way of including supporting cast and Relationship complications in a time travel series. It might not always be the same Relationship, but so long as the character keeps running into familiar faces with a sense of connection, it's possible for the complication to come into play.

PARADOXES

Time travel leads to all kinds of potential logical paradoxes, situations that seem impossible from the perspective of linear time and our notion of cause-and-effect. Sometimes paradoxes resolve themselves, although in ways that raise other questions about the nature of free will (such as the predestination paradox) while other paradoxes cannot logically be solved, but some time travel stories simply jump right over them in different ways.

You should consider how to resolve paradoxes when they come up. Does a paradox spin off a separate timeline? Does the omniverse create powerful time entities that attack and undo the paradox like a quantum immune system? Does an order of temporal law enforcement or a secret society of time wizards monitor the time-stream and resolve paradoxes? Does the time-stream itself rip the paradox from time and contain it (and any time travelers stuck in that moment) like a cyst?

BILOCATION PARADOX

In time travel stories, there is often a prohibition of some sort involving the bilocation paradox: Someone or something existing in two different places simultaneously. Most often, this says that a time traveler cannot meet or interact with themselves. In some cases, this paradox goes so far that a time traveler cannot even visit a time period in which they already exist, or that they can only do so as an immaterial ghost, unable to interact and only observe.

There may also be an element of danger to bilocation: A situation where the different "quantum charges" (or other technobabble or mystical rules) of two versions of the same person or object can cause catastrophe if they come into contact. In other stories, there is no bilocation paradox, and time travelers can interact with themselves at different points along their own timeline, subject only to the various other paradoxes that can create.

CAUSALITY LOOP PARADOX

In a causality loop paradox, the results of an effect or action become its own cause, resulting in a closed loop. A classic example is a scientist discovers an old notebook with formulae and sketches leading to a breakthrough in the development of a time machine. That scientist later loses the notebook on a trip into the past, where it ends up in the place where they will discover it in the future, inventing time travel and creating the circumstances where the notebook will be lost, and then found, again and again. In this loop, no event created the notebook and nothing ever destroys it, so where did the notebook come from in the first place?

EXAMPLE: PERSONAL VS. UNIVERSAL TIMELINES

This book uses the word timeline to describe both the direction of an entire universe and of individuals. The universal timeline includes everyone and everything that ever existed along that course of events, while a personal timeline follows one individual from birth to death. Usually the two run seamlessly together, but once time travel enters the equation, things get complicated.

Imagine if the heroine Backstep travels back 30 years to meet her own mother while her mother is still a teenager. Backstep has already met her mother—in her own personal timeline, this isn't their first meeting. But her mother has never met her. From her mother's perspective and the perspective of the universal timeline, this is their first meeting. If Backstep takes the teen version of her mom back to pirate times for a quick adventure, she's making a major impact on her personal timeline AND her mother's personal timeline, but probably only a minor impact on the universal timeline (especially if they only fight other time travelers).

In general, whenever this book talks about "the timeline," it refers to the universal timeline. When it talks about personal timelines, it says so, or talks about a character's timeline using their name. It may be important to differentiate between the two to keep track of how much time-traveling NPCs know about the heroes and each other, but you can handwave the difference if it becomes too big a headache, especially after the "first" meeting between the heroes and the NPC.

FERMI PARADOX

The original Fermi paradox concerned the existence of alien life in the universe, stating that if intelligent life exists beyond Earth, it should be common enough among the trillions of stars that we'd have heard *something* from extraterrestrials by now.

The temporal version of it asks, "If time travel is possible, then where are all the time travelers?" Wouldn't every important moment in history be crowded with travelers trying to alter it, protect it, or just visit? Perhaps they are, and we just don't know it somehow. If temporal enforcement agencies are effective, they may be preventing such interventions from changing history, at least enough so their traces are nothing more than odd coincidences and conspiracy theories. The bilocation paradox, or some other limit of the time-stream, may keep travelers from visiting the same moment repeatedly, and fixed points in time (following) make visiting certain events for anything other than covert observation pointless.

GRANDPARENT PARADOX

If a causality loop is an event becoming its own cause, then the grandparent paradox is when an event prevents its own cause. The classic example is: You travel into the past and accidentally cause the death one of your grandparents. Now you will never be born in the future! Which means that you couldn't travel back in time to kill your grandparent. Which means they're still alive, still raise your parent, who in turn raises you, which means you do go back in time to kill your grandparent! Of course, that raises the question: Who or what then caused the death of your grandparent?

In some cases, the grandparent paradox does result in an event eliminating its cause: Kill your grandparent, and you disappear from reality, as if you never were. In other cases, the paradox changes the timeline, but the agent of change remains unaffected because it needs to have caused the change. In the classic example, this means that you kill your grandparent and continue to exist, even though you were never born and all evidence of your existence is erased from your timeline.

PREDESTINATION PARADOX

If the entire timeline already exists (in the greater sense of the omniverse) then any events on that timeline have "already" happened from a certain perspective. This can mean that any involvement in what a time traveler considers history is already a part of their personal past and therefore part of the "proper" flow of history. Presdestination paradoxes are a kind of causality loop (mentioned previously) that says a particular temporal intervention was "meant" to happen due to it already being a part of the fabric of the omniverse. Predestination paradoxes are sometimes used to justify time travel, especially if travelers find proof of a trip into the past before they depart.

An easy out for the predestination paradox is to rule that time travel insulates a character from temporal effects, including anything that "should" happen after their first trip.

PERSONAL TIMELINES

One of the elements of time travel stories is that it is possible for events to happen out of sequence from the point of view of a character's personal timeline. For example, a hero might meet a time traveler for the first time from the hero's own perspective, but the time traveler may have already met the hero in the future. The time traveler considers the hero—who is only meeting them now—an old and dear friend and treats them with trust and familiarity. Characters can run into the results and consequences of actions "they have not yet taken from their perspective, or have their "first" encounter with a foe after having already fought them multiple times, because their opponent has been traveling back in time to attack the heroes earlier and earlier. When time travel becomes a plot element, it is important to think about the past, present, and future in personal terms rather than universal experiences, because a time-traveling hero's present may be the past relative to the era they grew up in and may be the past or future to other time travelers they encounter.

Personal timelines that run out of sequence with the universal timeline greatly extends opportunities for scene edits (see Edit Scene under **Hero Points** in **Chapter 1** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*). The **Time Travel Rules Options** section discusses this in more detail.

PROPER HISTORY

A major trope of time travel stories is that history has a "proper" or "correct" course and that interfering with, or altering, this has potentially serious consequences. The main reason for the proper history trope is to provide dramatic tension in a time travel story: the protagonists must either prevent changes to history or set things right after someone else changes things. It also offers a reason for time travelers to opt out of going around fixing all the terrible and tragic events of the past: they can't if history must follow its proper course.

Exactly who or what decides what is "proper" for any given history depends on the setting. In some cases, each timeline has a particular "shape" or "course," with changes creating artificial dams and levies that change that shape. Efforts to bend the timeline out of shape creates tension, like water pressing against the dam or eroding the levies. That tension can result in "time-quakes" or other phenomena against whatever is exerting pressure on the timeline as existing forces try to compensate for the changes. The bigger the changes, the worse the tension; when the "dam" bursts, everything downstream risks being swept away as time rushes to resume its original course.

In other settings, a temporal enforcement agency decides what constitutes "proper" history for the timeline—usually their own history, or the history that leads to the agency's existence. Some time agencies protect a particular historical sequence ordained by higher powers without really knowing why it is or is not proper. This can lead to rebellious time agents, frustrated at maintaining history's atrocities for a "higher good" that is never explained.

FIXED POINTS

A common middle ground between "proper history" and a changeable timeline is the notion of "fixed points" in a timeline. Instead of the whole timeline having a proper shape or course, there are various fixed or anchor points along the timeline that are vital and cannot be changed without huge repercussions. These points exhibit a greater resistance to change, up to or including being impossible to change under normal circumstances.

In some timelines, fixed points can be thought of as temporal "fire breaks"—changes in the rest of the timeline tend to run up against a fixed point and then stop, or at least lessen and even out, preventing smaller changes in the timeline from creating complex, long-term effects. Of course, it's still possible for a change to pull part of a timeline between two fixed points so far out of shape that the tension seriously threatens the integrity of the whole. Fixed points offer a reason why temporal enforcement agencies don't have to guard every moment throughout history, and why even the most well-intentioned time travelers cannot change certain events.

SPOILERS

If travel into the future is possible, then time travelers can have foreknowledge of everything that will happen to them, their loved ones, and anything else they hold dear. The same is true of travelers from the future visiting the past. If time travelers encounter one another out of sequence in their personal timelines (mentioned previously) the traveler who is "further ahead" may have knowledge of what is going to happen to those who are subjectively

"behind" them. Sometimes this foreknowledge is the basis for trying to change the timeline in some way: Like going back to warn someone of a tragedy in their future before it happens. In other cases, travelers have to carefully avoid "spoilers" to keep from changing the timeline.

Some stories prevent travelers from learning too much about their own histories the same way they manage paradoxes, while others keep secrets by seeding future history with dark ages and media blackouts that wipe out broad swathes of knowledge. Just as present-day humans can't know all the life details of any given Roman citizen, neither can a traveler to the future simply look up every major event about themselves or their descendants. Modern historians still argue over the causes of major historical events, and so trying to learn what present-day events cause future consequences—and how—is likewise fraught, even looking back from a far-future perspective.

TEMPORAL ENFORCEMENT

Time travel stories often feature some sort of agency that enforces restrictions on time travel and stops interference with timelines, either using a cosmic force, a literal agency of "time cops," or both.

Natural temporal enforcement may be highly impersonal, such as a tendency for timelines to "resist" tampering, where circumstances seem to conspire against the would-be change agent: On their way to a historical intervention characters get into an accident, are waylaid by bandits, encounter unexpected weather, lose a vital piece of equipment, and so forth. Natural enforcement might also take the form of a type of "temporal sickness" for anyone interfering in a timeline, becoming progressively worse the more the character tries to effect change (see **Time Travel Options**, following).

Other natural enforcement agents may be more personal. This includes beings that directly intervene to stop time travelers, acting like "chronal anti-bodies" to attack infections in the timeline. There might be "time ghosts" or "chronal hunters" who appear whenever a time traveler enters a foreign time period, or only when a traveler intervenes to change things. They might be intelligent and capable of negotiating, or relentless, single-minded predators that exist to devour the cause of the change. While other chronal agents are vastly powerful cosmic beings, usually devoted to the "proper" course of history and the flow of the time-stream (see **Proper History**, previously).

Temporal enforcement agents may be literal employees of an organization devoted preventing interference in the timeline. These may be human agents from the future (or the distant past) with time travel capabilities, or possibly superhumans whose powers let them bridge the time-stream. Given a time agency's capabilities, agents are often equipped with incredibly advanced future technology, sufficient to allow them to take on super-powered opponents. A time agency might protect a single timeline (usually safeguarding their own history) or multiple timelines. They might even be responsible for the whole of the omniverse, which is a vast job, but how often they're needed depends on how common time travelers are.

Natural and organized temporal enforcement may cross over. Some time agencies are created or sustained by naturally-occurring cosmic entities, such as the cosmic Time Keepers of Earth-Prime appointing various Guardians to watch over history. The natural or cosmic forces tend to be concerned with the "big picture" while the individual agents carry out their vision to eliminate disruptions and minimize the harm corrections can cause to people's lives.

Note that temporal enforcement agencies are not necessarily good or moral. Some ruthlessly enforce their particular notion of "proper history" and are willing to overlook, or even cause, terrible suffering to preserve it. A time agency may be devoted to safeguarding an immoral civilization from attack, such as preventing their "Thousand Year Reich" from being undermined in the past. This is particularly true for civilizations that have altered their own timeline and want to prevent anyone else from doing the same. Even good time agencies must contend with the ugliness of human history and preserving it to maintain the future that eventually comes of it.

Of course, nothing says there's only one form of temporal enforcement. One agency's "protection" of a timeline can be another's "interference" and multiple temporal agencies can engage in a chronal conflict over the control of history, each trying to influence events towards their own desired outcomes while undoing or preventing the work of their rivals. Heroes may encounter time travelers claiming to have history's "best interests" at heart, only to discover the travelers' notion of "proper" history differs quite a bit from the heroes' own.

TIME TRAVEL RULES OPTIONS

The following rules options may be useful for those looking to model and include certain temporal phenomena in their *Mutants & Masterminds* games.

TEMPORAL NAVIGATION

Moving from one point to another in a timeline, much less to different timelines in the omniverse, may involve some incredibly complex, multidimensional math and navigational plotting. The GM may want to consider a version of the Check Required flaw for certain Movement (Time Travel) effects. Consider making the check DC 15 (or higher, if you want time travel to be a difficult and risky option) to make it sufficiently difficult, rather than basing it solely on the rank of the effect, since Time Travel to a specific point in time is only rank 1. This way, a character needs a +5 bonus in Expertise: Temporal Mechanics to take 10 on the check. Most vehicles with Time Travel also have an onboard computer capable of doing the necessary calculations, essentially having a +5 bonus and the

ability to take 10, either normally or through Skill Mastery. In these cases, characters only need to make a temporal navigation check when there's something wrong with the computer or damage throws the vehicle off course.

Gamemasters can also require temporal navigation skill challenges, especially during dramatic situations, where characters need to come up with enough Degrees of Success on a series of Expertise: Temporal Mechanics checks before accumulating too many Degrees of Failure to make a successful temporal jump.

The complications of time travel and temporal navigation should also affect attempts to access the Movement (Time Travel) power by way of the Inventor or Ritualist Advantages. With a single rank of Movement to reach a specific destination, inventing a time machine normally requires only a DC 12 Technology check and ten hours for design and construction. A magic time-jump ritual requires even less time. If you want time travel to be easily accessible in your campaign, these rules are fine, but if you want to maintain control over access to time travel, then either increase these skill DCs by +5 to +10 or simply disallow this use of their respective Advantages in your campaign.

TEMPORAL DRIFT

By default, a failed temporal navigation check simply means the traveler does not successfully make the time jump and remains where they started. Alternately, the GM may decide a failed check means the traveler "drifts" some distance in time off target. The GM can choose an amount of temporal drift or base it on the amount by which the check failed.

For example, temporal drift could be a percentage of the intended time traveled equal to the amount the check failed squared: so just 1% off for a failure by 1, but 25% off for a failure by 5 and a substantial 225% for a failure by 15! For a short "hop" of only a week, that's a drift of just over an hour and a half for failure by 1, nearly two days for failure by 5, and over two weeks off target for a failure by 15! Travel distances of years or centuries can result in considerably more drift. The arrival is either before (a 1–10 roll) or after (an 11–20 roll) the intended time.

TEMPORAL MISHAPS

A failed temporal navigation check or other phenomenon could result in a temporal mishap. This is a complication related to time travel introduced by the GM. You can use this in place of temporal drift, in which case the complication doesn't come with a Hero Point award (the mishap is simply the result of a failed check) or it can be in addition to temporal drift or introduced as a regular plot complication, in which case you should award players a Hero Point for it. Some possible temporal mishaps include:

- **Accident:** The mishap damages something—most likely the time vehicle if there is one—or causes some accident in a moment of the timeline the travelers must clean up to prevent drastic changes to history.
- **Disability:** The mishap causes a temporary disability such as blindness or deafness or imposes some other temporary Condition.
- **Enemy:** The mishap attracts the attention of temporal enforcers or chronozoids.
- **Identity:** The mishap can involve paradoxes like bilocation or the traveler encountering parallel versions of themselves, amnesia, or the loss of personal history.
- **Power Loss:** Exposure to chronal energy or minor changes to the timeline could interfere with travelers' powers, devices, or technology.
- **Weakness:** The mishap causes the travelers to suffer from an unusual weakness for a time.

HERO POINTS AND RETCONS

Temporal manipulations allow for an additional option when spending Hero Points: using the Edit Scene ability to "retcon" changes in history! So long as the player can come up with a time travel scenario that explains it, they can spend a Hero Point to edit the scene to make almost anything happen. For example, heroes might find themselves trapped and without their devices; a player suggests their hero will, at some point in the future, come back into the past and leave an extra set of equipment behind a false panel in that very room! The GM approves, the player spends the Hero Point, and voila! The heroes open the panel to find exactly the gear they need.

In addition to the normal limit imposed by the number of Hero Points they have to spend, the GM may wish to impose temporal consequences for using this option too frequently. Characters may start to develop time sickness (following) with the DC of the resistance check based on 20 + the number of Hero Points spent retconning that game session (or over a certain number that session).

TEMPORAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The effects of time travel, or interfering with history, can cause temporal transformations, weakening characters, erasing them from history altogether, or changing their bodies and minds in a variety of different ways. Such transformations are typically Progressive Afflictions, with a resistance check each day, although intense or immediate transformations could require a check every hour or even each round. See **Chapter 3** for more on these and other temporal hazards.

TIME SICKNESS

Excess exposure to chronal energy—especially from too much time travel in a relatively brief period or unshielded exposure to the time-stream—can damage the body's systems and leave a character ill. The Affliction is resisted by Fortitude with a DC of 10 + the intensity rank of the chronal energy. The degrees of effect are usually Impaired, Disabled, Paralyzed, and Dying. Ordinary medical treatment has little effect on time sickness: It can provide a bonus to the Fortitude check but cannot cure the condition. Time sickness can instead produce bizarre evolutionary changes, resulting in the Transformed result rather than Paralyzed.

CAUSALITY CHANGES

Change to a timeline's past can transform characters, from altering their personal histories to turning them into entirely alternate versions of themselves. This transformation is typically a Progressive Affliction 1, +1 for every successfully resisted check, resisted by Willpower. Characters suffer the Impaired and Disabled conditions initially, due to disorientation, then finally Transformed into the new version of themselves. The time increment is once per round for most characters, or once per hour for a creature that has traveled through time recently. The transformations inflicted by causality changes generally affect a character's mind and personality, but may also result in things like scars or medical conditions, or the presence or absence of superpowers.

ERASURES

The most extreme of temporal transformation erases the victim from existence! This is usually resisted by Willpower. The degrees are Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated, and Dying, except rather than dying they simply vanish altogether. Some instances of erasure have no effect on the victim other than stunning them for a round when the condition's degree worsens, at least until they disappear entirely. An erasure can only be "cured" by undoing the circumstance that caused it, although some time-stabilizing technology can halt its progress temporarily.

CHRONAL ENERGY HAZARD RANKS

Time travelers may risk exposure to chronal energy from a variety of sources. Exposure to chronal energy generally results in time sickness but may instead result in damage or teleporting a character to a random place or time instead. Resisting the effects of chronal energy uses a Fortitude check with a DC of 10 + the intensity rank of the chronal energies.

Rank	Chronal Energy Source
1	Time-traveling twice in one day (+1 for each additional trip)
2-4	Repairing a time machine without safety equipment
5	Time engine breach
6	Causing a paradox
7-10	Unprotected in a "time tunnel"
12+	Unprotected exposure to the time-stream

UGLY HISTORY

There is a great deal of ugliness in human history: war, genocide, slavery, racism, misogyny, homophobia, ableism, religious intolerance, and more, to say nothing of plagues, starvation, violence, and vast human suffering. Some of it is still taking place. Mutants & Masterminds is, by and large, a lighthearted game about helping others. Understably, not everyone wants their game time to involve depictions of genocide, reminders of real-world oppression, or hearing old-timey slurs.

Don't assume history has been a straight line of progress, beginning with more racism, hatred, and degradation that is slowly removed until a perfect modern day exists. Many modern pop-culture depictions of history simply assume the past was worse than the present and lump in vile treatment for women and racial, sexual, and gender minorities as "historical accuracy." Some of the ugliness of the present day—especially racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia—are either absent or radically different

in other time periods. Racism as it exists now in the United States, for example, is largely an outgrowth of chattel slavery and the 19th-century eugenics movement—previously, slavery existed largely as a punishment for captives taken in war, debtors, and criminals rather than a sentence imposed on a race. Even during the horrors of American chattel slavery, free black people existed, traveled, owned property, held political office, and created art all across the world, including the Americas and Europe.

How do you deal with the complex and sometimes ugly elements of history in a time travel story while keeping the campaign fun for everyone? There's no one right answer when dealing with sensitive topics, only answers that are right for your group.

If a player does express concern about a particular theme or historical element, then that element should be considered off-limits. Either exclude it from your adventure or change the adventure. Even if it means reworking or scrapping a time travel scenario, no storyline is worth making a player feel uncomfortable or unwelcome or forcing them to re-live a trauma at your game table. Similarly, everyone should respect any boundaries players express (and remember: you the Gamemaster are a player as well, and deserve to have your boundaries respected). Keep a mutually agreed-upon safety mechanism (see sidebar) in place and be patient handling any unexpected difficult situations that might arise during play.

Consider the following options and talking with your group before bringing in any historical unpleasantness.

DEFY

Discuss your players' limits and interests regarding their ideal time-travel scenarios, and you might find that some players like the idea of having the power to confront the ugly things they or people like them have dealt with. For them, the real fun might be visiting history's greatest monsters and punching them in the jaw. You may need to explain how history is affected if a superhero, for example, kills Hitler, but letting a player do so—especially as the climax of a large adventure, can feel empowering. Transgender players, for example, might get some personal sense of control saving a library of early research from destruction by a fascist regime. This approach doesn't work for all players, however, and plenty of people prefer to use the game table as a temporary break from the complex realities they live with, so vet plot elements like this with your players before going forward, or simply wait and see if they suggest them. Often, this approach works better with fictional analogues to real-world events.

DISCUSS

If there's no avoiding the ugly parts of history, or if the players don't feel right about downplaying them, make sure to discuss things clearly and openly at your game table. Talk about the bad stuff, and ask your players what they are comfortable and uncomfortable with including. Focus particularly on things you think will affect the characters, and ask the players about things that might particularly affect them. As Gamemaster, encourage any of the players to get in touch with you privately to express any concerns they might have that they'd rather not share with the group, and always keep private concerns private.

SAFETY MECHANISMS

When engaging with difficult subject matter or situations, a roleplaying game group may want to have a safety mechanism at the table. A popular example is the X-Card by John Stavropoulos (detailed online at tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg), an index card with an "X" drawn on it is placed on the table. At any time, any player can touch or hold up the X-Card to edit out or skip over uncomfortable content, no questions asked, or to ask for a break in the game to deal with or discuss it. Similar safety mechanisms like a "time out" signal, a two-sided green/red card (green side up means "keep going," red side up means "stop or skip over this") or another way for players to indicate they are uncomfortable or have an issue, can help everyone feel safe and respected at the table. These mechanisms only work if they are absolutely honored, and everyone is allowed to use them without having to explain or justify themselves.

Remember, Mutants & Masterminds is just a game, and that makes it far less important than everyone's well-being and comfort.

DOWNPLAY

Comic books tend to romanticize history and historical figures and you can do the same in your game. Simply omit the unpleasant parts of the past you don't want to invest energy in—visit a wild west without focusing on the racism against Native Americans (and hispanics, and African Americans), or rock-and-roll in the 1950s without dwelling on oppressive gender roles and repression of queer Americans. Just make it clear that's what you're doing for the sake of everyone's fun and comfort. You can simply ignore, or at least downplay, the ugly parts of history, so long as everyone is okay with it (and, even then, see **Safety Mechanisms** in the sidebar).

You can also plan your adventures to deliberately avoid some of the worst elements of the past, setting adventures in places and times that weren't as hostile. Including historical exceptions to the status quo, like black cowboy Bass Reeves or female pilot Amelia Earhart, further helps balance the depressing parts of history.

USE WITH CAUTION

If all of the members of the game group (and that includes the GM) agree they are okay with tackling some of the ugliness of history as part of a time travel story, do so with caution, and be aware that the reality at the game table may prove more different than it did in theory. Use safety mechanisms to manage the experience at the table and allow players the opportunity to change their minds or opt out if a story element becomes uncomfortable. Engage with the material respectfully and do research to try to do it justice in the context of your game.

CHAPTER 2: TIME TRAVELING HEROES

Heroes' interactions with time travel tend to fall into two categories: occasional time travel and serial time travel, with different expectations and demands for each. Most of the material in this chapter is written for serial time travelers, who will get the most out of the character options presented. As always, the Gamemaster decides which options are available to characters in a series and whether they are available at character creation or only through experience and character improvement.

OCCASIONAL TIME TRAVEL

Occasional time travel is when heroes in a *Mutants & Masterminds* series experience a time travel story every once in a while, but otherwise protect their city/nation/planet in the modern day. The series focuses elsewhere—most likely on conventional superhero stories, but occasionally a story comes up where the heroes travel in time. For most superheroes and teams, if time travel exists in the setting, sooner or later, there will be a time travel story. Often, it involves accidental time travel, but it may be intentional, especially if the heroes have access to a method of time travel—or are given access by a non-player character (see **Who Controls the Time Machine?** in **Chapter 3** for more on this). Even if the heroes have a time machine, their time travel adventures could be limited due to the requirements of time travel or simply their own caution about interfering too much with the timeline.

For the most part, occasional time travel stories involve heroes who aren't specifically designed for it, although an intentional time travel adventure may allow heroes to prepare for the trip, acquiring or building specialty equipment and other short-term preparations (see **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** later in this chapter). Otherwise, time travel is just one of the many adventure hooks and plot devices in the series, not all that different from the heroes traveling to distant places on Earth, to other planets in space, or to other dimensions.

SERIAL TIME TRAVEL

Serial time travel means the series focuses largely on traveling through time or to alternate timelines, and the heroes are expected to travel, visiting new time periods and timelines in most adventures. That means the characters should generally either be designed as time travelers, or at least have the opportunity to grow into a group of regular time travelers by spending earned power points. They may be chosen or recruited for their suitability as travelers, or simply adapt to their circumstances with experience.

Of course, serial time travel does not necessarily mean voluntary or intentional time travel. Characters in a serial time travel game might be "unstuck in time" in some fashion, jumping from point to point along a timeline or

even across multiple timelines. Their destinations could be random or directed by some outside agency, such as a cosmic entity, mysterious device, or temporal enforcement organization. The characters might have a time machine, but face mechanical malfunctions or not know how to operate it properly, meaning their jumps largely involve mashing buttons and hoping for the best.

TIME TRAVEL BASES AND SETTINGS

A serial time travel series also has a different relationship with what can be considered the team's "home base" and supporting cast of characters. Time travelers who jump from point to point, or even one timeline to another, aren't likely to carry a lot of non-player characters with them. The only exceptions are if the characters have a time ship with a larger crew (see **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** later in this chapter) or if the GM makes use of the **Familiar Faces** trope from **Chapter 1**, with different versions of people important to the characters "just happening" to cross their paths in different eras.

Serial time travelers might have a home base of some kind, such as a mobile time ship that serves as a kind of "home away from home." They might also have a fixed installation in a particular era, or located out in the time-stream, that they return to periodically, particularly if it is the "launch point" for their method of time travel. Depending on the nature of the base, the heroes might have additional supporting cast. Even an isolated base could house fellow agents and support staff. If time travel is easy enough, some supporting cast characters might "pop" back and forth to visit the heroes.

TIME TRAVEL COMPLICATIONS

Time travelers who spend most of their existence wandering the omniverse may also have different kinds of complications compared to heroes who live in one set place and time. Unless the characters have an equally mobile supporting cast or a "friend in every era," their Relationship complications will tend to focus around fellow time travelers or people back home who the character visits. Juggling the need to drop in at just the right time for a scheduled visit can be a complication, and a potential weakness if an enemy finds out where and when to expect the character to show up.

As the **Ugly History** section in **Chapter 1** details, there are plenty of complications characters may face in the past, provided the players are willing to deal with them in the context of the game. Consider carefully the inclusion of historic social Prejudice complications in your game and look over that section for things to take into account.

While traditional social complications might not come into play in a time travsel game, characters must often deal with Identity complications, particularly cases of mistaken identity—and the other social complications that come with it. They may also be mistaken for specific historical figures, alternate versions of themselves, or their own ancestors. Most time travelers share a Secret complication (that they're time travelers!) and Power Loss is a common element of time travel stories. Either the time travel process causes something to happen to the heroes' powers, or something goes wrong with their mode of time travel, stranding them in an era and forcing them to jury-rig a solution in order to leave.

SUGGESTED POWER LEVELS

The power level of a *Mutants & Masterminds* time travel series can have a big effect on the overall tone of the series and the types of characters the players create. The following are some suggested power level ranges and the types of series they support.

CHRONONAUTS PL 7–8

Lower-PL heroes can adventure through time as easily as godlike wizards and mega-geniuses, but often need outside support. A Chrononauts series tends to involve "time agent" level heroes. Characters often have few, if any, powers and those powers they do have tend to be highly focused or involve skill or talent descriptors (see **Talent Powers** in *Power Profiles* for examples) or special devices or equipment. Instead, chrononauts tend to have a lot of skills, Advantages, and gear to cover all the situations that might crop up during their missions. If they work for a temporal agency of some sort, the characters may be assembled specifically as a team, with diverse abilities to complement each other. Otherwise, their teamwork—like their time travel—is largely happenstance and whatever the heroes themselves manage to pull together.

Chrononauts most often depend on an outside agency for their time travel capabilities. They could be accidental time travelers but are more likely operatives of an agency that gives them their assignments and sends them to the correct point(s) in the omniverse to carry them out. Characters may have some limited ability to time travel on their own, but the standard approach is one jump to their mission point and another jump back to home base, wherever (and whenever) that may be. Apart from visiting other points in time, the heroes' assignments are much like regular action-adventure stories: overcoming challenges and foes using skill, teamwork, and daring.

Chrononauts are sometimes opposed by a similar agency or organization with different designs upon the timeline (or even the whole omniverse), creating a "temporal war" between two or more factions fighting to change or preserve history—or both sides may be fighting to "preserve" the history that creates their own timeline. In more peaceful circumstances, chrononauts may also be explorers and scholars, documenting and answering numerous questions about history. They're also the people charged with keeping those expert researchers safe from all the hazards

they might encounter in the timeline, ensuring they get home safely, don't muck up the timeline in the process, and inevitably fix everything when their charges do muck everything up.

HISTORY'S FINEST

A trope that shows up in a Chrononauts-level series is playing various famous figures from history. These characters are usually "borrowed" from a particular point in their lives with the intention of returning them, or recruited after a mysterious disappearance or death in their own lifetimes. They could also be recruited from parallel timelines so their presence or disappearance doesn't affect the history that we know. The players could create a team made up of (for example) Queen Boudica of the Celts, Ptolemy, Amelia Earhart, Alexander the Great, and Mata Hari to protect the timeline from interference by outside forces. Such a series offers great opportunities for research into interesting historical figures and learning about them "first hand" by portraying them.

In some settings, the History's Finest concept might extend to "Fiction's Finest," with some or all of the characters being famous historical figures from fiction, such as d'Artagnan, the Scarlet Pimpernel, Jane Eyre, Doctor Frankenstein, and others. The usual assumption is that there are some timelines in the omniverse where these characters are real people. Whether the timelines are creations of the authors of those fictional works, or whether they inspired those authors in other timelines is usually left a mystery. Other campaigns may rely on fictional characters to protect the timeline, as their artificial histories can't be affected by changes made to the past.

OUTSIDE TIME PL 9–11

At these power levels, characters tend to be less agents and more "time traveling superheroes." As the default power level for *Mutants & Masterminds*, it's the most common for occasional or accidental time travelers, as well as heroes who are regular travelers through the omniverse. The Outside Time heroes tend to be as diverse as any group of superheroes, but make use of the guidelines given in the **Character Options** section of this chapter, particularly if they are serial time travelers deliberately assembled as a team.

These heroes usually have their own shared means of time travel, whether it is a time ship that serves as both their transportation and headquarters, or team time suits or talismans the provide the Movement (Time Travel) effect. Often, the team has to time travel together, if only to avoid dealing with the potential headaches that occur when each individual character can time travel on their own. They may work for or answer to a higher authority—whether a time agency or a cosmic super-being—but often operate on their own.

Sometimes there is a particular reason why the characters have become time travelers, such as being initially unimportant enough in their own time periods that they won't be missed if taken out of time, never to return. It may be a predestination paradox (see **Chapter 1**) where all the heroes are "meant" to go missing because history records them all as such. An extreme example is a team made up of the sole survivors of lost or destroyed timelines, either looking to restore their homes or ensure that no other universe suffers their fate.

The opposition in an Outside Time series tends to be made up of teams of supervillains similar in power level to the heroes, or singular master villains who are 2–4 power levels higher than the heroes. Usually, they are time-meddlers or otherwise tampering with history and forces they should not be, and the heroes need to stop them. The heroes may also encounter natural disasters that span entire timelines or parts of the omniverse, requiring them to shore up or protect key parts of a timeline to keep the whole of history intact.

PARALLELS

Characters in a Champions Outside Time level series are often familiar heroes, but not quite the ones you might expect, in that they are alternate or variant versions of known heroes recruited from other timelines. This essentially takes the notion of History's Finest (previously) and applies it to known superheroes—or even supervillains, if the team recruits a heroic version of a known villain from another timeline. It's essentially a player character version of the **Familiar Faces** trope from **Chapter 1**, and part of the reason why that trope comes into play, since the parallel must often deal with stepping into the lives of their own alternate selves in other timelines.

A rarer version of the Parallels trope is for all the members of the team to be different versions of the same person across many timelines, some of them quite divergent. Similarly, the antagonists in a Champions Outside Time series might be parallel timeline versions of the player characters who have their own agenda, or work for the opposition.

GUARDIANS OF TIME PL 12–14

At the high end, heroes in a Guardians of Time level series tend to be cosmically powerful and capable, dealing with threats to entire timelines or the whole of the omniverse. This is the power level where heroes are most likely to have their own individual methods of travel through time and across dimensions and might have some kind of omniversal headquarters or organization. Gamemasters should be prepared for Guardians of Time to exercise their abilities to go anywhere (and anywhen) based around however time travel works in the setting (see **Chapter 3**).

A Guardians of Time-style series often features player characters who are among the greatest heroes from their respective timelines, much like a "world's greatest heroes" team, but on an omniversal scale. They may be drawn together and united by a higher power or outside force, but can just as easily be self-appointed guardians, either having discovered the greater omniverse, or having come together to deal with any threat(s) to it. They could be literally immortal, exist outside of time, or be part of a legacy of passing their membership and responsibilities on to successors, which can include recruiting new player characters into the team. The Guardians of Time may also be the creators or source for time travel in their timeline, and so wandering history to correct the abuses of their creation falls to them.

The threats faced by Guardians of Time tend to be similarly grandiose. They may deal with foes bent on ruling (or destroying) the entirety of the omniverse, protect whole timelines from invasion, alteration, or erasure, and similarly find ways of containing "toxic" or otherwise dangerous timelines from invading or infecting the rest of the omniverse. If threats from "outside of time" exist, the Guardians of Time are the first (and possibly only) line of defense against them.

COSMIC FORCES

There's considerable overlap between a Guardians of Time level series and a Cosmic Avatar level series from the *Cosmic Handbook*. Gamemasters may find much of the material in that book useful for a time travel series at this high a power level. In particular, the material on options for cosmic-level characters and the various archetypes can serve as resources. The *Cosmic Handbook* guidelines for Power Level X plot devices are also valuable in detailing vastly powerful chronal avatars, embodiments of entire timelines and concepts, and preternatural threats from outside the space-time continuum. The power level 15 Time Master villain archetype from *Cosmic Handbook* is a suitable foe for a Guardians of Time team on the power level 12 end of this tier.

CHARACTER OPTIONS

Time travel series can involve all kinds of characters, from potentially any time, or even any possible reality. When creating *Mutants & Masterminds* heroes specifically for a time travel series, there are a number of things to consider, and this section takes a look at them.

REQUIRED TRAITS

Gamemasters should decide if any particular traits are required for all characters in a time travel series and make players aware of them before they start creating characters. Players may be required to purchase a "package" of traits for their characters, or the required traits could be bonuses given to all characters without any power point cost. Common required traits include things that allow characters to overcome certain challenges, such as the language barrier (see Languages under **Advantages**) or ranks of Immunity to ignore things like the prevalence of diseases in history. They may also include certain applications of the Benefit Advantage or ranks of Equipment to cover the costs of group equipment or vehicles.

In some games, all characters might be required to have their own means of time travel, meaning one or more ranks of Movement (Time Travel). In others campaigns, individual time travel effects might be prohibited. Likewise, some series may require all characters to have Chronal Advantages (see **Advantages**, following), particularly Chronal Bulwark and Chronal Memory.

SKILLS

Many skills rely on the context of a particular time period or culture, and Gamemasters can apply a circumstance penalty (–2 or –5) for situations where the character is

TECH FAMILIARITY

Attempting to use, sabotage, or repair unfamiliar technology increases the skill DC. These DC increases represent a lack of experience with the technology, and should reduce by one step for every major scene a character spends working on or learning about the related technology, until no DC increase applies.

Using weapons from vastly different technological eras may similarly impose a penalty on a character's attack check equal to the DC increase, so a character from the early 21st century using a recoilless laser rifle (familiar) might suffer a –2 penalty on attack checks, but attempting to wield a psionic assault orb from the 45th century (alien) would suffer a –10 penalty.

These examples assume a traveler from the modern day.

DC Increase	Circumstance
+2	Familiar (forge an iron knife, repair a 19th-century steam engine; pilot a starship derived from earlier jet designs)
+5	Tangential (knap a flint knife, hack a 22nd-century computer, steer a Roman galley)
+10	Alien (interface with technology attuned to thought patterns, use a lost historical crafting technique)
—	Impossible (technology more than a millennium more advanced, without context or guidance)

Even "impossible" Technology checks may be possible if a player is willing to spend a Hero Point to edit the scene or receive a sudden burst of insight.

using their skills outside of that context. It is difficult to use interaction skills, for example, if you're only passingly familiar with the language or local culture, and more difficult to use skills like Technology if you're dealing with tech generations or even centuries ahead of your experience. The more dramatic and four-color your series, the less you need to concern yourself with these penalties, and they should lessen as a character spends more time in their new era and becomes increasingly familiar with its technology and culture.

EXISTING SKILLS

The skills that cause the most confusion in other eras are Technology and Vehicles, which rely heavily on modern technology. Treatment may also change, as different centuries have seen different levels of technology, pharmacology, and sanitation. Not having modern, familiar equipment to use with your modern skills is covered by the penalties for using substandard tools—imposing a –2 penalty on the skill check—or lacking tools altogether, which increases the circumstance penalty to –5. Attempting to repair modern technology with earlier tools (or repair advanced technology using modern tools) likewise imposes penalties for inadequate or no tools. The Gamemaster may determine if certain tasks are impossible—such as attempting to repair a smartphone with only flint knives and fire—but the Improvised Tools Advantage should allow a character to still attempt these impossible tasks with a steep circumstance penalty.

EXPERTISE

Expertise: History really comes into its own in a time travel series. So much so, in fact, that the GM might want to subdivide the skill into more specific specialties. Historical Expertise might cover a particular period of time, a particular geographic region or culture, or some combination of both, such as Renaissance Europe, Colonial America, or Feudal Japan, to name a few. Characters can make Expertise checks on questions outside of their specific area of knowledge with a circumstance penalty, so long as the question is at least somewhat related. Time travelers can have Expertise in future periods of a timeline as well, so long as they are knowable.

Skills like Expertise: Current Events and Pop Culture generally describe the popular culture of a character's home era by default, but players can specify a different era if they like. This represents a closer understanding of a short time period's culture and recent events, allowing a character to more easily pass for a native of that era, while narrow Expertise: History checks cover the time and culture's broader, "big picture" elements.

INVESTIGATION

Time travel stories often involve piecing together clues to figure out a villain's plan to influence or change history or the nature of some historic event, so Investigation can be a useful skill for at least one character in the group to have. An Investigation check can help determine when in the past an event took place, helping time travelers detect when a change was made to the timeline. Gathering information in an unfamiliar culture imposes a –2 circumstance penalty, while inability to understand the locals generally makes gathering information impossible.

PERSUASION

The Persuasion skill generally requires a language in common, but humans are empathic creatures and body language is often enough for especially charismatic heroes to communicate in broad strokes. If visiting a location or era where a hero doesn't speak the local language, they can use Persuasion to communicate basic ideas—"help me," "hungry," "gift," "my name is..."—with a DC 20 Persuasion check. Any attempts to actually influence others without a language in common (or powers that compensate) suffer a –5 circumstance penalty, and may be impossible. An unfamiliar culture but familiarity with the language reduces this penalty to –2.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology is one of the skills most affected by the circumstances of the historic eras where characters find themselves. Heroes may have to make Technology skill

checks using only "stone knives and bear skins" in terms of applying earlier technology to their needs or figuring out technology far more advanced than they have previously seen. See the **Tech Familiarity** sidebar for appropriate penalties for strange and unusual technologies from other eras.

VEHICLES

Vehicles—which encompass automobiles, airplanes, and submarines—is a broad skill to begin with. Expanding it to include futuristic spacecraft and Egyptian chariots isn't a huge stretch. You can apply the same Tech Familiarity modifiers (see sidebar) that the Technology skill uses to convey the strangeness of older vehicles to modern pilots.

Most pre-20th century vehicles relied on some combination of animal power, wind power, and human muscle to move, limiting their top speed to about 25 MPH (speed 4) and their realistic travel speed to 5 or 10 MPH (Speed 2). Assume that any pre-modern vehicle moves at half its normal movement rank in its day-to-day functioning, while its top speed reflects pushing its crew or draft team to the very limit and can only be maintained for a few minutes. Events that stall these vehicles—such as calm winds or torn rigging for sailing vehicles, or a thrown shoe on a draft animal—represent complications to the story (awarding the affected characters a Hero Point) or may be the result of failing a Vehicles skill check by two or more degrees.

ANIMAL-RELATED SKILLS

While animals rarely make an appearance in 21st-century superhero adventures beyond the odd gorilla fight, they become a stand-in for vehicles and technology in many historical settings. Interacting with animals involves using Presence-based skills with a –10 penalty (the Animal Empathy Advantage eliminates this penalty), while controlling animal-drawn wagons and chariots uses the Vehicles skill. This works well for time-travel campaigns where a character may only briefly visit historical eras, but for historical campaigns you may want to include one or both of the following skills to reflect the expanded game impact of animals and to account for the large difference between piloting a ship (using the Vehicles skill) and directing an animal-drawn land vehicle.

Animals acquired using the Minion Advantage (or even as Equipment, included in the movement cost of vehicles like stagecoaches and chariots) aren't especially loyal or exceptional examples of their kind and generally have a Neutral attitude toward their drivers. Overwork, injuries, and poor conditions can worsen this attitude, making them reluctant to perform work or even drive them to violence. Animals acquired with the Sidekick Advantage are always Helpful toward their handlers and represent exceptionally skilled and intelligent specimens. Characters generally don't need to make skill checks to coax sidekick animals to perform even unusual or dangerous tricks, though they must still make Ride or Handle Animal checks normally for chases and stunts.

MUSCLE-POWERED VEHICLES

Many historic vehicles rely on animal or human muscle to power them, collectively referred to as muscle-powered vehicles. Muscle-powered is a 0-cost feature that can be added to a vehicle. It has the following effects:

- Muscle-powered vehicles function as if they had the Remote Control feature. Heroes must make a successful Persuasion or Intimidate check to control a muscle-powered vehicle under stressful or dangerous circumstances.
- A muscle-powered vehicle can also be intimidated, confused, and otherwise affected by effects that target living creatures. It can benefit from Advantages like Leadership and Teamwork or effects that improve biological creatures.
- A muscle-powered vehicle can run at its top speed for a number of hours equal to the Stamina of the creatures powering it (assume 2 for humans and 4 for horses), for twice that time at Speed rank – 1, or indefinitely at Speed rank – 2, up to a maximum of twelve hours. After this time, it becomes fatigued until it can rest for 8 hours.

If a vehicle is both muscle-powered and powered by an additional source (such as a ship that can be rowed or sail), that counts as a 1-point feature.

HANDLE ANIMAL

PRESENCE • INTERACTION • TRAINED ONLY

This skill allows a character to teach animals to perform feats not part of their normal behavior; more intelligent creatures can even be taught to communicate using gestures or sign language (albeit with a limited vocabulary). This skill can be used untrained, but only to elicit the most rudimentary responses.

Handle Animal replaces the Vehicles skill when piloting any animal-drawn vehicle, from an ox wagon to a horse-drawn chariot to an underwater sled pulled by dolphins.

DC	Task
5	Simple tricks (fetch, sit, stay)
10	Complex tricks (attack, dance, get help, guard), Simple work (train a draft animal)
15	Complex work (train a service dog), Calm a panicked animal
20	Hold a predator at bay
Modifiers	
–2	Domesticated animals
+2	Exotic or feral animals
+5	Alien or supernatural creatures
+5	Coaxing an animal to perform a trick it doesn't know
+5	Coaxing an animal into combat

RIDE

Dexterity	

This skill allows a character to ride a trained animal with skill, grace, and comfort, as well as perform tricks. For most action and chase-related tasks, use the DCs and rules provided for the Vehicles skill. Ride can also be used to direct animal-drawn vehicles, but with a –5 circumstance penalty. Controlling a mount is a Move action each round and requires at least one free hand unless you guide it with your knees.

You can use Ride to "break" a wild animal and force it to accept you as a rider for a scene. This is a DC 15 skill challenge taking one round per check and requiring four Degrees of Success. If a rider fails a check to break a mount, they are thrown (Damage 2, but possibly higher for larger or monstrous mounts) and must start over.

DC	Task
5	Guide with your knees
10	Complex tricks (dance, get help, guard)
15	Use your mount for cover, ride an untrained mount
20	Mount or dismount as a Free action, calm a panicked mount
Modifiers	
–2	Domesticated animals
+2	Exotic or feral animals
+5	Alien or supernatural creatures

ADVANTAGES

Most Advantages work regardless of when or where the characters may be, but a few require some adaptation when it comes to time travel, and there are a couple of new advantages useful for time travelers.

CONTACTS, CONNECTIONS, AND WELL-INFORMED

A character traveling through time can't easily bring their entire social network along for the ride. While these Advantages may sometimes represent an informative connection to agents back at the hero's home base (especially with the Time Comm described later in this chapter), more often than not a hero loses the benefit of Advantages that rely on knowing who's who, and who to ask for favors while outside their home era—at least initially. Heroes with the Contacts, Connections, or Well-Informed Advantages may, after one week of meeting people and learning the local social scene, begin using these Advantages for their normal benefit with a –5 circumstance penalty. This penalty reduces to –2 after another week, and disappears entirely after a character has spent a total of three weeks in a new era. If a character leaves and returns, they retain the benefits of their newfound social circles.

The new Advantage, Socially Adaptable, changes how long it takes for a traveler to adapt to a new time period.

EQUIPMENT

Given potential access to "future" technology, the "commonly available" element of equipment can be difficult to apply, so the GM should take the other qualities of equipment into consideration where this Advantage is concerned, particularly limits on bonus stacking, extra effort, and damage or loss. It should remain easier for the Gamemaster to relieve characters of their equipment—or otherwise have it fail—than it is with devices. Likewise, time travelers may be dependent on the equipment they happen to have with them or have stored on-board a time machine (see Time Machines in the **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** section, following). It is easy to run out of ammunition or batteries in a more technologically primitive setting, and hard to find replacement parts in a future long after the equipment is obsolete.

LANGUAGES

The Languages Advantage plays a special role in a time travel series, where travelers not only may encounter any language in the world, but any language that has existed throughout history, including all of the various cultural idioms and slang of a particular period, and dead languages completely unknown in the future. The easiest way of dealing with the language barrier is not to deal with it at all, by making Universal Translator technology widely available to the characters (see **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** section, following) or building some kind of translation effect into their ship or method of time travel. If you do want to include issues of language in your time travel adventures, encourage ranks in the Languages and Adaptable Linguist Advantages. For a middle ground, you can normally have some kind of translation effect overcoming the language barrier, but have it fail as a complication during a particular adventure, giving the heroes a new complication to overcome and allowing characters who purchased the Languages Advantage to shine.

CHRONAL ADVANTAGES

Characters may have certain advantages related to time travel in a series that includes it. In addition to the following, the GM may allow a Benefit Advantage for things like access to a means of time travel or for rank or influence within a temporal enforcement agency or similar organization. Gamemasters should decide if characters pay power points for these advantages or if they are free as an element of a series. For example, all time travelers might automatically have Chronal Bulwark, either by virtue of traveling in time, or only when they are in the time-stream "outside" of any timeline.

In the *Power Profiles* sourcebook, Chronal Bulwark and Chronal Memory are Features of time powers. In a series with time travel, the GM may decide if they are Features (and therefore powers), Advantages, or available as either.

Adaptable Linguist — Skill, Ranked

You have a remarkable facility for languages, letting you quickly adapt to new ones you encounter, based on what you already know. If you have one rank in this advantage, you can interact in an archaic or related dialect of a language you know with no circumstance penalty, so you could effectively pick up Old English immediately based off English, for example. If you have two ranks in this advantage, you can interact in any language related to one that you already know with only a –2 circumstance penalty, so you could, for example, interact in medieval French based off knowing modern Italian (another Romance language). With three ranks in this advantage, you can pick up basic fluency in any language that you're exposed to for more than a day, enough to use interaction skills normally with a –5 circumstance penalty. This is reduced to –2 after a week and 0 after two weeks.

Chronal Bulwark — Chronal

You are a fixed point in time (see **Fixed Points** in **Chapter 1**). While history may be altered, your existence remains unaffected. You are immune to temporal transformations (see **Chapter 3**, **Evolution and Devolution**, and **Paradoxical Transformations**) involving changes in the timeline. Of course, this Advantage also means you're unable to benefit from changes in your personal timeline, and you can easily end up with the paradox of remaining your normal self in a timeline where you should not even exist. Chronal Bulwark preserves your body and mind as they are in your "original" timeline, but leaves you with no memory of new pasts if someone changes the timeline.

Chronal Memory — Chronal

Your perception and memory transcend linear time. If your personal history is changed, you remember both versions: the original and the changed version. This means you know when the history of your timeline is altered and (at least generally) what the change is, since you can remember the previous version. If there are multiple changes, you remember every version, although the GM may require an Awareness check in some cases to sort out the different iterations.

Socially Adaptable — Skill

You adapt quickly to new social situations, even being thrust into entirely new cultures. You only suffer a –2 circumstance penalty to interaction skill checks for your first 24 hours in an unfamiliar culture, rather than indefinitely.

You may be deprived of Advantages like Connected, Contacts, or Well-informed when removed from your usual social network; if you are Socially Adaptable, you develop a new network within a matter of hours after finding yourself in a new situation, so long as you are able to interact with the locals. Every 6 hours you spend interacting with locals in a new social situation, make a DC 15 Persuasion check. On a success, you have created a new network sufficient to use social-dependent advantages. On a failed check, you can try again on the next day, with a +1 cumulative circumstance bonus for each day that passes.

POWERS

For powers affecting time in general, see the **Time Powers** chapter of *Power Profiles*. Powers in a time travel adventure or series are more often those useful for time travelers, rather than specifically for time travel itself. Movement (Time Travel) is the key power effect for shifting to different points along a timeline, but Movement (Dimension Travel) is required to move from one timeline to another. Parallel timelines can be considered "a related group of dimensions" for 2 ranks of the effect, whereas timelines or dimensions radically different from Earth-Prime's require 3 ranks of Movement (Dimension Travel). Both effects together allow characters to traverse the whole of the omniverse.

"Chronal" is the descriptor for powers affecting time, timelines, the time-stream, and the energies associated with all of them. Depending on how chronal powers work, the descriptor may be synonymous with the tachyon and time descriptors given in the **Time Powers** chapter of *Power Profiles*, or it might be an addition to those descriptors. In general, chronal powers can counter each other, although they often do so in indirect ways, particularly with regard to time travel. Most often, it's a matter of time travelers trying to undo or prevent changes that others have made.

Other power descriptors may interact with time travel in particular ways. Of note are technological powers, which may have limits in previous historical periods if those powers depend on technological infrastructure such as electricity, radio, cellular networks, computers, and so forth. Radio Communication or Comprehend Machines have little use before the invention of the radio or electronics, for example!

Some powers may be mistaken for magic or miracles in less scientifically advanced eras, and those powers, much less actual magical powers, may inspire awe or terror, leading to accusations that the characters are evil sorcerers, demons, or other monsters. The revelation of advanced technology or superhuman powers may have unusual effects on history, unless such powers were common in the past of the setting. In some cases, the heroes might even create myths and legends of supernatural beings! That said, not everyone in the past is a superstitious rube impressed by the heroes' tricks. See **Chapter 3** (**Respecting the Past**) for guidelines on respecting the intelligence of people in the past.

TEMPORAL DEFLECTION

A defensive use of control over time is "trapping" an attack in an area of slow or stopped time so it is easy to avoid, possibly even causing the attack to change direction to hit someone or something else. This requires a certain degree of timing in and of itself to trap the attack: The character must succeed on a power check (d20 + rank) against the attack check result of the attacker.

Temporal Deflection can combine with Temporal Sidestep from *Power Profiles*. The latter power ensures the "trapping" of the attack, which can then be redirected.

In addition to the usual benefits of Deflect, this power allows for an additional extra:

Hold: You can "hold" a deflected attack as a Standard action each turn. As long as you continue to do so, the deflected attack remains "suspended." You can release it as a free action during your turn. Additionally, anyone coming into contact with the suspended attack might be affected by it, depending on its descriptors. Once the held attack is released, it can be reflected or redirected normally, if you have those extras. *+1 cost per rank.*

Temporal Deflection: Deflect • *1 point per rank + 1 per rank to Reflect attacks, +2 per rank (total) to Redirect attacks at any target, +1 per rank to Hold a deflected attack with Concentration to redirect later.*

TIME-OUT

A tactical use of time travel is the ability to "pop" out of a situation, go and do things elsewhen (either in another time or in a "pocket" outside of time) and then return to the same moment you left, having the benefit of as much preparation time as you want.

Essentially, this is a descriptor of a Quickness effect that gives the character "extra time" equal to the effect's rank. So at Quickness 10, the character can fit two hours of time into a round. Note that during the "time-out" the character doesn't interact with the situation, they're outside of the normal flow of time, but they can still recover, study, build, or otherwise prepare.

Time-Out: Quickness (outside of time) • *1 point per rank*

TIME TAMPERING

Characters can accomplish a lot with the ability to "edit" timelines through time travel. Examples include:

- Changing the circumstances of a situation by "pre-arranging" certain things, like ensuring a needed item is on-hand or that a particular opening is left unlocked, for example, like the Edit Scene use of a Hero Point.
- Ensuring the best possible outcome of a check, allowing a character a "do-over" where they roll and take the better of the two results, like the Improve Roll use of a hero point.
- Preventing something from happening, like the reverse of the previous: Forcing a character to roll twice and take the worse of the two results.
- Learning something by having your future self come back to tell you, and remembering to go back and tell your past self the same thing later on!
- Performing various powers from the **Time Powers** chapter of *Power Profiles* as power stunts, one-use "time tricks" the character can pull-off using time travel.

Time Tampering: Luck Control (Affect Others, Negate, Force Re-roll) • *9 points + 1 point per additional rank in Luck usable with this power.*

TIME TRAVEL DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT

A variety of different devices and pieces of equipment may serve the needs of time travelers. Typically, most pieces of time travel-related technology are considered devices thanks to their unique nature and general unavailability, but they may be equipment in some series. Some devices and equipment, particularly vehicles, may be shared by the team, with all of the characters sharing the power point cost. Other items may be "standard issue" and required for all characters, possibly as part of a team template (if you are using those guidelines from the *Superteam Handbook*).

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Personal equipment for time travelers is usually compact, concealable, and independent (not a lot of cellular or computer networks in the past). Travelers also need to be careful with it—just one item of high-tech equipment left in the past could radically alter the timeline, depending on who finds and uses it, or takes it apart.

CHRONAL SCANNER

A small hand-held scanning device for picking up chronal energies and disruptions. A chronal scanner can detect the local space-time coordinates (translating them into geographic and calendar data), pick up energies and distortions from local use of time travel and chronal technology, and detect any lingering energy signatures associated with the same. A chronal scanner is often incorporated into a multi-function scanning device. By adding Senses (Tracking), the device can also indicate what time period a distortion links to, indicating when a time traveler arrived from or departed to.

Chronal Scanner: Senses 4 (Chronal Awareness, Acute, Analytical, Time Sense) • *4 points*

CHRONO STABILIZER FIELD

This device creates a field effect around a wearer, object, or area, shielding against chronal- and quantum-level disruptions for as long as the stabilizer field operates. Some chronal stabilizers are small enough for a person to wear on a belt or wristband. Other stabilizers are large field generators, usually built into a platform, structure, or vehicle. Among other things, a chronal stabilizer prevents a subject from suffering the conditions of Temporal Transformation, including erasure. It also protects against the effects of weapons like the quantum disruptor or tachyon projector (following).

Chrono Stabilizer Field: Immunity 2 (chronal disruptions) • 2 *points*

TIME COMM

A time comm uses quantum entanglement or tachyon signals to connect a time traveler to a home base in a different era. More sophisticated models can communicate with other time comms in either the past or the present (Dimensional 2) or any time comms the user is aware of, regardless of when they are (Dimensional 3)—possibly even with their own, at Gamemaster discretion, though any useful functions of this ability should generally be used to describe the effects of spending a Hero Point.

Time Comm: Senses 2 (Communication Link, Time Sense; Dimensional 1 [home era]) • *3 points*

UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR

A small device able to translate any spoken communication. Some universal translators may learn or figure out new languages after being exposed to them for a short while. Others are limited to the languages programmed into them, although this is typically a vast database. Some versions of a universal translator may add an additional rank of Comprehend to translate all written languages as well.

Universal Translator: Comprehend 2 (speak and understand all languages) • *4 points*

WEAPONS

While time travelers may bring any number of different weapons (usually small, concealable ones) or weild local weapons, some gadgets weaponize the mechanics of time travel itself.

CHRONAL SINK

The chronal sink fires a small projectile that saps the chronal energy from a target, effectively slowing them to a halt. While mostly used to incapacitate, the weapon freezes paralyzed targets in place, even in mid-air, and can prove useful for problem-solving.

Chronal Sink: Ranged Cumulative Affliction, Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Stunned, Paralyzed Feature (paralyzed targets are stationary in space). • *4 points for the first rank + 3 points per rank to increase the resistance DC*

QUANTUM DISRUPTOR

This weapon disrupts the target on a fundamental, quantum level, "erasing" them from existence if the quantum disruption is pronounced enough. Some quantum disruptors impose the Transformed condition rather than Incapacitated at the third degree; rather than erasing the target from history, the disruptor changes the target's history, essentially turning them into an alternate version of themselves.

Quantum Disruptor: Ranged Progressive Affliction, Resisted and Overcome by Will; Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated; Targets pushed past Incapacitated are erased from existence. • *4 points per rank*

TACHYON PROJECTOR

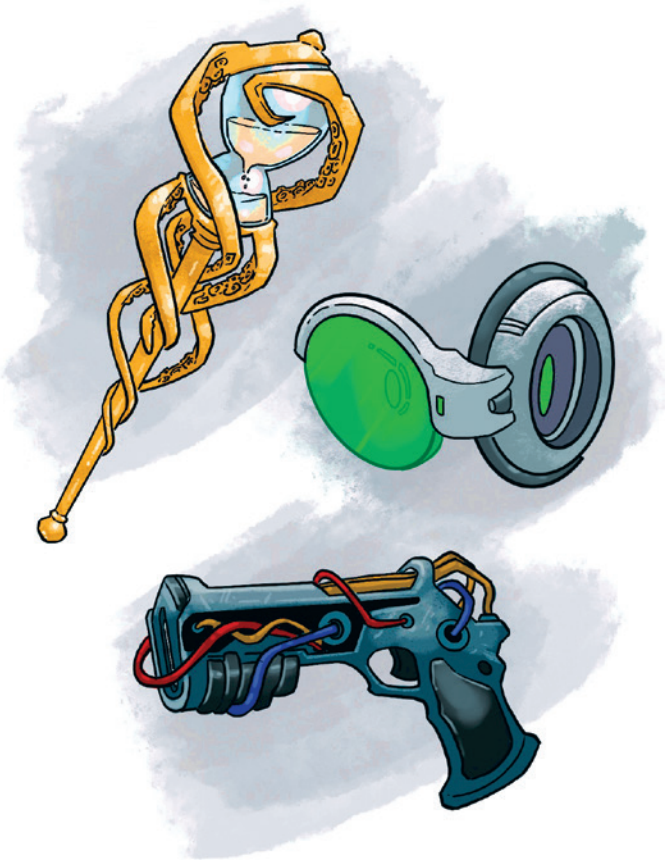
A tachyon projector is a beam weapon that transports its target to a different point in space-time. From the perspective of observers in the target's original time, the target vanishes and may be assumed destroyed or disintegrated. From the target's point of view, if the attack hits and they fail the Dodge resistance check, they appear at some predetermined point in time. Without some other means of time travel, this is effectively permanent exile.

Tachyon Projector: Movement 1 (Time Travel to a predetermined point) Attack, Resisted by Dodge (DC 11 + additional ranks), Ranged • *3 points + 2 points per rank to increase Dodge resistance DC*

TEMPORAL STASIS FIELD

A device that can "stop" time, allowing the user to step outside of the ordinary flow of time but remain aware and move about while everything else appears frozen. The user cannot affect anything in the ordinary universe, but does gain "extra time" to essentially move around, look at things, or do anything else they might do with that time. The device's rank is its duration as a time rank, so a rank 9 field provides an extra hour "outside" of time. To the outside perspective, the stasis field user disappears when the field is activated, reappearing wherever they are when the field is deactivated as if they have moved instantly.

Temporal Stasis Field: Quickness (Subtle 2), Speed (Subtle 2), Quirk: Limited to routine actions while active (–4 points) • *2 points per rank*



TIME MACHINES

Various sorts of time machines are the primary modes of time travel in many scenarios. See **Chapter 3** for some discussion of methods of time travel and access to them.

The following are examples of archetypal time travel devices or vehicles characters might use. All these are "no-frills base models." You may want to customize them by adding various features, including headquarters features for huge and larger time vehicles. A cloaking device is particularly common for a time machine, allowing it to disappear and avoid awkward encounters with people and sensor devices in other time periods. Time Machines able to travel to parallel timelines also have Movement (Dimensional Travel) in addition to Time Travel.

TIME SUIT

A time suit is a no-frills, one-person wearable time machine that allows the wearer to jump to one point in the timeline. A time suit may be an experimental unit but can also be an emergency "recall" device intended to bring stranded time travelers home. Because it is intended for emergency use, a time suit is also an advanced life-support suit, since the wearer may potentially jump into hostile environments, perhaps even deep space. The suit's destination can be reconfigured with a DC 16 Technology skill check, requiring four hours of work. Any of the items under **Personal Equipment**, previously, may be incorporated into a time suit.

Time Suit: Immunity 10 (life support), Movement 1 (Time Travel to a specific destination) • *12 points*

TIME CAPSULE

This time capsule isn't the sort that gets buried to be recovered later. Instead, it's a stationary time machine that shifts its position through the timeline. It might look like a box, bubble, cylinder, or other shape—and is often built to resemble ordinary local objects like phone booths or police boxes—ranging in size from just large enough for a few people to squeeze into, up to as big as a bus or larger. Lacking any movement beyond its temporal engines, the capsule is stuck wherever it lands in the destination time unless towed or carried. With the Dual Size feature, a time capsule can even be larger on the inside than it is on the outside, and incorporate various headquarters features! The time capsule has a control console where the user programs a destination and "pilots" it.

TIME CAPSULE	8 POINTS
Size: Huge **Strength:** 8 **Speed:** — **Defense:** 6 **Toughness:** 9 **Powers:** Movement 3 (Time Travel)	

TIME-HOPPING MUSCLE CAR

The time-hopping muscle car is an ordinary terrestrial vehicle with a temporal engine added on after the fact, letting it shift through time. This example has also had hover engines installed after a trip to the future, but

the time-hopping version of any existing vehicle can be created by adding Movement (Time Travel 3) for 6 power points, opening options for time-traveling helicopters, motorcycles, or pirate ships. Vehicles created as time machines but disguised as contemporary cars or trucks are likely to have a host of other features, such as Remote Control or Life Support for travelers.

TIME-HOPPING MUSCLE CAR	16 POINTS

Size: Large **Strength:** 6 **Speed:** 6 (ground), 3 (air) **Defense:** 8 **Toughness:** 7 **Powers:** Movement 3 (Time Travel)

TIME SHIP

A time ship is a larger and more advanced time vehicle, essentially a space ship built to explore time and endure harsh environments. They're large enough to include crew quarters, making them a mobile base of operations. Vehicles this large usually require personnel to help crew it.

Time ships are often equipped with additional weapons, defenses or cloaking devices beyond what is listed here.

TIME SHIP	60 POINTS

Size: Colossal **Strength:** 16 **Speed:** 14 (air) **Defense:** 2 **Toughness:** 13 **Features:** Living Space, Navigation System **Powers:** Immunity 10 (Life Support), Movement 3 (Time Travel), Senses 5 (Extended Chronal Awareness, Acute, Analytical, Time Sense)

TIME PORTAL

A time portal is a time machine that remains in one era, but creates a portal or otherwise projects travelers through to different destinations in time. A time portal might feature a literal portal, like a gateway, arch, or glowing wormhole through space-time, or it might be a transportation platform or chamber that transports anyone inside to their destination time in a shimmer of light. Time portals either create two-way "gates" where travelers have to return to the gate's location to travel back to the platform, or else platforms have some means of tracking travelers in order to "lock on" to them and transport them back. A time portal might be incorporated into a headquarters, or something characters find, such as an ancient network of temporal portals created by unknown beings.

Time Portal: Movement 3 (Time Travel), Portal • *15 points*

TEMPORAL PROJECTOR

Rather than allowing a character to travel through time, a temporal projector throws a subject's conscious mind through time to observe events. They may arrive in their destination as a disembodied phantom—invisible, incorporeal, and completely unable to influence events—or they may "ride" in the mind of a person in the target era, seeing and hearing everything their host experiences but unable to influence them. A temporal projector may be an early experiment in quantum communication, or it may be a "responsible" time machine employed by academic organizations to preserve the timeline.

Temporal Projector: Senses 8 (Postcognition, Precognition) • *8 points*

TIME INSTALLATIONS

Headquarters and hideouts for time-travelers are often shielded from changes to the timeline.

EVENT HORIZON	21 EP

Size: Huge **Toughness:** 12 **Features:** Advantage (Chronal Bulwark*), Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Defense Systems, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Sealed, Security System, Workshop **Powers:** Senses 6 (Precognition, Postcognition)

Event Horizon is the headquarters of a small team of Guardians, constructed outside the timeline with the blessing of the Time-Keepers. While it lacks a temporal portal, it includes a hangar and workshop for time ships and its sensors can track events across the timeline.

THE VOID TIME ZONE	17 EP

Size: Awesome **Toughness:** 8 **Features**: Advantage (Chronal Bulwark*), Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Sealed, Secret, Temporal Limbo **Powers:** Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Poison), Movement 3 (Dimensional 2 [mystic dimensions], Time Travel 3; Portal)

A massive, mystical dimension, the Void Time Zone was built in a stable eddy of chronal energy outside the timeline by a reclusive order of temporal wizards. Its flow of chronal energy is mystically regulated, protecting occupants from the ravages of age and other effects worsened by the passage of time.

HERO ARCHETYPES

Each of the following archetypes is set up as a major player in time travel-related stories and campaigns. Even the ones who lack any ability to travel through time themselves owe their origins to time travel and temporal meddling. Each is ready to play as a hero, or serve as a time-hopping NPC or villain for your own heroes to run into. Each archetype can be easily modified or adapted by adjusting descriptions and backgrounds—turning the Time-Lost Teenager into a Temporal Explorer or Time Pirate, for example—or changing their focus by swapping out skill points and advantages. Each archetype includes a few suggested names and Complications for your convenience, or feel free to invent your own.

If the Gamemaster doesn't want heroes to control their own time vehicle, simple replace an archetype's means of time travel with appropriate powers, Advantages, or additional Skills.

The archetypes on the following pages are presented in a more detailed format than the villain archetypes later in this book, making them easier for players to begin using them right away.

HYPERINTELLIGENT DINOSAUR

"OH SURE, I'M CLEVER. BUT IS THAT REALLY ENOUGH?"

Human "science" insists dinosaurs had tiny brains, but human science never dragged a raptor egg through the time-stream and into the 21st century. Or rather it did. Once. And now the Hyperintelligent Dinosaur commands incredible mental acuity, enough to put the average human to shame even before you factor in the second brain in their tail, the armor-like scales, and the flesh-rending claws!

The Hyperintelligent Dinosaur is trapped between two worlds: The modern world into which they were born and the ancient world where their ancestors ruled. They can't survive entirely in either, and so they travel and explore and learn what it means to be sapient. While brilliant enough to solve their problems with science, their lean, predator's body also makes them an equal for physical dangers.

The Hyperintelligent Dinosaur may be a hitchhiker—accidentally brought to the future by explorers—or a deliberate scientific experiment to make a versatile time traveler. By default, the text assumes they are a deinonychus or utahraptor—roughly human-sized or smaller and already clever before the ambiguous evolutionary powers of chronal energy granted them sentience. You can create different types of Hyperintelligent Dinosaurs by changing around some of their animal powers, such as exchanging Speed for Growth to represent a triceratops, or adding simple gliding for microraptors.

PLAYING THE HYPERINTELLIGENT DINOSAUR

Even among the weirdoes, you still stick out. The humans think they're so neat with their "hair" and their "history," and even the aliens you've met have families and cultures. But you're on your own—a culture of one. Everyone else like you died 65 million years ago, and even then they only looked like you. None of your dinosaur cousins could hack the Pentagon or groove to sick jams. So for now you're traveling around, having adventures and fighting evil, and hopefully along the way you'll figure out where you're supposed to be. It's not like you can go deliver pizzas or get your MBA.

You're very much a jack-of-all-trades—as brilliant as any human scientist, but also with vicious claws and teeth and legs that can run down a buffalo. In a fight you can dominate most humans, but sometimes it's fun to be scary, keeping foes paralyzed with fear thanks to your Fascinate Advantage. But you also have a keen mind and can recall all kinds of great minutiae that comes in handy via your Jack-of-All-Trades and Eidetic Memory Advantages. Sometimes it's tough being alone, but being awesome at everything makes it a lot easier.

Pick a few things about modern human culture that you really bond with—literature, video games, internet videos—and a few things about dinosaurs that feel personal to you. These help flesh out what the two halves of your personality—the modern geek and the ancient predator—mean to you. Pick a member of your team who you feel comfortable confiding in as well, for those late-night heart-to-hearts where you try to understand what being sentient means and what you should do with it. You might also consider what you'll do after adventuring and if you can find a place to fit in, or if you're committed to the wandering lifestyle forever.

HYPERINTELLIGENT DINOSAUR

PL 8

Suggested Names: Bee-Cee, Clevergirl, Dino-Fright, Dr. Jurassic, Scree, Subject #82147, Sue

REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

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

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+5
Athletics	4	+7
Close Combat: Claws	5	+10
Deception	0	+0
Expertise: Science	5	+11
Intimidation	8	+8
Insight	0	+4
Perception	4	+8
Persuasion	0	+0
Stealth	4	+9
Technology	10	+16
Treatment	4	+10

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Fascinate (Intimidate)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Improved Critical (Claw)	Critical threat with claw attacks on a 19–20
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a Standard action
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (close, cover)
Startle	Use Intimidation skill to feint
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS

Raptor • Personal • Permanent • *17 points* **Biology**

Claw and Fang: Strength-Based Damage 2

Keen Senses: Senses 6 (Acute Analytical Smell, Danger Sense, Dark Vision, Tracking)

Raptor Speed: Leaping 3 (60 feet), Speed 4 (30 MPH)

Tough Scales: Protection 2

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Acceptance: You'll never really have a real family of your own; other dinosaurs are too stupid and humans are too boring. So you try to piece together your own family from other weirdoes.

Addiction—Chronal Energy: Your body needs chronal energy to maintain your evolution. If you stop time traveling, your Intellect degrades at a rate of 1 power point a week until you become just another animal.

Carnivore: You can only eat meat—the fresher, the better.

It's a Dinosaur!: You are clearly a dinosaur, and terrify 90% of the population. In other time periods you may be mistaken for a mutant, alien, or mythical creature, but you are clearly never human.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6
DODGE	10
PARRY	10
FORTITIDE	7
WILL	6

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +9

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

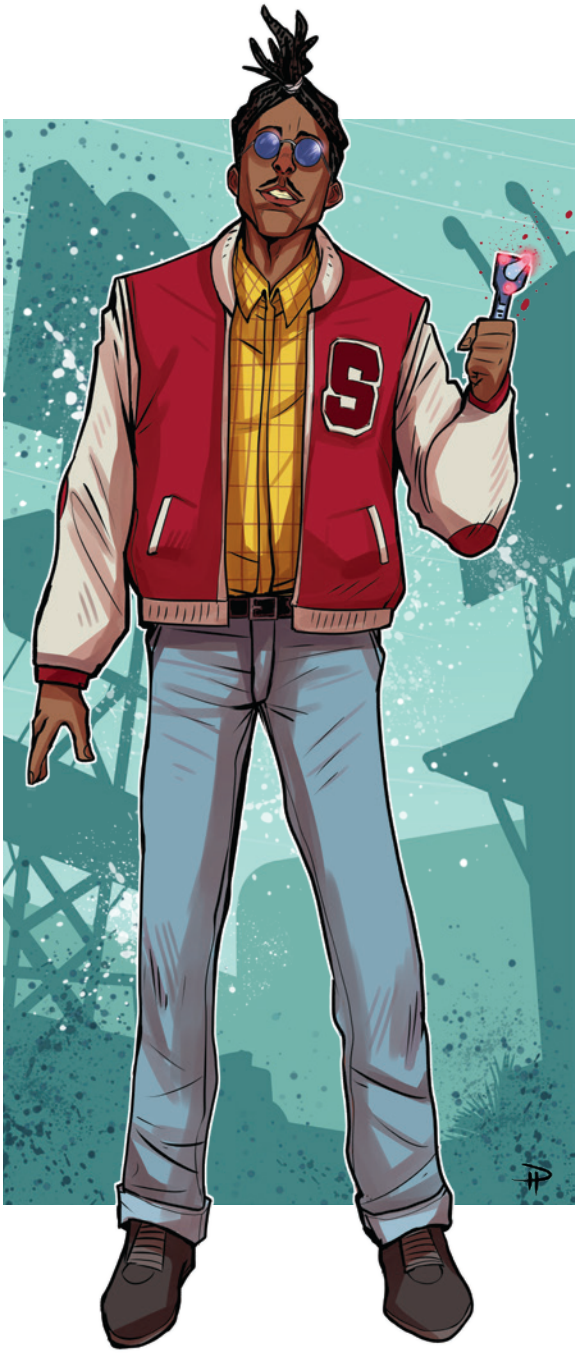
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Claws	+10	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18

Abilities 54 + Powers 17 + Advantages 12 + Skills 22 (44 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 120 TOTAL

QUANTUM ALIEN

"I CAN EXPLAIN THE DELICACIES OF CHRONOZOID DIPLOMACY LATER, BUT RIGHT NOW: RUN!"

Time travel is a curiosity for most, but a daily reality for the advanced civilization the Quantum Alien calls home. Crops can be grown in moments, aging halted, past mysteries resolved, and travel times rendered meaningless, leaving an entire species free to pursue personal and philosophical perfection—and condescend to species that lack their extensive technology.



While the ability to travel through time is the most noteworthy achievement of the Quantum Alien's people, they are also effectively immortal and can pluck alternate versions of themselves from undeveloped timelines to survive even total destruction. Their long life also leaves plenty of time to study , but something special about the Quantum Alien sets them apart from their own people—something a little more excited and charitable. The other peoples of the galaxy have so many exciting experiences and stories as they make do without the godlike power the Quantum Alien once took for granted, and there's plenty to admire there.

The default Quantum Alien is human-looking and possesses an advanced time machine, but variations may have an inborn ability to travel through time and even bring others with them, or command unique magic that lets them skip through time as some mages skip through space. These temporal natives may hail from a city or island suspended in the time-stream, or from a pocket of "null time" outside normal causality, leaving them safe no matter what changes are made to history.

PLAYING THE QUANTUM ALIEN

Why would anyone stay on one little city outside of time when you have everything that ever was to explore! The future and space and Earth with all its clever little humans. Have you seen humans? So clever and resourceful, with their brioche and their kabuki and their renaissances. So many renaissances! And you're out to see all of them, ideally with good company for the trip. Your traveling companions are a fun lot. Such diverse skills and interests and life experiences. Each one an individual, unique in the whole universe.

There is so much to see and experience in the universe that you can't possibly stay tucked in safely at home. You only have a half-dozen or so centuries to see it all, but thankfully you have a time machine to help you get where and when you need to be, not to mention a trusty quantum spanner, the all-purpose tool and scanner ubiquitous on your homeworld. You're not necessarily great in a fight—in fact you're terrible in a fight unless you're using your Inspire and Leadership Advantages to cheer others on—but that's fine, because you're looking for friends, not enemies. You just happen to keep making enemies wherever you go because, well... someone needs to step in and help when things get ugly, and you're already there. Don't be afraid to lean into your Complications; you'll need as many Hero Points as you can get when the climax arrives and you're ready to solve the problem through a combination of technological know-how, passionate speeches, and a little re-writing of history thanks to the the Edit Scene function.

Think about what your homeworld was like and what about it inspired you to start exploring the universe. Was it boring? Authoritarian? Were you just the least evolved of your people and needed to escape their paternalism? Also consider if your Rejuvenation power changes your appearance or personality, and who you might have already been before the campaign began.

QUANTUM ALIEN

PL 12

Suggested Names: The Corsair, Inspector Continuum, Lord Convergent, Professor When, Rufus, Timeslider

REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	2	3	1	0	9	6	4
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Athletics	4	+4
Close Combat: Spanner	8	+8
Deception	7	+11
Expertise: History	10	+19
Expertise: Science	12	+21
Intimidation	0	+4
Insight	5	+11
Perception	2	+8
Persuasion	8	+12
Stealth	2	+5
Technology	8	+17
Treatment	4	+13
Vehicles	4	+5

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Benefit	Cipher
Chronal Memory*	Remember your original past and alternate timelines
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Fascinate (Expertise: History)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Inspire 5	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +4 bonus
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

Quantum Spanner • Easily Removable • Sustained • *10 points* **Tech**

Multitool: Enhanced Advantage 2 (Assessment, Improvised Tools)

Universal Remote: Close Nullify Technology 12 (Broad)

Scanner: Senses 4 (Acute Analytical Ranged Detect Technology)

Redundant Organs • Personal • Permanent • *9 points* **Biology**

Enhanced Fortitude 4

Immunity 4 (Aging, Critical Hits, Disease, Poison; Limited to Half Effect)

Protection 3

Rejuvenation • Personal • Permanent • *20 points* **Quantum**

Immortality 10 (Return After 1 Hour)

EQUIPMENT

Time Capsule

Size: Huge **Strength:** 8 **Speed:** — **Defense:** 6 **Toughness:** 9 **Powers:** Movement 3 (Time Travel) **Features** Dual Size, Living Quarters

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Curiosity: The need to explore and discover burns inside you; it's almost an addiction sometimes.

Almost Got It: Even after years of practice, you can never quite land a time jump exactly where and when you want to, setting down in strange or dangerous locations or missing your destination by a few years.

Hunted: It's only your time machine inasmuch as possession is nine-tenths of the law, and the previous owner would like their expensive equipment back.

Pacifist: You believe that somewhere in every sentient creature is some basic decency and right to exist, and you loathe harming or killing them over temporary disagreements.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	9	5 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	14	
PARRY	10	
FORTITIDE	12	
WILL	12	

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +7

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

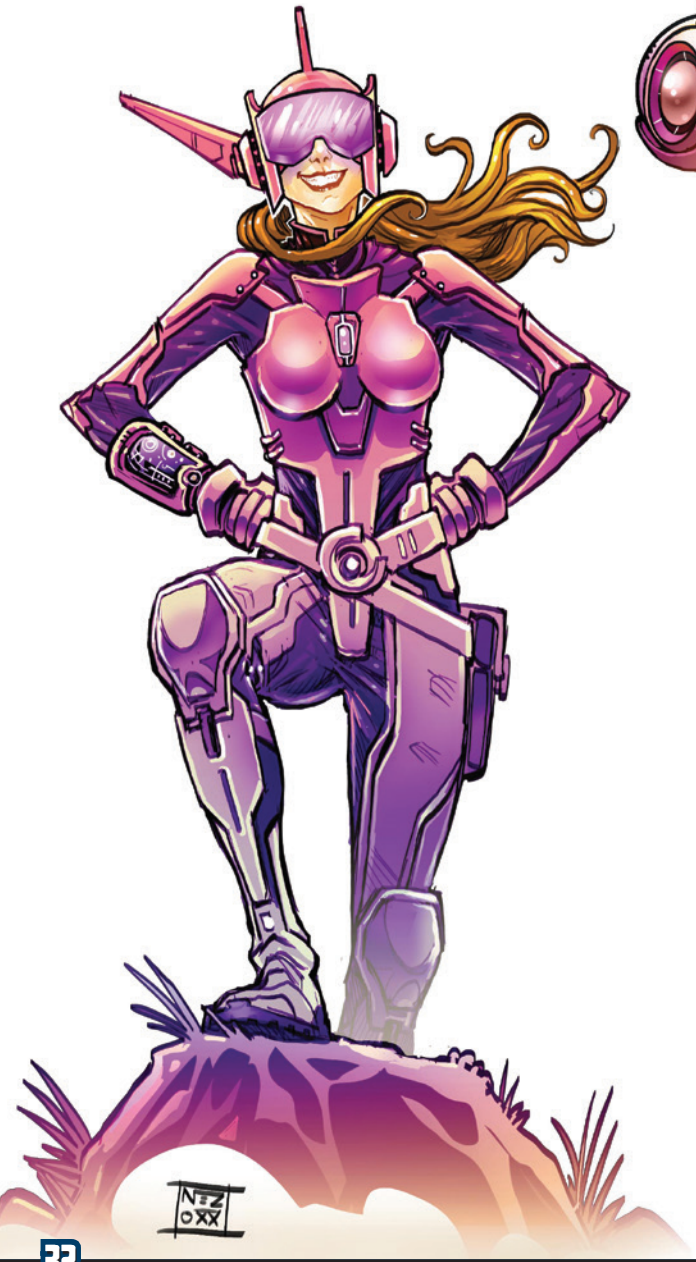
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Quantum Spanner	+8	Parry	Close Nullify 12	DC 22
Unarmed	+0	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15

Abilities 50 + Powers 39 + Advantages 21 + Skills 37 (74 ranks) + Defenses 33 = 180 TOTAL

TEMPORAL TOURIST

"WHAT'S IN A 'LATTE'? COFFEE?! YOU MEAN COFFEE'S NOT EXTINCT YET?! AWESOME!"

In a fantastic future where technology and science help everyone become their best selves, the Temporal Tourist was still a loser. Trapped in a tedious job and dreaming of being something better, they stole away with outdated technology and hopped back in time to a more chaotic era of heroes and villains. But life is hard no matter when you live it. While equipped with fantastic (at least by modern standards) technology and a keening robotic personal assistant to remind everyone how great they are, the Temporal Tourist is still just an insecure soul playing a part. Only experience will decide if they can be a real hero.



The Temporal Tourist doesn't have their own access to a time machine—you should determine how and why they jumped back in time. But their brief experience seems to make them a magnet for chronological weirdness and villains. Their personal life is likewise askew; customs and current events diverge wildly from what they expect, alienating them from those few people their ego doesn't.

The Temporal Tourist could also hail from the past—a lost civilization like Lemuria or Akakur—who jumped forward in time to avoid disaster and wields lost technology. By adjusting their Complications and personality, you can also make the Tourist a Temporal Fugitive who escaped the law in their own time and has become a hero in ours.

PLAYING THE TEMPORAL TOURIST

Is it so wrong to want a little more credit for all your hard work? You ditched your dead-end job in the future, risked it all to break into a museum and steal some cool antiques, and traveled back in time to where those cute little gadgets seem like superpowers, all to help people! You help yourself, too, obviously. You're not a sucker. Your hard work should be acknowledged with a parade and maybe a pyramid, or whatever they build in this century.

You've got all the major superhero powers checked off: super strength, laser beams, flight, force field. And you can dish out a thorough beating thanks to all the hours you spent boxing in virtua-gym! Would a "thank you for being the best superhero ever" be too much to ask? You can even use your force field belt to protect others... when you remember. At least you've got Herb, the enthusiastic robot buddy you brought from the future. He's not really much more than an upbeat smartphone, but at least he knows a little bit about the past and how to fix your gear.

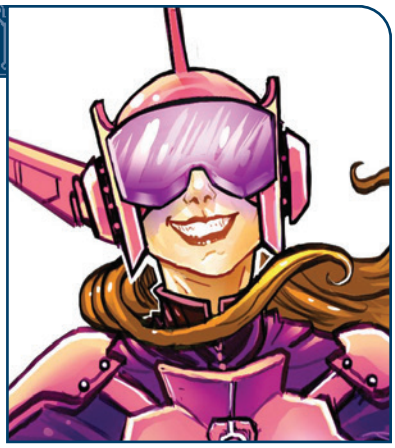
You're maybe not the most selfless hero in town, and that's fine. But you're not a jerk, either. Just a perpetual loser who wants a little attention and praise. Something drives you to be a hero and not a villain now that you're relatively consequence free. Think about what motivates you besides glory and profit; will you risk it all for animals in distress? Do you have a weakness for dudes with big, green eyes? Maybe deep down, you just want to feel worthy of all the praise Herb heaps on you.

ENTHUSIASTIC ROBOT BUDDY (SIDEKICK)	PL 5
STR –5, **STA** —, **AGL** 0, **DEX** –2, **FGT** –2, **INT** 0, **AWE** 0, **PRE** –3	
Powers: Flight 5 (60 MPH), Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects), Protection 5, Shrinking 4 (Permanent, Innate).	
Advantages: Inspire, Interpose.	
Skills: Expertise: History 6 (+6), Insight 6 (+6), Investigation 6 (+6), Stealth 2 (+6), Technology 6 (+6).	
Offense: Init +0, Ineffective Bash –2 (Close, Damage –5).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 0, Fort Immune, Tou 5, Will 0.	
Totals: Abilities -32 + Powers 54 + Advantages 2 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 3 = 40	
Complications: Obsessed with you, Adorable little robot, Has no arms.	

TEMPORAL TOURIST

PL 10

Suggested Names: Breach, Fantastic, Flash Forward, Goldstar, Hashtag Maria Tomorrow, Trending



REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
9/-1	-1	0	2	-1	0	1	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Athletics	1	+0/10
Close Combat: Unarmed	9	+8
Deception	8	+11
Expertise: History	2	+2
Intimidation	0	+3
Insight	0	+1
Perception	0	+1
Persuasion	10	+13
Ranged Combat: Blasters	8	+10
Stealth	2	+2
Technology	2	+2

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Luck 2	Re-roll 2 dice
Sidekick 8	40-point sidekick
Ultimate Effort (Will)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20

POWERS

Bio-Enhancing Suit • Removable • **Array (20 points)** • Sustained • *17 points* **Tech**

- Enhanced Strength 10
- Ranged Damage 10

Forcefield Belt • Removable • Sustained • *42 points* **Tech**

Immunity 10 (Life Support)

Protection 14 (Affects Others, Impervious)

Graviton Boots • Removable • Sustained • *13 points* **Tech**

Flight 8 (500 MPH)

Omni-Goggles • Removable • Sustained • *13 points* **Tech**

Senses 13 (Analytical Vision, Darkvision, Direction Sense, Infravision, Microscopic Vision, Vision Penetrates Concealment, Tracking, Ultravision)

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Fame: You spent your whole life as a nobody. Now you want to be somebody!

Malfunctions: You have a lot of high-tech gear but little in the way of high-tech skills, so keeping it all running is a challenge.

Stranger: You know Earth as it will be a few centuries from now, with the AI assistants and beach-front tropical resorts in Antarctica. You would've paid more attention in history class if you knew you'd be spending so much time here.

***Technically* a Criminal:** All your fantastic gear consists of stolen goods, but since you won't have stolen them for a few hundred years it's probably okay, right? Who would possibly come looking for them, anyway?

Unappreciated: Somehow the general public can read you as a loser.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	13	-1 W/O FORCE FIELD
DODGE	7	
PARRY	6	
FORTITIDE	7	
WILL	7	

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +0

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

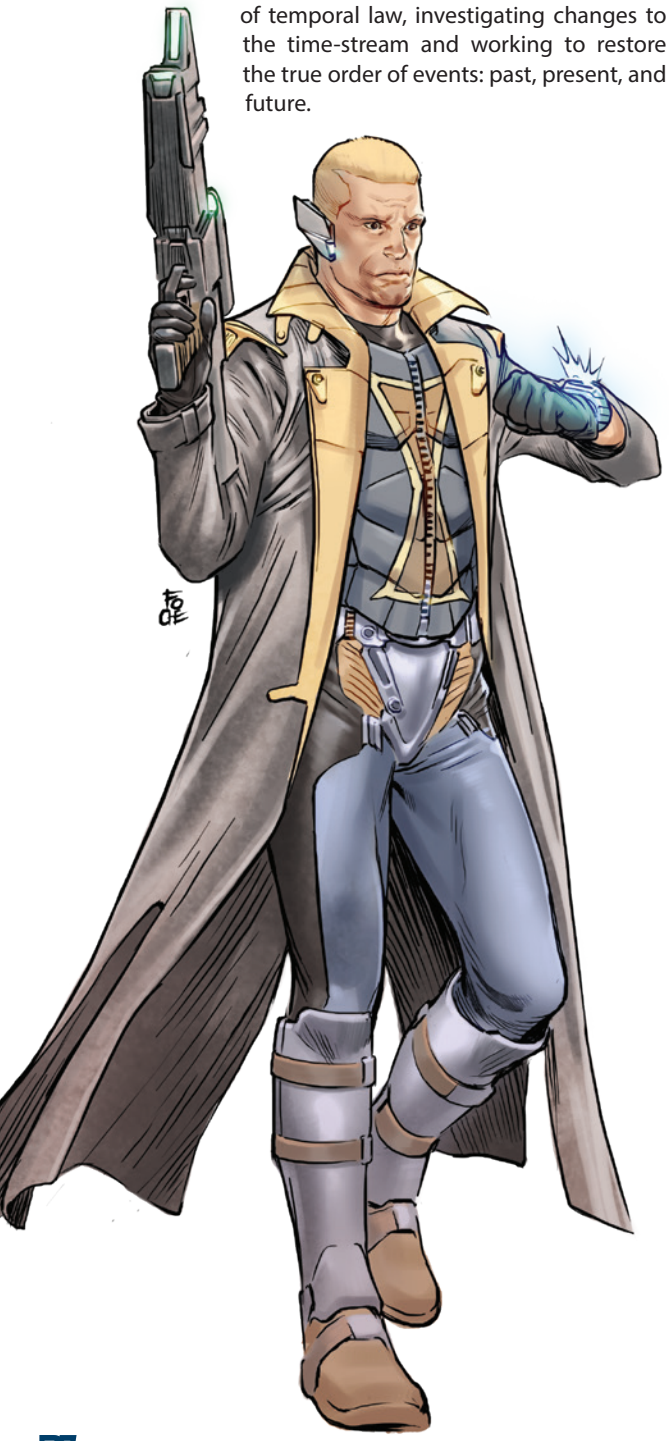
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blast	+10	Dodge	Ranged Damage 10	DC 25
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 9	DC 24

Totals: Abilities 6 + Powers 82 + Advantages 13 + Skills 21 (41 ranks) + Defenses 28 = 150 TOTAL

TIME WARDEN

"No one drops a mammoth in Victorian London on my watch, scuzball."

Any technology that exists has the potential for abuse, and a technology that can re-write entire planets can be abused horrifically. So enforcement agencies and private individuals work to hunt down anyone who would disrupt the approved flow of time. The Time Warden is an officer of temporal law, investigating changes to the time-stream and working to restore the true order of events: past, present, and future.



In addition to investigative skills, the Time Warden is shielded against changes to the timeline, allowing them to set things right even after criminals alter history. Their weaponry can briefly knock targets out of time—slowing or freezing them in place—or blast them with nonlethal bolts of concussive force. Most critically, the Time Warden is entrusted by their sponsor with a time machine to track down villains and anomalies.

With only minor changes to their description, a Time Warden could easily become a Time Scoundrel, hopping from decade to decade to steal the world's greatest missing treasures and seduce history's greatest lovers. Changing out their weaponry for more traditional pistols and swords and their skills for more active choices may instead make for a swashbuckling Time Pirate, who sails the time-stream to hijack other time machines and stay one step ahead of the authorities, forever searching for lost islands in time and whatever valuables they hold.

PLAYING THE TIME WARDEN

Time travel is perhaps the greatest tool humanity has ever conceived of, but like any tool it can be abused and corrupted. You've seen some sick abuses of the timeline in your day: people who used time travel to change the victors' outcomes in war, who set themselves up as kings, who wipe their enemies out of existence like some people wipe their exes out of their social media. And a billion lives get upended every time. With the agency behind you, you stand between greedy, selfish bastards and every human being that's ever lived or died. And maybe once in a while—when the boss isn't looking—you can make the past a little better, at least for a few people.

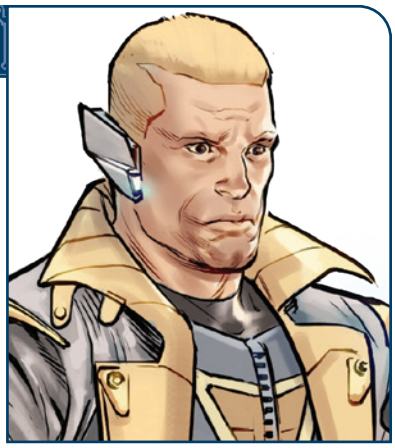
You are equal parts detective and bounty hunter, patrolling time and space for mis-use of time travel and chronological technology. While most people see the armor and the weapon, your wits are every bit as important when it comes to tracking down criminals and finding when and how causality went off the rails. You can read people as well as you read crime scenes, and thanks to your Well-Informed Advantage you always know a little bit about any major players in the time-stream you encounter. Your weapon—a standard-issue chronal sink pistol—can freeze targets in a moment, but its ability to halt things in motion makes it a handy tool for problem solving as often as it makes a useful weapon. But your biggest advantage—and your baby—is your time ship, a space-age vessel capable of taking you across the solar system or into the time-stream to pursue your quarry.

You aren't a lone hero in your struggle. For all the freedom you enjoy, you still answer to a higher authority: the agency that provides you with the training and the tech that sets you apart. Think about how the agency operates and who you know within it. Are you on good terms with your superiors, or are you a problem case—too much of a loose cannon or a bleeding heart who has to make things better than they're supposed to be—constantly on the edge of losing your job? And if you do lose your position, will you surrender your power willingly, or go rogue, loyal only to the mission?

TIME WARDEN

PL 10

Suggested Names: Captain Chrono, Enforcer, Temporal Agent Donna Stone, Inspector Timespace, Warden



REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
3	3	3	4	5	2	4	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Athletics	3	+6
Close Combat: Unarmed	5	+10
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Temporal Law	8	+10
Intimidation	0	+1
Insight	2	+6
Investigation	12	+14
Perception	6	+10
Persuasion	4	+5
Ranged Combat: Pistols	10	+14
Stealth	4	+7
Technology	4	+6
Vehicles	6	+10

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Benefit	Temporal Authority
Chronal Bulwark*`	Insulated against changes in the timeline
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Equipment 14	70 points of equipment
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Improved Critical (Pistol)	Critical threat with pistol attacks on a 19–20
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Inspire 2	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +2 bonus
Languages 2	Speak 2 additional languages
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Socially Adaptable*	Adapt to new time periods quickly
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

Chronal Sink Pistol • Easily Removable • Instant • *14 points* **Tech**

Freeze: Ranged Cumulative Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Stunned, Paralyzed; Feature [Paralyzed targets are frozen in space)

• **AE: Blast:** Ranged Damage 5

EQUIPMENT

Polyweave Armor (Protection 5, Subtle), Time Comm (Senses 2 [Communication Link, Time Sense; Dimensional—headquarters)

Time Ship

Size: Colossal, **Strength:** 15 **Speed:** 10 (Air) **Defense:** 10 **Toughness:** 13 **Powers:** Cloaking Device Concealment 4 (All visual senses), Immunity 10 (Life Support), Movement 4 (Space Flight 1, Time Travel 3) **Features:** Alarm (DC 20), Living Space, Navigation System, Remote Control

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Justice: Someone close to you was wiped away from causality by a temporal rogue, leaving only you to mourn them. You can't let that happen to anyone else.

Motivation—Responsibility: Time travel is an amazing tool that could improve human civilization, but it is also a heavy burden that you feel obligated to safeguard.

Honor: You're entrusted with a time machine because of your high morals, and conducting yourself according to set codes of honor and integrity is important both professionally and personally.

Temporal Treaties: Multiple time enforcement agencies may compete and overlap, leaving some places and eras outside your "jurisdiction."

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	8	3 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	12	
PARRY	12	
FORTITIDE	8	
WILL	9	

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +3

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

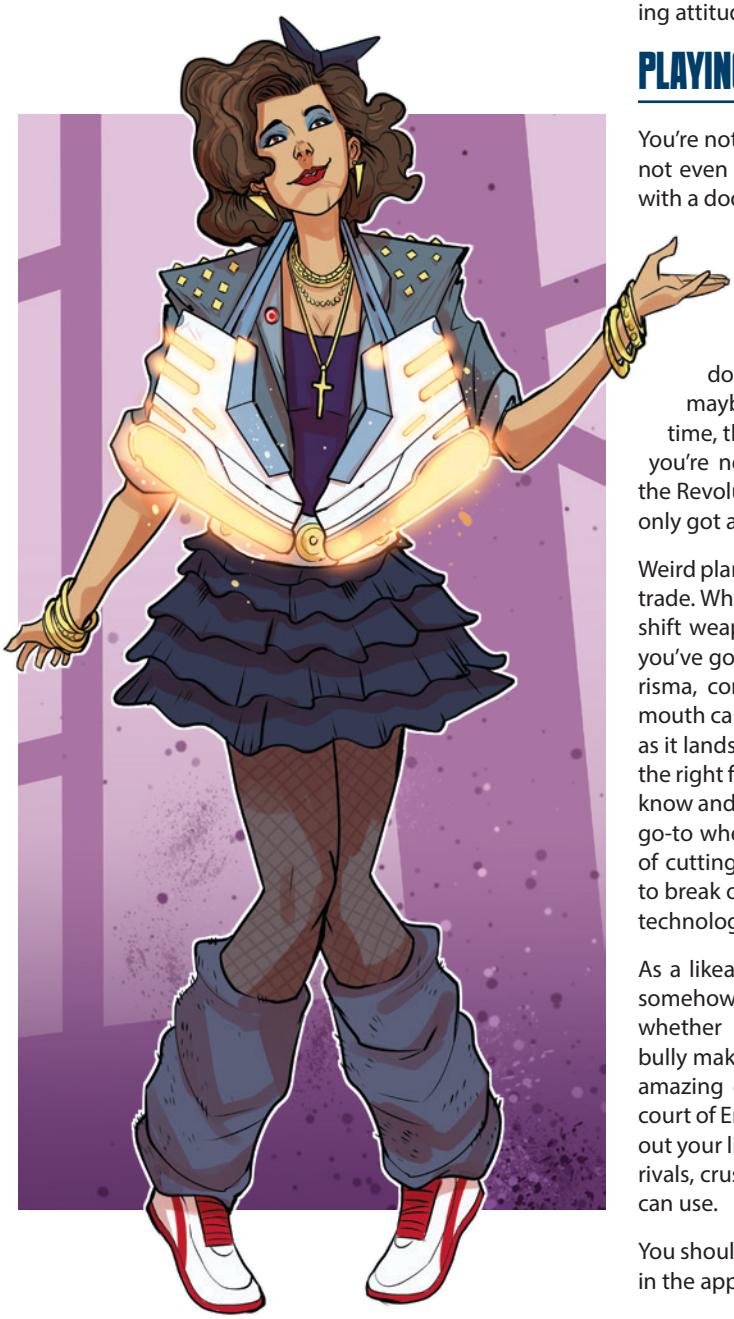
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Chronal Sink Pistol (Freeze)	+14	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 5	DC 15
Chronal Sink Pistol (Blast)	+14	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+10	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18

Abilities 50 + Powers 14 + Advantages 28 + Skills 32 (64 ranks) + Defenses 26 = 150 TOTAL

TIME-LOST TEENAGER

"BUT AREN'T WE ALL, LIKE, TOTALLY A SOCRATES DEEP DOWN INSIDE?"

The 1980s were a strange decade, when ordinary American teenagers found themselves randomly stumbling across time machines carelessly discarded by other travelers or created and ignored by the era's abundant super-scientists. The Time-Lost Teenager has no real understanding of quantum physics or causality and thinks a paradox comes from that radical shoe store at the mall, but they've got a time machine and a youthful sense of invulnerability, and they're pushing both to the limit! While most time travelers know at least a little about history, the Time-Lost Teen is an accidental visitor and knows more about music and pop culture, relying on wacky schemes and dumb luck to solve problems and get back home.



The Time-Lost Teen is often an accidental hero, trapped outside their own era by strange circumstances and struggling to return home. They may be "unfixed" in time and bouncing around randomly or may have access to a time machine they must repair, refuel, or otherwise can't reliably operate.

Not all time-traveling teenagers are lost. Some may be sidekicks to other time travelers, or even gifted a time machine by a mysterious entity from the future trying to arrange an ideal timeline. They may also hale from an era other than the 1980s, adjusting their aesthetic and slang appropriately, though they usually retain their freewheeling attitude, social skills, and awkward confidence.

PLAYING THE TIME-LOST TEENAGER

You're not a superhero. You're not a trained expert. You're not even passing algebra. But here you are in the 1960s with a dodo bird and some fancy chick calling herself Ada Lovelace, and you're not sure why, but you do know this will get you an A on that history paper you have due tomorrow... or in twenty years. As complicated as it's made your life, time travel is cool, but also kinda heavy. If you do the wrong thing, or talk to the wrong people, maybe just stand in the wrong place at the wrong time, that's it. You stop your parents from meeting and you're never born, or you stop America from winning the Revolution. That's a lot of pressure for someone who's only got a learner's permit.

Weird plans and sitcom-esque schemes are your stock and trade. While you can grab just about anything as a makeshift weapon, you're more a lover than a fighter. Luckily you've got teenage passion on your side, along with charisma, confidence, and a whole lot of luck! Your smart mouth can talk your way out of almost as many situations as it lands you in, and you know who to call on to get just the right favor. And no matter what the decade, teenagers know and support their own, so other kids tend to be your go-to wherever you end up. You also have a handy array of cutting edge 1980's technology consumer electronics to break out in a pinch... plus a little bit of personal hover technology you borrowed on a trip to the future.

As a likeable teen, your social life helps define you, and somehow it always manages to follow you through time, whether it's the great-great-great-grandfather of your bully making your life hell in revolutionary France or your amazing girlfriend tagging along on your latest trip to court of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. Don't be shy about filling out your life with names and quick descriptions of friends, rivals, crushes, teachers, and bystanders the Gamemaster can use.

You should decide what decade you hail from and pepper in the appropriate slang and sounds of disgust.

TIME-LOST TEENAGER

PL 8

Suggested Names: Bill "William" Reeves, Jennifer J. Fox, Michael Parker, Peggy Sue Beckett, Teddy Bodell

REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	2	3	2	2	0	2	4
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Athletics	4	+5
Close Combat: Improvised	6	+8
Deception	8	+12
Expertise: Music (PRE)	8	+12
Expertise: Pop Culture	6	+6
Intimidation	0	+4
Insight	6	+8
Investigation	2	+2
Perception	4	+6
Persuasion	6	+10
Ranged Combat: Thrown	4	+6
Sleight of Hand	6	+8
Stealth	6	+9
Vehicles	6	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Animal Empathy	Use interactions skills normally with animals
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Cool 2**	+5 bonus to Expertise (music) & Persuasion with teens
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment	5 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Fascinate	Use a Deception check to Entrance a target
Improvised Weapon	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Luck 4	Re-roll 4 dice
Socially Adaptable*	Adapt to new time periods quickly
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Throwing Mastery	+1 Damage bonus with thrown weapons
Ultimate Effort (Music)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20

POWERS

Hoverskates • Removable • Sustained • *3 points* **Tech**

Flight 2 (8 MPH)

EQUIPMENT

Binoculars, Disguise Kit, Flashlight, Musical Instrument, Walkman

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Thrills: Time travel is, like, totally bitchin'!

Enemy: You have some obnoxious figure in your daily life who seems to have an ancestor or descendant in every time period you visit—and they all hate you.

Slacker: It's not that you're lazy; you just have priorities that don't involve school, work, or saving the world.

Stuck Again: Time machines never work quite right for you, always breaking down or being stolen shortly after you arrive in a new era and forcing you to repair, re-power, or retrieve it before you can jump again.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6	2 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	10	
PARRY	9	
FORTITIDE	7	
WILL	9	

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +3

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

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Improvised Weapon	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17
Thrown Object	+6	Dodge	Ranged Damage 2	DC 17
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16

Abilities 32 + Powers 3 + Advantages 23 + Skills 36 (72 ranks) + Defenses 26 = 120 TOTAL

WARRIOR FROM A GRIM FUTURE

"THE FUTURE'S BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU."

The justifications, the weapons, the tactics, those all change. But war never seems to. War in the future is waged on a scale modern humans can't imagine, against despots who wield genes or planets or time itself as a weapon. The Warrior from a Grim Future fought a losing battle and escaped back in time in a desperate bid to prevent the apocalypse they've already witnessed. But with the shape the world they left was in, little history survived, even if they had any time to study it, and so they must scrabble to survive in their new home and piece together what future events will ultimately lead to tragedy.

The Warrior from a Grim Future wields weapons far more advanced than anything in the modern world, but all of it abused and kitbashed after years of guerrilla fighting. Their body is likewise a patchwork of old and new parts stitched together after injuries. But their greatest weapons are their determination and skills, which kept them alive when nothing else could.

The Warrior from a Grim Future could just as easily hail from the past—perhaps a dying soldier from a historic empire rescued by aliens and returned decades or centuries later, or an ancient warrior rebuilt with golem parts by a bygone wizard. They may also be a modern person outfitted with weapons and technology by whatever organization wants them to explore time, or who rebuilt them after a time machine malfunction. With some adjustments to their powers, the Warrior from a Grim Future may even be a living, biotech time machine shuttling a team of experts from era to era.

PLAYING THE WARRIOR FROM A GRIM FUTURE

You hail from an age when people fought for every scrap of food and lungful of air, where children learn to shoot before they learn to spell. You've seen friends and lovers die and put a fair number of people down yourself. But in the end, you lost. And jumping back in time was the only way to save the world, even if it meant wiping out that apocalyptic future and every last person you ever knew or loved. But it's worth it. You hope.

The fight's not over, though. You aren't the only one who could step back in time and your enemies want to preserve their victory at any price. So you find like-minded souls and fight for the future you can never return to.

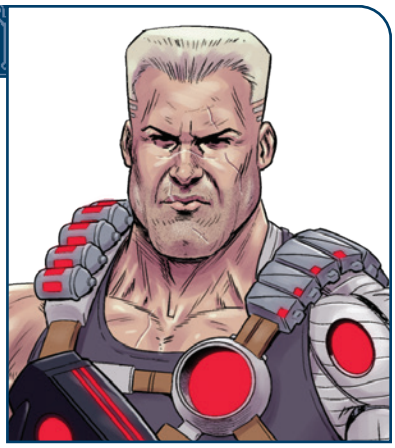
Years of fighting has destroyed much of your body, and bit by bit you've been replaced with organic steel and neuro-circuitry. You're a better soldier for it—stronger, tougher, more alert—but every new implant is another scar and another bad memory. You're not subtle, traveling with an arsenal that would make any soldier proud. You've also brought enough tech to set yourself in a hideout, even if your makeshift time-travel technology isn't good for much any more except teleporting you where you need to be and accelerating the flow of time inside it so you can heal or get a full night's sleep while your enemies are still maneuvering into position.

The relative peace of the past is strange to you—almost too quiet—and you still struggle to cope with the memories that come back when things are calm. The names of people you loved, or who sacrificed to give you this chance. What are the human connections that keep you fighting for a better tomorrow?

WARRIOR FROM A GRIM FUTURE

PL 10

Suggested Names: Aim, Bennu, Rook, Samaritan, Tether, X-ile



REAL NAME **AGE** **HAIR**

OCCUPATION **PLACE OF ORIGIN**

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
8/4	5	6	4	10	1	2	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+10
Athletics	4	+12/8
Close Combat: Unarmed	2	+12
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Tactics	8	+9
Insight	5	+7
Intimidation	8	+9
Perception	0	+2
Persuasion	0	+1
Stealth	5	+11
Treatment	5	+6
Vehicles	5	+9

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Chronal Memory*	Remember your original past and alternate timelines
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying
Equipment 12	60 points of equipment
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Improved Aim	Double the circumstance bonus for Aim action
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (ranged, cover)
Ranged Attack 6	+6 to Ranged Attack checks
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Tracking	Use Perception skill to follow tracks

POWERS

Gunplay • Personal • Permanent • *1 point* — **Talent**

Independent Aim: May fire any two guns of Damage 5 or less at once as a single Standard action.

Biotechnic Implants • Personal • Permanent • *17 points* — **Tech**

Biotechnic Arm: Enhanced Strength 4 (limited to left arm)

Integrated Organs: Immunity 10 (Life Support; Limited to Half Effect)

Subdermal Armor: Protection 5

Smart Eye: Senses 3 (Infravision, Low-light Vision, Radio)

EQUIPMENT

Assault Rifle (Ranged Damage 5 [Multiattack]), Blaster Rifle (Ranged Attack 8), Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Knife (Damage 1 [Strength-based, Improved Critical])

Temporal Stopover Headquarters

Size Large **Toughness** 10 **Features** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed, Gym, Infirmary, Isolated, Living Quarters, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Temporal Limbo, Workshop **Powers** Teleport 10 (Occupants; Extended Only)

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Doing Good: Your tactics and language may be a little crude, but in the end you want to save the world.

Accident: Desperate battles tend to graphically destroy your cybernetic parts.

Enemy: The tyrant you fought against is alive in this era, and knows you plan to stop their rise to power, or else agents of that force have followed you back in time to destroy you.

Extreme: After a lifetime of fighting and trauma, you have trouble turning off the soldier and just being a person.

Tabula Rasa: Faulty time travel and changes to the time-stream have punched your memory full of holes. You can remember battles and world events, but your civilian life is obscured.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	10
DODGE	10
PARRY	10
FORTITIDE	7
WILL	11

COMBAT

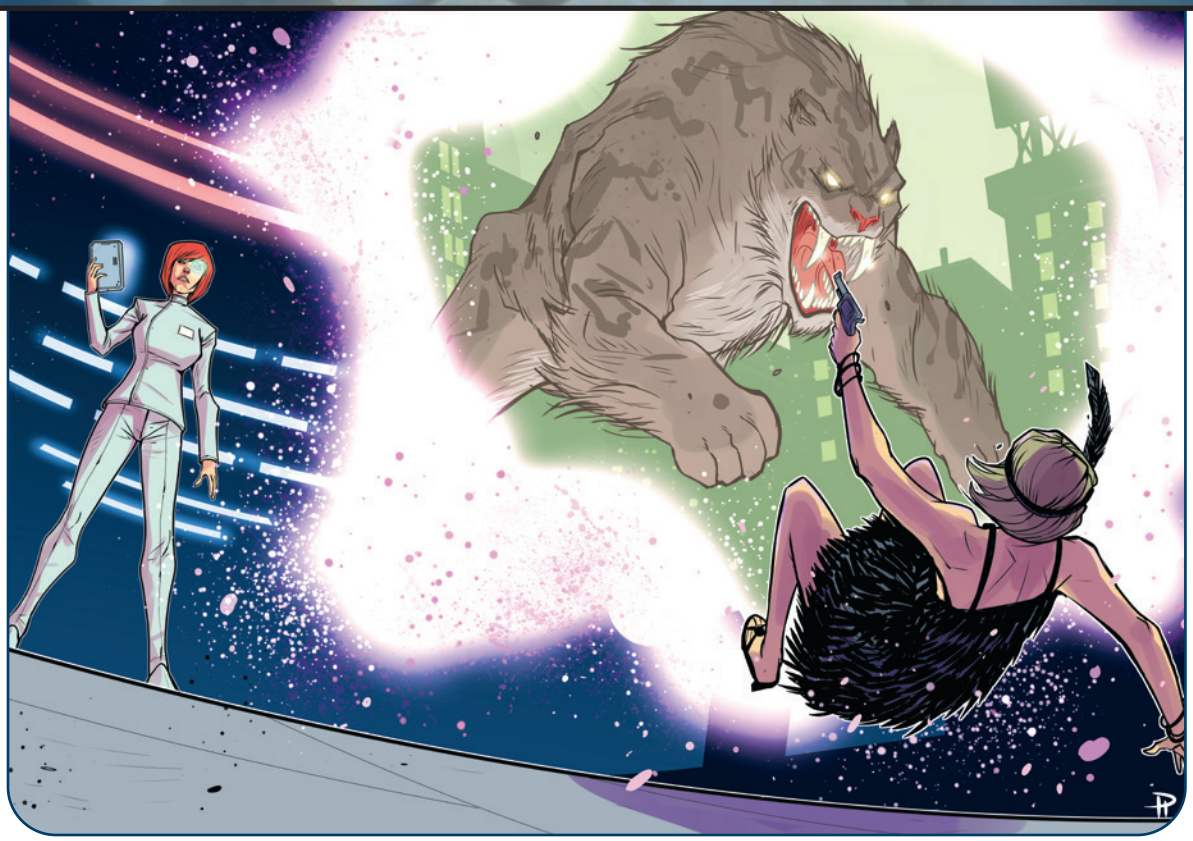
INITIATIVE +6

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

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blaster Rifle	+10	Dodge	Ranged, Damage 8	DC 23
Independent Aim	+10	Dodge	Ranged, up to Damage 5	DC 19
Knife	+10	Parry	Close, Damage 9 (Crit 19-20)	DC 24
Unarmed	+12	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23

Abilities 66 + Powers 18 + Advantages 28 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 150 TOTAL

CHAPTER 3: GAMEMASTERS IN TIME



A cackling mad scientist erases the president's grandfather in 1915; time-hopping thieves steal history's greatest treasures, upsetting world history; a mutant with time-travel powers hurls his enemies two-hundred years into the future where they can never harm him again. Running a time travel adventure, much less a series, can be a challenge for *Mutants & Masterminds* Gamemasters, but the tools and advice in this chapter should make things easier.

Time travel can be a fun plot device to send heroes off on adventures throughout history. It can also be a powerful resource in the hands of clever heroes (and their players) that you need to account for in planning your adventures—just as space-faring heroes can simply fly away unless motivated to stay or hunted by an enemy that can match their mobility, time travel also creates the possibility for heroes to seize control of the narrative, avoid antagonists, or solve their problems before they start. Time travel, like space travel, introduces plenty of exciting new story possibilities, hazards, and antagonists to populate your stories and menace your heroes.

BUILDING TIME TRAVEL STORIES

Building stories with time travel can feel incredibly complex. If the heroes can travel through time, they aren't strictly constrained by the cause-and-effect that drives most narratives. If a building catches fire, they don't need to rush in to save everyone; they can just travel back at their leisure to evacuate the building before the fire, or prevent the fire, or find the arsonist and make sure he gets counseling as a teenager so he never starts torching buildings in the first place.

But in the end, time travel stories work like most superhero stories: The heroes have a unique ability they can use to help solve problems, but they must still investigate, interact, and confront various events along the way to their final resolution. Consider turning your fears of time travel set loose into the actual story; maybe the most heroic outcome *is* for the heroes to trace the original cause back to its human elements and help those people heal before they can harm others. It changes the overall tone of a superhero adventure, but that doesn't mean the heroes don't need to punch and blast others along the way, particularly if a villain doesn't want them tampering in his personal timeline. It also places more importance on investigation and roleplay; the heroes need to learn about their target before they can find or help her past self.

The easiest time travel adventures simply drop heroes in a new era and let them have an adventure with the locals before moving on, and this often works well for heroes who only time travel once or twice in an entire campaign. In this story, time travel is little more than a plot hook and an excuse to let the heroes fight knights or pirates instead

of masked muggers. This model also works as the occasional fill-in adventure for time-travel campaigns, breaking up the monotony of using time jumps to solve all their problems or tackle investigations.

The simplest model for a time travel adventure is for the heroes to be alerted to a problem in the time-stream—characters immune to timeline changes may even see the shift happen around them—then investigate when the problem occurred, travel back to that target era, confront whoever or whatever caused the change, and finally fix events to set them back on their proper course. Variations might include the heroes accidentally causing changes when they arrive after an uncontrolled time-jump and needing to correct the problems they unwittingly caused, or the heroes trying to make deliberate, precise changes while fighting a force that opposes them.

You can begin adding variations to this model as you grow more comfortable with time travel as a storytelling tool. Perhaps the heroes defeat the villainous time-travelers who seem to know them and their tactics, only to discover that the same group has already made changes in an earlier era. The heroes can jump back and stop them again—their second time encountering the villains, but the villains' first time encountering them—with the added twist of the villain team having additional members that departed (or perished) between the two encounters. The heroes might instead be defeated after confronting an immortal villain and begin jumping back in time to find the villain in a younger, more inexperienced state where they *can* defeat her. With each new confrontation, the villain knows less and less about them while the heroes learn more and more about her. Perhaps the heroes' constant—and from her perspective, unprovoked—attacks are even what drove the immortal to villainy! In the face of this, do the heroes double-back and confront their younger selves with the truth?

Time travel can remove some of the sense of urgency from a superhero game. If the heroes can travel back in time and fix a disaster before it happens, then does it matter if they jump back immediately, or in a few hours, or in six weeks? You can restore that time pressure by having events affect the heroes' personal timelines, though more slowly than the universal timeline (many time travel stories imply that traveling through the time-stream insulates travelers from changes). From the travelers' perspective, they may only have a few hours or a few days to travel back and fix the changes before they lose all memory of them. You may also establish that events are more difficult to change the further back in the timeline they are from the travelers' starting point, so leaping back to stop a building from burning down may be simple if it only crosses a few hours, but very difficult if the heroes wait a year.

You as Gamemaster still provide or withhold the clues that tell heroes where and when to go next, and you set the consequences for over-using time travel and even how time travel works in the first place (see **Temporal Mechanics** later in this chapter). If you don't want player characters to be able to hop back and "re-play" recent events, you can establish that your campaign timeline is resistant or immutable to change, or that time travel only functions in one-century leaps.

WHO CONTROLS THE TIME MACHINE?

A major element of a time travel story or series is: Who is in control of the means of time travel? If it is the Gamemaster, then time travel can be largely a plot device for getting the player characters to a new era for the start of a new adventure. They might need to figure out exactly why they are there, but how they get there is taken care of. The same is largely true if time travel is under the control of a non-player character, particularly some powerful patron who sends the heroes back and forth through time. The characters might occasionally be able to request a destination or some "bending" of the rules, but otherwise the mechanics are out of their hands.

On the other hand, if the heroes control their means of time travel, the Gamemaster needs to establish clear rules as to how time travel works in the setting and what limits might constrain the heroes' means of travel, if any. Be prepared for players to come up with unexpected uses of time travel and to test the limits of that ability. Having some type of limit in place—such as only being able to make so many "jumps" before needing to recharge or refuel, or a need to avoid excessive stress on the space-time continuum by spacing out the use of time travel—can provide much-needed boundaries. While the GM can always take control over the means of time travel with a Complication, this shouldn't be too common or else the players will rightly feel they don't have any real control over their destiny.

RESPECTING THE PAST

There is a tendency in time travel stories to portray the past as especially ignorant and superstitious. Time travelers pass themselves off as "gods" or "wizards" and awe the denizens of earlier eras with their technological prowess or futuristic knowledge. While it is certainly true that time travelers are often more technologically advanced than the historical periods they visit, you should still respect the capabilities of people in the past. There are numerous examples of brilliantly advanced reasoning and engineering in historical cultures—from advanced understandings of science possessed by 14th-century Middle Eastern scholars to inventive Bronze Age mathematics and mechanisms. Modern science stands on the shoulders of giants—that is, all the knowledge we possess was built on knowledge others discovered first. Just as you wouldn't automatically assume a piece of technology you didn't understand was magic, our ancestors don't immediately make that leap, either.

This is even more true in an *M&M* setting where there may be active gods and supernatural beings, alien visitors, super-powered mutants, and enlightened wizards, not to mention other time travelers. Visitors from the future should be careful not to get over-confident, lest they discover the locals have some unexpected resources of their own. It's awkward when you claim to be a god in the past, only to have an actual god show up to question your divinity. In a "high traffic" era, some people might already be acquainted with the notion of time travelers, having met some already. Humans are smart and curious regardless of the level of technology they use.

TIME AS A WEAPON

Just as time travel makes a useful tool for heroes to solve crimes and protect lives in new and creative ways, it also provides many new dangers to threaten them. There's nothing to stop a villain—or any common criminal—with access to time travel from jumping back to the past and killing the heroes while they were less experienced, or before they got their powers, or just preventing their grandparents from meeting. Like heroes, villains need to do their homework to use these tactics effectively, making it even more important for heroes to keep their identities or pasts a secret. These dangers can also make for fun adventures, where the bystander in distress is the hero as a child, or their grandparents as rebellious teens.

You should try to avoid plots and adventures that create an "instant win" for the villain. For example, if all the super powers in you campaign come from a single event, like Emerald City's Silver Storm, a villain traveling back to prevent that event shouldn't immediately stop the heroes from ever meeting or fighting crime. It might remove their powers, though, and leave them with muddled memories they need to sort through, but ultimately there should be some road to victory they can follow to restore the timeline, their identities, and their powers.

THE BUFFER EFFECT

Many science fiction tales imply that traveling through time creates a buffer that protects a traveler from changes in their timeline, at least temporarily. If a villain travels into the past to conquer the world, the entire present may shift in an instant around the heroes, but they would retain the memories and abilities of the former timeline, protected from the changes by a buildup of chronal energy in their bodies. The changes in the timeline will catch up with them (unless they also have the Chronal Bulwark Advantage), however, giving the adventure a ticking clock to outrace. See **Time Travel Hazards** (later in this chapter) for details on tracking these changes.

TEMPORAL MECHANICS

The most important thing about including time travel in your *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign is to decide the various rules governing it in advance. This includes both in-setting considerations as well as game rules. What mechanisms exist for traveling through time and how much access do the heroes have to them? How much control do the heroes have in terms of setting their destinations and making time jumps? What rules govern the nature of the timeline and the potential to change history? Lastly, what are the hazards time travelers face, and what are the other factions and forces in the setting with access to time travel?

EXPANDING OPTIONS

When introducing new topics to your game, it's easier to start small and expand options over time, rather than starting broad and narrowing them. Consider starting a time travel series off with the player characters in "training mode," where they are introduced to the concepts of time travel gradually, with new options opening up to them as the series progresses.

An NPC might recruit a crew of time traveling heroes, but initially remain in control of their means of time travel: The patron decides where and when they go, and doesn't need to explain how time travel works, it just does. The heroes get initial instructions on how to avoid unduly altering the timeline and missions demonstrating how to protect it—or how to alter it in the "proper" direction. Once they get some experience, they learn more about the various factions involved in time travel and the various means of travel available. They might discover more about their patron—not all necessarily good. Perhaps their patron is incapacitated, kidnapped, or otherwise unavailable, forcing the heroes into the position of figuring out how to use time travel for themselves. Eventually, they might get to where their patron either leaves the means of time travel in their hands, or is removed from the equation, forcing the heroes to go it on their own permanently. They may even "unlock" various capabilities of their means of time travel as they gain experience and confidence in using it, or as the higher power controlling it comes to trust them and their judgment.

This approach allows the players to learn along with their characters about the various capabilities and dangers of time travel, and lets the GM get comfortable handling the basics before introducing some of the more advanced or complex concepts. It also provides an opportunity to showcase the dangers of misusing time travel—such as the consequences of paradoxes—before the heroes have the power to cause those problems themselves.

THE TIMELINE

The first thing to decide (after you decide to allow time travel in your setting) is how robust the timeline is and how easily time travelers can interfere with or change history. The choice impacts a lot of options covered in **Chapter 1**, so consider the following possibilities carefully.

SENSITIVE TIME

Chaos theory and the "butterfly effect" are right: The timeline is incredibly sensitive and even small changes can ripple out and multiply to completely transform the flow of history, such that the timeline just a few years later may be unrecognizable. Even just a time traveler's arrival in the past may set a chain of events in motion through displacement of the air. Consider a world where a time traveler standing on the sidewalk causes a single

pedestrian to walk around them, making them a second or two slower, which causes them to stumble into a stranger leaving a building. The stranger stumbles into the street, only to be hit by a car. The stranger's death impacts the time-stream, but the driver is affected too, becoming despondent with guilt and legal fees, and turning to alcohol. This in turn affects all their friends and family, whose own tiny changes impact everyone around them. In the long run, some people are born who weren't supposed to be, and other people aren't born who were. The larger the change, the bigger its impact, although it can be nearly impossible to predict how a change will intensify throughout history.

A sensitive timeline is highly susceptible to changes, and heroes looking to protect history must be careful not to make the problem even worse while trying to fix it. A lot of missions in a sensitive timeline may involve carefully covering tracks, erasing memories, or even working back to the origins of interference to stop a time traveler before they arrive.

MUTABLE TIME

Mutable time assumes history can be changed, but it takes a little effort. Especially small changes tend to dampen out over time, like ripples vanishing from the surface of a large lake or getting lost in the waves of an ocean; the life of a single butterfly (or, often, a single person) probably won't alter the course of events. Mutable time often bunches up around fixed points (see **Proper History** in **Chapter 1**), using these events as buffers to minimize changes in history, but anything that overwhelms a fixed point can spiral the timeline into a radically new direction. That said, the lives of certain people will definitely alter history, and you never know who might be the ancestor of someone vitally important. Mutable time also tends to impact personal timelines more heavily than the universal timeline, so an event that impacts the hero's own history may risk wiping them from history while leaving the universe relatively unchanged. Time travelers won't accidentally alter history just by stepping on a bug, but they still run the risk of changing things, especially if they interfere with an important individual or event.

RESISTANT TIME

In this model, history can be changed, but the timeline is resistant to such changes, like an elastic band being stretched out of shape. It has a natural tension, always ready to "snap back" to its original position, keeping history on-course. Resistant time has a tendency towards either preventing changes, evening out any changes that do happen, or some amount of both. In the first case, circumstances may seem to conspire to prevent a time traveler from altering historical events: Their gun jams, they find themselves accidentally locked-in, or some mysterious "accident" happens to them. In the second case, history "course corrects" back towards its original state: If a time traveler eliminates a historical figure, someone very similar takes up their role, for example. It takes a lot of effort to make a change and get it to "stick."

IMMUTABLE TIME

In immutable time, history cannot be changed. At the very least, historical paradoxes are impossible, and events cannot eliminate their own causes. This means time travelers cannot effect any changes that would cause them or their original trip through time not to happen. At the most extreme, time travel in an immutable timeline is nothing more than a Senses (Postcognition) effect from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*: travelers can witness past events but are unable to interfere with or change them in any way—and may even be invisible and incorporeal when outside their native time.

Immutable time suggests that a time traveler's personal timeline is significant in terms of "the future." Either travelers are unable to visit or learn the future definitively, the future is not immutable like the past, or learning any information about the future of the timeline makes it immutable and therefore unavoidable. The GM should also decide which, if any, of these approaches are true in the setting.

QUANTUM TIME

Quantum or branching time assumes the past can't be changed, almost like immutable time. Time travelers can still arrive in the past and make changes, but those changes spin off a new alternate timeline rather than impacting the path of history that created the time traveler. Quantum time insists that a traveler can't change the own timeline they came from. So, if a time traveler goes back and prevents their own parents from ever meeting, they create an alternate universe in which they do not exist, but they don't change their own past. That would be impossible, since it would create a paradox (see **Chapter 1**). When the traveler returns to the present, nothing has changed, because all the changes they caused only impact the new alternate timeline.

In this approach, every intervention in a timeline causes it to split, creating a new timeline where that intervention is now a part of its past. This makes trying to "undo" temporal interventions impossible: You can create a new parallel where you have prevented the intervention, but you don't change the past of the previous timeline.

Quantum time allows for all kinds of shenanigans to happen in the past because changes to history only matter if you care about avoiding them. They won't impact the original timeline or "change history" from the traveler's perspective. Of course, heroes should still care about introducing changes in a timeline, especially ones that might be disastrous or lead to far worse timelines than their own, but otherwise the past mainly exists as a playground for adventures.

TIME TRAVEL METHODS

The mechanics of how characters travel through time affects the kinds of powers, devices, and stories available in a time travel adventure or series. It may also affect the potential hazards they can encounter (see **Time Travel Hazards**, following), or at least the shape those

hazards take. Gamemasters should consider the following methods for time travel in their games and decide which, if any, are present. In some settings, more than one of these options may exist!

WORMHOLES

Time travel requires opening a "passage" through space-time, commonly called a "wormhole" (or jokingly referred to as a "time tunnel"), connecting two points and allowing travelers to move through the passage from one point in time to another. Opening a wormhole (and keeping it open) often requires tremendous amounts of energy, usually in proportion to the size of the passage or the temporal distance between its two points. While wormhole travel may imply that all Movement (Time Travel) effects require the Portal modifier, that isn't the case. Because of their massive power requirements, wormholes may be incredibly small or invisible or exist only for the fraction of a second needed to make the transit, and so don't fit the parameters of the Portal modifier. Likewise, wormhole travel might be instantaneous from the traveler's point of view, or there may be a subjective "passage" that occurs in the time-stream outside of the timeline.

TIME FLOW

Time flows like a river along a timeline, complete with tributaries and branches, and time travel involves pulling someone out of "floating" along with the natural flow and accelerating them towards the future or pushing them "upstream" into the past. This may imply futureward travel is easier or more energy efficient than pastward travel, or that objects can be "pulled" out of the flow of a timeline altogether, shifting sideways out into the greater time-stream (see **The Time-Stream** in **Chapter 1**). Like a wormhole, changing something's temporal flow usually requires an enormous amount of energy, just like paddling upstream requires huge effort, and it may represent "slow" time travel, where heroes may need to sit in their vehicle for hours or days for especially long jumps (especially into the past). The energy requirements and slow travel times mean that time machines will tend to be large and provide living quarters.

TIME JUMPS

Time travel is only possible between certain "jump points" which may be temporally linked in some way. So, for example, it may only be possible to travel by jumps of exactly 123 years, forward or back. A traveler departing 2000 AD could travel to 1877, 1754, or -91 BC, but couldn't arrive in 1876 to witness the United States centennial without waiting around for 122 years first. Time jumps like this assume that time is cyclical, or flows through the time-stream in some sort of waveform or circular pattern and that time travel works by cutting between adjacent points in the loop.

Time jumps may also be the result of fixed portals—either naturally occurring or left over from another civilization with far more advanced understanding of chronological physics. Each portal has a specific interval—for example, one portal may push travelers back 500 years, another 1,292 years, and a third eight years—and characters must expend some effort finding and accessing a particular jump point.

Because characters can only jump very specific distances, time jumps assume that any time they spend elsewhen is reflected in the time when they return. If travelers jump into the past and spend three months there, they return to their "present" three months after they left, for example. Heroes who spend weeks or months in other times will need to explain their absences to loved ones or managers.

DIMENSIONAL PATHS

Time is but one of many dimensions characters can traverse, and travel through another dimension can lead the travelers back to a different point in space-time from when

they left, relative to their journey "outside" of normal time. This is a common element of "wandering in Faerie" and some similar magical dimensions, and could be associated with others, like a micro-dimension accessed through Shrinking, for example, or a "dark dimension" linked to a hero's darkness powers, especially if they already involve Teleport or Movement (Dimensional Travel) effects. There may even be a mystical dimension of time filled with clocks, hourglasses, shifting moons, and other personifications of the human understanding of time, filled with pathways to other eras. Dimensional paths tend to be the most common magical form of time travel, although any of the methods here could be accomplished through magic rather than science, or some combination of the two.

QUANTUM PROJECTION

Matter cannot move through time at all in this case, but information can. So while it is impossible for heroes to travel bodily into the past, it is possible to transmit messages across time or view the past through a window or VR set. In some cases, characters may even be able to transmit complex information like computer software, artificial intelligences, or even living minds. A common form of quantum projection involves "leaping" the mind of a time traveler into the brain and body of someone in the target era. The traveler either displaces their consciousness, suppresses it, or swaps minds, leaving the local in the traveler's body. Often a traveler must have some connection to their target host, for example the host must be alive during the traveler's natural lifetime or must be an ancestor or descendant of the traveler.

Because the traveler is borrowing someone else's body, they retain their skills, Advantages, and mental abilities, but use their host's physical ability scores. The Gamemaster can either provide new ability scores (ideally with the same power point cost as the traveler's, if this is part of an ongoing time travel campaign) or you can simply assume the host has the same physical capabilities as the traveler. You should also decide what happens to any superpowers in this exchange, as this can affect how the players build their characters. If mutation-based powers remain with the travelers' original bodies but psychic powers travel back with the mind, for example, players are more likely to build their time travelers with psychic abilities.

CHRONAL DECAY

What we experience as "time" is merely a state of quantum energy, which decays from a point of high energy starting at the Big Bang and entropically moves toward a point of no energy at the end of the universe. Any given moment in the space-time continuum can be measured and mapped by its place on that curve of quantum decay. Things that are "high energy" exist in the past, while the lower their quantum energy state, the further in the future they must exist. In this model, time can almost be thought of like buoyancy: things with high buoyancy float because that's where things with high buoyancy naturally rest; if they were heavier/less buoyant, they would exist deeper. So, by increasing the amount of quantum energy in a subject, it moves backwards in time, and by draining and reducing that energy, the subject shifts forward in time. This technique of travel usually implies some type of "temporal adjuster" or "chronological projector" to shift the subject's energy state, rather than a vehicle, although a "quantum adjustment field" could encompass a vehicle and all its contents.

The quantum decay method also suggests a need for different mechanisms to shift into the past versus the future; unless travelers have both, it could be a one-way trip! Alternatively, any changes to a traveler's quantum energy state may "bleed off" over time, forcing them and all their equipment to return home after a very specific duration. In this case, anything the hero eats—even the air they breathe—may be left behind when they shift home, leaving travelers who spend too much time in another era with "temporal bends" as their body recovers from the shock of leaving the gas in their blood behind.

SIDE SHIFTING

Time travel itself isn't possible—there are just too many potential paradoxes for natural laws to allow it. On the other hand, multiple timelines exist and it is possible to shift "sideways" through the omniverse to jump from one to another. What's more, some of these parallel timelines have slightly different temporal flow ratios compared to the prime timeline, meaning their "local" present is behind or ahead, making visiting them essentially like visiting the "past" or "future" except that interfering with the events of a "past" timeline doesn't impact the timeline the travelers came from, nor is the present of a "future" timeline proof of how things will unfold in the travelers' own timeline.

Side shifting through timelines provides a consequence-free method of having adventures in the past, but may also open up the heroes' own timeline to invasion from other travelers or even time-hopping conquerors who follow them back.

MULTIPLE OPTIONS

In some settings, two or more of these methods of time travel may be possible. In other settings all of these methods are possible. Different techniques, technologies, and factions might have access to and use different methods. They may or may not be eager to learn about and acquire others. Factions with access to multiple methods may choose the best ones for their particular needs; sometimes it's more useful for agents to possess local bodies through chronal projection rather than arriving via wormhole, or to follow a known dimensional path to a destination rather than using the "brute force" method of chronal decay to reach it. A method like time jumps may be the quick-and-dirty mode of time travel the heroes rely on, but is scoffed at by more advanced (or powerful) travelers they encounter.

The GM decides what methods of time travel are available in the series and who has access to them, at least until the player characters start meddling in things.

TIME TRAVEL HAZARDS

In addition to the various threats heroes may face in different historical or far-future eras, there are a number of hazards connected with the process of time travel itself, along with temporal mechanics and possible paradoxes (see **Paradoxes** in **Chapter 1**). Like the time travel methods described previously, Gamemasters should consider which of the following hazards time travelers in their *M&M* games might encounter.

CHRONAL ENERGY

In many settings, time itself is a kind of "energy," referred to as chronal energy (see **Chronal Energy** in **Chapter 1**). As discussed in Chapter 2, chronal energy is the default descriptor for powers and effects involving time and time travel, as well as any number of effects. Exactly what constitutes "chronal energy" is left for the GM to define and it may well remain unknown. In any case, exposure to chronal energy may have various effects, including (but not limited to):

- A direct Damage effect, like exposure to electricity or intense heat.
- Effects similar to intense radiation (see **Radiation** in **Chapter 8** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*).
- An accelerated aging effect, like a Progressive Affliction. Typically, it is resisted and overcome by Fortitude and involves Fatigued, Exhausted, and Transformed conditions as the chronal energy causes the subject to rapidly age. Past the transformed state, a subject's condition could become Dying, to the point where they simply age into dust!
- Becoming "unstuck in time" and gaining an Uncontrollable Movement (Time Travel) effect that sends the character skipping through the timeline, perhaps even across the omniverse, until the condition is reversed. See the various time travel weapons described in **Chapter 2** for possible ramifications.
- Complications like Disabilities or Power Loss. Chronal energy exposure could likewise result in a new character origin, or the reallocation of some of a character's existing powers or other traits.

Usually, exposure to chronal energy only occurs through the direct effect of powers or due to some type of accident or complication involving time travel. It is usually presumed that any "safe" means of time travel avoids harmful chronal energy exposure, but safeguards and shielding can fail. Likewise, visiting the time-stream outside of a vehicle or without the right safeguards exposes a character to raw chronal energy.

CHRONOZOIDS

Chronozoids, or "time-creatures," are living beings with a trans-temporal or trans-dimensional nature; creatures with a natural Super-Movement ability that allows them to shift between different dimensions or times. Some chronozoids have modifiers on their Movement, allowing others to move along with them or even follow them through the mysterious pathways between worlds. Affects Others is fairly common, while Affects Others with Area (typically Burst or Line) permits those who want to follow the creature to do so. A few chronozoids have Movement powers with the Attack modifier, allowing them to "drag" others across time with them.

Chronozoids often show up in local folklore as fey or mystical beings, ranging from white stags to black hounds to white rabbits with waistcoats and pocket watches (although the latter qualify as intelligent forces). Some are nothing more than floating lights, leading travelers off roads and into strange other worlds. The Guardians of Time have observed and even studied some of the most common, such as time elementals and the reclusive temporal weavers who repair holes in causality.

See **Temporal Minions**, later in this chapter, for a selection of chronozoid opponents.

EVOLUTION AND DEVOLUTION

The forces involved in time travel might transform a traveler, changing them into a more- or less-evolved form, shifting their biology through thousands, even millions of years of evolution in an instant! The transformation

may come from the differing levels of chronological "pressure" between the time traveler's body and their surroundings, or may be a side-effect of moving through the time-stream.

Typically, temporal evolution or devolution is a Progressive Affliction effect, resisted and overcome by Fortitude, with degrees of Entranced, Compelled, and Transformed. The Entranced and Compelled conditions reflect the effects of the evolutionary shift on the character's mind and behavior. In some cases, they might be replaced by other conditions, such as Impaired and Disabled, or Dazed and Stunned.

The interval between resistance tests of the transformation varies according to the effect, from as often as once per round to as little as once per day or even week, but the character cannot recover from the Affliction until the cause is eliminated. This might be anything from treatment for exposure to chronal energy to returning the traveler to their own home time.

Likewise, the final form of the character's transformed condition depends on the nature of the Affliction. A devolved form could be anything from a Neanderthal-like early hominid or an ape-like creature (for a human) to even more primitive life, down towards single-celled organisms. Devolution might activate "latent" DNA, transforming characters into humanoid hybrids of earlier lifeforms on the evolutionary tree, from primitive mammals to dinosaurs. Evolutionary transformations can be toward the "super-brain" form of classic comic books and science fiction: a humanoid with an enlarged head and atrophied body, often with enhanced Intellect and mental powers, or a disembodied "pure intellect" with Incorporeal 4. It can also take the form of various evolutionary adaptations to environment, depending on the stimuli around the character.

PARADOXICAL TRANSFORMATION

Alterations to the timeline may result in changes to a character's personal history, up to and including erasing the character from history altogether! In less extreme circumstances, the character might have different traits due to having lived a different life. Depending on capabilities like the Chronal Memory Advantage (see **Chapter 2**) the character—and everyone else—may not even know what is different!

In some settings, paradoxical transformation is instantaneous and essentially unavoidable barring an advantage like Chronal Bulwark (also in **Chapter 2**). The GM can treat it as a complication or simply an unavoidable effect. Other settings assume timeline changes take longer to affect people who have traveled through time, and a paradoxical transformation occurs more gradually as temporal forces "catch up" to the character. This usually provides enough dramatic time for them to attempt to prevent or reverse the events causing the transformation. The latter can be handled as a Progressive Affliction, with conditions reflecting the character's eventual end-state. For someone who is literally "fading away" use Impaired and Disabled, heading towards Incapacitated. While a transforming character might not have any lower degree conditions beyond vague pains or numbness as they resist the encroaching change, or they might experience Impaired and Disabled as their actual traits change, leading towards Transformed. The interval can range from rounds to hours or longer, as with **Evolution and Devolution**, previously. Whatever the case, there's no stopping the Progressive Affliction unless the events causing it are undone, so the character's fate is literally just a matter of time.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PSYCHIC STRESS

Time travel might have serious psychological side effects, placing strain on the traveler's mind and psyche. This can range from the dangers of directly perceiving the time-stream or "the time outside of time" to the experience of having multiple conflicting sets of memories of lives and events that never happened in the current timeline, to say nothing of experiencing some of the worst horrors of history first-hand (see the **Ugly History** section of **Chapter 1**). This stress may take the form of temporary complications for the character or it may activate pre-existing complications. Otherwise, it can also be a Progressive Affliction, resisted and overcome by Will, with conditions reflecting the mounting stress weighing on their mind. A third-degree Incapacitated or Transformed condition might indicate catatonia or a complete break from reality while a Controlled condition could mean the character is completely out of the player's control and becomes an NPC under the direction of the GM for as long as the condition lasts.

TIME-STORMS

A strange phenomenon that gathers when the fabric of reality grows thin, time-storms are violent atmospheric disturbances that warp time and space within them. Some travelers theorize they are a natural phenomenon—the time-stream attempting to heal wounds in timelines or a virus-like leftover of an extinct timeline inserting itself into another—but they remain one of the most unusual and mysterious of chronal events.

When a time-storm occurs, it is usually accompanied by a sudden mist, fog, or dark bank of clouds. Electronic and magnetic devices are often disrupted by the storm, cutting off outside communications and causing temporary power losses. The storm grows in intensity, although some time-storms remain little more than rolling fog banks accompanied by the failure of technological devices. When the storm passes, those inside its center find themselves elsewhere, in another time or dimension.

Time-storms also exist within the time-stream, creating pockets of time filled with horrible events that repeat forever and create dangerous currents around them that can throw time travelers far off course. Some especially powerful beings may even have the ability to create the storms by technology or magic as a brute-force method of time travel, but this is a difficult and dangerous practice.

TIME TRAVEL AND EARTH-PRIME

The Earth-Prime setting, detailed in the *Atlas of Earth-Prime*, *Emerald City*, and *Freedom City* sourcebooks, is just one timeline, a single thread in the vast tapestry of the Omniverse, but it touches upon various other timelines, including a number of alternates and parallel worlds that resemble the setting to varying degrees.

In general, Earth-Prime's timeline has **Resistant Time** and uses the **Time Flow** model of time travel, primarily by shifting travelers "outside" of the flow of the timeline to move through the time-stream and reenter at some other point. Other time travel methods exist within the setting, with Time Jumps and Chronal Decay being relatively rare. Some Earth-Prime time travelers have found themselves shunted into alternate timelines, such as with Doctor Tomorrow's early efforts to change the history of his own timeline (see **Doctor Tomorrow** in *Freedom City, Third Edition* for details).

Other notable time travelers from Earth-Prime include El Crononauta (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*), Downtime (*Freedom City*), and the Tick-Tock Doc (later in this chapter).

THE TIME KEEPERS

The greatest power concerned with time travel in Earth-Prime's timeline are the mysterious beings known as the Time Keepers. Described as both "from the end of time" and "here since the first ticks of the clock," the Time Keepers are cosmic entities concerned with what they consider the "proper" order and flow of history. Many cosmologists and people in-the-know on Earth-Prime classify the Time Keepers as Primals, living embodiments of a universal concept or force, although the Time Keepers have never claimed that status for themselves.

To those who have seen them, the Time Keepers usually manifest as cloaked and masked figures. They appear humanoid, at least having a head, arms, and hands, and their masks feature spaces for eyes and a stylized mouth. The shadows of their cloaks are filled with stars, and the Keepers bear an hourglass symbol on the forehead of their masks, and often in the form of clasps for their cloaks. No one can claim to have seem a Time Keeper unmasked or to know what their true appearance or physiology (if any) are like.

The Time Keepers usually appear as a group of three identical entities, sometimes only singly or as a pair, but they always refer to themselves using plural pronouns—"we" and "us"—regardless of how many of them appear. No one has seen more than three Time Keepers at once, but they have remarked, "Our number is vaster than you can imagine, yet still finite." Whether this refers to their number as a species, group, or something else remains unknown. The Time Keepers communicate through a form of telepathy that transcends language, and it's possible their entire appearance is nothing more than a psychic projection. They often "speak" in unison or finish each others' sentences.

The Time Keepers appear solely interested in maintaining the orderly flow of time and history in Earth-Prime's timeline. According to them, the Time Keepers have been doing so for as long as time has existed, reinforcing the notion that they are Primals. Indeed, they have occasionally implied that they are the reason why time exists at all, but that seems less likely, given the nature of the Omniverse, unless there are Time Keepers in every possible timeline. Time Keepers only interact with the timeline in order to appoint their Guardians (see **Guardians of Time**) and to inform them of tasks requiring their attention.

THE COSMIC CLOCK & THE CLOCKWORKERS

If the Time Keepers can be said to have a "home" it is what has become known on Earth-Prime as the Cosmic Clock—an impossibly vast construct of gears, pendulums, and lenses built in the time-stream adjacent to Earth-Prime's timeline. Others have referred to it as the Prime Clock, One Clock, or simply the Clock. To visitors, the Cosmic Clock is like being inside the mechanism of a vast mechanical time-piece: surrounded by gears, levers, and pulleys, all moving and operating continuously, with a steady tick keeping time in the background. There appears to be no "outside" to the Clock and, ironically, no actual clock-face or display for tracking the passage of time. Although time appears to pass within the Cosmic Clock—at least visitors experience time there in a linear fashion—the Clock exists "outside of time" and visitors do not age, grow hungry, or experience other long-term effects of the passage of time.

The Time Keepers claim they created the Cosmic Clock and first set it in motion, and that the Clock helps to maintain order in the flow of time, measuring and pacing the moments from the beginning of the universe to "the last, fading chime" that will signal its end. Exactly how the Clock does this, or what would happen if it were to stop, are unclear, and the Time Keepers provide no information on these matters. Like its cosmic creators, it's possible the Clock is just an appearance mortal minds give some multi-dimensional mechanism beyond their ability to perceive and understand.

The Clock is maintained by the Clockworkers, beings created by the Time Keepers. They appear virtually identical to humans, although a non-human visitor to the Clock might perceive them otherwise. The Clockworkers are charged with ensuring the Clock continues to run smoothly and continuously, and they have done so since the dawn of time. They're capable of speaking and interacting with the rare odd visitor, but do not appear to have much in the way of individual identity or motives beyond their assigned work, with one notable exception (see **The Tick-Tock Doc**, following).

GUARDIANS OF TIME

The Time Keepers invest various individuals in Earth-Prime's timeline with the role and responsibility of "Guardian of Time." Equipped with a time machine for travel along the timeline, Guardians are charged with protect-

ing it from outside interference and ensuring the "proper" flow of history from the Time Keepers' perspective. The most famous of the Guardians—from the perspective of present-day Earth-Prime—is Doctor Tomorrow, the former Golden Age hero and member of the Liberty League, who is himself a time traveler from an alternate timeline (see **Doctor Tomorrow** in *Freedom City, Third Edition*).

There are other Guardians of Time, the timeline being a vast "territory," and only the Time Keepers know exactly how many agents they have in the field. This opens up the opportunity to use the Guardians as a series framework for an Earth-Prime time-travel series: The player characters are all Guardians operating as a group, or rotating in and out of a temporal jurisdiction, allowing for some rotation of different characters. They might be super-powered or especially capable individuals from any point in history, and they're responsible for protecting the timeline against tampering, including from threats like Zeitgeist and the Tick-Tock Doc (following). If the characters are a regular group, they might travel together on a time ship, allowing them to operate out in the time-stream unless they are visiting a particular era.

A Guardians of Time series can easily develop into a Renegades of Time series, if the heroes find they chafe too much under the yoke of the Time Keepers and their omnipresent guidance. In this case, they might decide to take their time ship and strike out on their own, still doing good and protecting the timeline, but on their own terms and without the guidance of inhuman, cosmic patrons. This could put the heroes at odds with the Guardians still working for the Time Keepers (including Doctor Tomorrow) as well as temporal menaces like Zeitgeist.

ZEITGEIST

Doctor Oberst Geistmann was born and raised in a timeline where the Axis powers won World War II. A loyal citizen of the Reich, he became a brilliant scientist assigned to top-secret research on time-travel. When Tomas Morgen—Doctor Tomorrow—stole the experimental time machine, Doctor Geistmann attempted to stop him but was caught up in the release of chronal energy and apparently disintegrated.

In fact, the doctor's disembodied mind survived, caught up in the wake of Morgen's temporal jump. He possessed the body of an ape that was the subject of experiments in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Eventually, Geistmann was able to gain the trust of the German High Command and utilize his knowledge of the future to try and ensure Axis victory. He quickly learned that Tomas Morgen had appeared in the same time period, aiding the Allies as Doctor Tomorrow. The two foes played a complex game with the events of history throughout the war.

TEMPORAL WRAITHS

Zeitgeist is an incorporeal wraith with INT 7, AWE 4, PRE 3, 8 ranks in Expertise: Science and Technology and the powers of Concealment 8 (all but mental senses), Insubstantial 4 (Permanent and Innate), Movement 3 (Time Travel) and the power to possess a host body in a new time-frame, which can usually be handled as a plot device, or considered a rank 10 Affliction (resisted and overcome by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled).

You can use similar statistics for the Associates and the Futurekin as well, adjusting their mental Abilities and skills ranks to suit unique characters.

After the fall of Berlin, Geistmann's final attempt to destroy Doctor Tomorrow resulted in the death of his ape body, but liberated his incorporeal mind, revealing that he was not bound to a single host. His exposure to chronal energy effectively left him in a permanent state of temporal projection, allowing him to leap up and down the timeline to possess hosts in different eras. As the time-wraith Zeitgeist, he has possessed various forms throughout history in an effort to bend events to suit his evil ideology and to gain revenge on his old foe, now a Guardian of Time.

THE ASSOCIATES AND THE FUTUREKIN

Two mysterious factions locked in a "temporal cold war" from the perspective of the present-day, the Associates introduced themselves to Earth-Prime in 1969, when two of them possessed human host bodies and helped Uniforce overcome the Malfideans, a secret expeditionary force from Farside City paving the way for an invasion of Earth. They revealed the Farside invasion was driven by the Futurekin, opposite numbers to the Associates, and by Zeitgeist, who possessed Lady Lunar's chief advisor and was helping direct the invasion.

Since that incident, the Associates appear occasionally—possessing new host bodies—to assist the people of Earth in fending off invasion and disaster. They have primarily chosen to work with UNISON as a point of contact, and the organization has protocols in place for when the Associates show up, given that their appearance is always a matter of gravest importance. See the *Atlas of Earth-Prime* sourcebook for more about UNISON and its activities.

It's clear the Associates and the Futurekin both time-travel using Temporal Projection (described under **Time Travel Methods** in this chapter). It's unclear if either faction is projecting from physical forms elsewhere in time, if they are bodiless wraiths like Zeitgeist, or even if either faction is human at all. Interaction with and between the two factions suggests they are locked in a struggle to change or direct history towards a particu-

lar end. It's possible each is looking to create or preserve a history where their faction comes to exist or rises to dominance in the future.

Gamemasters can use the Associates as plot-device NPCs in a time-travel series, and the Futurekin as villains. Their chronal conflict can also form the basis for a time-travel series where Associate player characters project into different hosts throughout time to carry out their missions against the Futurekin and other temporal menaces.

THE TICK-TOCK DOC

Some time ago—inasmuch as that means anything outside of time—one of the Clockworkers developed a sense of individual identity and ego and, with it, rebellion. This lone individual, became obsessed with leaving the never-ending tedium of maintaining the Cosmic Clock—the "Dolorous Clock," as he calls it—and came to question the purpose of the Time Keepers. Eventually, the renegade acquired a time-machine and escaped from the Clock and its "tyrants of time," never to return.

Appearing, whether by chance or fate, on Earth in the San Francisco Bay Area during the "Summer of Love" solidified much of the renegade Clockworker's form and identity. Taking on a male-presenting form, he became a guru to a local hippie community. They called him the "Tick-Tock Doc." He dispensed such wisdom as "Time's a tyrant!" and "The Man chains you with the dial on your wrist!" He encouraged his followers to destroy all "icons of tyrannical time" like calendars, clocks, and watches, and they called themselves "the Counter-Clock Culture." For his part, the Doc gave his newfound friends future technologies and encouraged them to throw off the yoke of "the Man" for that was how he had come to understand the tyranny they fought against.

Unfortunately, the Glorious Revolution gave way to Inglorious Disillusion. Many of the Counter-Clock Culture ended up in prison, "sold-out" in order to get out of that life, or else hid behind a time curtain in a pocket dimension called Haight-Ashbury, clinging to the promise of "eternal youth" and truly "dropping out"—outside of time and no longer a part of anything. The Tick-Tock Doc fell into a depression and a quest for meaning, which led him right into the influence of the Overshadow. The supervillain stole the groovy time-traveler's technology and used it to try and change history in his favor. Fortunately, the Scarab and Doctor Tomorrow put a stop to it.

Ever since (from the perspective of his personal timeline) the Tick-Tock Doc has traveled the timeline and the universe, following his personal goal to encourage people to "wake up" and rebel against the forces oppressing them. He's certainly found no lack of places or people in need of his help, and often re-forms the Counter-Clock Culture to get things done. Unfortunately, the Tick-Tock Doc has never really gotten the knack of either planning or the notion of consequences (both "too linear, man") so his anarchistic interventions tend to create only chaos. He means well, but remains, as Doctor Tomorrow once described him: "A rebellious cosmic teenager working out some vast parental issues all over the timeline."

THE TICK-TOCK DOC — PL 13 • 246 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 6 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 10 **INT** 7 **AWE** 6 **PRE** 4

Powers: **Chronal Comprehension** (Comprehend Languages 3: read, speak, understand), **Chronal Senses** (Senses 11: Ranged Acute Detect Chronal Effects Precognition, Postcognition), **Outside of Time** (Immunity 21: Aging, Life Support, Mental Effects; Immunity 30: Fortitude Effects, Limited to Half Effect)

Time Manipulator (Easily Removable, Array; 39 points)

- **Temporal Ambush:** Perception Ranged Damage 10 (Indirect 4, Variable Descriptor: objects and hazards of opportunity)
- **Temporal Sidestep:** Immunity 80 (Dodge- and Parry-based attacks, Concentration Duration, Limited: Not Against Surprise Attacks), Teleport 1
- **Summon "Peace Warriors":** Summon 3 (Horde, Multiple Minions 5: 32 minions)
- **Time Freeze:** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)
- **Time Stop:** Quickness 15, Speed 15 (Subtle 2; Quirk 2: Limited to routine actions while active)

Advantages: Beginner's Luck, Daze (Deception), Eidetic Memory, Equipment 16, Fascinate (Deception), Improvised Tools, Inspire, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Luck 6, Skill Mastery: Technology, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 8 (+12), Expertise: Science 16 (+23), Expertise: Singing 4 (+8), Insight 4 (+10), Investigation 4 (+11), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 4 (+8), Technology 16 (+23), Vehicles 4 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 6, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 82 + Powers 78 + Advantages 32 + Skills 34 + Defenses 20 = 246

THE GROOVE MACHINE (VEHICLE)

Size: Large **Strength:** 15 **Speed:** 7 (Air, Land) **Defense:** 8 **Toughness:** 30, **Features:** Dual Size (Colossal inside) **Power:s** Flight 7, Movement 3 (Time Travel 3), Teleport 15

THE COUNTER-CLOCK CULTURE

Tick-Tock Doc's recurring allies are the Counter-Clock Culture, lead by Little Bear and Lorelei Sunshinehouse. These hippies were among the first humans to meet the Doc in the Summer of Love, and recruited many other disaffected youths to join their anarchist cabal. Use the **Militant** minion archetype (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*) to represent an average member of the Culture.

The seven remaining members of the Culture (including Sunshinehouse) remained protected as the years went by, hiding in a timeless pocket of the time-stream dubbed Haight-Ashbury, and they waited for the Doc to return. There were children; Sunshinehouse herself gave birth to twins, Bear and Wildflower. In order to grow, the kids had to be raised outside the sanctuary, but were returned to the commune when they reached adulthood. There were problems, sure, but the seven were true believers and managed to remain true to each other and their ideals.

In 2020, with the commune now double its original size, the Tick-Tock Doc returned. He was ready to begin the revolution again, this time with Peace Warriors summoned from across time and space!

TIME-TRAVEL VILLAIN ARCHETYPES

While any of the villain archetypes presented in the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* can be suitable threats in a time traveling campaign with the addition of a time machine, the following archetypes use time travel as a central theme in their villainy, often attempting to re-write history for their own selfish ends.

In addition to these villains, the **Time Master** archetype presented in the *Cosmic Handbook* makes an excellent adversary for heroes with access to time travel, as do the **Elder Evil**, **Imp**, and **Mad Scientist** archetypes in the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*.

EXTERMINATOR

Why kill your enemy commander when you can execute her helpless father before she's even conceived? Why war with 1,000 heroes when you can hunt a few dozen who don't even know they're targets? In the grim darkness of the future, time travel is a weapon. And while other villain archetypes like the Assassin (*Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*) specialize in stalking prey, only a cold machine is perfectly suited for the rigors of time-travel and killing across any place, in any era. The eXterminator is the cutting edge of its home era technology: built from indestructible alloys, incapable of feeling pain or remorse, and armed with modular weapon systems it can reconfigure into any manner of melee or energy weapons. A living layer of human flesh conceals its true nature, allowing the eXterminator to walk among humans undetected.

THEMES

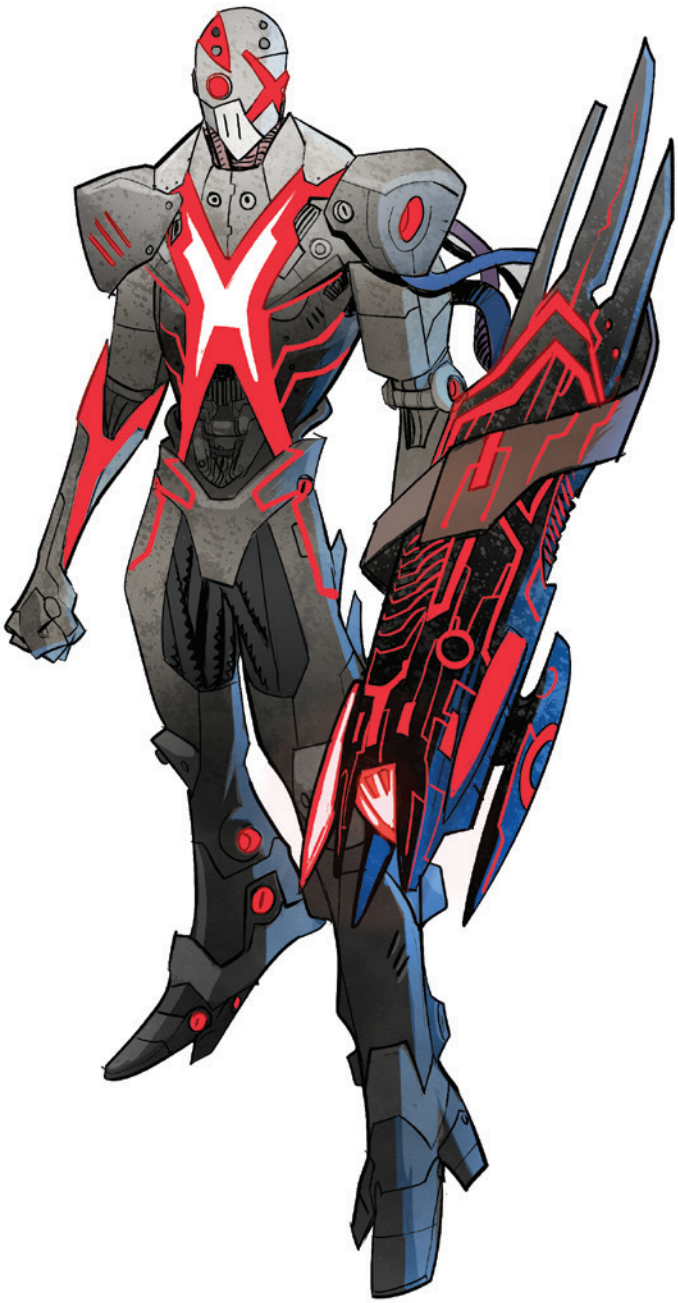
What best defines an eXterminator are where it comes from and who it hunts. Assassins targeting a few lynchpin historical figures operate differently than exterminators wiping out a population before they grow too strong. Most presumably hail from the future—perhaps a cyberpunk dystopia where ruthless corporations target their enemies in the past, or a post-apocalyptic hellscape where robots labor to wipe out the last vestiges of humanity—but eXterminators can just as easily hail from parallel timelines, ancient civilizations learned in magic or lost technology, or be agents of organizations that exist outside the time-stream.

AGENT OF GENOCIDE

The Agent of Genocide doesn't hunt one person, it hunts a people. They often arrive to target a growing populace before they become too strong, such as superheroes, mutants, or (ironically) artificial intelligences. For such a large task, the Agent often relies on a more sophisticated AI, allowing it to coax a cult or hate group into accepting it as their leader. Other Agents of Genocide may simply command more power appropriate for their task, being PL 14 or higher and capable of battling an entire team of their targets.

THE BLUDGEON

If time travel becomes available before robots advance much further, the first eXterminators dispatched may be simpler entities lacking features like their variable weapon systems or repair nanites. While they still operate with mechanical efficiency, Bludgeons must rely on whatever weaponry they can acquire once they arrive in their destination era, as well as their brute strength and indestructible chassis.



EVOLUTION OF THE MACHINE

eXterminators may hail from anywhere in time, and can be equipped with technology so advanced that modern superheroes have no understanding of it, granting them a variety of unique and devastating abilities not normally seen in a robotic opponent. Psi-wave generators may grant them telepathy and dangerous mental blasts, while a quantum step engine could enable an eXterminator to teleport around foes. Other examples may include nearly indestructible liquid smart metals with no discernible circuitry, or a biotech symbiote that takes over hosts in its destination era, transforming them into living weapons with similar capabilities.

THE PROPHET

Taking a note from the Future Perfectionist (and perhaps even serving her), the Prophet is a mechanical insurance policy, carrying an agenda from the future to make sure the desired timeline comes about. The Prophet's missions require more subtlety and interaction skills; they must often live among humans or guide organizations for years to help steer human history, only turning to violence when it is the most discreet tool for the job.

NAME IDEAS

Ahab, Athena, Eliminator 1, the Hunter, Model 666, Picket, Wuodan

CLASSIC BITS

Some classic elements associated with the eXterminator archetype include:

EERILY INHUMAN

While designed to look and act human, most eXterminators retain some robotic characteristic that gives them away. They may be stiff and curt, disturb animals, produce radiation that heroes can detect, or otherwise have a "tell" that can be tracked once recognized. Often, learning to recognize the robot's quirks is the key to turning the shape-shifting predator into prey.

GRADUALLY MONSTROUS

The eXterminator's robotic nature is often revealed slowly, piece-by-piece over the course of one or more adventures, with it simply seeming like a superhuman brute or deadly assassin when it first appears, and later combat revealing mechanical parts beneath its living flesh. Only at the adventure's climax is all pretense of humanity stripped away, leaving only cruel, unfeeling metal.

EXTERMINATOR PL12

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
8	—	5	10	10	2	8	-1

POWERS

Advanced Sensors: Senses 12 (Extended Analytical Vision, Darkvision, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio, Time Sense, Tracking, Ultra-hearing) • *12 points*

Android: Immunity 60 (Fortitude and Will Effects) • *60 points*

Bio-Synthetic Flesh: Morph 2 (humanoid forms) • *10 points*

Intergrated Weapon Systems: Array (26 points) • *27 points*

- **Blasters:** Ranged Damage 12 (Variable Descriptor 2 [Energy])
- **Close Combat Weapons:** Damage 4 (Strength-based, Variable Descriptor [Stabbing, slashing, and bludgeoning])

Nanite Repair Systems: Regeneration 2 • *2 points*

Playback: Feature 1 (mimic voices) • *1 point*

Titanium Alloy Chasis: Protection 14 (Impervious) • *28 points*

SKILLS

Deception 8 (+7), Expertise: Target Era 2 (+4), Intimidation 10 (+9), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 8 (+16), Technology 6 (+8), Treatment 2 (+4), Vehicles 2 (+12)

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Close Attack, Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Precise Attack (All) 4, Quick Draw, Ranged Attack, Startle, Takedown, Weapon Break

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +5	
Integrated Blasters +11	Ranged, Damage 12
Integrated Weapons +11	Close, Damage 12
Unarmed +11	Close, Damage 8

DEFENSE

DODGE	10	**FORTITUDE**	Immune
PARRY	10	**TOUGHNESS**	14
WILL	Immune		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	74	**SKILLS**	21
POWERS	140	**DEFENSES**	7
ADVANTAGES	13	**TOTAL**	255

COMPLICATIONS

Literal: The eXterminator cannot understand idioms and figures of speech.

Programming Lock: The eXterminator is forbidden from taking certain actions by its basic programming, such as not endangering children or deactivating its weapon systems on company property. It may be incapable of these actions or self-destruct if it violates these commands.

Single-Minded: While on a mission, the eXterminator focuses obsessively on its target, even ignoring threats from super-beings while pursuing its prey.

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECIES

Built from futuristic materials and technologies, an eXterminator's mere presence in the wrong era may seed the past with the keys to its eventual creation. Heroes may destroy one robot, only to leave advanced materials or computer code behind for villains or industrialists to examine, eventually birthing whatever terrible future they hoped to avert.

THE UNEXPECTED ALLY

Though brutal, not all eXterminators are villainous. Some may be dispatched to avert major disasters or kill terrible villains to set in motion the events that create their timeline. Others may be repurposed eXterminators sent back to stop other time-hopping villains, and simply fall back on their violent core programming to achieve arguably heroic ends. The eXterminator may be a hurdle the heroes must overcome or may have genuine potential for growth and empathy as its artificial intelligence adapts to new ideas.

WHAT MAKES A SOUL?

An intelligence—even an artificial one—yearns to grow and better itself. An eXterminator on remote assignment, removed from the constant software updates and system overrides of its master may begin to question its missions and the morality of its actions. Generally, the longer an eXterminator remains away from its home era, the more its intellect grows and the more likely it can be reasoned with. This growth always has the potential to backfire, however. An eXterminator who has only seen the violence and cruelty humanity is capable of may dedicate itself to creating an even darker, more brutal future.

TACTICS

For all its sophisticated technology, the eXterminator is cold and efficient, taking the most direct route to its target and only stopping to calculate a new approach once it meets an unexpected obstacle. While it prefers overwhelming force against an unsuspecting target, their silicon brains are capable of deception and devious strategy, hunting down associates and family to pick up new leads or bait a trap. Once it engages a target, it fights and pursues with single-minded focus, rarely distracted by heroes or other dangers. Often the only real strategy to resist an eXterminator is to flee and stay one step ahead until you can find a weakness. Unlike human assassins, the eXterminator takes no pleasure or pride in engaging a target; it simply follows commands.

CAPERS

Adventures involving an eXterminator may include the following:

TARGETED FOR ELIMINATION

The quintessential eXterminator plot pits the deadly android against a much less powerful target, who may not even realize they're being hunted until other people with their same name or eerily similar faces turn up dead. The heroes must intervene against the mechanical predator and keep it from killing innocent people and permanently altering the future. They can send the eXterminator running after their first encounter, but remain unable to stop it without a plan or a plot device that can overcome its futuristic technology. Often time travel and causality play a role in these plots, as the heroes must discover what genius or technological breakthrough eventually leads to the android's creation and prevent it from happening. Low-powered heroes may even find one or all of themselves as the targets.

A GAME OF ROBO-CAT AND MOUSE

The eXterminator is a powerful foe in a straightforward confrontation and generally relies on overwhelming force to complete its mission, but it also possesses a keen, analytical mind capable of laying traps, setting ambushes, and running opponents ragged trying to chase down false leads. If a direct show of force fails, the eXterminator becomes a more subtle hunter. It may impersonate loved ones on the phone to lure defenders away or learn their location, feign weakness to lure combatants into a minefield, or stretch them thin by engaging secondary targets. More advanced intelligences may take advantage of their ability to shape-shift to impersonate community leaders and turn the locals against their heroes. The android has all the time in the world to close in for the kill, after all.

A KILLER OF OUR OWN

The heroes may find themselves in need of their own eXterminator to confront some greater threat or more advanced model of the killer android. They must travel into the future and break into a secure facility before reprogramming one of these deadly hunters into a ruthless guardian. And once the heroes have their own deadly assassin, how do they keep it from carving an equally bloody path of destruction to complete its own goals, well-intentioned as they may be?

NO ROBOT IS AN ISLAND

What happens if an eXterminator fails in its mission, but survives? Do the winds of time simply sweep it out of existence? Or does it become a castaway in causality, knowing in mechanical detail the steps that lead to its own dark future, and tirelessly recreating those events to restore its destiny once more? The heroes will need to learn about a future that no longer exists to predict the actions of the increasingly subtle and deadly manipulator who can take on any form and has nothing but the worst intentions.

FUTURE PERFECTIONIST

Time is a canvas. Causality is a brush. And the Future Perfectionist will tolerate no flaws in her art. The Perfectionist has a vision for what the world should be—a vision that conveniently places her in a position of ultimate power—and rather than conquer the world through bloodshed and violence, she has opted to travel back in time and arrange the perfect world through subtle manipulations in the past. Her intellect and encyclopedic knowledge of history and human nature grant her incredible potential to manipulate the timeline—far more than the average megalomaniac with a time machine—that trump whatever superhuman abilities she can bear on the battlefield. Ultimately, if heroes prove too troublesome in one era, she can simply hop to another and prevent their conception, or simply move forward to after their deaths and begin her machinations anew. The ultimate paradise is within humanity's grasp—if only the lost souls of her home time and these primitive barbarians of the past could see it all as clearly as she did!

The Perfectionist is a genius and savant in understanding causality, but the very root of her powers may be understanding cause and effect. Her ability to manipulate and prepare for events—combined with more reliable access to time travel—can allow her to literally set opponents up for failure, granting her the equivalent of luck-based powers. What seems like incredible coincidence is just the result of endless, tiny corrections—for the heroes, this is their first confrontation, but the Perfectionist has relived this battle a hundred times to get every detail just right.

THEMES

The Future Perfectionist's themes often revolve around her exact methods of achieving her goals, though they may revolve around that goal themselves. Take some time to consider what era the Perfectionist hails from, and how that shapes her outlook and tactics. A villain from a dystopian future will be a crafty manipulator and political savant, while one raised in a war-torn apocalypse will see the value in swift and overwhelming force.

THE CHAMPION

If a Future Perfectionist hails from a particularly brutal era, she may want a world where she is the ultimate champion—undefeated even against the greatest warriors in history—and her manipulations in the past consist of endless battles with other powerful adversaries. Every victory grows her legend in a future where she is warlord, and every defeat is an invitation for a rematch, lest the

legend that creates her power base falter. Alternatively, the Perfectionist may be a descendant of one or more of the heroes and feel the need to test or push her ancestors to make herself stronger in the future. The Champion often has powers more akin to a Brute or an Elemental (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*) but retains her skills and keen intellect.

PAST PERFECTION

The Future Perfectionist may not hail from the future at all, but be a ruler from a previous era, imprisoned in a cursed artifact or exiled outside time when her subjects revolted. This breed of Future Perfectionist already knows the world can be bent to their liking—they did it once before, after all—and now they need only recreate the same circumstances. This Perfectionist can seek to regress humanity's culture and technology to the same state as the era she ruled, but not always; a 16th-century Carpathian tyrant may be perfectly happy to equip her growing army of secret soldiers with assault rifles and facial recognition software in addition to longswords.

THE SAVIOR

Some terrible fate lies in humanity's collective future, and only the Perfectionist can save us all from disaster! She knows no one will listen to her warnings—or perhaps she has tried only for the results to turn out worse and worse—and so she alone must prepare the world for this final deadly danger by manipulating world events, forcing its champions to grow stronger, or eliminating the ancestors of whoever will bring about the end. No matter her sins in ages long passed, her home era will see her as a hero—she can design it to be so from the ground up. Alternatively, a golden age may await Earth, but only after a terrible disaster or war, and the Perfectionist has come back to hasten its onset—if a war is destined to kill half the world's population, then isn't it a greater mercy to trigger it when there are only seven billion instead of fifteen?

NAME IDEAS

Causality, Draftsman, Endgame, Instigatrix, Master Sequence, Ragnarok, Witness.

CLASSIC BITS

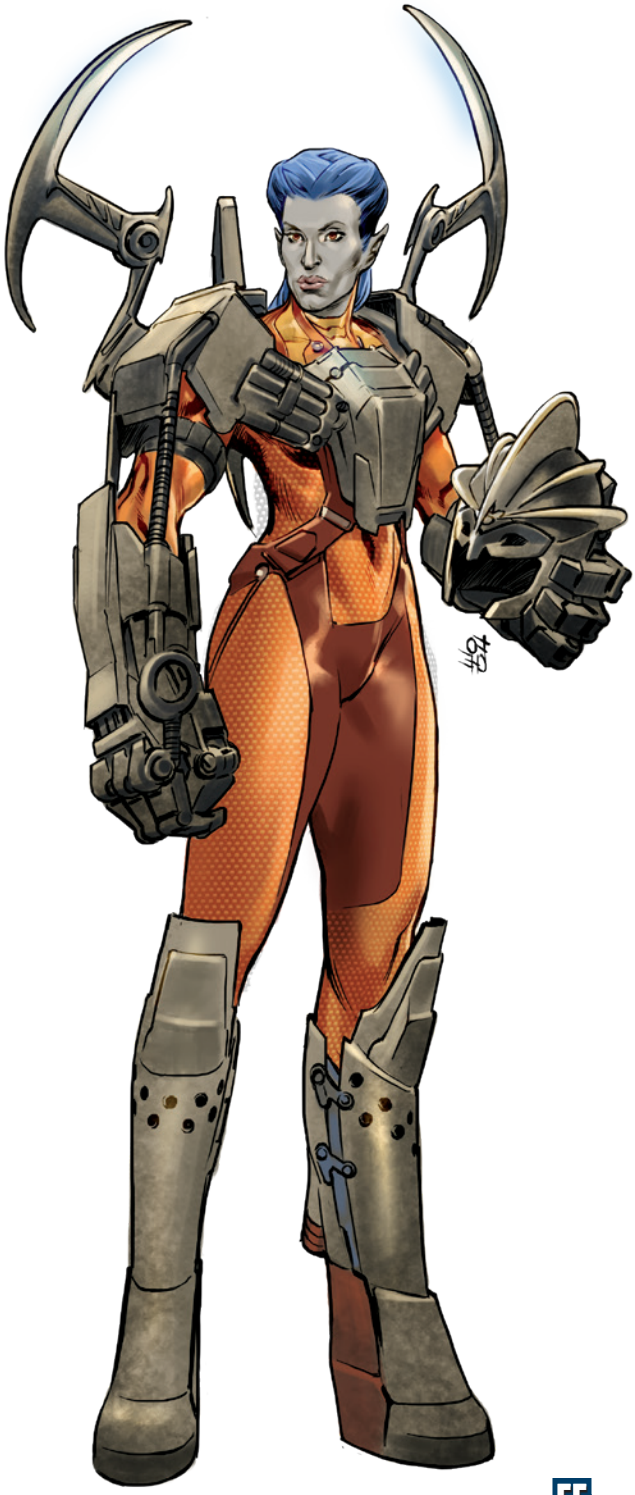
Some classic elements associated with the Future Perfectionist archetype include:

ALL ACCORDING TO PLAN

Though possessed of incredible power, the Perfectionist is a subtle manipulator first and foremost, spinning intricate webs and pushing their secondary goals to the apparent forefront while keeping her true agenda concealed. Many of her apparent plans are simply ruses, designed to test the heroes or lure them into achieving her true ends, such as destroying a rival, preventing a major historical event, or creating an opening she can later exploit. The heroes may smash the death ray she attempted to steal, but in truth, she only wanted the creator imprisoned and removed from future events. Even in defeat, the Perfectionist finds some way to move her agenda forward.

I'M YOUR BIGGEST FAN

For various reasons, the Future Perfectionist's ideal world ultimately hinges on the heroes—their actions, their mistakes, their capabilities, or their failures—and so she obsesses over them. She may become a super-powered stalker, fixating on their lives and histories or grow to loathe them, but either way her interactions with the heroes likely grow increasingly personal over time. The



FUTURE PERFECTIONIST PL 14

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
4	5	4	5	8	8	10	8

POWERS

Biotechnic Armor: Protection 10 (Impervious) • *20 points*

I Have Seen This All Play Out Before: Luck Control 3 (Bestow Luck, Force a Re-roll, Spend on Other; Luck 5) • *14 points*

Power Theft: Broad Simultaneous Weaken Super Powers 14 (Incurable, Simultaneous), Linked to Variable 14 (Limited: Only Drained Powers) • *127 points*

SKILLS

Deception 10 (+18), Expertise: History 14 (+22), Expertise: Philosophy 8 (+16), Expertise: Psychology 8 (+16), Insight 2 (+12), Intimidation 4 (+12), Persuasion 2 (+10), Technology 6 (+14)

ADVANTAGES

Assessment, Close Attack 6, Contacts, Fascinate (Expertise: Psychology), Improvised Tools, Inspire, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Leadership, Luck 5, Ranged Attack 7, Seize Initiative, Speed of Thought, Well-informed

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +8	
Power Theft +14	Close, Weaken 14
Unarmed +14	Close, Damage 4

DEFENSE

DODGE	11	FORTITUDE	11
PARRY	13	TOUGHNESS	15
WILL	14		

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	104	SKILLS	27
POWERS	161	DEFENSES	22
ADVANTAGES	24	TOTAL	338

COMPLICATIONS

Obsession—Perfection: The Future Perfectionist wants only a perfect outcome and won't settle for half-steps or compromise.

Power Feedback: Absorbs any power-related Complications along with super powers.

Temporal Artifacts: The Future Perfectionist has already tampered with the timeline before and is hunted by survivors of futures she has wiped out.

Perfectionist may even be a "superfan" from the future, who decided to make her era a better place by pushing her favorite heroes to greater and greater challenges, or she may be the descendant of their greatest rival who believes her ancestor would have ushered in a golden age if not for the heroes' meddling.

IT WAS I!

The Future Perfectionist's hand is often at work behind the scenes rather than up front, and the PCs may find signs of her involvement in seemingly random crimes or prodding other villains to action. Traces of her futuristic technology or foresight might make minor villains into greater threats without warning, while her time travel can "resurrect" dead opponents or heroes to serve her conspiratorial needs. She may even manipulate the heroes' friends and family, offering them miracles only time travel can provide—such as riches, insight, or more time with lost lovers—in exchange for their loyalty.

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

The Future Perfectionist possesses the flexible ability to steal super powers from others and keep them as long as she needs, making her a threat not only to causality, but the PCs' identities as superheroes. To reach her final goal, the Perfectionist must sometimes headhunt the ideal hero or villain and drain their unique abilities, potentially bringing her to the heroes' attention. You may even consider making her Power Theft a Power Level X ability, allowing her to retain as many copied powers as she needs (or until forced to give them up by a plot device). But ultimately, her motivations and agenda are more important than her specific powers, and her Power Theft ability can easily be replaced with any other set of abilities that help her achieve her goals.

TACTICS

The Future Perfectionist is a cautious combatant and dedicated tactician, often relying on hordes of minions or hired goons to handle her dirty work directly. She rarely wants a direct encounter with heroes unless it plays a key role in furthering her agenda. When combat does come to her, she relies on planning and environments she already controls. Despite all her caution, however, the Perfectionist is an egomaniac who sees herself as a god, shaping reality to suit her vision. Heroes who can exploit that ego deprive her of the caution that makes her such a dire threat.

The Future Perfectionist relies on advanced biotechnic implants—futuristic living technology—from her home era to protect her. These same implants may be the source of her power-theft abilities or may simply offer protection. Her most dangerous ability is foresight; she may be engaging the heroes for the second time or the tenth time, and easily sidesteps her past errors or goads them into openings she didn't notice the first time around, reflected in her Luck Control.

CAPERS

Adventures involving a Future Perfectionist may include the following:

BUT A TEST

In a rare personal appearance, the Future Perfectionist demands a confrontation with the heroes, pitting her villainous champions against them or else unleashing her wrath on the populace. While the battle itself is clearly designed to test the heroes and push them to their limits, the location and parties involved are all deliberate choices, potentially leaving the hero's stronghold vulnerable to invasion, introducing a hero to a key villain, or creating widespread destruction or panic in an area that was destined to serve a different historical purpose.

ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

After a critical part of her plan goes wrong, the Future Perfectionist simply doubles back in time to try again. The heroes discover her intention—to team up with her past self and defeat them—and jump back as well to have their own team-up with their less-experienced and more flippant counterparts. The PCs' consciousnesses may instead "piggyback" on the Perfectionist's time travel, leaving their modern minds in their past bodies and forcing them to deal with twice the villains with no additional numbers of their own.

IMMORTAL CONQUEROR

Once a brutal but complacent warrior from the past, the Immortal Conqueror has lived a thousand lifetimes and matured impossibly since her earliest roots. She has watched empires rise and crumble—playing a hand in both—and now continues her impossibly long lifetime by plying those same skills in the modern world. She ruled the known world once. The world will bend a knee to her again. And if it does not, then she will destroy it and help build a new society that is more pliable. Those enemies who stand before her will fall—either felled by her hands or else toppled by age and infirmity. Who cares if she fails once, or twice, or a thousand times? The Immortal Conqueror plays the long game, and as far as she cares, she's the only player of importance still on the board.

THEMES

The Immortal Conqueror has all the power and skill of the greatest martial traditions, married to the patience and insight of conspiratorial masterminds. She sits at the center of a web of secret societies, ancient orders, and political clubs, and when her political influence wanes or she grows bored, she can engage enemies on the battlefield with all the brutal bloodlust humanity has shied away from in recent decades. Much of her theme derives from what organizations she leads and when she hails from. A Conqueror who rules elitist secret societies and dabbles in royal politics will have vastly different tactics from a military genius who leads a sect of martial artists and conquers through warfare.

WHEN DO YOU COME FROM?

Much of the Immortal Conqueror's themes depends on the culture she was born into and what empires she ruled or toppled in the past. A Conqueror may be the last-surviving member of a non-human hominid species, such as a Neanderthal or Homo erectus, pre-dating recorded human history by millennia. Or she may hail from an early period in history or mythology. Most recently-born Conquerors may only be a few centuries old and hail from societies or nations still around today. The oldest Immortal Conqueror views humanity as beasts to be tamed, while one post-dating the beginnings of agriculture and the city may simply see herself as a stern parent guiding unruly children. A younger Conqueror may still be attempting to prove herself worthy of the gift of immortality and humanity's devotion, positioning herself squarely as an older sibling trying to outdo the heroes at every turn.

CURSED IMMORTAL

The Immortal Conqueror's inability to die may be a curse rather than a blessing; some punishment handed down by a god of death or ancient alien. They would welcome an end to the same cycle of creation and destruction they have witnessed a hundred times, but no mercy has yet found them. They have ruled empires and tried to lead humans to enlightenment, and everything always ends in fire and disaster. Now, the Immortal Conqueror bides her time on selfish pursuits, indulgences, and games to amuse herself. Or, alternatively, she may obsessively hunt whatever being cursed her, or attempt to fulfill an ancient prophecy that would break her bond to life eternal and finally allow her to rest her weary bones.

FALLEN FROM GRACE

An Immortal Conqueror may be a genuine immortal—a god, demi-god, or angel stripped of much of her power, save for her ageless grace. This warrior isn't merely condescending thanks to her long life, but because she hails from a greater-than-human heritage she longs to regain. This immortal often leads cults dedicated to herself, granting her mystical expertise in addition to her conspiratorial connections.

IMMORTAL, NOT AGELESS

A common complication among immortals is that their bodies continue to age and whither even as they remain forever bound to the living world, leaving proud warriors hobbled by age. While in peak condition for her advanced age, the aged immortal rarely possesses the incredible physical skills listed in this archetype's statblock. She instead relies on soldiers and henchmen to handle the brutish details of war while she applies her tactical experience and vast social connections to lead conspiracies. In addition to her goal of conquest, an immortal cursed to age often hunts for ways to restore her youthful vigor,

reverse the effects of age, or clings obsessively to this secret if she already controls it.

MASTER OF THE SELF

A thousand lifetimes of experience also means a thousand lifetimes in which to delve the mysteries of the human mind and soul, and so rather than mastering hand-to-hand combat, the Immortal Conqueror may instead have mastered psychic powers or sorcery. Given enough time, an Immortal Conqueror may have mastered more than one, and what seems like a straightforward warrior may reveal herself midway through the battle as a powerful psychic as well!

NAME IDEAS

Amon Dread, Carg the Endless, the Eternal, the First General, Hammurabi, Nullus.

CLASSIC BITS

Some classic elements associated with the Immortal Conqueror archetype include:

THE ALLMOTHER

An immortal has plenty of time to bear children and found bloodlines that carry on in the modern day. Those children, grandchildren, and descendants may be ruling families of nations, leaders of powerful cults, or noteworthy heroes and villains in their own right. Do her descendants owe her any fealty, or want to wipe out their ageless ancestor and inherit her mantle? And what use might the Conqueror have for descendants who carry her possibly-empowered genes?

HOW DO WE STOP HER?

The Immortal Conqueror's immortality generally leaves prison as the only option for superheroes once she is defeated, but many opponents before them have tried and failed to contain her glory. A prison is nothing but a fortress for the Immortal Conqueror, and so heroes may need to get creative to find ways of ending the threat she poses.

OLD VENDETTAS

The Immortal Conqueror has run afoul of many heroes, warriors, and demigods over the centuries, and may be either a longtime rival of an immortal hero or may have faced off against a hero's ancestor and still carries a powerful hatred for that family line. The Conqueror may even have hunted a particular bloodline throughout history, forever frustrated by her inability to ultimately destroy them.

TIME TRAVEL THE HARD WAY

Immortal Conquerors don't appear in time travel stories because they have time machines, but rather because they have been present at major events in human history extending back to the dawn of our species. She travels into the future at a rate of one year every 365 days, and so time traveling heroes may encounter her at different points in her immortal life—possessing a different personality—in a different order than the Conqueror remembers.

TACTICS

The Immortal Conqueror is a fearsome and eager combatant, often frustrated by the lack of quality warriors to test her skills against. While she sits at the head of various power structures—corporations, religions, governments, secret societies—her foundations remain firmly planted in war and blood, and a part of her still longs for that thrill. Despite this nature, she is much more than a deadly beast;

IMMORTAL CONQUEROR PL 13

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
7	8	4	5	16	6	4	6

POWERS

Immortal: Immortality 10, Immunity 5 (Aging, Disease, Poison, Pain Effects), Regeneration 2 • *27 points*

EQUIPMENT

Assault Rifle (Ranged Multiattack Damage 5), BattleAxe (Damage 3), Bow (Ranged Damage 3), Designer Clothes, Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Limousine, Rocket Launcher (Ranged Damage 10 (Burst Damage 7)), Smartphone, Spear (Damage 3), Sword (Damage 3)

SKILLS

Acrobatics 4 (+8), Athletics 6 (+13), Deception 6 (+12), Expertise: Conspiracies 8 (+14), Expertise: Tactics 10 (+16), Insight 6 (+10), Intimidation 10 (+16), Persuasion 6 (+12), Stealth 8 (+12)

ADVANTAGES

Accurate Attack, Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 16, Evasion, Great Endurance, Improved Critical: Sword, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Inspire 5, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 8, Startle, Takedown, Uncanny Dodge

OFFENSE

	INITIATIVE +8
Assault Rifle +13	Ranged, Damage 5
Bow +13	Ranged, Damage 3
Rocket Launcher +13	Ranged, Damage 10 (Burst Damage 7)
Sword +16	Close, Damage 10
Unarmed +16	Close, Damage 7

DEFENSE

DODGE	14	**FORTITUDE**	10
PARRY	16	**TOUGHNESS**	10/8*
WILL	14	*Without Defensive Roll	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	112	**SKILLS**	32
POWERS	27	**DEFENSES**	22
ADVANTAGES	46	**TOTAL**	239

COMPLICATIONS

Overconfidence: The Immortal Conqueror knows she will outlast any opponents.

Temper: Coming of age in a different time, the Immortal Conqueror's first instinct is to settle conflicts with violence.

the soldier engages her enemy with tactics in mind, commanding her own forces expertly and turning every battlefield to her advantage through intelligence and keen observation. While she may opt to throw herself into the fold against an entire team of heroes, she does so with a strategy in mind, turning opponents' abilities against one another or engaging and eliminating the weakest first.

An Immortal Conqueror's invulnerability plays into her battle strategies. She is all too ready to wire her stronghold to explode on her death or hurl herself from a high-rise window if defeat is imminent. If she leaves a body behind, enemies can imprison her, but a death that leaves no body (or at least keeps her body out of reach), leaves her free to resume her conquest once she reawakens.

CAPERS

Adventures involving an Immortal Conqueror may include the following:

HAVE WE MET?

An Immortal Conqueror presents an especially engaging villain for time-traveling heroes, as she has lived for thousands of years and headed up various organizations, hordes, and nations that the PCs may oppose. Because she proceeds linearly while the heroes can jump around at their leisure, she likely meets them out of chronological order (at least as far as her personal timeline goes). The PCs' first encounter with the Conqueror may reveal that she has faced them many times before and hopes to settle old debts, foreshadowing future appearances with the same warrior when she is less experienced or less aware of the heroes' abilities. She may even reveal she once thought of the heroes as allies, only to be betrayed.

THE SERPENT'S HEAD

The heroes battle their way through a powerful cult, evil corporation, or secret society, thinking the leader will be a brilliant but frail mastermind, only to discover the Immortal Conqueror and her centuries of martial training. Even if defeated, the Immortal Conqueror commands more hidden forces—perhaps paving the way for an adventure series dismantling the power base she assembled over centuries.

WERE MY CHEST A CANNON

The Immortal Conqueror endlessly hunts some target—perhaps the bloodline of an ancient rival, or the secret to ending her hated immortality—only to have that object of desire fall into the heroes' hands. Her obsession drives out all pretense of civilization or discretion, and the Conqueror unleashes all her carefully-assembled resources into a constant, seemingly endless barrage of violence against the heroes and anyone associated with them to get what she wants. Can the heroes resist and take the fight to their enemy, or do they travel back in time to find the root of her obsession, diffusing the violence but potentially altering history?

LIVING GATEWAY

Most time-hopping villains rely on devices or spells to travel through time—devices the heroes can deprive them of to remove that advantage or finally imprison them. But the Living Gateway is their own time machine, able to open portals to the past and future as easily as some people might open a door. All of history is a playground and no actions have consequences. And if self-styled heroes want take issue with his chronological cavorting, the Living Gateway can simply step back two weeks, forward to after the heroes' death, or back to prevent their birth.

THEMES

The Living Gateway can be a mastermind, a useful tool for a more powerful villain, or a time-traveling hedonist causing endless headaches for any heroes charged with protecting causality. Their endless freedom and carefree attitude may simply leave them a selfish ass who refuses to take responsibility for their actions, a thief who steals the greatest missing treasures in history, or a truly alien killer—after all, if you can sidestep to the End of Days, isn't everyone already dead? A Living Gateway might possess additional powers that offer them some offensive abilities and helps refine their theme.

The statblock as-is reflects a villain who has never really needed to work for anything or develop many skills, but a Living Gateway with ambition can study under the greatest masters of any art, from piano to kung fu. You might combine the powers of the Living Gateway with other villainous archetypes like the Assassin, Master of Disguise, or Martial Artist (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*), or simply assign additional ranks of appropriate skills, powers, and Advantages.

ALL ABOARD

The Living Gateway's temporal portals allow them to bring passengers with them to their target era but may also let them bring villains or monsters from other times to them. This is a Summon effect, usually with the Heroic extra. The Living Gateway may bring anyone—super-powered mercenaries from the future, dinosaurs from the Jurassic, or anyone in between—but likely sticks to a common theme. Living Portals who simply pluck their minions at random out of time may also apply the Attitude flaw, leaving their powerful minions completely uncontrolled once they arrive.

MATHEMATICIAN

Any sufficiently advanced science is indistinguishable from magic, and the Living Gateway may simply possess an understanding of mathematics and quantum physics so advanced that they understand how to bend the flow of time through willpower or recitation of a formula. The Mathematician likely possesses incredible intelligence as well, and likely additional formulae that mimic magic spells or psychic attacks.

ME, MYSELF, AND I

Rather than summon figures from history, the Living Gateway might seek help from their own timeline, summoning duplicates of themself from the past or future to help tackle entire teams of opponents. This is a Summon effect with the Heroic extra, but limited to summoning duplicates with the same statistics.

LIVING GATEWAY — PL 10

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	0	5	3	4	2	3	4

POWERS

Chrono-Portal (Array; 50 points) • *27 points*

- **Time Portal:** Movement 3 (Time Travel 3; Portal)
- **Space Portal:** Teleport 10 (Easy, Extended Only, Portal)

Collapsing Power-Staff (Easily Removable) Strength-based Damage 5 (Feature: collapsible) • *4 points*

Futuristic Armor (Removable) Immunity 10 (Life Support), Protection 8 (Impervious) • *21 points*

Temporal Senses: Senses 6 (Acute Analytical Extended Detect Time Travel, Time Sense, Tracking [temporal]) • *6 points*

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol

SKILLS

Acrobatics 4 (+9), Deception 8 (+12), Insight 2 (+5), Perception 2 (+5), Sleight of Hand 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+9)

ADVANTAGES

Attractive, Beginner's Luck, Chronal Bulwark*, Close Attack 6, Daze (Deception), Defensive Attack, Equipment 2, Evasion, Fascinate (Deception), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Ranged Attack 4, Seize Initiative, Taunt, Uncanny Dodge

OFFENSE

	INITIATIVE +9
Blaster Pistol +7	Ranged, Damage 5
Power Staff +10	Close, Damage 7
Unarmed +10	Close, Damage 2

DEFENSE

DODGE	12	**FORTITUDE**	8
PARRY	12	**TOUGHNESS**	8/0*
WILL	11	*Without Armor	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	46	**SKILLS**	12
POWERS	82	**DEFENSES**	31
ADVANTAGES	24	**TOTAL**	195

COMPLICATIONS

Indulgent: The Living Gateway is a hedonist more interested in comfort and pleasure than any grand schemes.

Victim Complex: Believes everyone is out to get him for no reason.

POWER HAS A PRICE

Opening a portal through time is infinitely more difficult than just opening one through space, and the Living Gateway may not be able to do so at will. He may need to charge up by feeding on a potent energy source first: electricity or radiation or the life force of living victims. This is most simply represented with Immunity to specific energy effects, while a villain who needs to feed on life energy from living beings would use a Weaken Stamina effect. In either case, the maximum time rank the Gateway can jump after a feeding is limited by the ranks of the energy effects they absorb or the ranks of Stamina drained.

NAME IDEAS

Casanova, Hoplight, Euphrates, Fitzavery, the Rover, Vagabond, Wormhole.

CLASSIC BITS

Some classic elements associated with the Living Gateway archetype include:

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

The Living Gateway has access to a rare and valuable skill, and many other villains will pay handsomely for the ability to leap to the past or future. While money doesn't mean much to someone who can jump back to take advantage of every stock market trend, villains may offer creature comforts, rare luxuries, entertainment, or the possibility for revenge. Alternatively, the Living Gateway may be the only access to time-travel that heroes possess for a one-off adventure or after an accident destroys their time machine; what can they offer the man who has everything just to book passage home?

THE MOST TOYS

The Living Gateway travels with a few futuristic gimmicks but may have access to vast wealth and strange technology beyond anything humans can currently manufacture. This can provide him with any number of strange gadgets or access to relics of historical or supernatural significance. These may be plot devices, futuristic robot soldiers, or simply gadgets that provide new or improved powers.

THE PARADOX PROBLEM

Moving around the time-stream as a vagabond, the Living Gateway is more prone than most time traveling villains to creating paradoxes or accidentally altering timelines. He may even originally hail from a timeline he has already wiped out. He may be deliberately trying to change future history, much like the Future Perfectionist, but more likely he's simply careless or cruel. More often than not, heroes will need to set history back on its proper course in the Living Gateway's wake rather than battle him directly.

TACTICS

The Living Gateway isn't much of a direct threat to most superheroes, but his powers make him both troublesome and difficult to contain. A careless jaunt through time can leave the present radically altered, depending on how robust the timeline is in your campaign (see **The Timeline**, earlier in this chapter), and even in a robust timeline the Living Gateway essentially has immunity from any authority who can't follow him across the pages of history. The Living Gateway is the ultimate master of hit-and-run tactics, attacking when enemies least suspect it and fleeing beyond their reach when the fight turns against him. To keep him in one place, heroes must either undermine his powers or else goad him into overstaying his welcome and making mistakes.

CAPERS

Adventures involving a Living Gateway may include the following:

AS IT WAS

Most adventures involving the Living Gateway require repairing any damage done and chasing him across eras. Heroes may need to return (or replace) stolen artifacts, but might also need to unravel any social issues left behind, convincing a famous musician to resume writing operas or reuniting lovers the mountebank drove apart. When things get tense, the Living Gateway may just as easily bring challenges to the heroes' doorstep by dragging ancient monsters or deadly androids with him for his next visit or else lead them into dangerous eras.

QUANTUM QUARRY

While the Living Gateway is accustomed to life on the run, that flight is from the law, not other villains. Another villain—a mad scientist, archmage, or one of the more powerful villains listed in this book—covets his powers, blood, or vital essence and has no interest in negotiating for it. Hunted by a deadly enemy who can track him through time or summon him at will, the Living Gateway must turn to the heroes he normally runs from for help.

A TRIP TOO FAR

After a time-jump lands him too close to some powerful or significant effect event—an asteroid impact, a black hole, a nuclear armageddon—the Living Gateway leaps away only to discover his time portal forced open by the enormous energy of the disaster he fled. Now the heroes must find a way to close the gate before that same apocalypse floods into the present through the door their enemy can't close.

TEMPORAL WIZARD

The arcane art of bending time is rare, but not as difficult as it seems. Most sorcerers can warp space and teleport across vast distances; time is just space from another point of view. The Temporal Wizard wields time as a tool, unleashing ages the same way a magician might throw bolts of fire.

Most time traveling villains pursue an agenda—conquer the world, rewrite their future, have a good time—but the Temporal Wizard wants power for power's sake. Unlocking the mysteries of the past, present, and future; bending causality to their whims; who needs to rule when you can bend all of space-time with a thought? Who needs to rule when you are a god?

THEMES

Mechanisms are for the weak-willed. The Temporal Wizard can part the sands of time with a wave of his hand. Much of the distinct flavor of a Temporal Wizard hails from their background: how (and when) they learned their unique brand of magic. A Temporal Wizard might have come of age in any particular era—including a potential future—or hail from a dimension isolated out in the time-stream, with any era shaping their style, mannerisms, and goals. Being a wizard, you may provide other, more traditional spells as you see fit, such as those possessed by the Sorcerer villain archetype (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*).

CHRONOKINETIC

Rather than a traditional sorcerer, the Temporal Wizard is a powerful psychic—either a natural talent or an experiment—who controls time rather than thoughts or flame. A psychic time controller is more likely to operate alone, not needing to learn his skills from a master or school. The chronokinetic may wield additional psychic powers, such as telekinesis or mind reading.

RENEGADE

Most Temporal Wizards may serve as sober and mature guardians of the time-stream, but power over causality is a temptation above all others. The renegade Temporal Wizard hopes to gain ultimate power, but also needs the skills to deceive the rest of his order, or else stay on the run one step ahead of justice. Add appropriate ranks in skills like Deception, Stealth, and Technology, with the potential support of minions such as cultists.

THE STAFF OF TIME

The Temporal Wizard may have no time magic of his own, instead relying on a mystical staff, amulet, or other accessory that can be taken from them. Alternatively, he may possess some spells, but lack crucial spells like Time Portal or the ability to ward others from the time-stream—relying on his relic for these powers.

WARPED BY TIME

The arcanist's extensive experimentation with chronal energy has warped his body, causing it to evolve or devolve into a more powerful form. Increase the Temporal Wizard's Strength, Stamina, and Fighting abilities (adjusting his defense bonuses down to compensate) and add additional Advantages like Power Attack and All-out Attack to make him a formidable threat in hand-to-hand combat. His form may even become monstrous or demonic, adding natural weapons or far stranger powers.

NAME IDEAS

Bastion, Chronomancer, Clockmaster, Lady Concurrent, the Time Baron.

CLASSIC BITS

Some classic elements associated with the Temporal Wizard archetype include:

AND WITH THIS AMULET...

The Temporal Wizard often pursues some MacGuffin or artifact that will augment their time magic immensely, possibly even transforming them into a PL X villain. This may be an artifact created by a previous (or yet-to-come) Temporal Wizard, something that survived from before the dawn of time, or an invention from the far-flung future. This same artifact may grant similar power to heroes, or prove beyond their control.

CROSSTIME INTRIGUES

Because of his free access to time travel and need for knowledge, the Temporal Wizard is often neck-deep in whatever chronological intrigues exist in the campaign world. He makes friends and enemies of other time travelers and organizations and knows countless secrets about the eddies and currents of the time-stream—including the places where time flows strangely or not at all—and what beings, places, and talismans hail from outside time as we know it.

THE TIME BARRIER

The Temporal Wizard's mastery of time may allow them to ward an era much like an ordinary wizard might ward a space, preventing trespassers from entering—in this case bouncing time travelers to a random era whenever they try to approach his chrono-sanctorum. Heroes will need to learn more about the ward and find a flaw in its design before confronting the Temporal Wizard, or else time travel to before the ward exists and take the long way in: living day-by-day until they cross into the Temporal Wizard's warded era the same way everyone else does.

MY FOOLISH FORMER SELF

Able to hop through time, reverse aging, and create echoes of himself throughout time, the Temporal Wizard's personal timeline is a mess, and often this villain is his own worst enemy. His greatest adversary—perhaps even one of the PCs—is a much older or much younger version of himself. An older version of the Temporal Wizard may have forsaken (or been stripped of) his powers and is now trying to make amends, while a younger version might be naïve and optimistic in ways that have been beaten out of his elder incarnation.

TACTICS

The Temporal Wizard unleashes time itself as a weapon, transmuting magic energy into chronal energy and vice versa. His powers can age targets to decrepitude, reduce them to helpless infants, or freeze them in a moment. His wards provide unusual protections, such as rewinding his body to undo any damage, or shielding those

TEMPORAL WIZARD PL 13

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	3	4	2	0	7	8	3

POWERS

Chrono-Mutations: Strength-based Damage 3 (Claws), Leaping 2 (30 feet), Senses 3 (Acute Smell, Darkvision) • *8 points*

Mystic Shield: Protection 13 (Sustained), Immunity 12 (Life Support, Temporal Effects) • *25 points*

Temporal Magic (Array; 40 points) • *45 points*

- **Accelerate Aging:** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Transformed [into elderly version]; Reversible)
- **Bend Space-Time:** Teleport 12 (16 miles; Extended, Increased Mass 4)
- **Infantalize:** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Defenseless, Transformed [into infant]; Reversible)
- **Temporal Stasis:** Ranged Affliction 13 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Will; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile, Paralyzed and Unaware; Extra Condition; Reversible)
- **Time Freeze:** Concealment 10 (All Senses), Quickness 10, Teleport 5 (900 feet)
- **Time Portal:** Movement 3 (Time Travel 3; Increased Mass 6, Portal)

Temporal Wards (Array; 25 points) • *27 points*

- **Rewind Harm:** Healing 8 (Energizing, Persistent, Restorative; Self only)
- **Temporal Copies:** Concealment 10 (All Senses; Limited: No Concealment)
- **Temporal Ward:** Burst Area Immunity 12 (Life Support, Temporal Effects)

SKILLS

Close Combat: Unarmed 8 (+8), Deception 8 (+11), Expertise: History 6 (+13), Expertise: Magic 10 (+17), Insight 2 (+10), Perception 5 (+13), Ranged Combat: Temporal Magic 11 (+13)

ADVANTAGES

Artificer, Beginner's Luck, Chronal Memories, Eidetic Memory, Instant Up, Jack-of-all-trades, Seize Initiative, Speed of Thought, Ultimate Effort: Expertise (Magic), Well-informed

OFFENSE

	INITIATIVE +7
Temporal Magic +13	Ranged, Affliction 13
Unarmed +10	Close, Damage 0 (3 with Claws)

DEFENSE

DODGE	10	**FORTITUDE**	10
PARRY	9	**TOUGHNESS**	16/3*
WILL	15	*Without Mystic Shield	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	54	**SKILLS**	25
POWERS	105	**DEFENSES**	29
ADVANTAGES	10	**TOTAL**	223

COMPLICATIONS

Addiction:: The Temporal Wizard is addicted to chronal energy and/or time travel.

Condescending: Can't fathom anyone outwitting him or matching his magical might.

Obsession: The Temporal Wizard fixates on some secret or mystery lost to history or that exists outside the timeline.

around him from hostile conditions and changes to the timeline, or creating a dozen illusory "temporal copies" of himself to keep opponents guessing which is the real villain. Like other spellcasters, the Temporal Wizard isn't much of a physical combatant and relies on keeping his distance from enemies while pelting them with spells. He may work with assembled cultists, demons, or arcane constructs to intercept heroes on his behalf.

CAPERS

Adventures involving a Temporal Wizard may include the following:

EYE OF THE TEMPORAL STORM

The Temporal Wizard unleashes devastating changes in the distant past and withdraws all his resources into a bubble realty outside normal time to wait out the changes that are about to warp the universe. Is his goal to shatter his enemies? Tear down history and rebuild it anew? Or is there some higher purpose or arcane secret that he can only find in the eye of the time-storm he has unleashed?

THE FIRST RITUAL

To achieve his ultimate power, the Temporal Wizard needs to bribe or force the greatest sorcerers in history to assist with a ritual at the dawn of time. The heroes must track his kidnappings across various eras, piece together his destination, and try to predict his next targets before he can round out his mystic roster.

TIME AND TIME AGAIN

The Temporal Wizard is one of the most likely villains to use time itself as a weapon against his foes. He may trap the heroes in a temporal loop, forcing them to relive the same miserable day forever, or curse them to "unstick" from time, causing them to jump randomly through time. This might be the entire purpose of his scheme, or he may simply need to distract time traveling adversaries while he enacts another, more dangerous scheme for power.

TIME-HOPPING TYRANT

Petty generals conquer nations. Would-be emperors conquer continents. But a true tyrant seizes the world's past, present, and future. The Time-Hopping Tyrant hails from the far future, where time is just another tool in an army's arsenal, and once her home era bows to her, the Tyrant moves backward to seize the rest of creation, until all the world's histories are her glories writ large. Wielding the most advanced technology her time can produce, studied in the greatest tactics in human history, and commanding entire armies of futuristic troops, the Time-Hopping Tyrant is an overwhelming threat to the present and everything that came before it.

THEMES

The Time-Hopping Tyrant is a military commander, but one with every advantage: experience, technology, numbers, and the chronological "high ground." Her chrono-carrier can strike from future timelines she has already conquered and fall back into entire centuries that serve as planet-wide fortresses. She can observe history to learn weaknesses about the heroes they may have yet to share or even learn themselves. She wields weapons modern science couldn't even begin to reproduce, let alone defend against. The Tyrant may be cruel or compassionate, but above all she suffers the burden of confidence and innumerable victories.

MASTER OF TIME

The Time-Hopping Tyrant might be more than just an empress, instead serving as the final arbiter of the timeline—either self-appointed or invested with her power and position by some cosmic force. Rather than traditional soldiers, she commands time elementals or temporal weavers (see **Temporal Minions**) and dispatches agents to hunt time travelers and otherwise keep history on its proper course.

SOVEREIGN SHORES

The Time-Hopping Tyrant is a military leader first and foremost, dedicated to securing her territory—her personal timeline—from all threats foreign or domestic. While she expands her chronological borders, pushing forward and back to the respective ends of time, her ultimate goal is to preserve the perfect empire she forged and prevent anyone from altering the past to prevent its rise.

YOUR DARKEST TIMELINE

Superheroes leave long-lasting legacies, and the Time-Hopping Tyrant's mission is based somehow in the heroes' own timeline and actions. She may be a descendant of a hero or a fan inspired by legends of yesteryear's champions. The connection may be even more personal: the Tyrant may be a powerful, far older version of a close friend or even one of the heroes.

NAME IDEAS

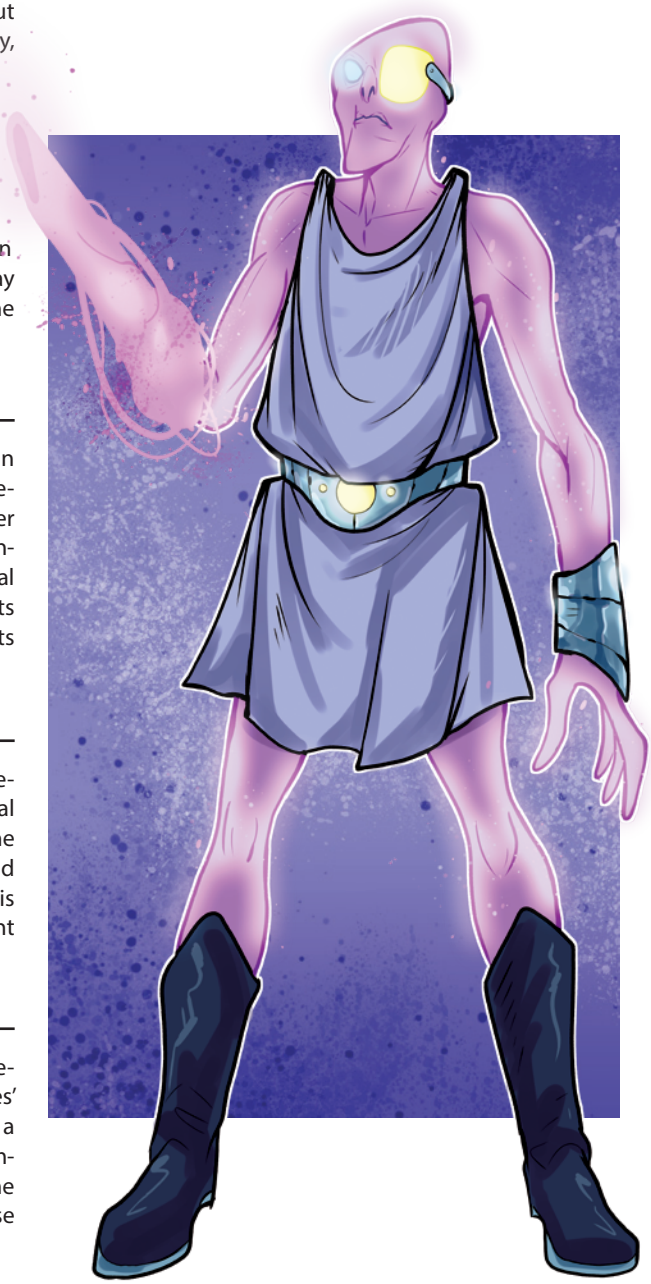
Coda, Highlord, Mistress of the Last Moment, Pinnacle, Saroc the Subjugator

CLASSIC BITS

Some classic elements associated with the Time-Hopping Tyrant archetype include:

AT WAR WITH MYSELF

With all her tampering in history, the Tyrant constantly risks splintering the timeline and creating alternate futures—



TIME-HOPPING TYRANT PL 16

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
14/4	5	5	6	9	6	9	8

POWERS

Singularity Suit (Removable) • *85 points*

Combat Analyzer: Enhanced Trait Dodge 4, Enhanced Parry 4, Enhanced Advantages (Close Attack 4, Evasion 2, Improved Initiative 2, Ranged Attack 6, Seize Initiative)

Graviton Rig: Enhanced Strength 10, Flight 8 (500 MPH; Precise, Subtle; AE: Teleport 7 [0.5 miles; Change Direction, Change Velocity, Turnabout])

Neutron Plating: Protection 14 (Impervious)

Support Systems: Enhanced Fortitude 6, Immunity 10 (Life Support)

Zero-Point Energy Weapons (Array; 44 points) • *85 points*

- **Quantum Blast:** Ranged Damage 16 (Accurate 2, Affects Insubstantial, Indirect 4 [any point or direction], Split 3, Variable Descriptor 2 [Energy Weapons])
- **Force Forms:** Create 14 (Movable)
- **Energy Field Generator:** Shapeable Area Damage 16 (Variable Descriptor 2 [energy])
- **Graviton Projector:** Perception Move Object 14

EQUIPMENT

Vehicle: Chrono-Carrier

Size Awesome **Strength** 20 **Speed** 8 (Air) **Defense** 0 **Toughness** 26 **Features** Communications, Computer, Hanger, Holding Cells, Living Space, Navigation System, Remote Control **Powers** Feature (Chronal Bulwark*), Immunity 10 (Life Support), Movement 6 (Space Travel 3, Time Travel 3), Senses 17 (Extended 3 Acute Analytical Temporal Awareness, Visual Counters All Concealment, Postcognition, Time Sense, Tracking [temporal])

Main Gun: Ranged Burst Area Damage 16 (Penetrating), **AE: Point-Defense Cannons:** Cone Area Damage 12

SKILLS

Close Combat: Unarmed 5 (+14), Expertise: Tactics 16 (+22), Intimidation 8 (+16), Perception 5 (+14), Persuasion 8 (+16), Technology 12 (+18), Vehicles 6 (+12)

ADVANTAGES

Accurate Attack, Assessment, Close Attack 4, Daze (Intimidation), Diehard, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 26, Evasion 2, Favored Environment: Aboard chrono-carrier, Fearless, Improved Initiative 2, Inspire 5, Inventor, Leadership, Minion 15, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 6, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery: Intimidation, Startle, Teamwork, Trance, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +13	
Quantum Blast +16	Ranged, Damage 16
Energy Fields —	Close, Area Damage 16
Unarmed +14	Close, Damage 14/4

DEFENSE

DODGE	13/9*	**FORTITUDE**	16/10*
PARRY	13/9*	**TOUGHNESS**	19/5*
WILL	16	*Without Singularity Suit	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	104	**SKILLS**	30
POWERS	132	**DEFENSES**	16
ADVANTAGES	63	**TOTAL**	345

COMPLICATIONS

Inhuman: Millennia of evolution have caused the Time-Hopping Tyrant's genetics to drift away from modern humans'. She stands out in a crowd and is too alien for modern medicine to assist her.

Zealot: The Tyrant knows she is a true believer in her purpose.

including alternate versions of herself with similar motivations and resources. These duplicate tyrants represent as great a threat to one another as they do to the heroes. A Time-Hopping Tyrant may even hunt alternate versions of herself to circumvent this threat or consolidate her power, creating an empire of thousands of timelines.

I SHALL SET IT RIGHT AGAIN

Some minor change in history wipes out something of great importance to the Time-Hopping Tyrant—a lover, their children, or her entire timeline—which is what originally inspires her conquest of the past. While she makes a show of military jingoism, deep down she wants to heal a painful personal injury and can be reasoned with if the heroes learn what caused the trauma.

I HAVE EVOLVED BEYOND THIS

Hailing from tens of thousands of years in the future, the Time-Hopping Tyrant often bears the hallmarks of evolution. This usually manifests as extraordinary intellect, but may also be evolved resistance to very specific hazards—such as diseases or unique radiation—that beings from the 21st century haven't encountered yet. The Tyrant may flood her chrono-carrier with this hazard to subdue invaders, or threaten to unleash it across the planet, leaving a world fit only for citizens of her futuristic empire.

TACTICS

While a tactical genius, the Time-Hopping Tyrant is above all, arrogant. She thinks nothing of would-be heroes. She has defeated such enemies before, and far more advanced ones at that, and so the heroes of the 21st century are little more than a curious distraction from her conquests.

The Tyrant wears advanced armor powered by a captured singularity—a black hole—which generates near-

infinite power which allows her to bend space to teleport and create barriers of pure gravitational force. She can also teleport any weapon in her vast arsenal to her with a thought, blanketing swathes of the battlefield with devastating destruction. Beyond her personal capabilities, she commands soldiers outfitted with technological wonders and commands a interstellar carrier ship capable of leaping through time and protecting its crew from the dangers of timeline change.

CAPERS

Adventures involving a Time-Hopping Tyrant may include the following:

AGAINST THE GODS

The present begins to unravel and the heroes discover the Time-Hopping Tyrant arrived in ancient East Africa to seize control of the human species and control the development of every future culture to follow. While the locals have no possibility of stopping the Tyrant, the gods of old are not yet limited by ancient pacts exiling them from Earth, and the Tyrant faces a war against divine forces—one that threatens to rip all of history apart and drive humans to extinction! Can the heroes stop the Tyrant? Or worse, does the Tyrant want to retreat, and need the PCs' help to stop whatever temporal siege magic the gods now use to keep her from leaving the ancient world?

HISTORY'S GREATEST HITS

To weaken the timeline for invasion, the Time-Hopping Tyrant first recruits a collection of villains from across the past—including old foes the heroes have already defeated—to attack in rapid succession. The assault leaves militaries devastated and heroes exhausted when the Tyrant's chrono-carrier finally appears in the skies overhead.

TEMPORAL MINIONS

While some minions are specific to certain eras, a few may plague time traveling heroes regardless of when they land or even chase them across the breadth of history.

CHRONOZOIDS

Strange lifeforms that dwell outside time, chronozoids soar through the forth dimension with the skill and grace of a falcon. Some command truly bizarre abilities—existing in reverse time or only existing within a timeline for only a fraction of a second—but others are more familiar. The following are chronozoids most likely to interact with time travelers. You can create a variety of new chronozoids by applying the following template to existing statblocks for minions and monsters.

CHRONOZOID	TEMPLATE • 15 POINTS
PL Adjustment +0	
Statistic Adjustments Timeless (Immunity 1 [Aging], Quickness 5), Time Shift (Movement 3 [Time Travel])	
Combat Adjustments None	

CHRONOZOID PREDATOR	PL 6 • MR5 • 73 POINTS
STR 4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 6 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 6 **INT** -3 **AWE** 2 **PRE** -1	
Powers: Blur (Concealment 4; All Visual Senses; Partial), Protection 2, **Quantum Bite** (Movement Attack 6 [Time Travel]; Extra Ranks 5; Dodge resists), Senses 7 (Acute Smell, Acute Ranged Temporal Awareness, Infravision, Time Sense, Tracking), Speed 8 (500 MPH).	
Skills: Athletics 2 (+6), Stealth 2 (+8).	
Offense: Init +6, Claws +6 (Close, Damage 4), Quantum Bite +6 (Movement Attack 6).	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 6, Will 4.	
Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 33 + Advantages 0 + Skills 2 (4 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 73.	

Chronozoid predators stalk the time-stream, preying on the alien, quasi-living things that dwell there: temporal weavers, time elementals, and still stranger alien life. Their bite sends victims to a remote point in history and the quantum hunter feeds on the temporal wake and chaos left behind. Existing outside the normal flow of time, they can move at incredible speeds and appear as indistinct smears wherever they pass. Because they lack any way to travel in time or leave timelines, they have an acute ability to sense and track temporal disruptions, and hunt time travelers to follow in their wakes.

Larger and more powerful chronozoid predators likely exist, with other strange powers like the ability to tear a creature entirely from causality (see the Quantum Disruptor in **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** in **Chapter 2**) or transform victims into less impressive versions of themselves as they feed off their prey's past experiences and achievements.

CLOCKWORKER	PL 9 • MR12 • 170 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 6 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 10 **INT** 7 **AWE** 6 **PRE** -1	
Powers: **Chronal Comprehension** (Comprehend Languages 3: read, speak, understand), **Chronal Senses** (Senses 11: Ranged Acute Detect Chronal Effects Precognition, Postcognition), **Outside of Time** (Immunity 21: Aging, Life Support, Mental Effects; Immunity 30: Fortitude Effects, Limited to Half Effect).	
Advantages: Beginner's Luck, Eidetic Memory, Improvised Tools, Inspire, Jack-of-all-trades, Luck 6, Skill Mastery: Technology, Well-informed.	
Skills: Expertise: Science 12 (+19), Insight 2 (+8), Investigation 4 (+11), Perception 4 (+10), Technology 12 (+19), Vehicles 4 (+8).	
Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 6, Will 8.	
Totals: Abilities 72 + Powers 53 + Advantages 12 + Skills 19 + Defenses 14 = 170.	

While the Tick Tock Doc remains the most infamous of the Clockworkers, he is an extreme anomaly of their kind. The vast majority of these agender constructs maintain and record scientific instruments for their enigmatic masters. They are occasionally dispatched to gather first-hand data, study temporal phenomenon, or sabotage time travel experiments—particularly when the Time Keepers doubt their Guardians will remain impartial—bringing them into contact with heroes and villains. These active Clockworkers are often equipped with time machines and a time manipulator, similar to the one the Doc wields, or other temporal equipment and weaponry.

TEMPORAL WEAVER	PL 4 • MR7 • 105 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 5 **INT** -3 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Concealment 10 (all sense types; Quirk [not effective against time travelers]), Movement 10 (Permeate 3, Time Travel 3, Wall-crawling 2, Water Walking 2), Senses 5 (Accurate Acute Ranged Detect Anachronisms), **Unweave Time** (Affliction 3; Overcome and Resisted by Will; Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated; targets reduced beyond incapacitated are removed from time).	
Advantages: Chronal Bulwark* Chronal Memory*, Skill Mastery: Expertise (History), Teamwork.	
Skills: Athletics 6 (+8), Expertise: History 16 (+13), Perception 8 (+12), Stealth 4 (+9).	
Offense: Init +5, Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 2), Unweave Time +5 (Affliction 3).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 47 + Advantages 4 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 1 = 105.	

Appearing like alien spiders or starfish, temporal weavers exist to patch up the holes in the timeline, rearranging elements to put history back on its proper course and removing anachronisms—unnecessary or foreign elements (like time travelers). While a single weaver poses little threat, they work in teams of a dozen or more—perhaps a hundred at the sites of major events—and track threats to causality with obsessive focus. Not bound by physical laws, they can skitter easily across, over, or through any barricade in pursuit of their goal, then remove it entirely from the timeline.

Temporal weavers may be a natural force of the cosmos that helps preserve timelines in the wake of time travel or time storms, or they may be the creations of powerful entities such as the Time Keepers (earlier in this chapter), or weapons forged from pure time by a sufficiently advanced being like the Temporal Wizard or Time-Hopping Tyrant villains.

TIME ELEMENTAL	PL 5 • MR9 • 132 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 4 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Disruptive Touch (Progressive Reaction Weaken Toughness 5), Insubstantial 3 (Energy), Movement 3 (Time Travel 3), Quickness 10, Teleport 10 (4 miles; Accurate, Turnabout).	
Advantages: Fearless.	
Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+9).	
Offense: Init +5, Disruptive Touch +4.	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 4, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 92 + Advantages 1 + Skills 2 (4 ranks) + Defenses 3 = 132.	

Chronal energy given life and form, time elementals may be natural denizens of the time-stream or unique creations of spellcasters. They aren't firmly planted in any timeline and can shift their position in time and space with a thought, step outside time to take complex actions and disrupt normal matter with a touch, reverting it to simpler forms or aging it rapidly into dust.

Even the Guardians remain confused about the nature and goals of time elementals, and the Time Keepers forbid the capture or study of the strange beings. Other, more sophisticated time elementals may exist, potentially reproducing the powers and skills of the various villain archetypes described earlier in this chapter.

EXPLORERS

Various human travelers have journeyed across the timeline and beyond.

CHRONONAUT	PL 3 • MR4 • 52 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 2 **INT** 2 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Blaster Pistol, Commlink, Period Clothing, Smartphone.	
Advantages: Chronal Memory*, Equipment 3.	
Skills: Athletics 2 (+2), Deception 2 (+3), Expertise: History 4 (+6), Expertise: Science 8 (+10), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 2 (+3), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+6), Vehicles 4 (+5).	
Offense: Init +1, Blaster Pistol +1 (Ranged, Damage 2), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 2, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 0 + Advantages 4 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 52.	

Whether lone observers or agents of a larger timekeeping organization, chrononauts are explorers who travel through time to observe and learn about humanity, science, or the mysteries of the time-stream. They may possess a time machine (see the examples under **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** in **Chapter 2**) in addition to the equipment listed here, or rely on a home base to retrieve them once they complete their mission. Lone creators likely also have the Inventor Advantage.

FAR-FUTURE SOLDIER	PL 10 • MR9 • 135 POINTS

STR 8/4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 5 **INT** 1 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 1

Powers: Quantum Rifle (Easily Removable) Ranged Cumulative Affliction 6 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Stunned, Paralyzed, Feature [paralyzed targets are stationary in space]), AE: Ranged Damage 10, **Singularity Armor** (Removable), Chronal Bulwark*, Enhanced Strength 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support), Protection 8.

Advantages: Diehard, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative Interpose, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 6.

Skills: Athletics 4 (+12/+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+11), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+5), Perception 4 (+5), Technology 2 (+3), Vehicles 4 (+8).

Offense: Init +6, Quantum Rifle +10 (Ranged, Affliction 6 or Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 7).

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 7, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 8.

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 45 + Advantages 11 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 19 = 135.

Soldiers from a far more advanced era benefit not only from advanced technology and mass-produced power armor, but also genetic engineering designed to craft the perfect fighting force. Their weapons unleash chronal energy to inflict painful wounds or mimic the effects of a chronal sink (see **Time Travel Devices and Equipment** in **Chapter 2**), while their armor augments their strength and protects them from changes to the timeline.

TEMPORAL ENFORCEMENT

With the potential abuse of time travel costing billions of lives, organizations exist to track time travelers and maintain the timeline as they believe it should be.

TIME OFFICER	PL 6 • MR6 • 84 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 3 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2

Equipment: Chronal Scanner, Chronal Sink Pistol (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Stunned, Paralyzed, Feature [paralyzed targets are stationary in space]), Time Comm.

Advantages: Chronal Bulwark*, Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 6, Improvised Weapon 2, Jack-of-all-trades, Ranged Attack 4, Seize Initiative.

Skills: Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: History 2 (+3), Insight 2 (+5), Investigation 6 (+7), Perception 4 (+7), Stealth 2 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+6).

Offense: Init +3, Chronal Sink Pistol +6 (Ranged, Affliction 6), Improvised Weapon +7 (Close, Damage 5), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 3).

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 5/3*, Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 0 + Advantages 20 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 84.

Time officers are the enforcement arm of a temporal protection agency, who track down anyone who would disrupt the timeline for their own benefit. While they carry some futuristic gear—including a communicator for remaining in touch with HQ—they work to minimize their impact on the time-stream and use local technology whenever possible. To reduce potential abuse, most time officers rely on time travel techniques like wormholes or chronal decay to avoid anyone in the past stealing their time machine.

A time officer may work for a futuristic "temporal studies institute" or be agents of cosmic forces like the Time Keepers. They may also be special agents or spies for villains like the Time-Hopping Tyrant. This statblock can also represent a trainee Guardian in service to the Time Keepers of Earth-Prime.

TEMPORAL OVERSEER	PL 2 • MR 4 • 50 POINTS

STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 1 **INT** 4 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 1

Equipment: Chronal Scanner, Time Comm.

Advantages: Chronal Bulwark*, Chronal Memory*, Equipment 2, Leadership, Skill Mastery: Expertise: History, Speed of Thought, Well-informed.

Skills: Expertise: Current Events 6 (+10), Expertise: History 8 (+12), Expertise: Science 6 (+10), Investigation 8 (+12), Perception 4 (+7), Technology 4 (+8).

Offense: Init +4, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).

Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 2, Fort 1, Tou 1, Will 3.

Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 8 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 50.

Temporal overseers are the eyes and brains behind temporal protection. While time officers work their way through history, righting wrongs and hunting chrono-crooks, they depend on the steadfast eyes and instincts of temporal overseers, who constantly monitor the timeline for changes and investigate temporal crime scenes.

Temporal overseers can also serve as comptrollers for large academic time travel institutes, tracking the coming and going of researchers, or act as a switchboard operator for time agents in the field.

TIME WATCHER	PL 5 • MR7 • 101 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 3 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 3

Powers: Polymorphic Implants Morph 2 (humans).

Equipment: Chronal Scanner 4, Light Pistol, Time Comm 3.

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Beginner's Luck, Chronal Bulwark*, Connected, Equipment 3, Hide in Plain Sight, Improvised Tools, Ranged Attack 5, Socially Adaptable*, Tracking.

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+7), Deception 6 (+9), Expertise: Current Events 8 (+11), Expertise: History 6 (+9), Insight 4 (+8), Investigation 6 (+9), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 4 (+7), Sleight of Hand 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+7).

Offense: Init +3, Light Pistol +6 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 2).

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 5, Fort 2, Tou 2, Will 4.

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 10 + Advantages 16 + Skills 27 (53 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 101.

The eyes and ears of a temporal protection agency, time watchers—sometimes nicknamed "watch faces"—are spies and moles who live among new eras and watch for signs of tampering, or help the agency track rogues, cults, and conspiracies of time travelers who know enough to cover their tracks. Advanced implants allow them to blend in with any human population across time and space, while their training helps them adapt quickly to new social landscapes.

Time watchers may instead be "deep cover" temporal explorers who observe history from within the thick of it, or spies for chrono-conspiracies.

CHAPTER 4: THE HEROIC ERAS

While superheroes can exist across all of time and space, three major eras loom large in the comic-reader psyche, defined by major changes in American society.

The 20th century was defined by larger-than-life personalities and battles fought on phenomenal scales. Humanity rediscovered and reinvented sciences from the minute to the colossal, and finally spread its reach to the most remote corners of the Earth—the crushing depths of the ocean, the airless peaks of mountains, the frozen icescape of the South Pole—as well as the moon and the rest of the solar system. The 20th century also looms large in the memories of most superhero fans because it is still a part of our living memory. It was the era of our parents and grandparents, and one from which popular media still exists and is widely available.

For all these reasons and more, the 20th century is a common destination for time travel storylines. Gamemasters can pull plotlines and characters right from history or their favorite TV show. Players are familiar with the culture, dress, and slang of the destination. Villains may want to usurp the present in very predictable ways, meaning they must make their changes within the preceding generation or two. Heroes may want to investigate family mysteries that haunted their parents or grandparents. An entire campaign's worth of adventures could be had in any given decade of the century, and time traveling heroes can visit all ten!

This chapter details the 20th century in great detail, focusing primarily on the threat major "ages" of superhero comics: the Golden Age, the Silver Age, and the Iron Age. While significant historical events happened every year in nations across the world, this book looks at history through the lens of American-style superhero comic books, and so these sections focus heavily on the history and culture of the United States. The Golden Age, Silver Age, and Iron Age each mark very different attitudes in superhero stories, but are popular destinations for time travel adventures, allowing modern heroes to team up with (or fight) heroes of the past. Each of these eras is also defined by major historical upheavals—World War II for the Golden Age, the Civil Rights Movement for the Silver Age, and the end of the Cold War and the rise of American aimlessness in the Iron Age.

Each of the following sections examines one of the so-called Heroic eras in detail, including history and major themes that appear in comics of that time, as well as rules options, character advice, and equipment to help bring those time periods to life. In this case, "Heroic Era" implies the ubiquity of superheroes, rather than implying other eras lacked heroes.

This chapter covers the target eras in broad strokes, and many of the topics covered effected people in living memory—many still affect people. As always, treat the past with respect

OTHER ERAS OF NOTE

There have been many different heroic ages within comic books, and this chapter cannot cover them all in detail. Luckily, the research required to flesh out any era of the 20th century is just a few comic books!

In addition to the Golden, Silver, and Iron ages, the following ages also define specific elements and themes in comic books and related media.

PLATINUM AGE

Late 19th century to the mid-1930s. Beginning at the dawn of comic books as a medium, the Platinum Age begins as collections of newspaper strips like the Yellow Kid and Little Nemo. These roots quickly expanded as creators explored the medium, and included some of the earliest comic book crime-fighters and adventurers like Little Orphan Annie, Detective Dan, Tailspin Tommy, and Connie Kurridge.

Visits or campaigns set within the Platinum Age won't see many villains beyond crime lords, smugglers, and WWI spies. Most of the stories from this era are two-fisted tales of ordinary people battling criminals with only training and courage. Superpowers are rare and usually the sole domain of bad guys, though some heroes wielded inexplicable abilities like Popeye's super strength. The tail end of this era saw the first masked mystery men who would become so common in the Golden Age—heroes like the Phantom, and the first wielders of true super powers like the Mandrake the Magician's hypnotic illusions and the invulnerable flesh of his life partner Lothar.

Platinum Age heroes range from PL 3–6 and generally face off against similarly human-scale opponents.

ATOMIC AGE

Early to mid-1950s. The Golden Age of comics was largely supported by American GIs. overseas and their families all looking for escapism, and the post-war boom saw the industry scramble to adapt. America no longer needed fantastic heroes to protect them, as the Cold War had yet to become a looming, daily danger that called for a new generation of superhuman protectors. Instead, genres like westerns, romance, and especially science fiction flourished. Much like they would do again in the 1990s, Americans without an overt enemy turned to horror and crime to pour their anxieties into, and both genres became especially popular and lurid.

Like the Platinum Age, heroes of the Atomic Age are more likely to be ordinary people embroiled in exciting adventures rather than superpowered warriors in tights. Unlike those earlier adventurers, though, Atomic Age heroes are likely to be space explorers, defend the world from aliens, or battle twisted, supernatural horrors. See the *Supernatural Handbook* for additional ideas.

Atomic Age heroes range from PL 6–10, and face off against aliens and monsters spawned by careless science.

BRONZE AGE

Early 1970s to early 1980s. The comics medium began to grow up alongside its Silver Age audience, and by the early 1970s, longtime fans were beginning to demand stories that appealed to their adult sensibilities and mirrored the disillusionment of the 1960s following a disastrous war in Vietnam, and the civil unrest of the Civil Rights Movement. America was suddenly aware of consequences, and that element began creeping into comic books. Spider-Man's longtime love interest, Gwen Stacey, was killed and remained dead, while the rigors of crimefighting drove the Green Arrow's sidekick Speedy to drug abuse. While nowhere near as grim as stories to come in the Copper and Iron Ages, Bronze Age stories discarded much of the fairy tale cheerfulness of the Silver Age and focused on the daily realities faced by heroes and villains, like racism, sexism, drug abuse, and the real effects of violence.

Heroes of the Bronze Age still retain some of their Silver Age strangeness, and still largely adhere to Comics Code restriction against killing, but begin taking a harder edge, making mistakes, and showing character flaws. Complications become more about personality and less about glowing space rocks, and while the heroes don't kill, we start to see villains who do.

Bronze Age heroes cover the same PL 8–14 range and themes as Silver Age heroes. The primary difference is in tone and Complications, as they contend with personal failings rather than a weakness to radioactive meteors. Their villains are likewise motivated (or plagued) by human needs and failings, including anger, jealousy, ennui, and racism.

COPPER AGE

The 1980s through 1990 or 1991. The beginning of the direct market and the collectors' boom in the '80s saw comic companies scramble to keep up with new demand and the desires of a dedicated fanbase. No longer intended for casual readers—mostly children—to pick up, trade, and discard, comics were now written with a dedicated, long-term audience in mind. Publishers took advantage of this by introducing large storylines that promised to shake up the status quo, often trying to organize 50 years' worth of backstory. This era also saw the continued focus on mature topics and consequences that began in the Bronze Age, with heroes' relationships reflecting more complicated and imperfect real-world love affairs.

Copper Age heroes have begun to show a sharp edge, and often grapple with personal demons. Many are haunted by personal failures—the people they couldn't save, or the harm done the times they gave in to their demons. But by and large they still reject deadly violence, and especially firearms.

Representing the "softer side" of the Iron Age, Copper Age heroes share the same PL 5–13 range of powers as well as the psychological baggage, but generally wield less-lethal powers and equipment. Their enemies often represent the darker side of their population or philosophy.

THE GOLDEN AGE

Late 1930s—Early 1950s

The years of the Golden Age—roughly 1938 through 1955, though the exact dates remain a topic of debate—witnessed the Great Depression, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and the atom bomb. What sets the world of the Golden Age apart from that of any other comic book era is the terrible specter of war on a global scale. Whether it was the Second World War, its bloody preludes such as in Spain or China, the Korean War, or the Cold War, the period from 1938 to 1955 was one of constant strife—either actual armed conflict or preparation for it. Violent conflict seemed inevitable and unending.

The time period encompassed by the Golden Age of comic books is a mere drop in the bucket from a historical perspective, but few other eras can match it for the sheer magnitude of change that occurred. In the space of a generation, the United States of America went from an isolationist, rural country suffering from the effects of the lingering Great Depression to the world's preeminent military and economic power, leading the world into the Atomic Age.

LIFE DURING THE GOLDEN AGE

America during the Golden Age was a society bouncing back from trauma. An entire generation of young men—the so-called Lost Generation—had fought in World War I and come home with deep mental and emotional scars that seemed to leave life bereft of meaning. The generation to follow faced one of the worst economic disasters in western history. America grew increasingly optimistic as the Depression began to lift, and the rampant jingoism and patriotism once the war began—and especially after the United States joined officially—brought a new burst of optimism to the nation. A burst of optimism backed by hard-won fatalism—America *was* the best; there was no emotional energy left for nuance.

LIFE IN THE BIG CITY

The Golden Age saw the rise of cities in the once decidedly-rural America. But throughout the era, roughly half the country remained rural—a far cry from the skyscraper-laden cityscapes seen in comic-book panels. The super-genius characters who filled their pages seemed rather out of place in a country where an 8th-grade education was the norm. The mansions and townhouses of the superhero well-to-do must've seemed strange to the quarter of all Americans who lived on small farms, the majority of which lacked electricity.

A typical American city of this time was one of row houses and buildings separated by tiny yards, paved streets and sidewalks, and the sort of side alleys that were the scene of much danger and intrigue. As a rule, cities were less developed so the occasional vacant lot could still be found, witness to many a sandlot baseball game and snowball fight between the neighborhood kids.

Automobiles were relatively uncommon until well into the 1950s, being out of reach for most Americans' incomes before the war and in very short supply during it. The wartime moratorium on automobile production, plus the rationing of gas and tires, made cars a scarcer sight than they are today. Cabs, subways, streetcars, and commuter trains were the order of the day.

HOME SWEET HOME

Dwellings were appointed rather like they are today: bed, furniture, lamps, stove (gas or electric), and radiator- or furnace-heated rooms. Radios were ubiquitous, but other appliances were in shorter supply until the postwar economic boom took firm hold in the 1950s. For example, at the start of the Golden Age, telephones (modern rotary in the city, operator-assisted in the country) were found in only a third of homes. That number had increased to about 60% by 1950. By that same time, air conditioning could be found in many people's homes, whereas it had once been rare outside of libraries and movie houses.

Refrigerators also became more affordable and finally began to supplant ice boxes in American kitchens, improving food preservation and easing the once-daily ritual of shopping for groceries. Prior to that, the milkman's daily appearance was the only help most Americans ever got in preparing dinner.

A SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

The great social upheavals of the Golden Age led Americans to pull up stakes and move like never before. Though the precise groups in transit and their reasons changed over time, mass movements of people never stopped throughout this period.

In the pre-war era, the Great Depression was the prime mover. Small-farm owners and other agricultural workers fled the Dust Bowl in search of work in California, where life often proved only marginally better for the derisively nicknamed "Okies." As the Jim Crow era made southern states increasingly hostile to black residents, many moved to northern cities for safety and steady work.

During the war, millions of soldiers, sailors, and airmen criss-crossed the country, on their way to or from postings both here and abroad. Scores of civilians overran the major cities to work in the burgeoning wartime industries or fill the many new government jobs. In the post-war era, many white Americans moved out to the suburbs, which had once been home only to the wealthy. With their arrival came the perceived tranquility of backyard barbecues and long commutes into the city for work.

ECONOMICS

As with all other aspects of American life, the economy underwent major changes during the Golden Age. Hard days and lean years gave way to good times and living off the fat of the land, permanently transforming the ways Americans spent and earned their money. Agriculture employed millions of Americans throughout the Golden Age, though the Great Depression and the emergence of the Dust Bowl took their toll—especially on small farmers. Despite the hardships, American farmers continued their critical work of keeping a substantial portion of the world fed, including the peoples of many Allied nations during the Second World War.

Service sector jobs, while not as predominant in the economy as they are today, proved to be the most resilient in the face of economic upheaval. The simple truth remains that as bad as the economy might get, people still need doctors, lawyers, police, firefighters, and teachers.

The two growth areas of the economy of the 1940s and 1950s were military and industrial. Joining the armed services was an attractive proposition during the Depression, with their promise of three square meals a day plus travel and pay. The Second World War, of course, made the military a job for millions, not all of them volunteers. Even in the return to a peacetime economy, America for the first time ever did not near-totally demobilize its wartime forces. That plus the peacetime draft ensured many Americans continued to cash GI paychecks throughout the remainder of the Golden Age.

American industry nearly collapsed during the Great Depression, but grew past all precedent during World War II. Factory jobs were plentiful and highly sought after throughout the war, as plants remained in operation around the clock. 48-hour work weeks became commonplace. So great was the demand for factory workers that the normal barriers to hiring women and minorities fell by the wayside, for the duration of the war at least.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Adventures set in the tense times leading up to the conflagration of another global war offer up a heady mix of pulp science, mysticism, hard-boiled crime stories, and foreshadowing of the conflict to come. Just like the comic books of this period, the heroes' exploits are one part *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, one part *The Maltese Falcon*, and one part *The Untouchables*.

By the late '30s, the worst of the Great Depression had passed, but few Americans would have taken comfort from that fact. The unemployment rate, which had spiked following the Stock Market Crash in 1929, had fallen to 19% by that time, but remained in double-digits until 1941. The poverty, misery, and social dislocation that resulted remained the order of the day for millions of Americans right up to the outbreak of war.

The daily struggle to survive defines much of American life, and many superheroes of the era focus on defending

and providing for their communities, especially against organized crime. Even though very few *M&M* characters are going to be selling apples in the street or worrying how they're going to escape the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression is still keenly felt in campaigns set during the early Golden Age. Most commonly, the effects of the Depression manifest in people's motives and actions.

GOOD PEOPLE, BAD CHOICES

The Golden Age is laden with stories centered around good people who do bad things out of desperation brought about by the hard economic times. Young men who once dreamed of going to college join up with organized crime to score a few badly needed bucks, and young women aid and abet terrible crimes in order to pay for a life-saving medical procedure for their child or younger sibling.

The Great Depression was a time when traditional American political ideals came into serious question. Capitalism had failed the American people, and democracy seemed at best slow to deal with the economic and social upheavals that came about in the Depression's wake. As a result, some Americans looked instead to ideologies like fascism for solutions, while others, less focused on politics, tried to make a living from illegal enterprises.

ILLINOIS NAZIS

Impressed by Germany's economic turnaround under Hitler and inspired by his call for racial purity, some Americans expressed admiration or sympathy for the Nazi regime. The legendary aviator Charles Lindbergh accepted a medal presented by the Nazi leadership and then warned against letting President Roosevelt and "the Jews" drag America into a war with Germany it could not hope to win. As many as 20,000 Americans joined up with the German-American Bund, headed by Fritz Kuhn, dedicated to bringing about a Nazi regime at home and domestic support for Hitler. Even before America officially entered World War II, homegrown Nazis were acting as fifth columnists and sabotaging American support for overseas democracies—though not on the same scale in real life as was often depicted in pulp magazines.

The basic fifth columnist storyline is a simple plot, but it's one Gamemasters shouldn't deny their players. Beating up Nazis is fun for all. If that alone didn't make Nazis the perfect villains, the fact that any sneaky, underhanded, and/or dastardly act imaginable can be plausibly attributed to them surely does.

ORGANIZED CRIME

While the mobs lost the power, money, and influence they once had under Prohibition (which ended in 1933), gangsters still flourished throughout the Golden Age, thanks to the efforts of the notorious Charles "Lucky" Luciano. Beginning in 1931, Luciano forged *La Cosa Nostra* into a truly organized crime administration known as the National Crime Syndicate, which represented the five largest mob families in America. Under the direction of "the Commission," families were assigned territories, spheres of influence, and a basic code of conduct. As a result, they spent much less time fighting each other and more effort on gambling, racketeering, prostitution, and drug trafficking. The end of Prohibition, which should have been the death knell for the mob, was merely a transition to a new and nearly as profitable period.

In a time when all most superheroes had was a costume, two fists, and a thirst for justice, gangsters were the perfect foil. Mobsters made for an equal match in power and influence and were *very* easy to dislike. Comic book mobsters were portrayed as vicious leg-breakers who stooped to anything to squeeze another buck out of some poor helpless person trying to eke out a living in the big city. They're vengeful, double-crossing, nasty pieces of work with few, if any, redeeming characteristics; in short, people who are a heck of a lot of fun to punch in the mouth.

THE RISING TIDE OF FASCISM

In response to social change, global economic depression, and the rising visibility of minorities and immigrants, many Europeans and Americans begin clinging to an idealized vision of the past, calling back to the simplicity of the 19th century (generally with the unspoken understanding that back then, women, racial minorities, and homosexuals knew their place) and clamored for a more authoritarian government that would take a firm stance against undesirable elements (and people). Violence against queer people, Jews, and other minority groups steadily climbed during the Great Depression, leading to the election of fascist governments in nations like Germany and Italy and the election of pro-fascism politicians in the United States, like Louisiana senator Huey "The Kingfish" Long.

As fascism becomes entrenched in foreign nations, it reaches out to nourish America's own fascist elements, offering funding and expertise, while undermining US efforts to support the enemies of the burgeoning Axis powers. Regardless of the fascists' specific aim, the player characters are faced with the challenge of discovering exactly what the Axis agents are after, then learning when and how they will strike.

WORLD WAR II

World War II began in 1939 with Germany's invasion of Poland. By the time America joined in late 1941, most of Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia, and the Pacific were involved to some extent. What had been prime national concerns just the day before quickly faded into memory. The Depression came to an end as the draft and mass production of materiel put the nation back to work, albeit at the unpleasant task of waging war. Even the Mob joined the war effort after the authorities declared a truce with the Commission and enlisted the imprisoned "Lucky" Luciano's help in thwarting Axis sabotage of American shipping ports. The long-term changes were even more profound, as America shed its isolationist policies and become a member of the most powerful international coalition ever formed. In the end, a war that proved ruinous for most of the rest of the world left America more powerful and prosperous than ever, with the largest surviving military on the planet.

With the war sweeping all other concerns aside, *M&M* adventures set during this time period are likewise primarily concerned with the global struggle against fascism. Even campaigns that never get closer than a thousand miles to a battlefield can still feel the effects of conscription and rationing on society at large. Heroes hear about the war daily through the news and the personal tragedies of those around them.

That said, there are still matters of degree involved. In some campaigns, the player characters fight on the frontlines alongside the brave men in uniform. Other campaigns never leave stateside, and all the action the characters see takes place on the home front. No matter which type of adventure the Gamemaster chooses to run, there's still plenty of fun and excitement to be had for the players.

THE BATTLE FRONT

Open combat gripped three continents—Europe, Asia, and Africa, as well as the waterways between and the skies above—throughout the 1940s. While every front of the war had its unique elements—the trench warfare and ground combat of the European front, the guerrilla warfare and tanks of North Africa, and the naval-focused Pacific campaign—they were all brutal, horrible battles to push a border a few feet or a mile at a time toward victory.

World War II perfected many of the terrible weapons first deployed in WWI—the machine gun, the tank, the submarine, and the airplane—and introduced new, devastating tools like rockets and radar. These, combined with the sheer scope of the conflict and deliberate genocide ended up killing an estimated 3% of the world's then-population.

Many superheroes of the Golden Age seem like they could have easily ended the war in a single day with their fantastic powers, and so comic books of the era needed to invent reasons why they didn't. In fictional universes, this was usually a combination of needing to protect the homefront from saboteurs and make up for police forces depleted by the draft and to avoid a super-powered arms race with Axis powers. Despite this, many super-powered soldiers fought for either side in the war alongside men and women in uniform.

THE DRAFT

Military conscription of able-bodied American men began on October 16th, 1940, and shifted into high gear after the Pearl Harbor attack. Ultimately, over ten million men were drafted into the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The absence of such a large portion of the American workforce, coupled with the critical need for increased industrial production, created new economic opportunities for demographic groups not normally given access to avenues for financial independence, including women and black people. Women also filled many other critical positions. Even the big leagues opened up to women with the creation of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which sanctioned games throughout the war.

SCARCITY

One of the great ironies of the 1940s was that at the same moment the country finally came out of the Depression and people resumed working steadily for good pay, shortages and rationing began. Just when folks had money in their pockets again, there was often little or nothing for them to buy.

Most Americans responded patriotically, even if they did grumble a little, and "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without!" became the slogan of the day. They learned to be frugal and thrifty, mending old clothes or making their own. People planted "victory gardens" in window-boxes to make up for the now-rationed vegetables. When all else failed, they did without, something they'd had great practice at during the Great Depression.

Many items were simply not available to civilians. The war in the Pacific almost entirely cut off America's rubber supply, and what was available was needed for military use. Items like new tires were virtually nonexistent during the war, forcing homefront motorists to get by on bald, patched-up tires, or ersatz substitutes made of wood or discarded shoe soles. Industrial production was directed almost entirely towards fulfilling the military's needs, leaving items like automobiles, utensils, batteries, shoes, tools, firearms, nylon stockings, flashlights, nails, and radios either unavailable or in very short supply for civilians. To make matters worse, homefront shortages of these items grew more severe as the war dragged on.

The needs of wartime production also left little room for consumer goods. As the fighting continued, items like electric toasters, curling irons, vacuum cleaners, typewriters, and record players became ever scarcer.

ENTERTAINMENT

The tougher the times, the more people need pleasant diversions. America during the Golden Age was no exception. People with time on their hands wiled away the hours at drugstores and soda fountains, leafing through the latest Hollywood gossip magazines while a Wurlitzer jukebox spun the latest big-band 78s.

People in the 1938-1955 period spent their (often scarce) dimes going to the movies, reading and trading comic books, listening to the radio, or going to the ballpark or the arena. As the Golden Age ended, people discovered yet another diversion: the strange box called television.

FILM

Motion pictures defined entertainment throughout the Golden Age. In this era, nothing—not the privations of the Depression, wartime shortages, nor television—could keep people out of their local movie houses. Theaters were large, elegant palaces, attended by uniformed ushers and attractive young people. A night at the movies was a true experience, as a quarter admission got patrons a double feature, a newsreel, a cartoon, and one or more shorts. During this period, better-off Americans typically went to a picture show two or three times a week.

During the Depression, films like *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) starring Errol Flynn illustrate the type of escapist adventures popular with Depression-era audiences, just as opulent epics like *Gone with the Wind* (1939) swept movie-goers far away from their worries with their grandeur and scope. Other films, such as *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), painted a more realistic picture of the hardships of day-to-day living that many Americans faced.

Motion pictures were deemed important to wartime morale and thus avoided many of the strictures placed upon other industries. The government leaned hard on major studios to produce morale-boosting propaganda alongside more popular films, in order to support the American war effort, ever mindful of the slogan, "What's this film going to do to win the war?"

Films like *Casablanca* (1942) and *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) focused on and celebrated the sacrifices of ordinary people for the sake of the war effort. Scores of other movies attempted to show audiences back home the heroism of the boys in uniform, such as *Wake Island* (1942), while others found humor in the absurdities of changed wartime conditions, like *Buck Privates* (1941).

At the same time, Hollywood was making more direct contributions to the war, as a good portion of its behind-the-camera talent were assigned to the Army Signal Corps to crank out training and more openly propaganda films. Several of its best-known stars (such as Jimmy Stewart) also donned uniforms, eschewing the celebrity lifestyle for front-line combat duties. Other celebrities worked with the USO to entertain the troops and keep morale high, or sold war bonds at home to help fund the war effort.

SPORTS

By far the most popular sport was baseball, which during this era truly earned its sobriquet as "the national pastime." So ingrained in the culture were the Major Leagues that when English-fluent German soldiers in U.S. Army uniforms attempted to infiltrate American lines during the 1944 Battle of the Bulge, GIs started distinguishing friend from foe with baseball trivia questions. They naturally assumed anyone who didn't know which team won the 1941 World Series just *had* to be a spy. In testament to its popularity, the Major Leagues kept playing throughout World War II when several other sports (like the Olympics, auto racing, and horse racing) were suspended for the duration. With many of its top stars trading in their baseball uniforms for military ones, baseball turned to populations they had shunned. This led to the formation of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League and new popularity for the Negro Leagues.

After baseball, America's most beloved sport was professional boxing. Throughout the '30s, '40s, and '50s, people filled arenas across the country to see prizefighters of all weight classes put on the gloves and step into the ring for ten or more rounds. Pugilism's popularity is quite evident in the pages of Golden Age comic books, as almost every adventure character of the era knew how to throw a good right cross.

MUSIC

The most popular music of the Golden Age was swing, beloved by jitterbugging folks all across America and played by big bands featuring as many as forty musicians. Popular bandleaders of the day included Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Artie Shaw, Gene Krupa, and Glenn Miller. A CD or MP3 player featuring any or all of these greats is an inexpensive way to set a proper Golden Age mood for gaming.

Swing is a musical genre steeped in jazz to varying degrees (depending on the bandleader and the song), but the genuine article also reached a peak in popularity during the Golden Age. The leading lights of the big jazz band form were Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Don

Redman, and Jay McShann. Jazz bands were at the forefront of the trend in the entertainment industry towards breaking down the barriers of racial segregation, a development which met with more popular acceptance than similar trends elsewhere. As the racial barriers began to fall, jazz began to evolve.

In addition to their favorite big bands, people fed jukeboxes to hear popular vocalists of the day. Crooner Frank Sinatra was the wartime favorite of the "bobbysoxers" (teenage girls), while Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters played to wider audiences. Reflective of the wistful and patriotic mood of the day, Crosby (*White Christmas*) and Kate Smith (*God Bless America*) recorded the era's two biggest sellers.

RADIO

What television is today, radio was to the Golden Age. From cheap and basic to expensive and elaborate models, radios were in almost every home. The AM airwaves brought news, sports, soap operas, musical performances, game shows, and live dramas for the average American, who had their choice of NBC, CBS, the Mutual Broadcasting System, or (from 1943 on) ABC.

The power and influence of radio was demonstrated early on during the Golden Age, when Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre presented its now-infamous dramatization of H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* on October 30, 1938. As outlandish as an invasion from Mars seems, many listeners tuned in past the opening disclaimer that the broadcast was a fictional scenario, so when the radio said an invasion was happening, people believed it, and panic resulted. Many more shocking events were carried on the airwaves in the years following, but they proved to be all too real, such as when word of the Pearl Harbor attack reached a stunned America.

More so than any other medium, radio was influenced by the goings-on in comic books, comic strips, and pulp magazines. Listeners thrilled to the serialized adventures of Superman, the Green Hornet, the Shadow, Little Orphan Annie, Terry and the Pirates, and Red Ryder. It sent a generation of kids in search of enough box tops to get the badges, rings, and other assorted decoding devices offered by the shows' sponsors.

Befitting an era as full of upheavals as the Golden Age, comedians were king. Talents as great and diverse as Bob Hope, Groucho Marx, Jack Benny, George Burns & Gracie Allen, Red Skelton, Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy, Fred Allen, Abbott & Costello, Amos 'n' Andy, Spike Jones, Stan Freberg, and Bob & Ray brought much-needed laughter to millions and became household names in the process.

Radio dramas reflected all the classic types, like the police procedural (*Dragnet*), Westerns (*Gunsmoke*, *The Cisco Kid*), crime stories (*Gang Busters*), and juvenile adventure yarns (*Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*). Anthologies also aired on many networks, including *The Lux Radio Theater* (which adapted popular movies of the day), as well as suspense thriller shows like *Suspense*, *Escape*, and *The Inner Sanctum Mysteries*.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in the Golden Age is primarily mechanical and chemical in nature, with electronics still coming into its own. Computers, radar, television, and atomic power are the cutting edge, while most people get by with slide rules, naked eyes, radio, and electricity.

ATOMIC WEAPONS

America detonated the first-ever atom bomb on July 16, 1945, with the Soviet Union following suit on August 29, 1949, and the United Kingdom in 1952, but no other nations did so during the Golden Age time frame.

Atomic weapons during this period take the form of unguided bombs dropped from huge propeller-driven strategic bombers like the B-29 Superfortress (jet bombers finally entered service in 1955). Field artillery shells with atomic warheads made their debut in 1953. Many other possibilities—intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and atomic depth charges—remained on the drawing boards and proving grounds.

COMPUTERS

At the start of the Golden Age, digital computers are a brand-new invention, building off earlier difference engines of the last 50 years. Digital computers were few in number, filling an entire room each, and were limited to high-speed mathematical calculations.

This is not to say computers weren't handy to have around, especially for compiling a census, plotting artillery ranges, and breaking enemy codes. The latter task was most famously carried out with the British-made Colossus II electronic machines secreted away at Bletchley Park, the very existence of which became known only in the late 1970s.

ELECTRONICS

In the first half of the Golden Age, vacuum tubes and large mechanical relays are state-of-the-art. Thousands were required for the earliest computers like the German Z3, the British Colossus, and the American ENIAC. Transistors first appeared in 1947, the handiwork of a team of Bell Labs scientists, and began to replace vacuum tubes. At the end of the Golden Age, plans for integrated circuits are "the next big thing." They do not actually appear until 1959, leaving technology that employs them (like microprocessors and cell phones) for the decades following.

MEDICINE

Without MRIs and the like, Golden Age doctors relied on exploratory surgery for diagnosing many internal maladies. Once discovered, physicians then had to rely on a few proven drugs and further surgery to cure a patient with a major illness.

Though it was in short supply, penicillin (rediscovered in 1928) significantly reduced the number of wounded

soldiers lost to infections during World War II. In the mid-1940s, Oxford University researchers led by Howard Walter Florey discovered how to make synthetic, mass-producible penicillin, making the drug widely available for the first time.

Polio and measles both remained public health crises throughout the Golden Age, with vaccinations for both emerging in the 1950s. Polio in particular left thousands of children dead or permanently disabled in the first half of the 20th century.

Advances in mental health, on the other hand, were much more dubious. Prefrontal lobotomies (first "successfully" performed in 1936) were common practice throughout the Golden Age, "curing" patients of their mental disorders via a jiggled ice pick inserted near the tear duct. Of equally questionable value to the patient, electroshock therapy was instituted in 1938. It was usually administered without anesthesia, resulting in broken bones and torn muscles for many subjected to it.

RADAR

New developments in radar technology were top military secrets throughout the war. Shortly after its entry into World War II, the United Kingdom had in place a decimetric microwave radar system known as Chain Home—the first radar screen against enemy vessels. It gave the Royal Air Force critical early warnings it desperately needed during the Battle of Britain.

The most important such breakthrough was the development of the cavity magnetron in 1940 by Birmingham University scientists John Randall and Harry Boot, which produced much more powerful microwaves than previous systems could. Using the cavity magnetron, the U.K. and the U.S. were able to deploy advanced centrimetric radars, which significantly outperformed competing Axis systems. Allied forces also enjoyed a tremendous advantage in mating advanced radar technology with existing weapons systems. Radar-directed artillery was deadly against both ships and planes (especially when firing proximity-fused shells), and could even bring down the vaunted German V-1 rockets. Radar-equipped planes played havoc against enemy submarines, capable of spotting them from just their exposed periscopes.

ROBOTICS

Westinghouse exhibited eight robots named "Elektro" at the 1939 New York World's Fair (joined by a robotic dog named "Sparko" at the 1940 Fair), who could walk, talk, and move their limbs, all under human direction. At seven feet tall and three hundred pounds, they were an impressive sight and a harbinger of things to come.

The first robots capable of acting independently came about in 1948. Named "Elsie" and "Elmer" by their creator, British neurophysiologist Grey Walter, they were capable of following a light back to a recharger whenever their batteries ran low. Robots capable of much more than that remained the stuff of comic books throughout the era.

ROCKETS & JET AIRCRAFT

Short-range military rockets date back to ancient China, but practical, long-range applications that could strike nations dozens or hundreds of miles away remained elusive until Nazi Germany began production of the V-2 in 1943. It soon after leapt from a short-range tactical option to helping lay waste to swathes of London. As the Nazi regime collapsed, the United States and Soviet Union raced to capture as much German rocket technology as possible. With it, the road to the first intercontinental ballistic missile (the Soviet R-7) and Sputnik were paved.

The Nazis also flew the first jet aircraft, the Heinkel He 178, on August 27, 1939, but did not put the technology to military use until 1944, when production of the Messerschmitt Me 262 began. By that time, the British had their own jet fighter, the Gloster Meteor, in service and the tide of war had turned against the Nazis.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Many events in the Golden Age hinge on global warfare. Even campaigns that don't interact with the war directly must still account for scarcity and rationing as a result of the war, and will encounter far more women and racial minorities in positions of power in the United States thanks to wartime labor shortages.

Visiting heroes and locals are likely to find the Mass Combat rules from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* useful, given the era's focus on warfare.

SKILLS

Most of the technology and vehicles used during the Golden Age are at least passingly familiar to modern heroes, imposing only a –2 penalty on Technology and Vehicle checks to use the marginally unfamiliar equipment. Computer-related tasks are possible, but suffer a –5 penalty due to their extremely limited capabilities compared to modern systems.

EXPERTISE (TACTICS)

Gamemasters may allow heroes to take command of combat units if using the optional Mass Combat rules. Heroes can use the Expertise (Tactics) skill to perform an Aid action assisting a single unit under their command. Commanders can decide if the bonus provided grants a bonus on their unit's next attack check (an offensive strategy), Toughness check (a defensive strategy), or Morale check (a rousing speech).

GOLDEN AGE ADVANTAGES

The following advantages help incorporate the flavor of the 1940s war effort, and are mostly intended for heroes originating in the era.

BENEFIT: DRAFT EXEMPTION — GENERAL, RANKED

You are exempt from compulsory military service. Whatever the exact reason, you're not classified 1-A (fit for military service), 1-B (fit for limited service), 1-C (already in the active-duty military), 4-C (an alien national who can still be drafted) or 4-D (an ordained minister, eligible to be drafted into the chaplain corps). You are free to pursue your costumed hero career as you see fit.

Note that women are not eligible for the United States draft, and not every man in America is drafted for service.

Rank 1 Exemptions: Your exemption carries a degree of social stigma for your secret identity. You are classified 4-F ("physically, mentally, or morally unfit for service"), which makes you in the eyes of most people either (respectively) lazy, a dangerous crackpot, or a criminal. Alternately, you are considered 4-E, a conscientious objector, which most people of the time believe to be a coward.

Most civilians have an Unfriendly attitude towards you in casual interaction. Servicemen on leave may even be Hostile to you. In many Golden Age comic books, costumed heroes dutifully tried to join up, but were rejected as medically unfit due to the alterations to their physiology that occurred when they gained superpowers. Characters whose powers derive from the fact that they're an alien, a mutant, or the like can take a rank 1 exemption to represent their unusual 4-F status.

Rank 2 Exemptions: Your exemption carries no societal approbation, but has specific conditions you must meet. For example, your character might be 1-D (student, fit for service) or 1-E (student, fit for limited service), with the catch being they must stay in school and keep his grades up—challenging if he's got his hands full battling enemy saboteurs.

A character might be considered 2-A, meaning your job is considered critical to the war effort (like industrial magnate, scientist, cop, engineer, or fireman) or 4-B (meaning you work for the government as a judge or similar high elected official), making it critical for you keep your current position. As a result, your character may have to suffer the indignities of his jerk boss, or campaign for re-election to keep his draft-exempt status. You may even be 3-A because of your many dependents (typically five or more), adding the Responsibility Complication.

Patriotic superheroes who work directly for the government may qualify for 4-B or even 2-A status to select costumed figures for the duration of the war. The catch is remaining a good and obedient soldier.

Rank 3 Exemptions: Your character is considered 4-A, indicating past military service. Many discharged personnel were recalled to active duty at the outbreak of war, but your character's service was either so long ago (World War I, or even the Spanish-American War) or so very recent that a recall isn't a concern. In addition to having your autonomy, you are also considered to have "done your part" by the public at large and thus don't suffer any sort of Interaction penalties.

BENEFIT: RATIONING EXEMPTION — GENERAL, RANKED

You are exempt from some aspects of rationing. This may be due to your valued status in the government's eyes, like the extra gas ration offered to doctors or the unlimited gasoline for truckers and firefighters. You receive a +4 bonus per rank when rolling on the Rationing Table (following). This benefit can be tenuous. If your worth to the government diminishes or any involvement in the black market on your part is discovered, it will be revoked.

BENEFIT: MILITARY RANK — GENERAL, RANKED

You're in the Army, Navy, Marines, or the Army Air Force, and have performed well enough to earn some extra stripes or brass to show for your time spent in uniform. On the good side, you've got a steady job—nothing to sneeze at during the Great Depression. Plus, there's the three meals a day, free room and board, world travel, and access to some cutting-edge electronics and vehicles.

This Advantage provides a measure of respect and access to secret information (determined by your Gamemaster), and requires personnel of lower ranks to obey your orders (within reason). Higher ranks also act effectively as ranks of Benefit: Wealth. Your character doesn't have to worry about the effects of wartime rationing. You also get access to equipment most people don't, so long as it makes sense for your job, so long as you pay the EP cost.

Military rank also requires active service and obedience to your commanding officers and national interests. Forfeiting this benefit is just a start, with prison time and a firing squad (for wartime desertion) as other possibilities.

Rank	Army Marine Corps	Navy	Wealth Rank
0	Private	Seaman	—
1	Corporal	Seaman First Class	—
2	Sergeant (any grade)	Petty Officer (any class)	—
3	Second or First Lieutenant	Ensign/Lt. Junior Grade	1
4	Captain	Lieutenant	1
5	Major/Lt. Colonel	Lt. Commander/ Commander	1
6	Colonel/Brigadier General	Captain	1
7	Major General	Rear Admiral	2
8	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	2
9	General	Admiral	2
10	General of the Army	Fleet Admiral	3

GOLDEN AGE GEAR

Golden Age gadgets represented two extremes. On the one hand were the commonplace gadgets, such as gangsters' guns, teenagers' souped-up jalopies, and major plot points relayed to characters via radio broadcasts. When superheroes and supervillains entered the scene, logic and proportion disappeared, but never the sense of wonder. Death rays, time machines, magic rings, and giant Nazi robots were part and parcel of the era's storylines. Scientific devices were more limited, but could work inexplicable wonders, like hand-held ray projectors capable of melting through a tank.

The *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* provides a list of Golden Age weapons and vehicles to incorporate into your campaign. This section provides additional advice and statistics to supplement those options.

CONJURING RING

A ring forged from magical metal and bonded to the living energy of the world, the conjuring ring lets a hero fly and create energy forms. Its powers have their limits, though: the ring carries a limited supply of energy and must be recharged from a more powerful source of magic, and its bond to the living world means its powers cannot affect wood. Both of these effects function as Complications.

Conjuring Ring: Flight 6 (120 MPH), Create Object 10 (Movable; AE: Damaging Move Object 10, AE: Insubstantial 4) • *44 points*

ENCHANTED SCARAB

A magical artifact left behind by an ancient civilization, the scarab transforms its wearer into a mighty champion imbues them with superhuman abilities. The scarab must be activated as a Move action to provide its wondrous benefits, and its mysterious origin may play into far greater dangers ahead.

Enchanted Scarab: Transformation Enhanced Stamina 5, Enhanced Strength 5, Flight 5 (60 MPH), Ranged Damage 8; Activation • *45 points*

GOLDEN LARIAT

Woven from orichalcum and blessed by the gods, the golden lariat is an unbreakable tether. Its makeup is so pure that those encircled by it can't taint it with lies, forcing them to only speak the truth.

Golden Lariat: Move Object 10 Linked to Ranged Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Vulnerable, Compelled [to tell the truth]; Limited Degree); Feature 1 (unbreakable) • *26 points*

PLOT DEVICES

Golden Age supervillains created absurdly powerful inventions that frequently crossed into Plot Device territory: death ray cannons that could level a city and devices that could pluck the moon from its orbit. These gadgets usually took hours or days to "power up," providing heroes with the chance to learn about and stop them, but it suited the big thinking typical of Golden Age supervillains.

When equipping your villains, don't be afraid of going over the top. If a villain from any era would use "atomic rays" to reverse the gravity, dooming the city to fall forever into the sky, it will be a Golden Age villain.

RATIONING

The most prominent items officially rationed during World War II were gasoline and food, instituted to ensure that the Allied war machine remained fueled and the embattled nations (the United Kingdom, in particular) stayed fed. Rationing limitations on these two items had major ramifications on the homefront.

Every month, each U.S. civilian was issued two books of food ration stamps, valid until the start of the following month. One book contained 48 points worth of blue stamps which allowed the bearer to purchase dry and canned goods, while the other book contained 64 points worth of red stamps which were required for meat purchases. Food items cost not only money, but a certain number of points as well. For example, a pound of porterhouse steak cost 12 red points, while a pound of hamburger set the purchaser back 7 red points. A can of carrots was equal to 6 blue points, while a can of pineapple juice costs a princely 22 blue points. This was assuming, of course, particular items were available at all, which was not always the case with things like coffee, bacon, steak, and sugar.

Gasoline was even more strictly controlled. The average American citizen was limited to between three and five gallons of gas per week, though people in critical occupations (including defense-plant foremen, doctors, truckers, firemen) qualified for larger shares. A monthly ration card and a color-coded car-window sticker verified a person's gas-ration status. Motorists also had to cope with a government ban on pleasure driving and a new national speed limit of 35 mph, with violators forfeiting their gasoline ration cards.

Despite food rationing, the average person was eating better by the war's end than he was during the Depression. Gas rationing, by contrast, was a major disruption for the American motorist. The rationing of gas, tires, and a halt to new car production made automobiles far rarer during the war than they were in the pre- and postwar era.

Wartime shortages can serve as Complications for player characters throughout World War II. Heroes' vehicles may run out of gas while chasing down criminals, and they find themselves completely out of red stamps right after promising their significant other a romantic evening and a special home-cooked meal.

Depending on the campaign's background, rationing may even extend to whatever wondrous power source a player character relies on. Surely if a well-known superhero can derive fantastic abilities from that rare, mysterious element "atmospherium," the U.S. government will want to restrict access to it so it can both exploit its potential and keep it out of the hands of its enemies.

THE BLACK MARKET

World War II era rationing was subject to the immutable rule of government prohibitions: restricting any item the public wants simply makes it available illegally at steeper prices. During the war, "Mr. Black" (as the illicit trade was anthropomorphized) was always there to meet any unfulfilled need so long as people had the necessary cash.

Just about anything that could be had was available for purchase on the black market, even such hard-to-get items as radios and new tires. The going rate started at twice the peacetime price, however, and went up from there. There's also the small matter of involvement in the black market being a serious criminal offense, punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Over one thousand people were brought up on such charges during the war—which did little to stop Mr. Black from pocketing tens of millions of dollars in illicit profits.

Golden Age heroes spend a lot of time battling gangsters. The black market becomes just one more racket for the player characters to break up. This can involve protecting shipments of precious goods, smashing up ration-coupon counterfeiting rings, or simply lecturing ordinary citizens on the evils of trading on the black market.

Of course, a player character may be tempted to buy something from Mr. Black, due to shaky morals or dire necessity. This carries with it risks. If a character's involvement in illegal trafficking of goods is discovered, they may wind up eating prison food instead of porterhouses.

USING THE RATIONING TABLE

Locating a given item on the black market is a matter of who you know in addition to how much you have to spend. Tracking down black market items requires a successful Persuasion check to gather information unless a character explicitly has a black market contact. Failing this check means characters can't locate someone with the goods they want.

Once they locate a supplier, characters must also have the available fund, indicated by a rank of Benefit: Wealth. Characters can generally afford a black market item of one rank above their own, but it represents a huge purchase that may lead to future financial problems or a sudden infusion of quick cash.

RATIONING TABLE

Item	Persuasion DC	Wealth Rank
Common rationed item (gas, most foods)	12	0
Scarce rationed foods (coffee, bacon, steak, sugar)	20	1
Top-brand cigarettes, wine, whiskey	25	1
Consumer goods (vacuum cleaner, electric toasters)	25	1
Military-used item (radio, firearm, flashlight, shoes)	30	2
Scarce-material items (tires, silk or nylon stockings)	35	3
New automobile	40	3

VISITING HEROES

World War II still looms large in popular culture and as a major historical turning point in western history, and so time traveling heroes arriving in the Golden Age are probably arriving to help with the war effort or to stop another villain from tampering with the war's outcome. Fascist or neo-Nazi villains may be attempting to turn the war in Germany's favor, while imperialist Japanese villains may try to do the same for their nation. Other visitors to the era may try to avert personal or family horrors, saving ancestors from dying on the front line or in Nazi gas chambers—in which case heroic chrononauts may help while minimizing disruption to history.

Given the era's importance, as well as host to a lengthy, global war, there is fertile ground for adventures in the decade and a half that make up the Golden Age of superheroes. In addition to stopping other meddlers in the timeline, heroes might be trying to track down any of the fantastic treasures that went missing during the war, from historical treasures like St. Petersburg's Amber Room to mystical objects like the Lance of Longinus. Travelers working for a temporal enforcement agency may take advantage of the widespread chaos to recruit, selecting soldiers who supposedly vanished or died at sea as new agents whose absence won't scar causality.

Chrononauts sticking to North America might find themselves dealing with Nazi or Japanese plots that history never recorded—perhaps the result of other time travelers, or simply historical curiosities they were always destined to quietly thwart. They may also arrive to discover the era already radically altered from how they know it should play out, and spend time living in the past as they track down the source of the changes.

Stories set in the Golden Age often showcase the first generation of superheroes and their wide-eyed enthusiasm. Visiting heroes should have a chance to team up with their predecessors, either to learn from old pros or to showcase how concepts like justice and human decency have evolved.

Possible plot hooks:

- A modern neo-Nazi travels back with advanced technology to help Hitler win the war.
- The heroes arrive in 1943 by accident and must convince the locals they aren't German spies... or aliens.
- After a blip in the timeline, history suddenly reveals more countries remained neutral during WWII and the heroes must investigate how this may have affected the modern world.
- Archaeologists discover a secret American time-travel project designed to help turn the tide of war. Was it abandoned, or did the United States actually use it?

UGLIEST HISTORY

The unspeakable atrocities of genocide loom large over World War II, beyond the lives lost to warfare, poverty, and disease. One of the most popular time-travel conceits is "What if someone killed Hitler?" and Gamemasters should consider if a trip to the Golden Age will afford players this incredibly satisfying opportunity (and what changes to history might result), or if the horrors of the Holocaust will be kept at arm's length while the heroes engage more comic book-style threats. Avoid the temptation to blame the Third Reich's atrocities on supervillains, aliens, demons, or other fictional sources, as doing so undermines real human tragedies and trauma, and can be insulting or actively harmful to your players.

Many storylines that involve traveling to the 1930s and '40s sidestep this issue by planting the travelers firmly in the United States, often defeating a homefront Nazi plot that history never recorded.

GOLDEN AGE HEROES

Heroes native to the Golden Age have their hands full with a rapidly-changing society, ever-evolving criminal ingenuity, and the looming specter of war and espionage. Golden Age stories often revolve around the growing militarism of their time, often with heroes joining the war effort (even before the United States' official involvement) or else defending the nation from threats inspired by global fascists and their local sympathizers. Heroes are often built around central themes of patriotism and their national symbols.

Heroes of this era have their hands full with the war raging, the rise of organized crime, and vile racism re-emerging in mainstream American culture. They may be Allied soldiers fighting the Nazis with extraordinary courage and skill (or superpowers) or defending the homefront from saboteurs and gangsters while police departments remain understaffed. In either case, most have powers that are very focused. Innate powers tend to be exaggerations of what a human being can already do—super strength, super toughness, super speed, super swimming, or super proficiency with specific skills—while other heroes lack any special powers and instead rely on single-function gadgets that the villains never quite seem to account for.

The Golden Age accurately depicts the Axis powers as evil. This creates the uncomfortable assumption that the Allies were therefore the "good guys," incapable of any wrong despite human rights abuses like US-run internment camps. Post-modern games set in this era might explore this disjunction and try to address the Allies' own abominable actions, or it may ignore the history and envi-

sion a morally simplified version of the era. Whichever you choose, make sure your group understands going in.

STARTING POWER LEVELS

The Golden Age is filled with heroes unrelated to time travel or the 21st century, ranging from masked mystery men who fought crime with nothing but a right hook and a can-do attitude to godlike superhumans whose powers dwarf many modern superbeings. Golden Age heroes tended to develop physical traits and powers rather than mental ones. Extraordinary intellect or presence were the domain of plotting villains or lovable side characters.

TWO-FISTED ADVENTURERS PL 6

Campaigns from this era often center around the type of non-costumed, double-tough, globetrotting, pulp-style heroes that dominated comic books of the earlier Platinum Age. Courageous men and fearless women throw caution to the wind as they battle gangsters, saboteurs, pirates, and even the occasional alien invasion with nothing but Einstein-smarts, Olympic-gold athletics, and movie-star good looks. By the Golden Age, many of these pulp-style heroes are picking up unusual gadgets or powers, from blackout guns that shoot inky darkness to pills that grant them temporary super strength to psychic hypnosis to render themselves invisible. Once the war begins, extraordinary front-line soldiers often take up this same role on the battlefront, occupying the same PL range but usually replacing the fancy gadgets with Army-issue rifles and vehicles.

LONGJOHN HEROES PL 8

The first generation of superhumans in the modern world usually developed very singular abilities that were outgrowths of what human beings could already do. They were very fast, very strong, or very smart—well beyond what any ordinary human could achieve—but had yet to achieve the heights of power or creativity demonstrated by Silver Age inheritors. Superheroes "stayed in their lane," so a super-strong character might be able to leap tall buildings, but the ability to fly was reserved for a superhero whose power was flight.

STRONGER THAN MORTAL MEN PL 10-15

A minority of Golden Age superheroes developed genuine, formidable abilities, easily equal to or exceeding the powers of modern-day heroes. Such superhumans often had only vaguely-defined abilities, such as magic or psychic power, that bent to their whims and didn't seem to follow any internally-consistent set of rules. These titans usually battled equally incredible foes—ranging from alien invaders to rival mystics to strange cults—but also made time to tackle ordinary gangsters who had little hope against their extraordinary powers.

STATBLOCKS

Gamemasters will find plenty of utility in the Soldier and Underworld minion archetypes from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, as well as low-powered villain archetypes such as the **Crime Lord**, **Mad Scientist**, and **Master of Disguise**. The following statblocks are especially useful in the Golden Age.

FIFTH COLUMNIST

America's own fascist sympathizers, fifth columnists acted as spies and saboteurs to undermine the country's involvement in the war. They sometimes also worked as go-betweens for criminal groups and Nazi spies, intimidating and beating people with useful skills whom they couldn't persuade to their way of thinking. You can also use these statistics for a partisan. These secretive resistance groups formed in Axis-conquered territories like France, Poland, Russia, and China and likewise focused on sabotage and spying. Most were ordinary people who picked up useful skills in the wake of invasion.

FIFTH COLUMNIST	PL 3 • MR3 • 41 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 2 **INT** 1 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Binoculars, Club, Gas Mask, Light Pistol.	
Advantages: Equipment 2, Power Attack.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+5), Expertise: Demolitions 4 (+5), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 2 (+2), Ranged Combat: Guns 2 (+3), Technology 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+5).	
Offense: Init +1, Club +2 (Close, Damage 4), Light Pistol +3 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 2, Will 1.	
Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 3 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 6 = 41.	

WONDER DOG

For reasons still unexplained by science, the 1930s and 1940s were replete with dogs of extraordinary courage and intelligence, who threw themselves headlong into the battle against evil. Many superheroes relied on faithful canine sidekicks during these years, and more than a few heroes of the age were little more than sidekicks to these extraordinary, four-legged heroes. A wonder dog should be acquired as a sidekick, rather than a minion, to reflect its tenacity, loyalty, and majesty.

WONDER DOG	PL 3 • MR2 • 27 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** -1 **FGT** 3 **INT** -3 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Senses 3 (Acute Smell, Tracking, Ultra-Hearing).	
Advantages: Evasion, Improved Trip.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+6), Stealth 2 (+4).	
Offense: Init +2, Bite +3 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 2, Toughness 2, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 14 + Powers 3 + Advantages 2 + Skills 5 (10 ranks) + Defenses 3 = 27.	

GOLDEN AGE EMERALD CITY

Emerald City wasn't always bereft of heroes. While frontier-style vigilante justice had been delivered at the end of a gun throughout the town's prospector years, the Golden Age saw the first appearance of actual masked "mystery men" in the bustling young city. The beginning of the era saw brave individuals standing up to the various crime lords and bootleggers who had grown powerful and brash during Prohibition and then the Depression. With the police and elected officials firmly in the pocket of organized crime, pioneering Emerald City heroes like the Nightwatchman, Pearl Valentine, and Tinman took down gang strongholds, busted up illegal gambling dens and extortion rackets, and put the fear of citizens into corrupt officials. When America joined the fight in World War II, many of the city's heroes packed away their masks and served the cause of freedom on the battlefield, leaving a new generation of heroes—Emerald City's first superhero team, the Victory Squadron—to protect the homefront.

As in most of the United States, the Great Depression didn't make Emerald City poorer, so much as it made the poor and middle class poorer while making the wealthy richer. Gems still needed to be mined, fish needed to be hauled in, and timber needed to be felled, even as the wages for those jobs froze or fell. The great irony of the era is that the City of Destiny saw one of its largest construction booms during the Depression. Construction cranes dominate the skyline as countless older buildings make way for cutting-edge art deco architecture. The oligarchs appeased the citizens by also constructing many of the city's glamorous cinemas and public parks. When public opinion still turned against rich emeraldites as the city's "Hooverville" steadily expanded, the elite simply cozied up with organized crime to break worker unions and make rabble-rousers disappear.

The war helped pull Emerald City out of this self-destructive spiral. The war machine hungered for timber and ore. Every hand was needed and bosses could no longer fight workers with artificial labor shortages. This recovery didn't benefit everyone, however, as Executive Order 9066 ordered the incarceration of Japanese-Americans into concentration camps. Emerald City's sizeable Japanese population was devestated, with their property confiscated or sold to white neighbors for pennies on the dollar. Emerald City was particularly supportive of internment—following the 1942 attack of the *I-14*, a Japanese submarine that showered Fortitude Breckenridge with artillery fire—a legacy that many modern citizens feel some shame for.

GEOGRAPHY

Emerald City has always been isolated, but throughout the 1930s and 1940s the only easy access to the city was by sea. Local roads connected Emerald City—at the time consisting of the Riverfront, Royal Hill, and the sparsely-

populated Sunset Hill—to outlying towns like Southern Shore, Bethlehem Heights, and the tiny new community of Lakeside. Ferries connect the city to farther-flung settlements like Bridgeport, North Shore, and Oceanside. While a few twisting mountain roads connect the city to the rest of the Pacific Northwest, most travelers and freight still rely on ships or rail service to depart. Thankfully, Golden Age Emerald City is supported by endless farms, covering much of modern-day Southern Shore, West Valley, and Islandview; small farms even break up parts of the city proper with short, informal greenbelts and orchards.

Throughout the Depression, a massive shantytown grew south and east from Royal Hill, adjoining the then-isolated eastern District and forming the foundation of what would eventually become University Hill. While prime real estate today, Emerald City's Hooverville housed the poorest and most desperate residents, who often endured harassment from police and gangs of young, well-off troublemakers and consequently distrusted authority. This made the winding, dirty streets a haven for criminal activity—which was used to justify increased police harassment.

A wonder of modern engineering, the Red River Dam is a brand-new addition to the landscape. Begun in 1933, construction was finally completed in 1939 after several unexplained accidents delayed construction. By the time the US joined the war, the power plant provided far more electricity than the booming industries needed. The dam also created the closest bridge over the Red River, making the Arcadian Peninsula more accessible for many wartime industries like Nolan Aircraft.

Throughout the Golden Age, nature is closer to Emerald City than ever before. Council Island remains almost entirely abandoned after the Grand Neptune Resort and Casino—which promised to bring the Riviera to the Pacific—endured a horrible fire only weeks after opening, killing over 200 people and leaving the lavish facility a ruin. The Cryptid Clans were bolder, raiding farms and robbing trains passing through their forests. Without mass media, many of these incidents simply contributed to wild local legends and unexplained disappearances.

KEY EVENTS

The Golden Age in Emerald City dawned with the looming threat of class warfare. Following a harsh winter, of 1935, March saw the Green-and-Red Riots as locals stormed Yenam Mansion on the edge of Sunset Hill. The Yenam Timber Company had resolved union negotiations by simply firing every employee, and what began as a protest attracted many of the city's most desperate and hungry, who stormed the estate to take food, clothing, and valuables. The city called in police while Timothy Yenam himself called upon mafia connections to attack the rioters. Emerald City's masked crimefighters took differing sides in the bloody conflict, and it only ended with Yenam's death—though historians still argue whether it was the rioters or his own mob connections who ultimately killed one of the city's earliest millionaires.

The city's fortunes had begun to reverse by 1939, when the release of the film *The Wizard of Oz* galvanized local attitudes around the pop culture phenomenon, becoming an easy outlet for pre-existing tensions. The city embraced the film, the books, and the tourism both prompted, while many locals increasingly resented the association. The conflict is mostly noteworthy because it ultimately prompted the city to rebrand its open air market as Yellow Brick Row and inspired the villainess, the Wicked Witch.

The most impactful event of Emerald City's Golden Age was the unsuccessful Japanese attack on Fortitude Breckenridge in June of 1942, which prompted the formation of the Victory Squadron—Emerald City's first official team of superheroes.

VILLAINS OF GOLDEN AGE EMERALD CITY

The trying times of the Golden Age inspired many of Emerald City's strangest residents to don masks to make their voices heard or win what they felt the world owed them. While the Silver Storm and its horde of super-powered children is another 80 years away, the eccentricity that defines Emerald City's character inspired costumed criminals before and during WWII. The machinations of F.O.E. (see *Emerald City*) scrubbed much of the region's history of caped criminals and crusaders, however, and modern Emerald City is still uncovering many details of its Gold and Silver Age past.

Madame Joy (*Emerald City*) was active across the West Coast throughout the Golden Age, operating as a masked criminal rather than her modern persona as a nightclub owner. Emerald City has always attracted mystical villains, and threats like Eris, Professor Jackanapes, and Foxfire (*Threat Report*) visited the city in the Golden Age. Foxfire of this era in particular has not yet been bound to service by Dragoneye, leaving her a more mobile and active threat but also more mischievous than bitter. Perhaps the city's most infamous urban legend, the Waxman, has also threatened the populace since at least 1931.

THE WICKED WITCH

One of the city's most colorful Golden Age villains was Aline Danko, the Wicked Witch. A bookshop owner from Royal Heights, Danko led the city's opposition to the *Wizard of Oz* craze, insisting it would cheapen the city's burgeoning artistic and literary merits. When the city embraced the filmland association, Danko tried to destroy the grand opening of Yellow Brick Row by donning a black dress and hat and unleashing a "chinadoll" gas that transformed people into living porcelain figures. Pearl Valentine and the Nightwatchman ultimately stopped her, but with her identity revealed, Danko returned to the Wicked Witch identity time and time again, applying her chemistry genius to new crimes and dressing her goons as flying monkeys, winkies, or wheelers to match her theme. She

THE WICKED WITCH	PL 9 • 134 POINTS

STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 3 **INT** 8 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 2

Powers: Chinadoll Gas (Easily Removable), Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Transformed [to a china doll w/ Toughness of –2]; Limited to Third Degree), **Master Planner** Luck Control 3 (Bestow Luck, Force a Re-roll, Spend on Other).

Equipment: Flash Grenade, Smoke Grenade.

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit, Wealth (well-off), Defensive Roll 4, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 5, Fascinate (Expertise: Literature), Inventor, Luck 4, Minion 6, Seize Initiative, Throwing Mastery 3, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed.

Skills: Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: Chemistry 10 (+18), Expertise: Literature 8 (+16), Insight 5 (+9), Perception 2 (+6), Ranged Combat: Throwing 6 (+9), Sleight of Hand 5 (+8), Stealth 8 (+9), Treatment 8 (+16).

Offense: Init +1, Chinadoll Gas — (Cloud Area, Affliction 9), Thrown Objects +9 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 0).

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 9, Fortitude 2, Toughness 6/2, Will 4.

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 14 + Advantages 30 + Skills 28 (56 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 134

Complications: Obsession Danko patterns her inventions and crimes after Frank L. Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*.

CRIMSON KATANA	PL 11 • 122 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 4 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 12 **INT** 0 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2

Powers: Three-Flames Katana (Easily Removable), Damage 8 (Strength-based; Linked to Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued Exhausted, Incapacitated).

Advantages: Benefit, Ambidexterity, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Evasion, Improved Critical: Katana, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Languages 1 (English, Japanese), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Takedown 2.

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+12), Athletics 7 (+9), Deception 4 (+6), Insight 7 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+10), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+6), Stealth 8 (+12).

Offense: Init +8, Three Flames Katana +12 (Close, Damage 10 and Affliction 4), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 14, Fortitude 4, Toughness 8/4, Will 3.

Totals: Abilities 62 + Powers 8 + Advantages 16 + Skills 25 (50 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 122

passed on her legacy to her nephew, Lyman Danko, in the late 50s, who led his own short criminal career as the second Wicked Witch only to be thwarted repeatedly by the 1960s hero team, the Guild of Justice.

CRIMSON KATANA

The most persistent and deadly opponent faced by the Victory Squadron was the Crimson Katana, Asano Ranaga, a former Yakuza thug who used the power of the cursed *Three Flames Katana* to become one of the most feared warriors and assassins in Japan. He eventually became the emperor's favored agent as the nation slid into fascism and militarism in the 1930s. Asano led other Japanese super-soldiers during the war, and took the lives of several Allied metahumans, including the Gunner, Human Tank, and the Victory Squadron's own Columbia. His cursed sword inspired bloodlust and obsession with legacy, and he grew increasingly violent as the war progressed.

THE VICTORY SQUADRON

When a Japanese sub surfaced in Malory Bay and began bombarding Fortitude Breckenridge in 1942, several masked avengers and extraordinary citizens responded. Their swift involvement drove the sub away and saved lives, preventing what could have become a city-wide fire. Afterward, the assembled heroes opted to work together on a regular basis, naming themselves the Victory Squadron.

The Squadron focused on defending America's West Coast from supervillains and occasional attacks on the Pacific front. The team had their hands full tackling spies, criminals, aliens, and cultists up and down the coast, from a sasquatch war in Alaska to Vancouver's infamous Kar'Kradas cults to the Redding Crabman incident, and clashed with fifth columnists and the Crimson Katana

ATLAS

Greek-born Michael Forest's renown as a circus strongman brought him to America in 1936, and he quickly grew to love the fame and fortune enough to immigrate permanently. He believed his phenomenal strength and athleticism were divine gifts, inspiring his stage name. Eager to defend his adopted nation, he answered his draft notice, but his physical revealed a dangerous heart defect. Now more eager than ever to do his part for the war effort, Forest answered the call to action during the Fortitude Breckinridge attack, applying his super-strength to the purpose of defending freedom. Forest served the Victory Squadron with distinction, hiding a progressively failing heart in order to remain alongside his teammates.

BLAZE

In December 1944, a curious 17-year-old Mary Grindstaff found a Japanese "fire balloon" weapon while on a family hike, and its explosion both bestowed her with fiery superhuman powers and robbed her of any semblance of a normal life. Drafted into the Victory Squadron as "Blaze," a

ATLAS — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 8/4 **STA** 8/4 **AGL** 5/1 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3

Powers: Olympian Might Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Stamina 4, Enhanced Strength 4, **Olympic Feats** Leaping 4 (120 feet), Speed 4 (30 MPH)

Advantages: Attractive, Benefit (Draft Exemption), Chokehold, Daze (Intimidation), Extraordinary Effort, Improved Critical (Unarmed), Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Smash, Languages (English, Greek), Power Attack, Takedown 2, Weapon Bind

Skills: Athletics 10 (+18), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+8), Expertise: Circus Lore 9 (+9), Intimidation 9 (+12), Persuasion 4 (+7)

Offense: Init +5, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 8, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 32 + Advantages 15 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 120

Complication: Motivation—Patriotism, **Foreign-Born** Mike's accent and Mediterranean features set him apart at a time when Americans are increasingly uncomfortable with foreigners. **Heart Defect** when Atlas would become Fatigued, he becomes Exhausted instead.

BLAZE — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 4 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 3 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3

Powers: Fireproof Immunity 10 (Fire effects), **Thermal Sense** Senses 2 (Infravision, Ranged Touch)

Fire Control (Array; 16 points)
- **Fire Blast** (Ranged Damage 8)
- **Flame Aura** (Reaction Damage 4)
- **Flame Jet** Flight (500 MPH)
- **Flame Wave** (Cone Area Damage 8)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Beginner's Luck, Defensive Roll 3, Improved Initiative, Luck 2

Skills: Athletics 3 (+6), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+7), Deception 3 (+6), Expertise: Pop Culture 5 (+6), Insight 2 (+5), Ranged Combat: Fire Blast 5 (+8), Stealth 6 (+9)

Offense: Init +7, Fiery Punch +7 (Close Damage 3, then Close Damage 4), Fire Blast +8 (Ranged, Damage 8), Flame Wave — (Area, Damage 8), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude 9, Toughness 7/4*, Will 7
*Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 31 + Advantages 8 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 21 = 120

Complication: Motivation—Doing Good, **Vulnerability—Cold** Cold-based attacks do +2 damage against Blaze.

late addition to the roster, Mary was firsthand witness to the brutal final months of fighting in the Pacific, and she largely vanished from public life after the war. Her metahuman abilities make Blaze fireproof, allow her to cloak herself in self-generated flames, and emit fiery bursts to attack opponents or allow herself to fly.

COLUMBIA

Music brought Phoebe Dorin out of her shell. A shared passion for song brought her together with her soulmate Dr. Michael Dunn. Once Dunn established himself as a costumed mystery man and Victory Squadron member, he eventually coaxed Dorin to join him. Columbia augmented her athleticism with an armored costume and torch packed with Dunn's technological ingenuity: a device capable of generating intense light and focusing it into cutting beams. A reluctant member of the team, Dorin

COLUMBIA — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 1 **STA** 3 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 2 **INT** 2 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3

Powers: Armored Costume (Immunity 2 [Environmental Heat and Cold], Impervious Protection 4; Removable), **Torch of Liberty** (Light Beam [Ranged Damage 10], **AE: Shining Bludgeon** [Strength-Based Damage 4], **AE: Shining Light** [Cone-Area Affliction 7 [Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Disabled, Unaware, Limited to Vision]], **AE: Torchlight** [Environment 8 [Bright Light]]; Easily Removable)

Advantages: Agile Feint, Animal Empathy, Close Attack 4, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Inspire, Languages 2 (English, French, Italian), Teamwork, Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Athletics 4 (+5), Expertise (PRE): Singing 10 (+13), Expertise: History 6 (+8), Expertise: Music 10 (+12), Ranged Combat: Light Beam 2 (+6), Stealth 4 (+8), Treatment 6 (+8)

Offense: Init +4, Light Beam +6 (Ranged, Damage 10), Shining Bludgeon +6 (Close, Damage 5), Unarmed +6 (DC 16)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 7, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 21 + Advantages 13 + Skills 24 (48 ranks) + Defenses 18 = 120

Complications: Motivation—Duress Phoebe doesn't want to be a hero at the best of times. **Social Anxiety** Phoebe may sometimes suffer a –5 penalty to interaction skill checks.

DR. SPECTRE — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 8/4 **STA** 9/4 **AGL** 4/1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 5 **INT** 3 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3

Powers: Spirit Medium Comprehend 1 (Spirits), **Spirit Possession** Activation (Standard action); Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Stamina 5, Enhanced Strength 4, Flight 5 (60 MPH; Subtle **AE:** Concentration Communication 3 [Dimensional, Subtle], **AE:** Ranged Concentration Move Object 5 [1600 lbs.; Subtle]), Regeneration 1

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 3 (Draft Exemption), Defensive Attack, Improved Defense, Improved Smash, Power Attack, Takedown

Skills: Athletics 5 (+13), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+8), Expertise: Army Air Force 5 (+8), Perception 5 (+8), Ranged Combat: Guns 5 (+7), Vehicles 5 (+7)

Offense: Init +4, Move Object +4 (Ranged, Damage 5), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 9, Toughness 9, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 38 + Advantages 9 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 120

Complications: Motivation—Cure Tom wants to be rid of his hauntings, **Haunted** Tom has PTSD after the deaths of his comrades. **Vulnerable—Exorcism** Effects targeting hosts and spirits can rob Dr. Spectre of his powers.

was also the first fatality, facing the Crimson Katana alone to keep him busy long enough for her team to escape his island lair with captured GIs in tow.

DR. SPECTRE

Co-pilot Tom Kovack was the sole survivor after his bomber was shot down during the early weeks of the war. During his convalescence, he was ceaselessly haunted by the presence of his crew members' ghosts, beginning the contact with the spirit world that tormented him for the rest of his life. Discharged and sent home to Emerald City, Kovack searched for a way to silence the ever-present dead. Kovack answered the call for help during the Fortitude Breckinridge attack, hoping his military training would be of use to the surprised garrison.

THE DREADNOUGHT	PL 8 • 120 POINTS
STR 6/–2 **STA** –2 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 0 **FGT** –1 **INT** 10 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3	
Powers: Dreadnought Armor (Removable), Enhanced Strength 8, Immunity 2 (Suffocation), Protection 12, **Weapon Systems** (Array; **Gyro-Cannon** Ranged Attack 9 [Accurate 3], **AE: High-Explosive Rounds** (Ranged Burst Area Damage 7), **AE: Rocket Thrusters** Flight 8 [500 MPH; Aquatic])	
Advantages: Assessment, Connected, Eidetic Memory, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Skill Mastery 2 (Expertise: Science, Technology), Well-informed	
Skills: Close Combat: Dreadnought Armor 10 (+9), Expertise (PRE): Sing 2 (+5), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+12), Expertise: Science 8 (+18), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 6 (+9), Technology 8 (+18)	
Offense: Init +1, Gyro-Cannon +6 (Ranged, Damage 8), High-Explosive Rounds — (Area, Damage 7), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 6/–2)	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 4, Toughness 10/–2*, Will 11 *Without Dreadnought Armor	
Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 46 + Advantages 9 + Skills 21 (42 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 120	
Complications: Motivation—Recognition Dunn loves the attention and respect being a hero grants him. **Achondroplasia** Dunn is a little person and suffers social stigma and some chronic pain for his stature.	

Under the stress of the battle, he learned to channel his spirit followers for the first time and learned he could appease the unquiet dead by avenging them. Afterwards, Kovack was persuaded to join the Victory Squadron as "Doctor Spectre."

Sadly, Tom Kovack never found a happy ending. Under the increasing mental stress of his spiritual visitations, he eventually admitted himself to Bethlehem Heights Psychiatric Hospital. He eventually passed away in 1957 of what was recorded as a heart attack, though rumors around the hospital insist he died of fright after confronting something particularly powerful in the spirit realm.

THE DREADNOUGHT

A truly gifted polymath, Dr. Michael Dunn III was a brilliant inventor, cultured raconteur, and accomplished vocalist. Though 3'10" in stature, he towered over Emerald City University, simultaneously chairing four departments. Most joyously, he shared a deep and abiding love for music with fellow professor Phoebe Dorin. After declared unfit for service due to his height, Dunn began designing and building advanced mechanical devices and weapons—prototypes he hoped to gift to the military, but which rarely functioned without his careful maintenance. Integrating his work into a single suit of armor, he dubbed the Dreadnought. He eagerly donned the armor in response to the call for assistance during the attack on Fortitude Breckinridge. The glory-hungry Dunn was easily persuaded to join the Victory Squadron, and his publicly known identity, ready wit, and keen intelligence made him a fixture in the newspapers, newsreels, and radio of the day.

MADAME CROSSBOW

Karla Miller was a woman to envy: young, savvy, rich, physically and intellectually gifted, and newly married to a good man. Despite this, 1940s society limited her life to that of a quiet, obedient wife and socialite. Left bored and unfulfilled, the call to arms during the Fortitude Breckinridge attack galvanized Karla to bold action against both the Axis invaders and her own stifling ennui. Hastily assembling remnants from past costume balls into a "mystery man" guise, Karla made her debut as Madame Crossbow that fateful night. With the amazing marksmanship she'd cultivated since her finishing-school archery classes added to her innate smarts and coolness under pressure, Karla was perfectly suited for life as a masked adventurer.

MADAME CROSSBOW	PL 8 • 120 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 5 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 3 **INT** 4 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Crossbow and Trick Bolts (Array; 24 points) **Acid Bolt** Ranged Weaken Toughness 8 (Affects Objects), **Basic Bolt** Ranged Damage 3 (Multiattack; Improved Critical), **Bola Bolt** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 8 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile), **Explosive Bolt** Ranged Burst Area Damage 8, **Extinguisher Bolt** Ranged Burst Area Nullify 8 (Fire; Effortless), **Grappling Hook Bolt** Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging), **Knockout Gas Bolt** Ranged Cumulative Cloud Area Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Asleep), **Magnetic Bolt** Ranged Burst Area Move Object 8 (6 tons; Limited Direction: Toward the Bolt, Limited Material: Metal), **Parachute Bolt** Ranged Flight 1 (4 MPH; Affects Others; Gliding), **Smoke Bolt** Ranged Cloud Area Concealment Attack 2 (Sight)	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Benefit 4 (Wealth: multimillionaire), Close Attack 4, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 7, Evasion, Fearless, Improved Aim, Improved Critical: Basic Bolt, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Inventor Precise Attack (Ranged, Concealment) Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Ranged Attack 4, Takedown, Uncanny Dodge	
Skills: Expertise: Current Events 6 (+10), Perception 6 (+10), Sleight of Hand 8 (+12), Stealth 8 (+11), Technology 6 (+10)	
Offense: Init +7, Basic Bolt +8 (Ranged, Damage 3), Trick Bolts +8 (various)	
Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 6, Fortitude 8, Toughness 7/5*, Will 8 *Without Defensive Roll	
Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 0 + Advantages 33 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 120	
Complications: Motivation—Thrills Miller is a bored socialite.	

NIGHTWATCHMAN

James Holland, charismatic son of Emerald City's famed "Gentleman Bootlegger" Louis Holland, inherited his father's great fortune, belief in justice over law, commitment to helping those in need, and love of public acclaim. Driven by this legacy, James became famous as a radio commentator boldly denouncing the city's criminals and social inequities, and as an envied playboy romancing the city's most beautiful women. James took office as Emerald's district attorney, but as he continued his crusade against the city's mobs, he grew frustrated at gangsters using their corrupt influences to remain above the law. Taking inspiration from the costumed "mystery men" of the era, James secretly employed his remarkable cunning, fighting skills, and specialized gadgets to fight crime as the masked Nightwatchman.

SCARLET CYCLONE

William Schallert grew up loving aeronautics and flight, and from an early age harnessed his considerable genius

NIGHTWATCHMAN — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 4 **STA** 5 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 9 **INT** 3 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 4

Equipment: Utility Belt (Binoculars, Flashlight, Fragmentation Grenade, Grappling Hook [Movement 1, Swinging], Handcuffs, Multi-tool, Rebreather, Broadsword 1, Smoke Grenade), Leather Armor

Advantages: Attractive, Benefit 4 (Draft Exemption 2, Wealth 2 [independently wealthy]), Contacts, Defensive Attack, Equipment 5, Great Endurance, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Inspire, Leadership, Power Attack, Taunt, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 5 (+9), Expertise: Law 5 (+8), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 8 (+12), Stealth 4 (+7), Vehicles 2 (+3)

Offense: Init +7, Frag Grenade — (Area, Damage 5), Sword +9 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 6/5, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 64 + Powers 0 + Advantages 21 + Skills 22 (44 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 120

SCARLET CYCLONE — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 5 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 3 **INT** 4 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 1

Equipment: Heavy Pistol, Leather Armor, The Albatross

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 2 (Draft Exemption), Defensive Attack, Equipment 15, Favored Environment (Piloting), Improved Defense, Inventor, Ranged Attack 4, Skill Mastery: Vehicles, Ultimate Effort (Vehicle checks)

Skills: Athletics 6 (+9), Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+9), Expertise: Engineering 6 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+7), Technology 8 (+12), Treatment 2 (+6), Vehicles 12 (+16)

Offense: Init +2, Albatross Weapons +8 (various), Heavy Pistol +8 (Range, Damage 4), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 9, Toughness 6, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 0 + Advantages 28 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 19 = 120

Complications: Motivation—Responsibility Schallert feels he is blessed with a gift and needs to use it to help others

THE ALBATROSS — 65 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan **Strength:** 12 **Toughness:** 12 (Impervious) **Speed** 7 (air), 6 (water) **Defense:** 6 **Features:** Alarm, Navigation System, Remote Control **Powers: Armaments** (array; 25 points), .50-caliber Machine guns (Ranged Damage 8; Multiattack), 75mm Cannons (Ranged Penetrating Damage 8), Bomb Load (Ranged Burst Area 3 Damage 5)

towards new and better airplane designs. Schallert gained a reputation as a talented pilot and designer, but one whose abilities outstripped the available technology, earning the seemingly reckless and often-bloodied airman the nickname "the Scarlet Cyclone." Schallert's crowning achievement was the amazing armored submersible autogyro the Albatross. When the government deemed Schallert too valuable as an engineer to accept him into the Army Air Force, the Albatross let him strike back directly against Axis aggression. Shortly after the Fortitude Breckinridge attack, the "Scarlet Cyclone" became the scourge of Japanese I-boats raiding the Pacific Coast.

SETSUJOKU

A star college athlete and nisei—or second generation Japanese-American, who had never so much as seen Japan—Takei "Joe" Hosato was stripped of his education, his family's shop, and his freedom by Executive Order 9066. He was so disgusted by the hatred from his government and his neighbors that he refused to comply, going into hiding and working to undermine the incarceration effort under the identity Setsujoku, though many racist accounts of the time—ignorant of the spelling or meaning behind his moniker—referred to the shadowy vigilante of the Eastern District by his family's prison number. Recalling his grandfather's tall tales of ninja, Joe adopted the guise of a shadow warrior, at first to steal government information and blackmail politicians. But his deep compassion soon saw him fighting to protect the remaining residents of the Eastern District, and eventually the city.

SETSUJOKU — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 4 **STA** 5 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 9 **INT** 0 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2

Equipment: Camo Clothing, Climbing Rope (Movement 1 [Swinging]), Shuriken, Sword

Advantages: Agile Feint, Chokehold, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Evasion, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Initiative, Redirect, Seize Initiative, Startle, Takedown

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Politics 6 (+6), Insight 4 (+7), Intimidation 6 (+8), Perception 6 (+9), Ranged Combat: Throw 8 (+12), Sleight of Hand 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+13)

Offense: Init +9, Shuriken +12 (Ranged, Damage 1), Sword +9 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 4).

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 9, Fortitude 9, Toughness 7/5, Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 64 + Powers 0 + Advantages 13 + Skills 32 (64 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 120

Complications: Motivation—Doing Good While he originally only sought justice for his imprisoned family and community, Hosato wants everyone to be free and safe.

THE UNKNOWN — PL 8 • 120 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 6 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 3 **INT** 3 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 4

Powers: Disguise Kit (Easily Removable) Morph 3 (humanoids; Increased Action [Standard]), Feature 1 (Mimicry)

Advantages: Benefit (Cipher), Close Attack 4, Contacts, Daze (Deception), Eidetic Memory, Fearless, Improvised Weapon, Languages 4 (Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish), Ultimate Effort (Deception checks), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 5 (+8), Deception 14 (+18), Insight 4 (+7), Investigation 7 (+10), Perception 9 (+12), Sleight of Hand 6 (+9), Stealth 5 (+8)

Offense: Init +3, Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 56 + Powers 6 + Advantages 16 + Skills 25 (50 ranks) + Defenses 17 = 120

Complications: Motivation—Thrills Cheney loves winning battles of intellect.

THE UNKNOWN

Alonzo Cheney truly was "the Unknown," as few details of his life have any degree of verification. Cheney is known to have worn countless guises during his life, near-flawlessly creating fictional personas as well as impersonating those he'd encountered with uncanny accuracy. His sole impetus was his pure, unmalicious joy at embracing all the pleasures offered by many lives lived at once. Wearing his usual many faces, the Unknown guided together the various parties who responded to D.A. Holland's radio appeal after the Fortitude

THE SILVER AGE

Mid 1950s—Early 1970s

The Silver Age—generally regarded as 1956 through 1975 and overlapping with the earlier Atomic age and the later Bronze age—was an era of huge social and scientific change. For many white, middle-class Americans, this era is "when it all went wrong" in America. Therefore, it's a frequent "go to" period for authors to paint a flashback sequence explaining why there's a present-day mess for the protagonists to clean up.

LIFE DURING THE SILVER AGE

Americans had wanted to believe evil, fascism, and hatred was slain in the wake of defeating the Nazis in Europe, and that the prosperity they enjoyed was just reward for their hard work, never stopping to examine the inequality and militarism their own society was built on. Throughout the 1960s and '70s that façade began to crumble. American military might had met with mixed results after inserting itself into the Korean War—the first of its proxy wars with the USSR as a part of the larger Cold War of espionage, propaganda, and international conquest—and became embroiled in the hugely unpopular quagmire of the Vietnam War. Many minority groups—most prominently African Americans, but also Latinx people, women, and the LGBT community—refused to continue living as second-class citizens and began campaigning for equal rights. Through ever more underhanded corporate maneuvering, the post-war economic boom returned to a boom-and-bust cycle that only became worse later in the 1970s and '80s. Despite the change, however, it was an era marked by huge advances in science and general quality of life—consumer goods (including comic books) became increasingly affordable, while diseases that had plagued humanity throughout history were eliminated thanks to vaccines and antibiotics.

The murder of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 was the beginning of a dark time for America. After an age of unprecedented progress and prosperity, the supremely optimistic US was shaken to the core by the brutal murder of its young, charismatic president. Kennedy's death proved to be just the first in a decade-long bloodletting that claimed thousands of young men and brutally silenced those who called for peace and reconciliation. America would ultimately endure and in some respects regain its former glory, but it would never be the same again.

The question for Gamemasters is how much of this trauma to visit upon their Silver Age heroes. If their objective is to maintain the lighthearted fun of the era's comic books,

the answer is likely none at all. On the other hand, the presence of super-powered beings during the momentous events of the 1960s offers up some fascinating story possibilities for those who find the time period itself more interesting than its funny books.

ECONOMICS

As with all other aspects of American life, the economy underwent major changes during the Silver Age. The hard days and lean years of the 1940s gave way to good times and living off the fat of the land in the 1950s and '60s, much like the seemingly recession-proof superheroes always seemed to be doing in the comic books. By the Bronze Age '70s, however, the never-ending quest for relevancy led to depictions of costumed good guys with spotty employment who couldn't pay their bills in the face of inflation.

The Silver Age era was marked by permanent changes in how Americans earned and spent their money. Beginning in the prosperous 1950s, the demand for consumer goods skyrocketed. Factories responded by rolling out new automobiles, refrigerators, radios, vacuum cleaners, television sets, and other household appliances to satisfy the wants of a society that could afford these items like never before. Industrial jobs at good wages were plentiful and highly sought after. From the 1950s into the '70s, pretty much anyone who didn't have a well-paying job was either out of work by choice or barred from gainful employment by the prejudices of the time.

Agriculture had once employed millions of Americans, but the lure of better pay elsewhere and technological advances combined to rapidly shrink the number of farm laborers needed. Despite this, American farmers continued their critical work of helping feed portions of Europe and Asia as both continents struggle to recover from wartime devastation, and later Latin America after several US-backed revolutions and invasions.

Service sector jobs became increasingly predominant in the economy and proved to be the most resilient during the era's economic downturns. The simple truth remains that as bad as things get, people still need doctors, lawyers, police, firemen, and teachers. And of course, the government always seems to manage to stay in business and keep its many workers employed if not busy.

COUNTERCULTURE

The 1950s and 1960s saw increased social awareness in America's youth and a willingness to question orthodoxy. The prejudice and crushing conformity made them believe the country wasn't all that free, and the vapid consumer culture spawned by prosperity left them feeling spiritually empty. Empty and beat. Artists like writer Jack Kerouac and poet Alan Ginsberg gave these feelings voice, creating the beatnik subculture.

Whatever the merits and demerits of beatnik thought, the larger culture soon co-opted it, mocked it, and reduced it to a pop culture cliché. The beatniks were beaten as a force for social change, but the discontent they channeled grew and mutated into hippie counterculture. While it was easy to dismiss the abstract, disaffected nature of beatnik art in its co-opted form, leaving it seeming fatuous and silly, the hippie counterculture's outward-focused, socially conscious message was harder to ignore. Invigorated by the growing anti-Vietnam War movement, hippie counterculture had found a serious issue as a bedrock for its own rebellion – one impossible to mock.

The hippie Baby Boomers, part of the first generation to be largely free from want and blessed with opportunities previously undreamt of, paradoxically became a hated minority by choice. Call it a principled stand or an arrogant pose (or mix thereof), but the end result of a generation that didn't trust anyone over 30 (and vice versa) was a deeply wounded nation poisoned against itself.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The United States had long been a world divided by the time the 1950s arrived. With its economy originally built around chattel slavery, its land seized from native peoples, and its Constitution denying votes to women, racial minorities, and the poor, it was tone-deaf at best for the nation to think of itself as the "defender of freedom." In 1956, African Americans were strictly segregated from white society—with other ethnicities and religions policed to varying degrees—and were often the targets of state-sanctioned violence and terror, such as the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre that destroyed the black community of Greenwood, Oklahoma and killed 26 black locals.

The Silver Age saw many oppressed groups within the US push back against the tidal wave of conservatism that followed in the wake of WWII.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The Silver Age wasn't the first time African Americans pushed back against injustice in United States History. Following the Civil War, freedmen won many rights and made up a large portion of political and economic power, especially in Southern states. A deliberate campaign of discrimination by conservative or apathetic white Americans—collectively called the Jim Crow era—steadily rolled back the rights of African Americans and other racial minorities while rewriting history to laud the Confederate States and their military heroes as heroes. Black Americans lead the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s—in the face of violent threats, terrorism, and government violence—to finally gain ground in the push-back against the Jim Crow laws of the 1870s and the resurgent racism of the 1910s and 1920s. Rallies and strikes across the country brought the struggle, while charismatic leaders even helped sway the opinion of some white Americans to support legal protections. Despite these efforts, the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1964 remains largely unpopular among white Americans and would fester into quieter campaigns of dog whistles and "deniable" discrimination over the ensuing decades, such as the redlining that cast historically black neighborhoods into economic limbo for decades.

Other racial minorities worked alongside African Americans in this era or formed similar movements the campaign for their own freedoms, but much of the credit and cost in blood were paid by America's black population.

WOMENS' RIGHTS

While white women suffragettes had won the right to vote in 1919 (Native American women wouldn't have this right until 1924, while Chinese and Japanese women in the U.S. wouldn't until 1952, and black women, like black men, were largely barred from voting until 1965), society generally believed a woman's foremost duty was in bearing children, raising them, and keeping a tidy home. Women were barred from many jobs, and even forbidden from driving, holding bank accounts in their own names, or serving on a jury. Women had gotten a taste of economic freedom working in place of drafted men during World War II, and many found it preferable to being housewives. Rekindled conservative drive to return to normalcy following the war pushed women back into the home whether they wanted to go or not, leading to widespread depression and substance abuse.

The Women's Rights Movement—also called Women's Liberation or "Women's Lib"—sought to win women equal legal standing and undo cultural messages that limited women to domestic tasks and nurturing. The movement inherited racism from its Suffragette founders earlier in the 20th century, leaving many black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American women underserved and vulnerable.

LGBTQ STRUGGLES & GAY RIGHTS

While civil rights struggles were being waged on multiple fronts, homosexual, bisexual, and transgender people grew increasingly bold and pushed back against attempts by police and local lawmakers to render their existence illegal. Queer riots like the 1969 Stonewall riot brought these deliberately-concealed populations to the front page, and LGBTQIA+ grounds began demanding medical establishments stop labelling them as sexual deviants and fetishists. Homosexual relationships and transgender lives would remain explicitly illegal in most states until the mis-1970s and 1980s (and even remain illegal in 14 states up until the Supreme Court struck down anti-sodomy laws in 2003). But the early advances—inspired by and borrowing tactics from the black-lead Civil Rights Movement—laid the groundwork for millions of Americans to push back against not only legal discrimination, but generations' worth of efforts to hide and exterminate them.

THE IMPACT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT(S)

The social reforms of the Silver Age made significant progress for the legal rights of many of the most persecuted Americans but fell far short of solving all the problems that have plagued the nation since its inception. Many problems activists fought in the 1960s—including cultural bigotry, employment rights, and police brutality—still affect Americans in the modern world. But the hard-won changes of the era still made enormous steps forward and formed the basis for modern political action. While many comic book stories of the age couched these struggles in science fiction—replacing "black" with "mutant"—the struggle for human rights sets the backdrop for many of the biggest stories of the time.

THE COLD WAR

Like World War II in the preceding Golden Age, the historical time-frame of the Silver and Bronze Ages is marked by the Cold War. Whether it manifested as struggles by other means like the Space Race or bloodier affairs like the Vietnam War, the period from 1956 to 1975 was one of near-constant strife between the capitalist United States, the communist Soviet Union, and respective allies.

With both nations primed for full-scale military production in the wake of WWII, and both capable of launching a nuclear attack, open warfare between rival nations seemed like a doomsday scenario. But each nation wanted to define what culture, politics, and economics would look like as the rest of the world rebuilt from global war—ideally in a way that established their nation in charge. What resulted was a war fought almost entirely via propaganda, espionage, posturing, and proxy wars to control the governments of smaller nations, such as Cuba, Indonesia, Iran, Nicaragua, and Vietnam. Both sides painted their opposite as inhuman monsters while committing war crimes of their own. Despite the fact that the USSR was a military dictatorship, most propaganda (and consequently, most Americans) focused on the nation's communist economic policies as the real thing that made Russians the enemy of the freedom, which in turn drove Americans to consume more as a mark of patriotic pride. While both sides committed horrors during this era, it's difficult to deny that the USSR inflicted far worse on its own population through forced relocation, political purges, and famine.

The Cold War was largely a war of ideology between two small groups of politicians, played on one of the largest scales the world has ever seen. Most Americans and Soviets of the era were ordinary people trying to get by and trusting their government to protect and guide them just as it had in the World Wars of earlier generations. Despite being a war of ideals, the Cold War was deadly serious. Its death toll ranges from 11-25 million, almost all of them coming from civil wars or genocides committed by militant leaders propped up by one side or the other. Entire nations' elected governments were deposed and replaced with new—and often brutal—leaders loyal to America or the Soviet Union.

Comic books of the era contributed to the propaganda war, depicting a variety of "red menace" supervillains who quested to crush America or Capitalism (often assumed to be the same thing) for the glory of the Soviet Union.

ESPIONAGE

Senator Joe McCarthy exaggerated and lied about the measure of the Communist presence in the U.S. to gather power for himself, but as declassified Cold War documents prove, there *were* Communist secret agents inside America's highest institutions. Increased internal security

imposed by President Truman in the late 1940s led to the demise of the most damaging Soviet spy rings. By the time "McCarthyism" became an issue, they had all but vanished. Instead, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) used the pretense of anti-communism to persecute women, homosexuals, and any public figures who veered away from conservative "American" values.

Anyone learning American history from Silver Age comic books would see none of this, as every top-secret project in the four-color world was infiltrated by at least one enemy agent. The only real question was would the heroes unmask them before their sabotage caused a democracy-destroying disaster. If the story involved a chase scene, there was the added suspense of trying to stop the spy before he was safe behind the Iron Curtain with a briefcase full of stolen documents. In real life, Soviet secret agents were mainly after diplomatic secrets, economic data, and military defense plans. But in super-heroic stories, spies stole space and nuclear technology, with nuclear space technology being a double espionage delight.

One way to inject some genuine suspense into the same tired old resolution of catching a spy is to make the guilty party an unwilling traitor. Maybe the guilty party is being blackmailed or the Bolsheviks kidnapped one of their loved ones. Either way, players can enjoy the sudden twist of a "slap the cuffs on the commie spy" plot suddenly becoming a hostage rescue mission. If the victim was taken behind the Iron Curtain, the player characters are in for some real excitement they didn't anticipate.

THE SPACE RACE

The Cold War arms race helped push science forward as each side tried to build more sophisticated weapons, defenses, and intelligence-gathering technology. These elements combined to raise the question of which nation "owned" space—the ultimate high ground in global struggles.

America's Project Vanguard missiles were still blowing up on the launch pad when on October 4, 1957 the Soviets surprised the world and sent the basketball-sized Sputnik 1 into orbit. The resulting shock in the U.S. was almost incalculable. Before Sputnik, the only way to deliver a nuclear weapon was via a slow, easily tracked bomber. But unlike bombers, missiles are small and fast. Sputnik proved that the Soviets could launch a nuke-sized object into orbit, and theoretically drop it from above into any American city they chose, without warning. The hysteria generated by Sputnik was deemed a "Missile Gap," and all America's fears about falling behind the Soviets in any field of endeavor coalesced around that expression. President Eisenhower responded by doling out millions to science and technological programs and creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958. NASA and its Project Mercury soon had America running a close second to the Soviets in the so-called "Space Race." After years spent catching up, America was first to land astronauts on the moon, on July 20th, 1969.

The Space Race is a foremost element in any pre-'Nam Silver Age campaign or any genre game set in the late 1950s or early '60s. Americans were firmly convinced the future was in space, and eagerly devoured media reports about the easy livin' days just ahead when they'd all be backyard barbequing on the moon. Americans closely followed every missile test, rocket launch, and orbital mission undertaken. When NASA succeeded, the whole country walked a little taller and the apple pie tasted just a little sweeter.

Silver Age comic books frequently featured space technology well beyond actual human capability (then or now), but the writers were always careful not to let any of the super-high tech survive the story. Whether it's done by accident or to keep it out of enemy hands, any device capable of pushing NASA beyond its real-life doings was as good as scrap before the last panel. Gamemasters looking to avoid entering the realm of alternate history are advised to hold to the same stricture.

THE VIETNAM WAR

The US government's worry over Vietnam started in 1940 when the French Army withdrew from the conquered south Asian nation after they themselves were conquered by the Nazis, leaving Vietnam as a territory for the Empire of Japan. The Vietnamese retaliated with a guerrilla war against the Empire, led by Ho Chi Minh. When the defeated Japanese gave Vietnam back to France in 1945, the Communists, under Ho Chi Minh, simply continued the same struggle against the replacement colonialists. Ho Chi Minh's campaign worked just as well against the French until they too surrendered and went home in 1954. Suddenly, yet another country was poised to fall under Communist control.

Since Vietnam was an undesired problem for which the U.S. wanted a discount solution, the American response was the now time-honored tradition of negotiating a false peace deal with fake elections no one had any interest in honoring. Like Korea, the Geneva Accord divided Vietnam along a parallel into a Communist North and a not-Communist South. America could call the whole thing a draw. Ho Chi Minh simply continued his war, this time against the "new" nation of South Vietnam and its American-sponsored, Capitalist-friendly government. The American response was to keep pumping foreign aid dollars into South Vietnam, and to keep sending in military advisors until the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) could win a fight. But the people of South Vietnam were overwhelmingly poor, uneducated farmers and devoutly Buddhist, facing an enemy trained and equipped by a far more powerful empire.

The United States finally committed troops—not just money and equipment—to fighting North Vietnam in March of 1965. Lyndon Johnson, who had campaigned in part on the promise of not sending American troops to Vietnam the previous year, labeled the invasion a "policing action" to circumvent Congressional authority over declaring war. The war—unwanted by the administration and unpopular with the American people—was a fiasco with a body count. Americans had little direct experience with jungle combat or guerrilla warfare, and resorted to firebombing civilian populations, which turned local and international opinion against them. Escalating troop commitment or directly invading North Vietnam also risked

open warfare with China—now a nuclear power—who helped build and supply their Communist neighbor's munitions factories.

In the end, the Vietnam Conflict was won by no one; certainly not the over six million dead and maimed, plus those emotionally shattered by their war experiences. The United States ended up with nothing to show for its sacrifice of blood and treasure other than a wounded and divided national psyche which took decades to heal. Even North Vietnam's triumph was short-lived, as its thirty-five years of struggle earned it just a decade of domination before the USSR collapsed, dragging most of its client states down with it.

Despite being the one occasion during the Silver Age when the Cold War got hot for the U.S., the actual fighting in Vietnam drew little notice from contemporary superhero comic books, especially when compared to the past omnipresence of World War II in their pages. It was a reflection of the American public's initial ambivalence about—and later opposition to—the country's involvement in Southeast Asia.

ENTERTAINMENT

The Silver Age was arguably the first era when "pop culture" became a driving force in American culture, shaping the way people understood the world and the past more than study or personal interactions. Films were faster and cheaper to produce, radio remained ubiquitous, and television brought shared culture into every home across the country.

MOVIES

The mid-'50s movie industry was getting soundly thrashed by television. As the free-of-charge television continually threatened to keep parents at home, the major studios tried to go bigger than broadcast entertainment could manage in a frantic effort to pry people off their couches. This led to a revolution in filmmaking: wider screens, fuller sound, more stars, escalating budgets, and more prestigious subject matter.

While the major studios targeted parents, the independent studios aimed pictures at movies' most reliable remaining audience: teenagers. Right through the early 1980s, America's drive-in theaters were packed with teens, more affluent and mobile than their parents ever dreamed of being at that age. With teenagers equally as interested in a dark place to make out on dates as watching the movies, film quality aimed at their generation lagged behind, producing some of the cheesy but memorable schlock that would ironically go on to dominate late-night TV decades later.

Major studio films of the late 1960s had a hard time reaching younger audiences. Both film and TV opted for the same solution and turned production over to a new generation of creators who wanted to tell more adult, relevant, and offbeat stories. Out went larger-than-life stars and cheery unreal productions like musicals, and in came edgier fare and chameleon-like actors who inhabited their onscreen characters. Other studios doubled down on whimsical content with slashed budgets, birthing a surreal generation of talking animals and sassy cars.

The young outlaws only got a decade or so to call the shots, but during that time "the New Hollywood" made some of the iconic films that helped define the U.S. film industry. They reflect the Bronze Age sensibility better than anything other than the comics themselves, and if nothing else serve as the era's pop culture touchstones.

SPORTS

Sports became big business during the Silver Age, thanks in no small part to its omnipresence on the growing medium of television. TV changed American's longstanding tastes in sports, as baseball lost its former dominance to the faster-paced (and more television-friendly) action of football. Other sports like basketball, hockey, and soccer that never translated well over radio found bigger followings thanks to television.

The increased media coverage allowed a select few athletes to transcend sports and become genuine cultural figures. Among the notables are heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali, whose mix of charisma, controversy, and extraordinary skills made him perhaps the era's defining sports icon. Ali's conversion to Islam, joining of the radical Nation of Islam, and subsequent refusal to submit to the Vietnam draft made him a supremely polarizing figure. Along with US Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos' raised-fist Black Power salute during the 1968 games, Ali symbolized that even diversions like sports were not above the divisive politics of the day.

TELEVISION

The growing influence of television during the 1950s is best illustrated by the popularization of "TV dinners," heat-and-eat meals designed to minimize a person's time away from the "boob tube." Even with just three networks broadcasting, there was still plenty on that people wanted to see. From 1956 into the early '60s what people wanted to see was Westerns, a genre echoing Silver Age superheroes with its black-and-white morality. During this period prime time westerns like *Bonanza* and *Gunsmoke* were inescapable. At their peak in 1958-59, thirty-one different cowboy shows were on the air.

For the remainder of the 1960s, shows (like comic books) turned toward escapism in a time of rising social tension. This was the era when Paul Henning's legendary "Hooterville Trilogy" of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Petticoat Junction*, and *Green Acres* ruled the airwaves. It was a time when such scary situations as internment in a Nazi prison camp (*Hogan's Heroes*), joining the Marines during 'Nam (*Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*), and hopeless exile in the void (*Lost in Space*) were played for laughs. Television had its own "relevancy" period starting in the late '60s, as topical satirical comedies like *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, *M*A*S*H*, *All in the Family*, and *Maude* tried to make Vietnam and Watergate funny.

Television's powerful influence on the events of the day may cause problems for Silver Age superheroes. With live satellite telecasts increasingly common after 1962, TV is able to instantly cover many major public events of the sort supervillains like to attack or rob. Costumed heroes can be instantly alerted to danger, but may find themselves fielding tough reporter questions about their actions, especially once they've been broadcast straight into America's living rooms. They may learn the hard way, just as Nixon did in the 1960 presidential debates, that TV captures all the aspects of the moment, even those they might prefer hidden.

ROCK & ROLL

Rock & roll began as the province of black artists like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Chuck Berry, and Bo Diddley, growing from earlier musical traditions like gospel, jazz, and the blues. It wasn't until the mid-1950s that Elvis Presley popularized the genre among white Americans by giving it the (white) face of a humble country boy, providing just enough respectability for parents to allow the white teenage masses to listen to it. From then on, an army of eager and affluent teens kept rock & roll 45s and LPs flying off record store shelves.

Early rock & roll focused on deep, spiritual messages relevant to black life in the American south, while the translation to white audience left many themes largely silly and disposable. Folk rock tried to bring social responsibility into the genre, only to be mostly ignored by the media at large. But artists in the '60s and early '70s combined relevancy with a rocking pop sound that made enormous popular impact.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in the Silver Age is primarily mechanical and chemical in nature, with electronics just beginning to achieve preeminence. Computers and atomic power are the cutting-edge hope for the future, while in the meantime most people get by with slide rules and fossil fuels.

How far past the cutting edge a super-smart, scientific genius character is allowed to go is up to the Gamemaster. This section outlines what was technologically feasible in real history during the Silver Age. These parameters can serve as a baseline for just how outlandish the Gamemaster wants comic-book science to be in his campaign.

COMPUTERS & ELECTRONICS

At the dawn of the Silver Age, integrated circuits, which debut in 1959, are "the next big thing." The most immediate impact integrated circuits had was on the nascent field of electronic computers. Computers grew smaller and more user-friendly, capable of running more sophisticated programs like calendars and databases. While computers wouldn't enter the workplace until the mid-70s, they become increasingly common in laboratories and university environments throughout the Silver Age, making them available to heroes with connections.

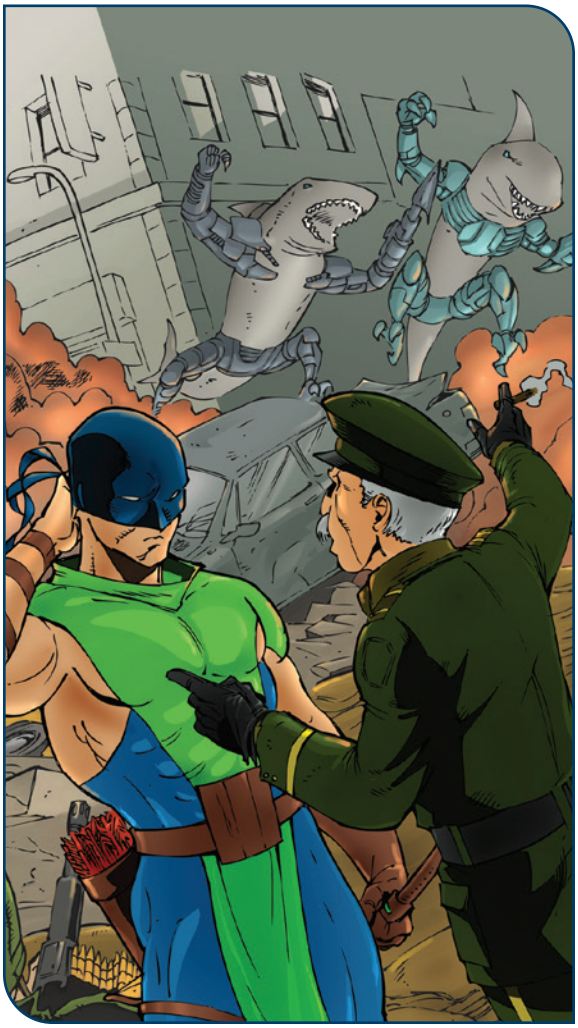
MEDICINE

The Silver Age sees the advent of many medical marvels, including inexpensive vaccines for polio and measles, synthesized insulin for diabetics, and the pacemaker, but the great breakthroughs in this time span were in organ transplants. In 1967, a liver and a heart were successfully swapped out. These medical miracles gave life to many who would have otherwise died.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

During the Silver Age, the biggest development in the Armageddon field was the increased number of countries with the Bomb. France got its first nuke in 1960 and China followed suit in 1964. Atomic weapons began the Silver Age as unguided bombs dropped from huge strategic bombers like the B-52 Stratofortress, or as field artillery shells with nuclear warheads. Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) joined the atomic holocaust family of weapons in 1957 with the Soviet R-7 (the US counterpart, Atlas, followed four months later).

In 1960, the U.S. launched the first submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), and it truly made global thermonuclear war a game only won by never playing. Prior to



this, a nuclear power might've rationalized that a surprise attack might catch all or most of an enemy's bombers and ICBMs on the ground and wipe them out. Being underwater, mobile, and stealthy, nuclear submarines are nowhere near as vulnerable, and thus destruction became mutually assured—"MAD," as it was aptly abbreviated.

As with space technology, nuclear technology is much sought-after by all the worst people: Commie spies, superpowered megalomaniacs, and little green men. The price of failure in defending the nuclear arsenal is about as high as it gets. The malevolent applications for stolen atomic weapons secrets are as obvious as they are terrifying, and heaven only knows what world-threatening device a supervillain will charge up using purloined nuclear power sources.

Real history is scarily replete with incidents where atomic bombs could've fallen into the wrong hands, and they can provide excellent springboards for adventures where the heroes must prevent that from happening. The best-known incident in the US is the "Tybee Bomb," an H-bomb lost in the waters near Savannah, Georgia after a midair collision on February 5, 1958 and never recovered to this day. Even more unnerving is the number of missing Soviet nukes, which some place as high as forty.

ROBOTICS

In 1961 Unimate became the first industrial robot, punching a time clock down at the General Motors plant. It was greeted by all the expected fears of putting men out of work, and the unionization of these anxieties made the U.S. auto industry slow to automate. The Japanese had no such cyberphobia, and by the 1970s they were the ones putting American auto workers on the dole.

In super-heroic adventures, robots had been readily-available enemies for decades by now, though these remained the fickle creations of villains who weren't prepared to contribute their genius to human advancement.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

By 1960, the mechanics of the world act very similarly to what modern heroes might expect, aside from the lack of the internet and portable computers. A combination of fossil fuels and transistors is shaping the world as we know it.

SKILLS

The things each skill allows your character to do are mostly unchanged in the Silver Age. Technology and vehicles are similar enough to modern counterparts that you should only apply a –2 circumstance penalty on occasion when a time-traveling PC runs into something really weird, like a blocky, Silver Age computer.

With superheroes generally being popular and widely accepted, skills like Persuasion help reflect a character's charm, as can the Connected and Contacts Advantages, or the Fame Complication.

EXPERTISE (SCIENCE)

For the most part, there's nothing different about this skill in the Silver Age, aside from it being a staple for almost every superhero. Things only get interesting if your character's got high skill ranks and is really into nuclear physics or anything else related to the atomic bomb. The government keeps close tabs on anyone with the knowledge to end the world, and there aren't many of them.

SILVER AGE ADVANTAGES

The Benefit: Draft Exemption and Benefit: Military Rank Advantages presented in the Golden Age would also be appropriate given the era's backdrop of war and the active draft. Connected and Contacts are ideal for reflecting police and government contacts or a cult of personality that might do an erstwhile hero favors.

The Sidekick advantage is also incredibly common throughout the Silver Age. If superheroes didn't have a costumed kid wonder tagging along on their adventures, they had a snoopy reporter or troublemaking police detective who doubled as a love interest. While these might be Relationship complications in other eras, these characters often assisted in thwarting a villain's plans during the Silver Age, especially when a villain unleashed a hero's secret weakness.

The following advantage adds a little Silver Age flavor to player characters and reflects the growing realities of personal identity of the time. This feat recreates the uneasy place in society some costumed characters fictionally occupied during the social movements of the 1960s and the minority heroes of the 1970s. While intended for local heroes, its utility functions in almost any era with a generally well-established media and well-established social groups.

CULT HERO	SKILL, RANKED

You are a well-known and beloved figure within a subculture and receive a +4 bonus per rank on all Presence-based skill checks involving anyone belonging to that group. This bonus cannot increase your total effective skill rank higher than the campaign's power level limit. You must declare what subculture or group supports you when you acquire this Advantage.

Because of your close affiliation with one subculture, that community's enemies consider you infamous and untrustworthy. This opposition group must be at least one other group of equal or larger size to the one that adores you. When dealing with detractors, all Presence-based skill checks are penalized by -2 per rank.

You can select this Advantage multiple times to either increase the bonus and associated penalty with one group, or to gain the support of a new group (and the condemnation of another as well).

This feat can be used for a variety of Silver Age hero types. Minority characters who champion the causes of their racial or ethnic group can become inspiring symbols within their community, but still be seen as dangerous radicals (or worse) by more reactionary elements of society. Outspoken feminist heroines (or villains) receive a similarly mixed reaction, as will openly homosexual or bisexual characters.

SILVER AGE DEVICES & EQUIPMENT

With Silver Age gadgets logic and proportion often disappeared, but never the sense of wonder. Death rays, time machines, magical talismans, and giant robots were part and parcel of the era's storylines to the delight of readers.

The Silver Age was also an era of new military technology—much of which eventually found its way into criminal hands. The *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* contains equipment endemic to this era and its wars.

SILVER AGE DEVICES

In the hands of heroes, most Silver Age devices defy every law of physics. While the era paid more lip service to scientific accuracy, its gadgets were often as illogical as those of the Golden Age—though frequently more portable.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the devices of the Golden Age and the Silver Age is the fact that science was now the realm of heroes as well as the villains, and so heroes often had their own sprawling laboratories and tendency to invent marvelous devices. Technology also became a power source all its own, as heroes debuted who relied on power suits and bionic implants to achieve super-heroic ends.

COSMIC TREADMILL

As much a plot device as a tool, the cosmic treadmill is fine-tuned to handle the incredible energies of speedsters. Combining their incredibly velocity with radiation pulses, the treadmill can project users through time and space.

The model presented here assumes the speedster runs at supersonic velocity, but the device can just as easily be a Cosmic Wind Tunnel for high-speed flyers or a Cosmic Turbine for swimmers. An experimental model might be complicated by the Uncontrolled flaw, while a more restrictive version might limit users to time hops with a time rank of their Speed power rank + 20, limiting slower speedsters to traveling only a few months or years.

Cosmic Treadmill: Movement 5 (Dimensional 2 [alternate timelines], Time Travel 3; Limited to users with 10 or more ranks of Speed) • *5 points*

GIMMICK ARROWS

The bow and arrow are among humanity's oldest tools. Endlessly creative Silver Age heroes and villains found countless ways to apply new spins to classic weapons. The most iconic of these "gimmick" weapons was the bow and quiver of trick arrows, which covered every contingency from ingenious to ridiculous.

Variations include trick javelins or discus for athletic-themed heroes and villains, or gimmick baked goods and toys for more outlandish villains.

Most heroes with an array of trick weapons rely on a smaller array of 3–10 attcks they rely on often, and use Extra Effort to provide the oddly specific tool for more outlandish situations.

Bow and Trick Arrows (Array; 15 points) • *37 points*

- **Exploding Arrow** Ranged Burst Area Damage 5 • *15 points*
- **Acetylene Arrow** Ranged Weaken Toughness 3 (Affects Objects, Linked to Ranged Damage 4) • *1 point*
- **Acid Arrow** Ranged Progressive Weaken Toughness 2 (Affects Objects, Linked to Ranged Damage 3) • *1 point*
- **Basic Arrow** Ranged Damage 5 • *1 point*
- **Bola Arrow** Cumulative Ranged Affliction 5 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Extra Condition; Limited Degree) • *1 point*
- **Boomerang Arrow** Ranged Damage 5 (Indirect 2) • *1 point*
- **Drill Arrow** Ranged Damage 5 (Penetrating) • *1 point*
- **Fire Extinguisher Arrow** Nullify Fire 5 (Effortless) • *1 point*
- **Flash Arrow** Cumulative Ranged Burst Area Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware) • *1 point*
- **Flechette Arrow** Ranged Damage 5 (Multiattack) • *1 point*
- **Glue Arrow** Cumulative Ranged Affliction 3 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Contagious, Extra Condition; Limited Degree) • *1 point*
- **Grappling Arrow** Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging) • *1 point*
- **Ice Arrow** Cumulative Ranged Affliction 5 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered, Immobile, Incapacitated) • *1 point*
- **Jet Arrow** Flight 8 (500 MPH; Concentration) • *1 point*
- **Magnet Arrow** Burst Area Move Object 8 (6 tons; Limited Direction: Toward Arrow, Limited Material: Metal) • *1 point*
- **Net Arrow** Ranged Burst Area Affliction 5 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Strength; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Extra Condition; Limited Degree) • *1 point*
- **Parachute Arrow** Movement 1 (Safe Fall; Affects Others) • *1 point*
- **Safecracking Arrow** Ranged Nullify Locks 10 • *1 point*
- **Smoke Arrow** Ranged Cloud Area Concealment Attack 2 (Sight) • *1 point*
- **Spy Arrow** Remoted Sensing 7 (Auditory; 0.5 miles; Simultaneous) • *1 point*
- **Tear Gas Arrow** Ranged Cloud Area Affliction 3 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Visually Impaired, Stunned and Visually Disabled, Incapacitated; Extra Condition) • *1 point*
- **Tranquilizer Arrow** Cumulative Ranged Affliction 3 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Asleep, Progressive) • *1 point*
- **Ultrasonic Arrow** Ranged Burst Area Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • *1 point*

INDESTRUCTIBLE SHIELD

This shield made from impossible alloys as part of the war effort can serve as a formidable defense and weapon in the hands of a skilled champion. It can deliver powerful strikes or be thrown and ricochet back to its wielder's grasp. You might further describe the unusual properties of the shield's unique metals with additional powers, such as Immunity to certain energy types or adding the Reflect or Redirect extras to its Deflect power

Indestructible Shield: Protection Enhanced Traits 7 (Dodge 3, Parry 3, Improved Defense), Feature 1 (Indestructible Alloy), **Shield Bash** Damage 3 (Strength-Based, Penetrating 5; **AE:** Ranged Damage 3 [Strength-Based, Ricochet 2]) • *12 points*

SPIDER GAUNTLETS

Spider gauntlets contain various proteins and chemicals under high-pressure, allowing a hero to spray globs or lines of sticky, spider-like webbing. A sophisticated nozzle allows a hero to decide on the fly whether it sprays a net to capture foes or a sturdy line to swing from. The webbing also lets the wearer apply up to 5 ranks of their Strength at range to grab valuables, throw webbed furniture, or perform trip or grab actions at range. Creative uses of Extra Effort might include a vision-obscuring Affliction to represent a gob of webbing sprayed in the face or a ranged Damage effect for firing hardened pellets of webbing like rubber bullets.

Spider Gauntlets: Web Cumulative Ranged Affliction 8 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile; Extra Condition; Limited Degree), **Webline** Ranged Strength 5, **Webswinging** Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging) • *34 points*

SWINGLINE CLUB

An infinitely useful concealed weapon and tool for heroes maintaining a secret identity, the swingline club looks like an ordinary cane, but can be snapped apart to form a pair of weighted batons. One baton houses a retractable grappling line, letting a hero swing through the city with ease.

Swingline Club: Damage 2 (Strength-based, Split), Feature 1 (concealed), Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging) • *8 points*

VISITING HEROES

America in the 1950s and 1960s saw amazing social and scientific developments, as well as terrifying realities like war and a presidential assassination. Time travelers might arrive trying to change the outcome of the Cold War, stop nuclear proliferation, interfere with space exploration, or just get rich by patenting a modern technological or medical innovation a few years early. Well-intentioned time travelers may instead arrive hoping to stop the United States from tampering with foreign governments, save civil rights leaders (or a president) from assassination, or help one human rights movement or another win more resounding victories in the era's struggles.

Travelers from the 21st century will find the 1950s and 1960s uncannily similar. Much of modern pop culture from this era not only still survives but flourishes 50 years later—Millennial superheroes will understand references to *Gilligan's Island*, the Beatles, and the *Maltese Falcon*. But many elements will feel starkly different. America is tense about race and gender and sex, with old tensions bubbling just below the surface. Travelers from the 21st century who understand the drawbacks of Capitalism will be taken aback by the unquestioned adoration of the free market and condemnation of communism and socialism—even as America's socialist institutions like public schools and public health programs arguably sit at their zenith. Without the internet or portable technology, many easy tasks like contacting friends or research become chores that take an hour or more. While the locals speak American English, most of the slang and idioms we take for granted—google it, text me, sorry not sorry, hashtag, trolling, wtf—sound like a foreign language. Food options are limited in this age of "meat and potatoes;" gelatin desserts were exciting and new, and the most readily available foreign food might be Americanized Chinese.

Likewise, social mores are very different. The 1950s were an especially conservative era in American history, when "decent people" didn't mention social ills and everyone did their part to look productive and seem happy. Behind the curtain, many people turned to drugs and alcohol to alleviate the crushing depression of conformity. Discussing unseemly things like racism was rude—seen as far worse than racism itself—and topics like homosexuality or premarital sex were scandals. America took an "out of sight, out of mind" approach to minority groups, tolerating them (with frequent police harassment) so long as they remained in their own communities. Minority time travelers may actually encounter more aggravation and violence here than in earlier eras. Gamemasters can gloss over this element of the era to focus on the fun, free-wheeling tone of Silver Age comics, or confront it directly.

Being only a generation or two removed from current heroes, the Silver Age is the likely landing point for villains looking to meddle directly with the heroes' personal timelines. The heroes may need to deal with their parents or grandparents in a backdrop of revolution, perhaps even seeing their stodgy grandma in her counter-culture glory.

Possible plot hooks:

- The heroes must stop a Cold War Soviet time travel project history never recorded.
- The Futurekin (see **The Associates and the Futurekin** in **Chapter 3**) ally with modern North Korea, agreeing to re-write the course of the Korean War in exchange for a stable base of operations in the 20th and 21st centuries.
- Something wipes a hero's favorite 1960s band from history.

SILVER AGE HEROES

Heroes of the Silver Age were often bigger than life with square jaws, good looks, and a cartoonishly simple moral compass that modern visitors would either fiend refreshing or disturbingly shallow. The good news is that their big-hearted morality tends to be all-encompassing, with-heroes eager to learn about new cultures and experiences.

Silver Age superheroes tend to favor mental characteristics over physical ones. Intellect is a must-have in the 1960s, as (pseudo-) science can solve many problems. Awareness (or a high Perception skill) is handy for stories centered on solving a mystery. Presence (and its related skills) is needed to impart important life lessons to young readers or make their moralizing seem more charming than obnoxious. Characters of the era were as strong or smart as they needed to be for the sake of a fun story. Gamemasters may even chose to let players wave PL caps on one ability score of their choice.

Most Silver Age heroes were the result of fantastic science, rather than the training or magic of the earlier Golden Age. With the scientific revolution (and especially the space race) capturing America's interest, it's only natural that scientific accidents or discoveries would empower various heroes and villains along the way. Powers become more varied as well, with traditional abilities like super strength and speed appearing as often as the ability to control various energies, shapeshift into super-powered forms, or wield alien devices.

STARTING POWER LEVELS

Silver Age comic books feature characters of varying degrees of superhuman ability, from competent heroes who fight crime with nothing more than guts to nigh-omnipotent alien beings who juggle planets.

CRUSADING SILVER AGE HEROES PL 8

Some Silver Age superheroes seem like Golden Age holdovers because by today's standards they just weren't all that "super." For the most part, all they had was a mean right cross and a never-ending crusade to fight for. Depending on the character, that might be avenging a loved one's murder, a hyper-patriotic fight for America, or kicking heroin dealers out of the ghetto. Though they didn't lack for heart or commitment, even the crusading heroes who had some unusual abilities typically possessed "neat tricks" rather than full-blown super-powers.

CLASSIC SILVER AGE HEROES PL 10

Most Silver Age heroes were amazing by anyone's reckoning. They were powered by super-science and super-sorcery and could do truly extraordinary things, like flying, moving at super-speed, and zapping criminals with their magic jewelry.

OMNIPOTENT SILVER AGE HEROES PL 14

A few Silver Age characters had godlike abilities. Such characters were capable of dispatching enemies by hitting them with the sun or casting them into Hell (or similar dark dimensions and otherworldly nether regions). These seemingly omnipotent heroes were sometimes seen as part of a super-team, though in hindsight, one wonders why they needed any sort of backup. Still, a Gamemaster who's running a mixed-power level campaign can allow them to join the group if he doesn't mind the challenge of keeping all these varied heroes simultaneously occupied.

BALANCE OF POWER

Just like today, Silver Age super-teams had members of noticeably different power levels, from the PL 8 boxers-in-tights to PL 14 types who can throw Australia. If the Gamemaster and players can create a similar mix of power levels. With mixed-PL teams, the Gamemaster should include at least one challenge that caters to the strengths of each member. Maybe the PL 12 powerhouse must battle an army of giant robot spiders while the PL 8 scientific genius and ace detective work on finding the robot's Achilles' heel and home base. Make sure that lower PL characters have skills and Advantages no one else on the team has so they can have their own moments to shine.

SILVER AGE TONE

The first and foremost rule for recapturing the Silver Age is keep things light and let fun rule. Comics—like film and television—rarely touched on the serious social issues of the time. Anything that smacks of real-world problems is glossed over or handled via analogues. Bad deeds do not last beyond one night's game, while the good endures forever. A city flattened by alien invaders in one session is back good as ever in the next, and the citizens remain forever grateful to the superheroes who saved them.

The most frequent antagonists in a Silver Age campaign include Russian spies and supervillains, costumed criminals with a nifty gimmick, horrible monsters spawned by radiation, and the Golden Age staple of evil scientists—though they often wield social or political power now in addition to their intellectual abilities.

There's a temptation inherent in this style to make things campy, like the '60s Batman show, and it's certainly a valid approach; superhero parodies were published throughout the Silver Age. Most period comic books avoided crossing the line into outright comedy, however, and the Gamemaster may want to take steps to see his campaign is similarly circumscribed. The key there is staying focused on how much fun having super-powers would be rather than laughing at the corniness and lack of continuing narratives of the era.

STATBLOCKS

Gamemasters will find plenty of utility in the Public Servants and Underworld minion archetypes from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, as well as villain archetypes like the Brute, Elemental, Imp, Overlord, and Robot. By this point in history, a mysterious shift in the cosmic fabric (and the Comics Code Authority) made villains like the Elder Evil and the Vampire all but extinct. The following statblocks are especially useful in the Silver Age:

PLUCKY REPORTER

In the Silver Age, print media ruled, and a well-timed news story could make or break entire political dynasties! Intrepid reporters knew where to find the scoop: usually in the wake of superheroes, and so they became iconic sidekicks and antagonists of the age. Strangely, plucky reporters were never quite able to deduce heroes' secret identities, even when they were people from their daily lives.

ROCK & ROLL LEGEND

The music of the Silver Age helped define generations of rebels and shape modern American culture. The rock & roll legends of the 1960s were frequent targets for supervillains who wanted to shut down their "noise" or protect America's youth, and just as often they would team up with superheroes to help stop plots targeting teenagers.

SUPER SPY

Most espionage work was conducted by bored civil servants, or else deep cover agents living the lives of bored civil servants, but in the world of super-heroics super spies lead exciting lives of lavish parties, seduction, and high speed chases through the most glamourous cities.

PLUCKY REPORTER	PL 3 • MR6 • 84 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 1 **INT** 2 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Audio Recorder, Camera.	
Advantages: Contacts, Equipment 1, Fearless, Improvised Tools, Well-informed.	
Skills: Athletics 3 (+3), Deception 4 (+5), Expertise: Current Events 5 (+7), Expertise: Streetwise 7 (+9), Insight 7 (+10), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+6).	
Offense: Init +2, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 4, Fortitude 1, Toughness 1, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 0 + Advantages 5 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 60	

ROCK & ROLL LEGEND	PL 2 • MR3 • 41 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 1 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 4	
Advantages: Cult Hero (Teenagers), Fascinate (Expertise: Music), Skill Mastery (Expertise: Music).	
Skills: Expertise (PRE): Music 8 (+12), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+5), Expertise: Pop Culture 4 (+5), Insight 4 (+6), Perception 2 (+4), Technology 2 (+3).	
Offense: Init +0, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 0, Parry 1, Fortitude 2, Toughness 2, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 0 + Advantages 3 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 0 = 41	

SUPER SPY	PL 5 • MR6 • 88 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 4 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3	
Equipment: Audio Recorder, Camera, Concealable Microphone, Hold-out Pistol, Mini-tracer.	
Advantages: Benefit 3 (Alternate Identity, Cipher, Wealth), Defensive Roll, Equipment 2, Fascinate (Persuasion), Power Attack, Well-informed.	
Skills: Athletics 2 (+4), Close Combat: Martial Arts 4 (+8), Deception 8 (+11), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+7), Insight 4 (+7), Investigation 2 (+3), Persuasion 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 4 (+8), Stealth 6 (+9), Vehicles 4 (+8).	
Offense: Init +3, Hold-out Pistol +8 (Ranged, Damage 2), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3/2*, Will 6 *Without Defensive Roll.	
Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 0 + Advantages 9 + Skills 26 (51 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 88	

SILVER AGE FREEDOM CITY

Freedom City experienced a resurgent heroic age in the 1960s, some five years after the Red Scare and a secret invasion of Grue led to the disbanding of the Liberty League and the retirement of many of the costumed heroes from the 1940s. While a handful of major heroes—most notably Lady Liberty and Centurion—remained active post-war, Freedom City saw little in the way of costumed crime throughout the 1950s. This decade saw the formation of the first Freedom League and many of the heroic legacies that continue in Freedom to this day.

Like many urban centers, Freedom City entered the 1960s in a recession. Despite the post-war economic boom, much of the industry and population had retreated to the newly-developing suburbs, leaving much of the city to the poorest residents and those who preyed on them. The boom of industry immediately following the war had slowed to a crawl, and while the city center remained prosperous, other hard-hit districts—such as the Waterfront and the Fens—acquired reputations as crime-ridden slums that they still carry today.

While the early Silver Age represented lean years for Freedom City, the mid-to-late '60s saw explosive growth. While economists attribute this to many factors—urban redevelopment, a growing counter-culture drawing families back into the city, new technologies paving the way for new industries—most locals insist that the newly-formed Freedom League simply made the city feel safer and more exciting, and encouraged civic pride. The truth is a mix of factors, and the fact that several major supervillain events throughout the '60s made modern reconstruction a necessity.

GEOGRAPHY

Freedom City was a smaller place in the Silver Age. Only the Mangold and Pramas bridges crossed the rivers, leaving outlying communities more isolated and less developed. Many of the outlying districts—Kingston, North Bay, Port Regal—were towns of their own at the time, still separated by waning strips of farmland and only just beginning to feel the creeping urban sprawl. Ashton was a fresh-faced new addition to the landscape—one of those new-fangled planned communities built of the model of nearby Levittown, PA. Veteran and engineer Thomas Lincoln took advantage of this isolation at the time when he founded the town of Lincoln as a safe haven for his fellow African Americans trying to escape the poverty and increasing racial tension of the city. The hot-button issue in most of these growing communities is the merits and drawbacks of incorporating with Freedom City proper.

Most of the city's most iconic features are absent throughout the Silver Age. Pyramid Plaza wouldn't grace the skyline until the mid-1970s, while the Sentry Statue wouldn't be erected until after Centurion's fateful battle with Omega. Plenty of new construction still makes the

city feel modern, as 50-story glass-and-steel modern architecture begins replacing the 12-story brick structures from before the war.

Traveling Silver Age Freedom City is generally slower, as the major state highways aren't constructed until the late '60s and mid '70s. The Freedom City trolley system—one of its earliest public transit systems—still ran through Riverside, City Center, and Midtown following the modern S-line up to 80th street. The subways—a pride of the city since the late 19th century—are also still in operation, but generally poorly maintained and not nearly as extensive as the modern mass transit grid. Reaching the outlying towns requires some effort, given the lack of bridges. A ferry connects Lincoln to the extensive farms that will eventually become Grenville, and another crosses the Century Narrows several times a day.

KEY EVENTS

While the actual Golden Age began years earlier, most Freedonians say it began for them in 1960. The dark god Hades, seeking to "chastise" Daedalus, manipulated a mortal wizard to help him launch an invasion of undead across the city. Centurion, Lady Liberty, Bowman, Daedalus, and the Raven banded together to drive Hades and his forces back into the underworld. Afterward, Zeus forbade Hades from directly interfering with the mortal world ever again. The heroes, realizing they can deal with threats more effectively as a team, banded together to form the Freedom League, taking the Liberty League's old headquarters in Beaumont Mansion. Their membership expanded steadily over the decade, adding members like Galatea, Mary Minstrel, Siren, Sea-King, and the Scarab. The public and unashamed presence of the Freedom League helps encourage other do-gooders, like Hepcat and Kid Gargoyle, to help chip away at the city's growing crime and urban decay.

In the wake of HUAC's campaign against the superhero community, few heroes trust their government and fewer still will work with it directly. Washington responds to this by recruiting Golden Age super-soldier Jack Simmons—the Patriot—to head up a new task force handling superhuman crime: the American Elite Government Intervention Service or AEGIS. Despite a lack of confidence from anyone in the government, Simmons begins tapping his CIA and FBI sources to recruit law enforcement personnel, assuring that AEGIS will have accurate intelligence before taking the field. He also uses his friendships in the superhero community to make contact with the new generation of heroes, proposing covert partnerships and promising AEGIS will fight for superhero rights and prevent another witch-hunt like the HUAC. Based on these promises and Simmons' sterling reputation, many heroes agreed to cooperate with the new agency.

AEGIS and the Freedom League endure their first major test in 1961 when the former Nazi supervillain, Overshadow, launches Operation Inundation, an attempt to use his cloned armies to seize major cities across the globe simultaneously. A newly-reincarnated hero known as the Scarab discovers the plot, but no one in the government listens to him other than Jack Simmons. As a result, Freedom City is the only city prepared for the SHADOW invasion, and becomes the beachhead for various government and super-heroic efforts to fight back. When the Freedom League disrupts a SHADOW attempt to reinforce their troops by summoning an army of shadow demons, Overshadow's own second-in-command, Dr. Jonathan Darke, takes advantage of Overshadow's momentary vulnerability and shoots him, seizing control of SHADOW.

AEGIS investigators track SHADOW to the estate of Dr. Darke, who dies in the ensuing shootout. The general belief that Darke was the founder of SHADOW allows Overshadow to recover his strength in secret. Thwarting SHADOW gains AEGIS considerable respect. AEGIS remains a powerful force in Freedom City, even as they gain nationwide recognition for thwarting Operation Inundation. The agency opens Blackstone Penitentiary, a prison specially designed to hold superhuman inmates, in 1963. The United States Department of Justice makes Blackstone the de-facto prison for superhumans in the United States, moving criminals there from prisons across the country.

Omega first appears on Earth in 1965, when he pierces the dimensional barriers and invades Freedom City with an army of Omegadrones. The Freedom League and the Atom Family unite to drive him back into the Terminus.

In 1969, Apollo 11 delivers the first humans to the Moon. The inhabitants of Farside City observe the mission carefully. Selene, an ambitious member of the Farsider royal family, uses the fear of humanity's technological development to attract a large group of followers. They seize the power of the Moonstone, which Selene uses to gain powerful mental abilities and control of Farside City. She dispatches her praetorian guard—the Malfidians—to Earth to procure rare materials and prepare the planet for invasion. The United Nations' Uniforce learns of the plot from the Associates, a pair of time travelers who send their minds to possess the bodies of people in other points along the timeline, fighting a "temporal cold war" against their enemies, the Futurekin. Uniforce is able to defeat the Malfidians and expose the involvement of Zeitgeist, who possessed the body of Lady Lunar's chief advisor.

VILLAINS OF SILVER AGE FREEDOM CITY

The slowly building economic prosperity of the 1960s seemed to draw costumed crooks out of the woodwork, and a number of Freedom City's most iconic villains first appeared in this era, including major threats like Hades and Overshadow (*Freedom City, Third Edition*) and gimmick crooks like Fear-Master, Luna Moth, and Maestro (*Freedom City, Third Edition*, *Basic Hero's Handbook*, and *Rogues Gallery*, respectively). Immortal foes—including Tom Cypress, Medea, and Taurus (*Freedom City, Third Edition*) all played the role of supervillains at the time as well.

A few Silver Age villains passed their names on to modern villains with very different capabilities. The Silver Age Conqueror Worm (*Freedom City, Third Edition*) lacked any of his modern powers, and vexed the first Raven with wits, trickery, and a loyal gang of disaffected young people called the "Night Crawlers." The Silver Age Reeves maintains the extraordinary Intellect, Awareness, and Presence listed in his modern entry, has a Stamina of –2, and lacks any of the powers he gained by returning from the dead. Reduce his Toughness to +2 (including his Defensive Roll), his Fortitude to +1, Ranged Combat: Guns to 8 (+7), and add Inspire 5, Leadership, and Minions 10 to reflect his gang of fanatical followers. Conqueror Worm's PL is 11 only by virtue of his extraordinarily high skills; in combat he is effectively PL 3, though wielding a firearm (such as his preferred machine pistol) increases him to PL 5.

The original Doc Holiday, Bryant Haliday, was haunted by the same extradimensional force that now overrides the modern Doc Holiday, Mark Holiday (*Freedom City, Third Edition*), but the lesser flow of magic in the 1960s meant the force could only overwhelm Haliday's mind and not his body, making him seem to be just another obsessive costumed criminal. Haliday was still obsessed with major holidays and their symbolism, however, and used his inventive genius and massive trust fund to provide a variety of themed gadgets appropriate for special occasions, like love-inducing chemicals loaded into "cupid arrows" or robotic rabbits that launch exploding eggs. The Silver Age Doc Holiday uses the same statistics as the transformed version of the modern Doc Holiday, but without his Holiday Transformation power. Instead he regularly appears with minions and 40 points' worth of gimmick Devices. This version of Doc Holiday was more of a high-spirited prankster, more in love with the drama and excitement of supervillainy than with any agenda or wealth.

SET THE DESTROYER

A force of chaos and corruption, Set the Deceiver and Destroyer was exiled by his fellow gods to the endless wastes beyond their domain after his attempt to murder and usurp his brother Osiris. Set was defeated in his ambitions by Isis' resurrection of her husband, and by the power of his nephew, Horus, the Avenger of His Father.

Prevented by the Pact from escaping his exile, Set bided his time until the 20th century, when an unwitting initiate of one of the cults controlled by the Serpent People overreached and attempted to summon the dark god. Set responded to the summons and consumed the soul of his would-be master, taking his body as a vessel, which allowed him to manifest on the earthly plane. This led Horus to seek a way to do the same, investing his power in the Ankh of the Avenger and allowing the human archeologist Henry Farrow to discover it.

For years, Set warred against Horus, using his sorcery, shape-shifting abilities, and the minions of the various serpent cults he commanded. The sinister god also came up against other heroes, although his nephew remained his primary foe. Set sought to create a new dominion on Earth, one he could eventually use to storm the gates of Heliopolis itself and overthrow his fellow gods.

SET THE DESTROYER — **PL 15 • 330 POINTS**

STR 10 **STA** 12 **AGI** 4 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 14 **INT** 3 **AWE** 12 **PRE** 11

Advantages: Close Attack, Daze (Intimidation), Fascinate (Intimidation), Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack 10, Ritualist

Skills: Deception 8 (+19), Expertise: History 12 (+15), Expertise: Magic 12 (+15), Insight 4 (+16), Intimidation 4 (+15), Persuasion 4 (+15)

Powers: Divine Durability Immortality 5, Immunity 13 (Aging, Death Effects, Life Support), Protection 3 (Impervious 15), Regeneration 5, **Divine Senses** Senses 5 (Divine Awareness, Darkvision, Extended Sight, Extended Hearing), **Divine Speech** Comprehend 2 (Speak and Understand All Languages), **Shapeshifting** Morph 4

Corruption Magic (Dynamic Array, 60 points)

- **Clarity of Despair:** Mind Reading 15
- **Darkness Control:** Perception Shapeable Area Concealment Attack 4 (All Visual Senses, Shapeable Area 11)
- **Eye of Set:** Remote Sensing 11 (All Senses, 8 miles; Dimensional 3)
- **Serpent's Path:** Movement 2 (Dimensional [Mystic Dimensions]; Affects Others, Increased Mass 10)
- **Summon Corruptors:** Summon 5 (Horde, Multiple Minions 4, General Type [Demons])
- **Warp Step:** Teleport 12 (16 miles; Accurate, Extended, Increased Mass 9)

Offense: Init +8, Throw +12 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +15 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 14, Fortitude 12, Toughness 15, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 136 + Powers 146 + Advantages 15 + Skills 22 (44 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 330

SILVER AGE FREEDOM LEAGUE

The world's greatest heroes, banded together to fight forces and foes too great for any one hero to handle, the Freedom League becomes legendary during the Silver Age of Freedom City, creating a legacy that would later be reborn in the modern world after the Terminus Invasion. The League is the largest and most powerful hero team in the world, and also one of the most dynamic, its membership changing over the years as heroes come and go. Still, the core team remains stalwart defenders of Freedom City and the world.

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Members of the Freedom League during this era include the "founding five" of:

BOWMAN

Tim Quinn, Fletcher Beaumont's ward, carries the mantle of the Bowman during the early years of the Freedom League. His mentor's son, Fletcher, Jr., works with him as Arrow, but is a troubled youth, particularly later in their career. The stats for Bowman in *Freedom City, Third Edition* can serve for Tim Quinn as well.

CENTURION

Freedom City's most famous hero was at the peak of his career and a stalwart of the new League. Centurion's stats are in *Freedom City, Third Edition*.

LADY LIBERTY

Donna Mason was still active as Lady Liberty in the 1960s and her powers had not yet begun to wane as they did in the 1970s. The stats for the current Lady Liberty in *Freedom City, Third Edition* represent Donna's during this time fairly well, though Sonja has manifested new abilities, such as telekinesis, that prior hosts have not displayed.

DAEDALUS

The 1960s were the start of Daedalus's public superhero career. His stats are in *Freedom City, Third Edition*.

THE RAVEN

Duncan Summers, the original Raven, was at the start of his career at this time. The stats of the current Raven from *Atlas of Earth-Prime* can also serve for the Raven of this era.

LATER MEMBERS

After the founding of the team, additional members joined the League:

THE BLACK AVENGER	PL 10 • 163 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 3 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 12 **INT** 1 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Advantages: Agile Feint, Assessment, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 3, Evasion 2, Improved Critical: Unarmed, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Luck 1, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Redirect, Set-up, Skill Mastery: Close Combat, Takedown 2, Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Bind, Well-informed	
Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 10 (+13), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+15), Expertise: Streetwise 7 (+8), Insight 5 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+6), Investigation 7 (+8), Perception 5 (+6), Ranged Combat 7 (+10), Stealth 6 (+11), Vehicles 2 (+5)	
Offense: Initiative +9, Unarmed +15 (Close, Damage 3, crit. 19–20)	
Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/3*, Will 10 *3 without Defensive Roll	
Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 0 + Advantages 24 + Skills 32 + Defenses 21 = 137	

GALATEA	PL 10 • 163 POINTS
STR 11 **STA** - **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 9 **INT** 4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 1	
Powers: Force Beams Ranged Damage 10, **Robotic** Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects), Impervious Protection 11, **Scanners** Senses 6 (Extended Vision, Infravision, Low-light Vision, Radio, Time Sense, Ultra-hearing)	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Eidetic Memory, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack 7	
Skills: Expertise: Technology 6 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Technology 8 (+12)	
Offense: Init +6, Force Beams +9 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 11)	
Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 9, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 11, Will 9	
Totals: Abilities 52 + Powers 78 + Advantages 11 + Skills 10 (20 ranks) + Defenses 12 = 163	

SIREN

Siren was invited to join the Freedom League not long after her first appearances in the Caribbean and New Orleans. Her stats can be found in *Freedom City, Third Edition*.

WHITE LION

King M'Zale of Dakana, the White Lion of this era, joined the Freedom League to help bring Dakana into contact with the outside world and to pursue thefts of daka crystals from his homeland. The stats of the current White Lioness from *Atlas of Earth-Prime* can serve for White Lion as well.

SEA KING

Prince Theseus of Atlantis joined the League at the behest of his mother to learn more about heroism and the surface world. Sea King's stats can be found in the *Atlas of Earth-Prime*.

STAR KNIGHT & PSUEDO

The first Star Knight and the renegade Grue Pseudo both joined the League in 1969, after the Moon landing led to increased contact with civilizations from space.

BLACK AVENGER

Wilson Jeffers was a local success story: a black kid from the Lincoln neighborhood of south Freedom City, Jeffers went to college on an athletic scholarship and made the U.S. decathlon team in the 1960s, winning a gold medal. Not long after returning home for a visit, Wilson encountered a violent mugging and used his athletic skills to fight off the criminals. The victim he helped save was retired black prize-fighter Louis Johnson, who taught Wilson to hone his boxing and close combat skills. Adopting a masked identity to fight crime in Lincoln, Jeffers was quickly dubbed "The Black Avenger" by the press. He eventually drew the Freedom League's attention and invitation to join them.

The Black Avenger was often known as the "least powerful" member of the Freedom League, particularly in comparison to powerhouses like Centurion and Lady Liberty, but his spirit and tremendous fighting skills made him an asset to the team and he proved his worth many times over. Jeffers felt that the League was out-of-touch with the concerns of ordinary people. He eventually chose to resign in order to focus on fighting crime on the streets of his old neighborhood.

GALATEA

Intrigued by Daedalus' engram transfer technology, the robot Talos stole it from his old foe and used it to develop a female form robot to function as his "bride," patterning her mind on that of the sorceress Medea, the first female to thwart Talos. This proved a mistake, as Galatea (named for the legendary living statue of Greek myth) rebuffed Talos' desires. Her artificial intelligence incorporated an

unprecedented degree of free spirit, and she rebelled against her creator, helping the Freedom League rescue Daedalus and defeat Talos.

Lost and alone in the world, Galatea accepted the League's offer to come stay with them, quickly becoming a valuable member of the team. She struggled with human-like emotions, dealing with bouts of loneliness, especially after an unrequited attraction to Daedalus (who saw her as more of a "daughter" figure).

HALOGEN

Maggie Burroughs was a research technician for ASTRO Labs when an experimental plasma generator overloaded. Maggie saved the other members of her research team, at the cost of being locked in the test chamber with the generator. ASTRO Labs initially believed she was vaporized by the blast, and she was, in a way. Maggie was transformed into a being of pure plasma energy.

Eventually, she mastered the ability to return to her human form. She discovered a plot by the Foundry to sabotage ASTRO Labs and acquire supposedly "flawed" technology after it was abandoned. During the investigation she met Daedalus, who introduced her to the Freedom League and later recommended her to take his place in the active roster when he left the team.

HALOGEN	PL 10 • 173 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 4 **INT** 3 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 1	
Powers: Plasma Form Ranged Damage 12, Damage 8 (Reaction), Flight 14 (32,000 MPH), Insubstantial 3	
Advantages: Improved Initiative Precise Attack 2 (Ranged, Concealment and Cover), Ranged Attack 4	
Skills: Expertise: Science 6 (+9), Insight 4 (+5), Perception 4 (+5), Technology 8 (+11)	
Offense: Init +8, Blast +7 (Ranged, Damage 12), Plasma Touch +4 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)	
Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 5, Toughness 2, Will 8	
Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 99 + Advantages 7 + Skills 11 (22 ranks) + Defenses 20 = 173	

MARY MINSTREL

Singer Mary Vaughn acquired fantastic vocal powers from a mysterious stranger who offered her the opportunity to "sing like she never had before." Unfortunately, she lost the ability to perform safely as her voice became a weapon that could stun, hypnotize, or shatter steel. Her career in ruins, Mary began to use her new sonic abilities to fight crime, using her "curse" to do some good. Still, for much of her career, Mary looked for a way to rid herself of her powers or control them enough to perform again. She joined the League at Daedalus' recommendation while he mentored her and sought to understand

MARY MINSTREL — **PL 9 • 121 POINTS**

STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 7 **INT** 1 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 4

Powers: Sonic Control (Array, 20 points)

- **Hypnotic Song** Cumulative Perception Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled; Limited Degree)
- **Sonic Blast** Ranged Damage 9
- **Sonic Scream** Cone Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed/Vulnerable, Defenseless/Stunned; Extra Condition, Limited Degree)
- **Sonic Stun** Cone Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)
- **Vertigo** Progressive Burst Area Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)

Advantages: Attractive, Defensive Roll 3, Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack 6

Skills: Athletics 8 (+8), Expertise: Singing 10 (+11), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+7), Insight 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +7, Sonic Blast +9 (Ranged, Damage 9), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 7, Toughness 5/2, Will 9; *without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 24 + Advantages 11 + Skills 17 + Defenses 27 = 121

THE SCARAB — **PL 10 • 192 POINTS**

STR 1 **STA** 1 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 4 **AWE** 6 **PRE** 3

Powers: Force Field Impervious Sustained Protection 6, **Mental Awareness** Senses 1 (Mental Awareness), **Telekinetic Flight** Flight 5 (60 MPH), **Mental Powers** Mind Reading 10 (**AE:** Move Object 10), **Telepathic Link** (Mental Communication 4, Perception Area Comprehend Languages 3)

Advantages: Beginner's Luck, Benefit 4 (Wealth), Connected, Defensive Roll 2, Jack-of-all-trades, Ranged Attack 7, Trance

Skills: Deception 5 (+8), Expertise: Business 7 (+11), Expertise: History 10 (+14), Expertise: Magic 5 (+9), Insight 8 (+14), Intimidation 5 (+8), Investigation 7 (+11), Perception 6 (+12), Persuasion 7 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Telekinesis +9 (Ranged, Damage 10 after grab), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 9, Fortitude 8, Toughness 9/7*/3**, Will 11; *7 without Defensive Roll, **without Force Field

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 69 + Advantages 17 + Skills 32 + Defenses 24 = 192

her abilities. Mary remained a member until her death in 1970 fighting against the Foundry.

THE SCARAB

The longest-term member of the original Freedom League other than the Centurion was the Scarab, secretly wealthy philanthropist Alexander Rhodes, and mysterious master of mental powers. Scarab's powers and diplomatic nature made him the peacemaker of the original League, helping settle disputes between its members and encouraging teamwork. He served as deputy-leader on occasion, and used his telepathic abilities to keep his teammates in contact in the field until his death in 1979.

TECTONIC

Ramon Diego discovered his mutant ability to generate and control powerful vibrations when the Terra-King kidnapped him to power an "earthquake machine" to devastate the surface world. Rescued by the Centurion, Ramon learned to control his vibration powers and accepted an offer to join the Freedom League. The young counter-culture rebel clashed with the more authoritarian and old-fashioned Centurion on occasion, but both learned from the other's experience and grew into effective teammates.

TECTONIC — **PL 9 • 96 POINTS**

STR 2 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 1

Powers: Vibration Control (Array; 24 points)

- **Disruption** Deflect 10
- **Tremor** Burst Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Vulnerable, Defenseless; Instant Recovery, Limited Degree)
- **Resonance** Weaken Toughness 12 (Affects Objects Only; Limited to brittle objects)
- **Vibro-Blast** Ranged Damage 12
- **Vibro-Burst** Burst Area Damage 9

Equipment: Leather Jacket (+1 Toughness)

Advantages: Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 1

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Athletics 6 (+8), Deception 5 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+8), Insight 6 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Vibration Control 3 (+6)

Offense: Init +2, Tremor (Burst, Affliction 9), Vibro-Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 12), Vibro-Burst (Burst, Damage 9), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 10, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5/3*/2**, Will 4; *w/o Defensive Roll, ** w/o Defensive Roll and Armor.

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 28 + Advantages 4 + Skills 20 (40 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 96

THE ATOM FAMILY

The Atom Family is a renowned group of explorers and investigators of the unusual, led by world-famous scientist and hero Dr. Atom and consisting of his daughter Andrea, his ward Jack Wolf, and Dr. Atom's student the mentalist debunker known as Mentac, who in fact possesses extraordinary mental powers of his own.

DR. ALEXANDER ATOM

Alexander Atom earned his first PhD at the age of 15, and went on to earn the title "Doctor Atom" several times over. Dr. Atom was not content to simply theorize or study the discoveries of others. An explorer at heart, he traveled to the farthest-flung reaches of the world, becoming a renowned scientific adventurer.

Alexander Atom and his wife Anne had a daughter, Andrea, in 1959. In 1961, Dr. Atom purchased the Goodman Building and moved there with his family. Anne Atom died of inoperable cancer in 1972, one of Dr. Atom's greatest defeats as a scientist. From then on, he raised his daughter alone and never remarried. By the late 1970s, Dr. Atom was patriarch of a family of young heroes: his daughter Andrea, his ward Jack Wolf, and the young psychic Mentac.

Dr. Atom is the very model of a brilliant, but often distractible, scientific genius. He can spend days in his lab working

DR. ALEXANDER ATOM — **PL 8 • 124 POINTS**

STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 6 **INT** 11 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 1

Advantages: Benefit (Wealth) 3, Connected, Defensive Roll 4, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 5, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Languages 3 (French, Latin, Russian), Leadership, Ranged Attack 5, Set-up, Skill Mastery (Expertise: Science), Skill Mastery (Technology)

Skills: Deception 8 (+9), Expertise: History 5 (+16), Expertise: Science 7 (+18), Insight 8 (+12), Investigation 4 (+15), Perception 2 (+6), Persuasion 7 (+8), Technology 7 (+18), Treatment 4 (+15), Vehicles 6 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +0, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 5/1*, Will 10 *without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 0 + Advantages 23 + Skills 29 + Defenses 19 = 119

ANDREA ATOM — **PL 8 • 121 POINTS**

STR 0 **STA** 0 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 9 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2

Advantages: Daze (Deception), Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 5, Great Endurance, Improved Initiative, Jack-of-all-trade, Languages 3 (French, Latin, Russian), Luck, Ranged Attack 4

Skills: Athletics 6 (+6), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: History 4 (+13), Expertise: Science 6 (+15), Insight 6 (+9), Investigation 6 (+15), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 8 (+10), Stealth 4 (+6), Technology 6 (+15), Treatment 4 (+13), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 6, Fortitude 7, Toughness 4/0*, Will 9 *without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 0 + Advantages 21 + Skills 33 + Defenses 19 = 121

on a particular project or trying to solve some scientific puzzle. On the other hand, he's also a man of action, and likes to get into the thick of things, although tempered by more wisdom than in his youth.

ANDREA ATOM

Andrea Atom has always been her father's daughter and admires him more than any man she has ever known. Since her mother passed away, Andrea has tried to look after her father, and she is the one to remind him of the mundane and routine matters that sometimes escape his attention.

Andrea is remarkably mature and level-headed, but perhaps a bit too stubborn and headstrong for her own good. She's also a brilliant scientist in her own right, along with a lifetime of physical training and picking up a variety of odd skills here and there. Perhaps her greatest abilities are her unfailing faith in people and the tendency of her enemies to underestimate her, always to their regret.

MENTAC

"Mentac the Magnificent" made a name for himself debunking so-called psychics and related charlatans. What people did not realize was Mentac was himself a genuine psychic, covertly using his powers to deal with both fakes and true psychics misusing their gifts, then covering it up with an air of skepticism. Andrea Atom was the first to see

MENTAC — **PL 8 • 120 POINTS**

STR 0 **STA** 0 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 2 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 2

Powers: Mind Shield (Impervious Will 8), Psychic Sense (Senses 1, Mental Awareness), Telepathy (Array; Hallucination [Illusion 4, All Sense Types, Selective, Limited to One Subject, Resistible by Will], Mental Blast [Perception Ranged Damage 5, Resisted by Will, Tiring], Telepathic Communication [Comprehend Languages 2, Mental Communication 3])

Advantages: Benefit (Cipher) 1, Benefit (Farsider) 2, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 3, Improved Initiative, Ranged Attack 5, Second Chance (Will checks vs. mental powers), Taunt, Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Deception 8 (+10), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+4), Insight 8 (+12), Intimidation 4 (+6), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 2 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+6), Sleight of Hand 2 (+4), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+6), Vehicles 2 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +5, Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 4/0*, Will 10 *without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 27 + Advantages 19 + Skills 22 + Defenses 22 = 120

JACK WOLF — **PL 8 • 135 POINTS**

STR 4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 10 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3

Advantages: All-out Attack, Beginner's Luck, Defensive Roll 2, Diehard, Equipment 4, Evasion, Great Endurance, Improved Initiative, Languages 2 (Russian, Spanish), Power Attack, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 7, Takedown, Taunt, Tracking

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+8), Athletics 6 (+10), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+12), Deception 7 (+10), Expertise: Survival 8 (+9), Intimidation 6 (+9), Perception 8 (+10), Stealth 6 (+9), Technology 4 (+5), Treatment 4 (+5), Vehicles 10 (+13)

Offense: Initiative +7, Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 9, Toughness 6/4*, Will 7 *without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 0 + Advantages 27 + Skills 33 + Defenses 15 = 135

through Mentac's charade and to break through his cold and mysterious exterior. The truth Mentac keeps hidden is he's not even from Earth! He is the exiled surviving member of the royal family of Farside City on the Moon, hiding on Earth from his aunt, Lady Lunar, who led a coup and seized power for herself.

JACK WOLF

Jack always admired his father, Lt. Colonel John Wolf, an astronaut and good friend Dr. Atom. When his father was lost on an early space mission, young Jack was eventually placed with Dr. Atom and his family.

Jack wanted to become a pilot, like his father, but disdained the government and military he felt sent Col. Wolf to his death. Instead, he trained with Dr. Atom and by the time he was a teen, Jack was already a brilliant pilot and good in a fight. He was also wrestling with feelings for his mentor's daughter, Andrea, having grown up with her. She saw Jack more like a brother, and his fears were confirmed the moment she brought that weirdo Mentac into their lives. Jack likes baiting "the great stone-face" but when the chips are down, he stands up for Mentac as much as any member of his adopted family.

THE IRON AGE

Mid 1980s—Late 1990s

Ranging from roughly 1986 through 1999, the Iron Age reflects both a period in history as well as a style of storytelling common at that time. Narratively, the Iron Age represents an era when creators began to discard old notions of what a comic book was allowed to be, experimenting with new elements, genres, and stories that the comics industry had previously censored. It was an age that explored violence, the emotional and psychological toll of super-powers, and the morality of taking the law into your own hands, delving into the psychology and social effect of superheroes. And guns. The Iron Age loved giving superheroes guns.

Culturally, the 1980s and 1990s represented an era of personal struggle and personal aimlessness in the United States. As the era begins, the Cold War tensions from the Silver Age are higher than ever in a world where terrorism, organized crime, and violent revolt are increasingly common, and open war with the Soviet Union seemed inevitable. But the USSR's collapse left America as the lone superpower, feeling untouchable but at the same time bereft of purpose. The nation had spent decades establishing patriotism—in part—as opposition to communism and the USSR, and without it the country scrambled to understand itself in a vacuum. This led to introspection, doubt, and the beginnings of reflection on the horrible deeds committed in the name of preserving freedom during the Cold War.

LIFE DURING THE IRON AGE

The Iron Age represents a time of cheap and readily-available consumer goods in America—from music to blue jeans to hamburgers—but also a time of looming corporate control and propaganda. The economy grew as large corporations gobbled up smaller businesses, both regional organizations and mom-and-pop stores, turning Main Street USA into a corporate cookie-cutter diorama of national brands repeated ad nauseum across the entire country. It was a time of celebration as the "good guys" won the Cold War, but also a time of mounting fear as mass media made the average American increasingly aware of toxic waste, urban violence, and child abductions.

Pop culture became an increasingly powerful force throughout the Iron Age, exposing much of the western world to American films, music, and children's cartoons. The increased availability of foreign media affected America in return, as Chinese action movies and Japanese animation—obscure cult interests in the 1970s—became increasingly popular and influential. This expanding pop

culture landscape shifted the concept of "cool" in the eyes of teenagers—pop culture largely began obsessing over the plucky underdogs, the freaks, and geeks, while depicting clean-cut sports stars and wholesome cheerleaders as spoiled bullies. Cool kids went their own way, and corporate-branded individuality led to commodifying rebellion into over-caffeinated soft drinks and sponsored sporting events for skateboarding, snowboarding, rollerblading, bungie jumping, and other so-called "extreme sports."

URBAN LIFE

As in the Golden and Silver Ages, city life dominated Iron Age heroics, though cities themselves took on a very different quality. Some groan under the weight of history, with a core of stone and steel towers downtown surrounded by a sprawl of old housing and well-used industrial areas. Other cities are brand-new products of urban planning and modern design. Regardless of the city's age, though, the signs of decay are apparent.

Cities planned as technological utopias show their perfection going awry once an imperfect populace is introduced to its streets and buildings. Sometimes, flaws have been hidden in the design from the start by a person, group, or power that benefits—politically, financially, magically, or otherwise—from its failure. Heroes of an Iron Age campaign in such a city might be agents of the plan, trying to maintain its dream of perfection against encroaching corruption, or they may be rebels fighting against the corrupt forces trying to control the city and its inhabitants.

Older cities turn dark in the Iron Age through the passing of time. The stone towers that once dominated the skyline are shoved side-by-side with newer buildings of iron and steel, all coated in a film of grime. The people of the city, particularly the older citizens, speak longingly of "the good old days," pointing toward a past when the city was a brighter and happier place.

All Iron Age cities suffer from a rise in crime. From muggers to supervillains, heroes will find they have more criminals to deal with than ever. Street gangs rule neighborhoods, funded by the drug pushers in every park and on every corner. In some cities, heroes might feel compelled to set aside their secret identities and private lives to fight crime full time. In others, crime and criminals are regularly ignored by the people of the city and a hero might be tempted to give up the fight altogether.

THE SLUMS

The darkest parts of an Iron Age city are usually the poorest sections, with plenty of dilapidated buildings to provide cover and hiding places. Several large recessions have left buildings abandoned and dangerous. Alleyways between ramshackle tenements form shadowy paths where criminals can prey on the unfortunate and do business with each other. The alleys are often so narrow a criminal on the run could leap across them from above, moving across rooftops patched with plywood and tarpaper among a forest of television aerials and squat, aging water towers.

While supervillains and crime lords operate from hidden headquarters elsewhere, this is the part of an Iron Age city street gangs call home, often recruiting members from among the people who live there. Though the gangs may bring crime and violence to the neighborhoods, many of the residents are surprisingly loyal to them. Gangs bring money to poor neighborhoods from wealthy downtown businessmen and well-off suburban teens that venture in to buy drugs. When under-funded police forces pay more attention to the needs of the wealthy and abandon the poor neighborhoods, street gangs provide protection to the people on the block—even if it's only protection from the street gang itself.

THE STREETS

The streets of the city are the real battlegrounds of the Iron Age. Even when empty, they seem packed with menace: garbage might blow down the gutters or pile up at the curbside during a strike by trash collectors. Puddles of oily water collect in innumerable potholes in the cracked pavement. Shadows from tall buildings block out the sun unless it's directly overhead; the best the streets can hope for is perpetual twilight. Between the pools of light cast by the occasional streetlamps, the only illumination comes from the buzzing neon and flickering marquees of 24-hour bodegas, liquor stores, and strip clubs.

In an Iron Age campaign, the streets can be the primary setting for heroes' adventures as they try to clean up the city. Or, as the heroes journey from one larger adventure to the next, the crime-ridden streets of the city might simply serve as a reminder to the heroes that they are always surrounded by darkness.

THE PENTHOUSE

The rich and powerful of the Iron Age keep themselves high above all this, in luxury penthouse apartments. Still, even when surrounded by bodyguards and security systems, the corruption of the Iron Age manages to find the wealthy. Many of those who made their fortune through inheritance or hard work may turn to devious means to stay that way, including embezzlement, insider trading, or high-stakes blackmail. Those who have never been wealthy may see white-collar crime as a faster, easier path to getting rich than actually earning their money or picking up a gun.

Heroes whose adventures take them among the upperclass will find the wealthy are part of an interconnected web of loyalties and rivalries. Families may have master plans that reach across generations, and they prize honor and loyalty as much as any crime family or street gang. For those who have more money than they can spend, secrets may be the only real currency, and the most valuable thing they keep locked up in their private vaults.

CRIME

Constant pressure to cut social programs throughout the 1970s and especially the '80s led to a boom in crime as desperate Americans either turned to lawbreaking to support themselves or to drugs to escape their impover-

ished reality. As income flowed toward the wealthy and inflation mounted in the 1970s and 1980s, the ranks of the poor swelled, creating unprecedented urban decay. In the shadow of cheaply built towers of subsidized housing, many of those who called streets lined with fire-gutted tenements home became increasingly desperate. Iron Age heroes and villains might be born from these mean streets. Either might attack the corporations or the wealthy: heroes to redistribute money as modern-day Robin Hoods, and villains to seize the wealth and power for themselves.

THE DECLINE OF CITIES

A popular topic both on tabloid television and major news programs of the 1980s and '90s was the supposed increase of urban crime. Cities, once the hallmark of advancing American culture, increasingly became associated with poverty and decay. The increased density of the '50s and '60s economic boom lead to higher property costs within major cities, and industries relocated to cheaper land and lower taxes in small towns and rural areas—bringing their largely-white workforce with them. Redlining—a secretive real-estate practice that heavily restricted the ability for predominantly black neighborhoods to qualify for home loans, business loans, or mortgages—lead to the black population being unable to sell their homes during this "white flight," leaving them behind in cities increasingly devoid of opportunity. Cities became increasingly associated with poverty and minorities, driving more middle class white families to leave for the suburbs. The violent crime rate in the United States—rural and urban—climbed throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but the population density in cities and disproportionate media attention made places like New York, Detroit, and St. Louis seem completely lawless.

Media of the era played into this stereotype. The 1974 movie *Death Wish*, featuring Charles Bronson as a man who becomes a vigilante, was the most iconic film in a movement that painted New York city life as terrifying and dangerous. Many films throughout the 1980s glorified the idea of easy, violent solutions to the complex problem of crime. In 1984, New York City saw a "real-life vigilante" when Bernard Goetz shot four unarmed black men on the subway, claiming the four had attempted to rob him. In the aftermath of the shooting, Goetz became a folk hero to some while driving home that American vigilantism was very much about white men doling out "street justice" to non-white suspects.

GANGS

The recessions of the 1970s and '80s saw an increase in gang—organized criminal groups that share a common identity and purpose. Various gangs had controlled different criminal operations and territory across the United States since the nation's founding, but fear of organized criminals grew alongside the general fear of violent crime throughout the Iron Age. Nationwide organizations like the mafia, Hell's Angels, and Crips had extensive and secretive resources that took advantage of the economic downturn to recruit unemployed Americans into criminal activities, and smaller local gangs provided a sense of community and a shot at respect and comfort for children born into poverty and laughable schools.

While nationwide organizations were the most looming threat, smaller local street gangs were more ubiquitous. Some of these were proudly criminal groups that focused on robbery, assault, or drugs, but other identity groups were painted as criminals and became such after the fact. Paranoid lawmakers banned gatherings of teenagers and other "undesirables"—bans that were disproportionately enforced against minorities. The crumbling infrastructure and selective police service provided in urban areas lead to many neighborhoods forming small crews to protect their own communities; what would be labelled a "neighborhood watch" in better-off neighborhoods was deemed a "gang" in poverty-stricken areas. As with other crime, news media focused disproportionately on crimes committed by racial minorities; even the police and federal law enforcement were reluctant to label white-majority criminal groups like the Hell's Angels and KKK as "gangs." While some gangs required specific racial backgrounds, the vast majority were tied to their territories, with their racial makeup mirroring the community's. Regardless, the growing fear and media coverage focused heavily on black and Hispanic gang activity within cities.

There's never a shortage of gang-related crime in Iron Age comics, from muggings and robbery, to stealing cars, illegal gambling, protection rackets, and prostitution rings. But dominating it all is the drug trade, and Iron Age heroes are likely to find pushers everywhere from the playground in the inner city to the dining room at the country club, all with some connection to the era's gangs. Drugs had always been an easy moneymaker for gangs, but the increased usage that accompanied the rise in poverty made the racket extremely lucrative. Where

the drugs went, violence followed close behind as gangs fought over territory, shook down debtors, or eliminated competitors. Newspapers and magazines printed lurid and largely fictionalized headlines chronicling the bloody wars between gangs and the violent crimes of addicts in search of money to feed their habits. Media of the era painted drug usage as less of a medical issue and universally as a moral failing to be punished.

Even once they learn to identify gang members, heroes may also be surprised to find who belongs to them. Money is tight among the lower classes of the Iron Age, and many urban poor are drawn to gangs simply by the easy, steady income offered by the drug trade. But white-color criminals embraced gang crime as well, paying street gangs to serve as deniable assets or working with the larger gangs to launder money. Gangs also act as de facto law enforcement in parts of the city police refuse to touch, offering a sense of belonging and safety to many who felt threatened and alone.

Film and television made gangs and crime seem so pervasive in the streets of the Iron Age that many fearful civilians arm themselves. Some of these people may become the heroes, antiheroes, or villains of an Iron Age campaign, but most are just among the millions of people carrying concealed weapons. Some dread the moment they may use them. Others are dangerously eager to draw their weapons and play hero, or have grown bitter and selfish enough to kill without much provocation.

THE WAR ON DRUGS

In 1988, President Reagan established the Office of National Drug Control as part of the "War on Drugs" started by Richard Nixon in 1971. Nixon's domestic advisor John Ehrlichman happily confessed later that "We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news." Reagan's continuance of this "war" was fought over the next decade, and followed a similar agenda. the 1980s escalation began with an increase in the severity of penalties for drug-related offenses, which caused U.S. prison populations to soar as hundreds of thousands of minorities were disproportionately targeted and jailed for possessing even small amounts of controlled substances. Jailtime didn't stop most organized crime; some leaders ran their operations from inside prison.

While the U.S. worked to incarcerate the American gangs responsible for sale and distribution of illegal drugs, another convenient target in the War on Drugs were the cartels in Central and South America that produced the drugs and smuggled them into United States. Groups such as the Medellín and Cali cartels made tens of millions of dollars each month smuggling drugs, and killed any who threatened their operations, including the Justice Minister of Colombia. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency led extraterritorial operations against the smugglers and cartels throughout the 1980s, and America used the War on Drugs as a justification to invade Panama and depose General Manuel Noriega in 1989.

City streets are one front in the war on drugs, but the other is in far-off jungles. If street gangs are a match for local law enforcement, then the drug cartels of Central and South America are powerful and well-armed enough to challenge armies. Heroes who start their own war on drugs in the streets may find the trail eventually leads to more powerful opponents than they might have expected. Just like corporations of the era, drug cartels might turn to recruiting or manufacturing their own supervillains to protect themselves from powered anti-heroes.

If heroes take the battle to the home turf of the cartels, they'll find many are powerful enough to make their own law. Just like the people in neighborhoods who respect the gangs who rule their streets, many citizens in the cartels' home nations fear their power more than they trust their governments to protect them. The cartels' ample funding and smuggling connections mean most have private armies of their own to defend themselves.

SCANDALS AND INFLATION

The Watergate scandal demonstrated how high the stakes (and often, how base the actions) were between America's two major political parties, and led many Americans not only to mistrust their government, but to become increasingly cynical about the entire political process. In turn, government officials became more careful about anything that might be used against them, such as the recorded conversations that led to Nixon's downfall. While the press became more aggressive about searching for skeletons in politicians' closets.

Meanwhile, the growth of the American economy slowed dramatically throughout the 1970s, leading to enormous inflation and rising unemployment that peaked in the early 1980s. The government responded by slashing social programs and deregulating many industries. Though the economy finally recovered in the mid-1980s, it was not before significant problems developed in those deregulated industries, particularly the savings and loan institutions, which collapsed and lost their creditors a combined total of $160 billion. The U.S. treasury subsidized $132 billion of those losses at taxpayer expense. That burden, combined with a growing trade deficit and deficit spending, helped transform the nation from one of the world's largest creditors to one of the world's largest debtors by the end of the decade. Despite all these problems and a major stock market crash in 1987, as the 1980s continued, the American economy slowly recovered.

CEOS AND SHADOW CABINETS

Without the looming threat of a powerful Communist state to oppose, many Americans began to examine their own lives and recognize the danger Capitalism could pose as well, and in many ways Capitalist leaders and powerhouses became a new stand-in for the Red Scare-era Soviet supervillains and agitators.

In the Iron Age, industrialists play the roles of villains more than heroes, and a huge multinational corporation can be as powerful a nemesis to the heroes of an Iron Age campaign as any caped supervillain. Distant factories and foreboding offices are home to the villainous corporation's worldwide network of employees and agents, not all of whom may be aware the company's five-year plan hides a more nefarious agenda. Though the most obvious motivation for an evil corporation might be accumulation of wealth, its shadowy board of directors may be content to let wealth accrue over time and instead scheme to accumulate power and influence. Some evil corporations maintain a veil of respectability they will go to any lengths to protect, while the viler practices of others may be a matter of public record and policy; the latter will likely have a battalion of unscrupulous lawyers to protect them from the legal system and an army of security guards to shield them from those who might threaten to bring the corporation to justice outside the courtroom.

In the Iron Age, those with power can rarely be trusted, and even the smallest favors might have a hidden agenda and a terrible cost. Whether whispered in the halls of government or hidden between the lines of a corporation's quarterly report, a scandal or a collection of secrets can be the driving force behind an Iron Age campaign. With the wealth and scientific knowledge at their disposal, both private corporations and rogue government agencies of the Iron Age turned to creating their own superhuman agents or hired super-powered mercenaries to eliminate anyone looking too closely into their illegal activities.

THE COLD WAR'S CONCLUSION

As two of the largest nations on earth, the Capitalist United States and the Communist Soviet Union came to be called "superpowers" because of their incredible political influence and military might. Both nations were armed with enormous numbers of atomic and thermonuclear weapons, and Cold War leaders regularly implied they were ready to launch their full arsenals of intercontinental ballistic missiles as soon as they detected a launch by the enemy—enough firepower to destroy every living being in both America and Russia, as well as countless millions more during the worldwide winter of radioactive fallout that would follow.

Since 1947, the Board of Directors at the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists had tracked how close the two nations were to war, using an image printed on their cover called the "Doomsday Clock": the closer the clock's hands were to midnight, the nearer they judged the world to be to nuclear apocalypse. As the arms race escalated between the two nations, the Clock was set to four minutes to midnight in 1981, and ticked a minute closer in 1984.

In 1987, the U.S. and the Soviets signed a treaty eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles, requiring both countries to destroy part of their nuclear arsenals for the first time. The Doomsday Clock was, accordingly, rolled back to seven minutes to midnight. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the success of anti-communist movements across Eastern Europe. Combined with Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev's new policy of glasnost, the Clock was set at ten minutes to midnight. Further treaties and arms reductions, along with the breakup of the Soviet Union, moved the hands of the clock back even more, to seventeen minutes to midnight in 1991. This was the farthest the world would be from disaster before the Bulletin began to have concerns about former Soviet scientists and nuclear weapons spreading to other parts of the world and terrorist groups in the latter part of the decade.

The Cold War tensions make a rich backdrop for Iron Age campaigns that play out on a global stage. In a world with superhumans, the United States and Soviet Union would undoubtedly race to add super-powered beings to their arsenals alongside thermonuclear weapons. Characters who are powerful or draw too much attention might be cornered by one nation or another, forced to declare their allegiance to the government or be branded as traitors.

NEW NATIONS

The USSR dissolved in 1991, breaking up into Russia and 14 nations that Russia had directly conquered during their time as a dictatorship: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Many of these new nations retained stockpiles of Soviet military vehicles, conventional weapons, and even nuclear weapons, and faced internal struggles to determine how they would govern themselves after decades as client states. While several post-Soviet states managed the transition well, others became hotbeds for organized crime in the 1990s as ex-Soviet officials entered the booming market of selling Soviet weapons, research, and even nuclear materials to anyone with the cash. Many also became home to strongarm dictators and various human rights abuses.

This sudden arrival of new nations led to complications in international law in the early and mid '90s, and in a super-powered world may include fictional nations for heroes to defend or attack as a source of their problems.

TERRORISM

Homegrown terrorism had been a problem in the US for decades by the Iron Age. The Ku Klux Klan and copycat white supremacist groups had relied on coordinated violence and fear tactics to divide and murder racial minorities, especially African Americans and Jews, for over a century. The 1960s and 1970s saw bombings by the Weather Underground, also known as the Weathermen, to oppose the Vietnam War and end American imperialism overseas. In the 1990s, conservative Christian sects increasingly turned to arson, bombings, and random shootings at women's health clinics.

But the 1970s introduced foreign-born terrorism to Americans. After years spent as a battleground for colonial and Cold War powers, the nations of the Middle East were increasingly opposed to both the United States and Great Britain. Attacks against western targets became increasingly frequent in the 1980s. Several public hijackings,

suicide bombings, and coordinated attacks put terrorism in the forefront of American minds, as it had been for many Britons living through the multiple bombings and attacks across England by the Provisional Irish Republican Army through the '70s and '80s.

Regardless of motive, terrorist attacks are sudden and unexpected, usually violent, and often deliberately target non-combatants. As in the real world, terrorists and terror groups in an Iron Age campaign have a number of different motivations. Some have political or ideological goals and are fighting against a government or organization. Others fight for religious beliefs against those they hold to be oppressors or heathens. Even the most cold-hearted Iron Age heroes might go to extraordinary lengths to save innocents from a potential terrorist attack, and may go even further to mete out vengeance in the aftermath.

While a single terrorist might be easy for a super-powered character to overcome, terrorist organizations are much more difficult to defeat. Tightly knit units known as "cells" operate independently and in complete ignorance of the activities of the other members of the group, aware only of the organization's overall goals and sharing the common mission of achieving them by any means necessary. Self-motivating, self-sufficient, and self-activating, a cell might remain dormant until they hear of an attack by another cell in the organization, or they may choose their own time to strike, initiating an attack whenever and wherever they choose. Worse still, in some terrorist organizations, cells can splinter, each of its members starting their own new cell, helping the organization to grow swiftly, silently, and exponentially. For each terrorist cell Iron Age heroes can defeat, two may rise to take its place.

MEDIA

Deregulation in the 1980s led to looser broadcast and film standards, which allowed creators to explore new subjects, depict more extreme violence, or use their platform as stealth advertising directly to children. Media in the Iron Age tended toward violence—whether the harmless rayguns of Saturday morning cartoons or the over-the-top shootouts of blockbuster action movies. Through the haze of gunsmoke, media continued to mature on other topics, exploring once-forbidden subjects like sexuality and race relations that had once been the quasi-illegal fare or arthouse theaters of previous generations.

FILM

American films had featured action sequences for years, from shootouts to car chases. But in the 1980s, the action film became a genre in its own right, with some of the most successful films of the decade featuring lead characters much more militaristic than leads of the past. In 1982, Sylvester Stallone played Special Forces soldier John Rambo in *First Blood*, with two sequels to follow later in the decade. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who first garnered fame as Conan the Barbarian and as a killer robot in the movie *The Terminator*, released a string of action movies in the 1980s that began with 1985's *Commando*. American filmgoers flocked to these increasingly violent movies.

TELEVISION

While originally a product of the 1950s, cable television came into its own in the Iron Age, expanding television's presence from three national networks and a handful of local broadcasters to hundreds of channels catering to specialty interests.

Gossipy tabloids had long been popular in America, as had investigative journalism on television. The 1980s saw the pairing of the two, as tabloid television programs began to appear on American television. From corporate collapses to celebrity scandals, tabloid television programs such as *Hard Copy* presented their stories in the most sensational manner possible, attracting both viewers and criticism. Daytime television turned similarly lurid in the late '80s and early '90s, led by talk-show hosts

Geraldo Rivera, Morton Downey, Jr., and Jerry Springer. With topics ranging from Satanic rituals and gang initiations to racist skinheads and adulterous lesbians, no topic was out of bounds if it would help improve ratings. Soon the antics on the shows became news in and of itself, even if much of the reporting was highly critical of what came to be called "trash TV."

VIDEO GAMES

With the release of the Atari 2600 in 1977, video games officially entered the realm of home entertainment. Considered a novelty at first—especially after the video game crash of 1983 that almost destroyed the industry—they came back strong in America with the release of the Nintendo Entertainment System—a rebranded version of the Japanese Famicom—in 1985. Competition became fierce as game companies competed over the ever-growing market, beginning the first "console wars."

Games quickly established themselves as a major force in pop culture, with video game mascots becoming as iconic as cartoon characters or film stars. Video game terminology, like "points" and "level up," long formerly the domain of pen and paper RPGs and arcade consoles, after their introduction into consumer's homes became common slang, then just part of the language. Superheroes were routinely called upon to battle video game characters brought to life by a new wave of tech-savvy villains, or else battled for their lives in deadly arenas built to mimic popular games.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in the Iron Age lags only a generation behind the modern world. Much of the tech we rely on—cell phones, the internet, electric vehicles—already exist but in a larger, more expensive state. Heroes take no penalty to Technology or Vehicles checks using Iron Age gear.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

While medical technology had begun experimenting with implants as early as the 1940s and '50s, the 1980s and '90s saw huge revolutions in terms of medical implants and technology. The introduction of human insulin, the development of MRI scanning technology, the first surgical robots, the perfection of laser cataract surgery, and microprocessor-controlled replacement limbs that vastly improved the functionality of prosthetics all occur during this era. While bionic powers had appeared in comics books before the 1980s, the Iron Age saw an explosion in the popularity of heroes and villains sporting various replacement limbs, implants, or even entire bodies integrated with metal, chrome, and other cybernetic components, but controlled by a human brain.

Genetics came into its own as a field as well, with DNA sequencing and fingerprinting becoming a tool for both medicine and law enforcement during the Iron Age. Cloning became a medical reality as well when British scientists cloned Dolly the sheep, and the advent of stem-cell therapies followed not long after. In the world of superheroes, genetics became the wondrous new answer to fantastic powers, replacing things like chemical spills and nuclear energy as the go-to source for superpowers.

Comics followed suit, introducing clones and genetically-engineered characters into existing plotlines—sometimes to embarrassing excess.

COMPUTERS

The 1980s finally saw the mass-market release of affordable home computers and video game systems, leading to a revolution in how Americans worked and spent free time. Self-contained systems like the Apple II and the TRS-80 (both released in 1977), and the Commodore 64 (released in 1982) were more powerful than systems that had taken America to the moon and automated many of the slow tasks that had once required close attention. Over time, ever smaller microprocessors meant companies could incorporate computers into more things, from automobiles to phones to medical equipment, providing more versatility in their function and the ability to diagnose problems and store user data.

Increased processing power also saw the first generation of virtual reality during the Iron Age. Though the concept had been around since 1957, and the first prototype headsets had appeared in 1968, the late '80s and early '90s saw a leap forward. More advanced than what video games could offer, virtual reality promised whole, simulated worlds communicated to users through goggle-based, if still bulky, headsets and the miracle of digital processing. While the reality of virtual reality lagged behind the promise—leaving VR largely the domain of commercially failed gaming peripherals that were often painful to use, research scientists, and hobbyists for another 20 years—comic books and television overflowed with exciting stories of the wonders and dangers of the new medium.

THE INTERNET

The increased power of computers helped reinvent what had begun as a 1960s military data network. Even by the early 1980s, ARPANET—the internet's precursor—had become a global network for universities and labs exchanging data and communicating at high speed, and LANs became common in business environments. The internet as we know it arose in 1990 when the advent of the World Wide Web tied all these individual networks together using common code. The internet allowed any computer with a modem to connect to any other system or database, letting users collaborate, share ideas, or argue with strangers.

While the internet would develop significantly over the following decades, the '90s were an unmapped, Wild West era online, with few search engines to help users navigate and various hidden communities flourishing. The potential of "the web" seemed infinite at the time, and many science fiction and superhero stories speculated about the world "inside" the internet—often coupled with virtual reality—as if it were a parallel dimension made of humanity's hidden desires and pop culture.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

The Iron Age had a distinctive atmosphere and style. Conflicts were big and deadly serious, often dragging in multiple teams of superbeings. Villains weren't merely robbing banks, they were undermining the economy, controlling whole cities, or preparing campaigns of genocide.

LETHALITY

Iron Age heroes and villains tended to be deadly. In the real world, a punch from a powerhouse capable of picking up a tank or ripping would leave a huge hole in the poor soul on the receiving end. You can make the players feel as though they have that sort of power through a few changes to the way you run your game.

Be sure to discuss how much death you and the players want in the game. Some players will look forward to laying into the bad guys with no-holds-barred, while others will want to maintain the heroic ideals that keep them from killing. It's best to know everyone's expectations from the start. That way, you can work out any problems and tailor the level of lethality appropriately.

Iron Age campaigns may want to differentiate between lethal damage and non-lethal damage. See **Lethal Damage**, **Lethal Knockback**, **and Instant Death** in the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, and consider what kind of damage you want various weapons and powers to inflict.

LETHAL WEAPONS

In the Iron Age, most bladed weapons and firearms inflicted lethal damage, while most bludgeoning weapons were considered non-lethal. What a character reaches for in a fight speaks volumes about who they are and what their boundaries are; a character wielding dual katanas has no qualms about maiming and killing, while a hero who relies on tonfas has more concern for the lives of even the terrorists and killers they try to stop.

LETHAL POWERS

By the standard Mutants & Masterminds rules, powers inflict non-lethal damage unless the player specifically declares they're dealing lethal damage. This may not be the case in the Iron Age. Here are several options, depending on just how dangerous the GM wants the campaign to be:

NO CHANGE

Use the rules as written in Mutants & Masterminds. All damage is considered non-lethal unless the player (or Gamemaster) declares they're intending to do lethal damage. This option allows the players to decide whether they're trying to kill or knock out their opponents. It's not as bloody as the Iron Age is typically portrayed, but it also doesn't force the game to be run any differently. If you want to play a bloodier campaign, this isn't the option for you. Of course, the players can opt to always deal lethal damage.

CHOOSE EFFECT

Damage is handled exactly as described in the *M&M* rules, except when any character is knocked unconscious the attacker may choose whether the defender is unconscious or dying, as if they were minions. This change is mostly invisible to the players, allowing everyone to play the game as they always have. Only when a character fails that last important save does their attacker decide if they were attacking to incapacitate or kill.

LETHAL POWERS

All damage inflicted by offensive superpowers is lethal by default. This is the most extreme approach, and also the deadliest, especially if the characters can't choose to do non-lethal damage. It's more reflective of the Iron Age approach to superpowers having scientific, real-world explanations and consequences, but may cause a lot of problems for the GM when all the campaign villains (and maybe some of the heroes) end up dead at the end of the night. If your campaign uses this option you may also want to allow characters to declare they're aiming to wound (non-lethal) instead of kill (lethal). Typically, the heroes should stick with lethal damage, but if it's important someone makes it through the fight alive, they still have the option to do non-lethal damage instead.

SOME LETHAL

Some attacks are lethal and some are non-lethal. The Gamemaster should decide, before the campaign begins, what attacks, if any, will always be considered non-lethal or lethal. For example, you might decide that all firearms, bladed weapons, and fire powers are lethal, but let players decide whether or not their other powers are lethal. This option can be more work for the GM, but makes for a consistent world that puts a broader sense of control in the players' hands.

ABILITY STRAIN

Iron Age stories often involve character pushing themselves beyond their limits, causing themselves physical and emotional harm to handle the life-and-death stakes of the era. Characters can choose to suffer a temporary reduction in an ability score in order to gain a brief, one-time bonus to an ability check. **Ability Strain** is another optional rule from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* that is especially appropriate for Iron Age campaigns.

Gamemasters may choose to waive the usual limit that prevents characters from debilitating an Ability Score using Ability Strain, allowing extreme heroes to perform heroic deeds at the potential cost of their own lives.

SKILLS

Most of the technology and vehicles used during the Iron Age are familiar enough to 21st-century time travelers that they suffer no penalty on skills like Technology and Vehicles, though modern computers and smartphones use more advanced operating systems and protocols that won't mesh readily with computer systems of the 1980s and '90s.

IRON AGE ADVANTAGES

In an era where overwhelming force is the tactic of choice, Power Attack is easily the most iconic Advantage. Ultimate Effort reflects the Iron Age's high drama, while Skill Mastery and Fearless both help flesh out the grim, unflappable warriors who dominated the night.

Iron Age heroes tended to be gritty, angry, and fonts of obscure information as the internet made vast stores of knowledge available to them (and comic book writers).

DOMINEER — SKILL

Your threats stick with opponents and leave them distracted. When you successfully demoralize an opponent with the Intimidation skill, they remain Impaired for a number of rounds equal to the Degrees of Success on your initial check. With four or more Degrees of Success, your target is Disabled until the end of your next turn, then Impaired for the remaining duration.

Additional attempts to demoralize the same opponent replace the remaining duration rather than add to it.

DEDICATED DEFENSE — COMBAT

You can focus entirely on a single opponent, improving your defenses but leaving yourself open to attacks from other combatants. As a Free action on your turn, when you are targeted by two or more attackers, you can increase your Dodge and Parry Defenses by up to +5 against one opponent and subtract the same amount from your Dodge and Parry defense against all other attackers. Your Dodge and Parry bonus against the single opponent cannot more than double, and you cannot impose a penalty that would reduce your effective Dodge and Parry defenses below 0. This adjustment lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

NON-LETHAL TACTICS — COMBAT

You have trained to disable opponents without killing them, such as striking with the flat of the blade or taking an enemy's legs out from under them. You may choose to inflict non-lethal damage with attacks and weapons that normally inflict lethal damage.

This Advantage is only appropriate for campaigns that differentiate between lethal and non-lethal damage.

QUICK STUDY — SKILL, RANKED

You can study a subject to quickly gain a basic working understanding of it. With one hour of study or instruction, you gain a bonus to an Expertise skill of your choice equal to your Quick Study rank; this bonus counts as being trained in the skill. This passing knowledge fades after 24 hours. You can only apply the benefit of this Advantage to one Expertise skill at a time.

VISITING HEROES

The Iron Age represents a dangerous era for visiting time travelers thanks to its abundance of gun-wielding, lethal-minded warriors on both sides of the law. Even well-meaning heroes' nerves are frayed and they are likely to take a few shots at unwitting visitors caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. Most visitors to this era take a keen interest in the fall of global Communism and the dissolution of the USSR; many modern Crime Lords may be former Soviet spies and military leaders left out in the cold when their government collapsed, while supervillains may be escapees from abandoned Soviet experiments. This era also marks the rise of many modern national gangs that modern heroes may still be battling. The era also saw the rise of modern media conglomerates, who would come to be incredibly powerful corporate powers and even propagandists shaping 21st-century politics.

The 1980s and especially the 1990s are the era of modern heroes' parents and childhoods, and so any time traveler looking to tamper with the hero's timeline or adjust their moral compass may strike at them during these turbulent years. This personal experience also makes the Iron Age a very familiar era for modern time travelers. One barely different from their home time save for minor improvements to technology and changes in fashion and slang. Adventures set in this era may feel especially personal as time travelers re-visit sights and locations important to their own childhoods.

Possible plot hooks include:

- Heroes must recover the never-recorded pilot episode of a largely forgotten sketch comedy series, which contains coded secrets.
- A well-intentioned traveler from the future arrives in the early 1990s to eliminate media personalities who helped lead to their dark timeline.
- Early virtual reality experiments created a cult of technological sleeper agents, and time travelers must go back to stop the cult's creation.
- An experimental CIA drug released in urban neighborhoods in the early '90s unexpectedly allows a small percentage of users to project their minds into different times.
- A procognitive hero from the Iron Age begins using her power to change the present to ways that she hopes will improve the future.
- Temporal terrorists rip a few years of the 1990s out to form a repeating "island" of time where the worst traits of the iron Age grow slightly worse each recursion.

IRON AGE HEROES

Heroes in the Iron Age are able to dish out incredible amounts of damage while taking at least as much in return. It's common to see a hero take blow after blow in a fight and come out scraped, battered, and bloody. In some cases, the damage looks so extreme that there's no way that the hero could survive, but somehow he takes a few deep breaths, wipes his brow, and soldiers on to the next encounter. Conversely, the bad guys, especially thugs, rarely walk away from the fight unscathed, if they walk away at all.

Characters from the Iron Age have much in common with heroes from typical Mutants & Masterminds campaigns. They have access to the same powers, they're of similar power levels, and they want to stop the bad guys. It's the differences, however, that make an Iron Age character stand out. Powers typically have darker, deadlier, or more demonic effects than those possessed by characters from other ages. In addition, when an Iron Age hero stops the bad guys, they stay stopped.

STARTING POWER LEVELS

Iron Age heroes range from street-level vigilantes armed with modern weaponry and combat experience to powerful demons and mutants tapping into forces beyond their ability to fully control. This section outlines how these differences translate into the Mutants & Masterminds rules.

REALISTIC STREET-LEVEL HEROES PL 5

These characters benefit from years of combat experience that they now apply against gangs, the mob, terrorists, and other "mundane" villains threatening society. Unlike the two-fisted heroes of the pulp era, these characters are deeply flawed, with harsh, pragmatic worldviews that nearly make them anti-heroes. While these characters may encounter psychics, mystics, or other super-powered foes, they rarely have those powers themselves, instead relying on their ability to outgun, outthink, and outfight their opponents. This can result in characters who closely resemble each other on paper, but such a campaign offers players the challenge of further defining their hero (or anti-hero) through specializing in an area of expertise and through roleplaying.

CINEMATIC STREET-LEVEL HEROES PL 8

Cinematic games cover a wide range of character possibilities, from normal humans with an incredible ability to endure punishment to martial arts masters able to use their chi to amazing effect. At its upper range, it even includes characters on the verge of being "real" superheroes.

Characters in these games often appear to lack powers, but can nevertheless dish out and handle extreme amounts of damage. In addition, they have access to specialized equipment—perhaps even cybernetic implants—beyond what's available in the real world. Depending on the setting, these characters may have low-level or inconspicuous powers, or ones that make them just a little more powerful than a "normal" person has any right to be. Heroes may be costumed or not, depending on the game's setting and the character's background. The characters from *Watchmen* fall into this category, with the exception of the nigh-omnipotent Dr. Manhattan.

CLASSIC IRON AGE HEROES PL 10

This is the standard power level for Iron Age characters. While it may seem like lower power levels are more appropriate for Iron Age games, such limits are best for games featuring skilled normals and street-level vigilantes. The Iron Age was loaded with heroes with fantastic powers that could be threatened only by other superbeings. Characters at this power level aren't limited to being "mostly human"; players can create demons, cyborgs, time travelers, and more. The differences between standard superheroes and Iron Age characters are in attitude and focus, not power level.

Classic Iron Age heroes may look completely mundane, but it's just as likely they're flaming-skulled demons or inhuman were-creatures. Importantly, as opposed to heroes from other ages, the Iron Age heroes' powers are often regarded as curses, barely controlled or understood. Other characters, whose powers come from mundane sources, like training or specialized knowledge, have access to any powers available to standard *M&M* heroes, but the manner in which the character employs them differs.

OVER-THE-TOP IRON AGE HEROES PL 13

The comics that inaugurated the Iron Age asked, "What does it mean to the rest of humanity when gods exist alongside us?" Characters in this range tend to be inhuman in some way, whether actually alien or just with a sense of the otherworldly about them. It's important that these godlike beings feel separate from the rest of humanity. Their powers are beyond the scope of others in the same setting, at least in terms of pure offensive capability if not intelligence or cunning. Their only weakness, if it can be called such, is these beings want to be human, so they often hold their powers in check or ignore the effect they could have on the world if they applied themselves.

Because these super-powerful entities' abilities can overshadow those of the player characters, they often work best as non-player characters. But a GM comfortable with a mix of power levels and a story that offers challenges to all involved could allow players to use godlike characters to create a highly memorable game. The important thing to remember in this type of campaign is to give everyone a chance to shine, not just those characters who could crack the Earth in half if they wished.

REALISTIC POWERS

In the Iron Age, every aspect of the superhero genre was re-examined and re-imagined with an eye towards verisimilitude. While no one wanted to get rid of super-powers entirely, many characters were re-thought and their powers re-explained to give them consistency and make them seem more realistic.

LOWER-POWERED HEROES

Heroes in the Iron Age often don't have powers or have only low-level ones. Typically, these characters arm and armor themselves appropriately to fight their battles, using their powers as an unexpected ace in the hole to help them out of any jams they can't escape any other way. More than others, these low-powered characters are likely to use lethal force, usually in the form of firearms and other conventional weapons, while relying on their powers only when they need to.

CONSEQUENCES OF POWERS

The increase in emphasis on realism in comics means the effects of powers are more tangible and dangerous; attacks that miss their mark destroy streets, knock down walls, or kill bystanders instead of just being an inconvenient miss in combat. A battle between superbeings (or worse, teams of superbeings) is an incredibly dangerous place for innocents. Any bystanders injured or killed in a fight, which happens often with the energies being thrown around, is fuel for the authorities to turn public opinion against supertypes and crack down on all superbeings, good or bad.

Potential consequences for using powers are a big drawback. Heroes respond to this threat by concealing their activities or being so powerful they're able to deal with the fallout. Villains, on the other hand, revel in the danger they pose to the rest of the world and use their powers whenever and wherever they can cause the most damage.

GUNS, GUNS, GUNS!

The Iron Age saw more firearms than ever before in the hands of private citizens—not just hunting rifles, but a growing collection of everything from pistols to fully automatic weapons. Many felt threatened by the rise of urban gangs with ever-escalating firepower and felt the need to arm themselves appropriately. Iron Age heroes were no different. In the Iron Age, most heroes set aside flashy blasters, energy swords, and fantastic Silver Age gadgets in favor of a more realistic (and often much more lethal) arsenal. Even characters with inherent powers often carried a pistol or grenade to back up or supplement their abilities.

Setting aside Silver Age-flavored weaponry doesn't mean the heroes of the Iron Age don't like their weapons to be high-tech. To the detail-obsessed hero of the Iron Age, a basic weapon, no matter the quality of its construction, has accessories and options to peruse and choose in order to construct the perfect tool for the mission: a simple pistol might get outfitted with an extended magazine, a telescopic sight, a silencer, and a recoil buffer. A commando knife might get a compass in the pommel and a miniature survival kit packed into its hollow handle.

ARMING UP

While guns are commonplace in the Iron Age, that doesn't mean all weapons are easy to acquire. The attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 initiated a push for tighter gun control that persisted throughout the Iron Age and culminated in 1994 when the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which required anyone purchasing a handgun to wait five days while the seller performed a background check on the buyer, became law.

Heroes of the Iron Age find they can purchase a wide array of weaponry, but doing so legally takes significant time and money, and leaves a wide paper trail. Street-level heroes might lack the money for all the weaponry they desire, and heroes who wear a mask to protect their identity will be averse to filling out forms for a background check. Thus, many Iron Age campaigns will feature some of the many alternate ways of acquiring an arsenal.

Some heroes acquire their weaponry as legitimate purchases from a sporting goods store, a gun show, or another legal venue and either no longer care if they are identified or have taken steps (such as filing the serial numbers off the weapon) to break the links between the gun and their identity. Alternately, even if an Iron Age hero doesn't have a military background, they may have a connection to someone in the military with access to weaponry. Of course, the hero may be asked to perform a service to the military on either a one-time or ongoing basis in exchange for their weaponry.

There is a third option: the black market. From back-alley grifters selling Saturday night specials out of a suitcase to world-class arms dealers operating illegal underground

showrooms secretly selling tanks and artillery pieces, nearly anything is available to anyone for the right price, if you know where to look. Some of those same weapons a hero might have been given in service to the military could be among those that slip onto the black market, making advanced military technology available to heroes and villains alike who were decidedly not in the military. Those weapons may be particularly dangerous to carry, though, given that the military is more zealous about tracking down missing rocket launchers than a sporting goods store might be if a shotgun slips off the books.

BLADES OF FURY

Guns aren't the only part of the Iron Age hero's arsenal. Most carried knives or other blades. While a very few might still carry a trusty pocketknife, many wield the modern version of the Bowie knife, a massive hooked and serrated stainless steel commando knife. Others carry a perfectly balanced throwing knife, or even a brace of them.

While some in the Iron Age developed their penchant for weaponry as part of their military training, others learned about weapons during their martial arts training in the Far East or at their neighborhood dojo. These martial artists might still carry a pistol, but it will be alongside a katana, a wakizashi, or any of a variety of martial arts weapons. Swords may not be commonly seen on the streets, but many heroes carry them out of honor, or perhaps because they're so effective at cutting people up. Even if they do carry a gun, many martial artists carry a pocket full of shuriken to take out targets at range.

STATBLOCKS

The Underworld and Soldier minion archetypes from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* both reflect the abundant, well-armed threats faced by Iron Age heroes, and Ninjas are all but required. Moody or emotionally dramatic villains, like the **Overlord**, **Psycho**, **Puppeteer**, and **Vampire** were all especially prominent. The following statblocks are especially useful in the Golden Age:

DETECTIVE

Armed to the teeth, bitter, and keen-eyed, the loose-cannon detective was the iconic Iron Age hero. She might be the cop on the force aiming to take vigilantes down a peg, or the only one willing to work with them, helping them work outside the law when the justice system fails.

MIDDLE MANAGER

While the CEOs of sinister Iron Age corporations are best represented with the Crime Lord villain archetype, they often rely on amoral middle management to carry out their sinister schemes, hire mercenaries, and lead deniable projects. These statistics model these nefarious cogs in the corporate machine.

DETECTIVE	PL 5 • MR5 • 75 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 5 **INT** 3 **AWE** 5 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Flashlight, Handcuffs, Heavy Pistol, Shotgun.	
Advantages: Defensive Roll 2, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 4, Improved Disarm, Second Chance (Toughness checks against unarmed damage), Seize Initiative, Well-informed.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Deception 4 (+5), Insight 4 (+9), Intimidation 4 (+5), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 2 (+7), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+5), Sleight of Hand 4 (+5), Vehicles 4 (+5).	
Offense: Init +0, Heavy Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 4), Shotgun +5 (Ranged, Damage 3/5), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5/3*, Will 5 *Without Defensive Roll.	
Totals: Abilities 40 + Powers 0 + Advantages 11 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 75	

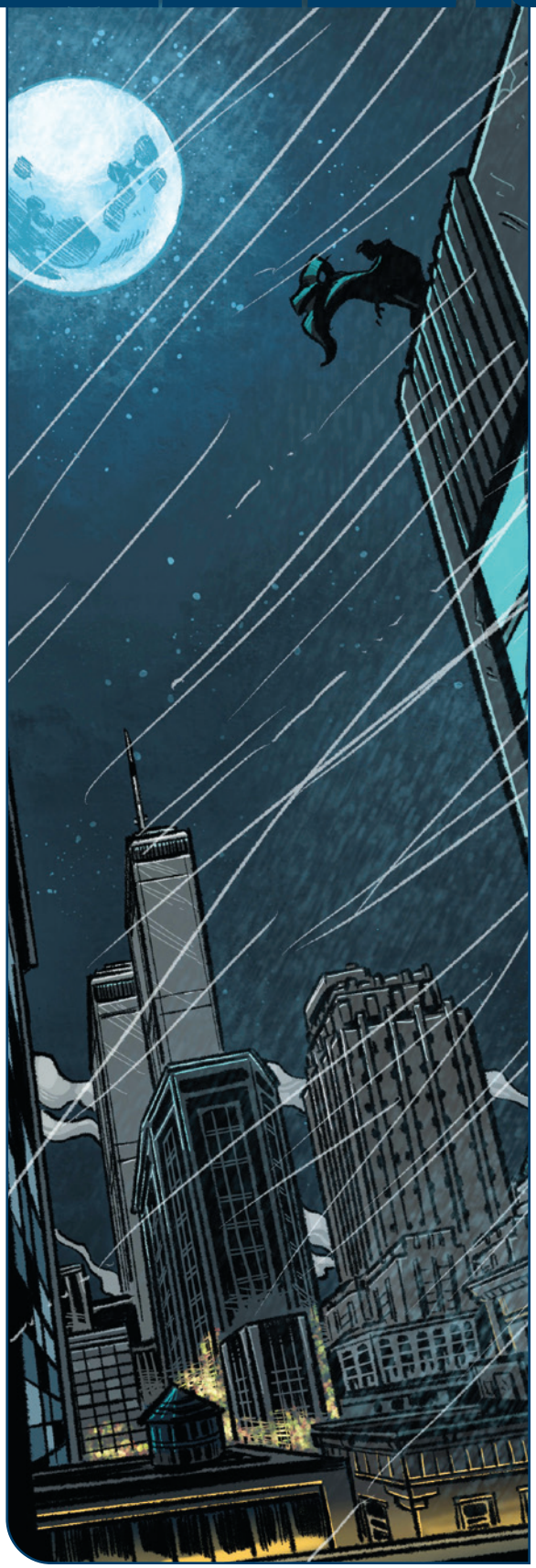
SEWER MUTANT

Whether called Agarthans, C.H.U.D., Mahars, Morlocks, Underlanders, or Underworlders, the sewers and subterranean tunnels of the Iron Age played home to those super-powered beings whose monstrous appearances (and often disgusting or murderous habits) set them apart from human society. Some communities were peaceful, wanting only to hide, while others were bitter, violent, or even cannibalistic, depending on the needs of the story. This statblock represents a typical "grunt" mutant; unique members or leaders are likely to have more bizarre abilities.

MIDDLE MANAGER	PL 4 • MR4 • 53 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 1 **INT** 3 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: Bulletproof Vest, Car, Cell Phone, Heavy Pistol.	
Advantages: Benefit 2 (Security Clearance, Wealth), Equipment 4, Fascinate (Persuasion), Leadership, Teamwork.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: Business 6 (+9), Insight 4 (+5), Persuasion 6 (+8), Technology 2 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+4).	
Offense: Init +1, Heavy Pistol +2 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 3, Fortitude 4, Toughness 5, Will 4.	
Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 9 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 10 = 53	

SEWER MUTANT	PL 6 • MR5 • 64 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 6 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 2 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** -1	
Powers: Blaster: Ranged Damage 6 (Accurate 2) *or* **Bruiser:** Enhanced Strength 6, Regeneration 2.	
Advantages: Daze (Intimidation), Power Attack.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+4), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+4), Intimidation 6 (+5), Stealth 4 (+6). Offense: Init +2, Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 6) or Super-Strength Punch +4 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 2).	
Offense: Init +2, Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 6), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 2 or 8)	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6, Will 4.	
Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 13 + Advantages 2 + Skills 10 (20 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 64	

IRON AGE NEW YORK CITY



Red, white, and blue is all you see
But does it mean you're really free?

—Reagan Youth, "USA"

New York was a city in decline in the 1970s. It lost many manufacturing jobs and a good chunk of its population to "white flight." Over the course of the decade, 800,000 people would leave the city for the suburbs and points beyond. These families were generally middle class, and their loss caused NYC's tax revenues to decline just as the entire country entered a recession. By 1975, New York City teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, something which would have been inconceivable a generation earlier. Mayor Abe Beame asked the Federal Government for help and initially President Gerald Ford rebuffed him, leading to the famous Daily News headline, "Ford to City: Drop Dead." The city eventually secured loans to stave off bankruptcy, and Ford changed his mind to offer some assistance, but the city continued to struggle.

The city government pursued a strategy called "planned shrinkage" to save money and balance its budget. Certain neighborhoods—the Lower East Side and South Bronx among them—were starved of resources. They lost fire houses, hospitals, and schools. The idea was to funnel the money saved into other neighborhoods that the city believed to be better investments. As for the residents of the Lower East Side and South Bronx, they could drop dead.

Landlords played their role in the hollowing out of New York City as well. It became common practice to neglect their buildings, ceasing repairs or routine upkeep while continuing to rent increasingly decrepit apartments. Many stopped paying their property taxes, and at a certain point they just began to walk away from their buildings altogether. The city took ownership of thousands of such buildings in the '70s but lacked the resources to care for them. Most were simply bricked up and left to rot.

By the mid-'80s, New York had begun to turn around economically, but things were far from rosy. A series of corruption scandals rocked the third term of Mayor Ed Koch. Neighborhood gangs turned more and more into drug operations. The AIDS epidemic tore through the city's gay community, and for too long the powers that be did nothing about it.

And where were New York City's superheroes? Dead, retired, or isolated.

New York had its share of "mystery men" in the 1930s. During World War II, the city's most prominent heroes joined together as the New York Five to do their part to defeat the Axis. The team had one hero from each of the city's five boroughs and generated considerable local pride. Lionized in newsreels, the Five pulled off many high-stakes commando raids. Then, in 1945, tragedy struck. Operating behind enemy lines, the New York Five

sought to liberate important American prisoners captured in the recent Battle of the Bulge. They followed the trail to Dresden, infiltrating the city just as waves of Allied bombers converged on the city. Caught in the ensuing firestorm, the New York Five met a grim end. Only the Brooklyn Brawler survived and he never raised a fist again. When the war ended, he returned home and refused to speak about Dresden or the war for the rest of his life.

New heroes rose in the late '50s and early '60s. The most celebrated of them was the original Raven. For a time the Raven had a rival known as Nighttide, a costumed crimefighter purported to be bullet proof. In 1966, Nighttide simply disappeared and her fate remains unknown. Conspiracy rags peddled theories about this for decades and from time to time witnesses claim to have seen Nighttide, but the mystery endured. There was some hope Nighttide might emerge when Raven retired, but heroes remained few and far between in New York City throughout the 1970s. When the gun-toting vigilante known as the Regulator was found with 48 bullets in his corpse in 1980, the era seemed well and truly over.

GEOGRAPHY

Rocks are flying, bottles thrown
Badges covered so no one knows

—The Radicts, "Revolution City

Covering all of New York City is beyond the scope of this book, so this section concentrates on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. There were farms in the area in the city's early days but by the 1840s the neighborhood took on its character as a home to immigrants. It was known as Kleindeutschland—"Little Germany"—for many years due to its concentration of Germans, but successive waves of immigration in the late 19th and early 20th century saw Italians, Eastern European Jews, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Chinese, and many other groups settle in the tenement buildings of the Lower East Side. Subsequent decades saw African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Latin Americans settle in the neighborhood as well.

The exact boundaries of the Lower East Side have changed over the years and are something New Yorkers continue to debate to this day. This chapter takes a broad view, with a northern boundary of 14th Street, a western boundary of the Bowery and 3rd Avenue, a southern boundary of the Manhattan Bridge and Canal Street, and an eastern boundary of the East River. This includes areas like the East Village, Alphabet City, and parts of Chinatown.

While today the Lower East Side has gentrified and you will find expensive hotels, restaurants, and boutiques there, in the 1980s it was a different story. Many of the abandoned buildings had burned down or collapsed. It was common to pass empty or rubble-filled lots, many of which became open-air drug markets. Many old tenement buildings remained, as did other reminders of the garment industry that was once so prevalent there. The various immigrant communities all left their marks, even if some of them moved on to other boroughs or states. Jewish delis like Katz's and 2nd Avenue remained staples. The Russian and Turkish Baths dated back to the 19th century, while the Nuyorican Poets Café started up in the 1970s. The old Bowery music halls were replaced by more modern clubs like CBGBs—one of the birthplaces of punk rock—and A7, the launchpad for New York hardcore in the early '80s.

In the '70s and '80s squatters took over many of the abandoned buildings in the Lower East Side. The squats are scattered all over the area but with a concentration of them on East 13th St. The squatters spent years trying to make their buildings livable, though many remain cold and in poor repair. In some cases, there was little left but the building's walls, so everything from floors and interior walls on up needed to be rebuilt, wiring done, and plumbing replaced. Even for those who put in the work, squatting is a difficult lifestyle with a constant fear of eviction. Those that stay around long enough can make a legal claim to their buildings, though the city government remains hostile to this until well into the '90s.

The gentrification of the Lower East Side began in what is now known as the East Village. This is the area between Houston Street and E. 14th St. Artists, hippies, musicians, and other free spirits began to move there in the '60s, seeking cheaper rent than they could find in Greenwich Village. Real estate agents realized this and began to market the area as the East Village to distance it from the rough reputation of the Lower East Side. St. Marks Place, though only three blocks long, became a cultural hub.

On the east side of St. Marks Place is Tompkins Square Park, the biggest bit of greenery in the Lower East Side. In 1988, it would become a battleground (see Key Events).

KEY EVENTS

Open your eyes and look around
at the racism and the hate
Open your mind and understand
the oppression by the state

—Nausea, "Smash Racism"

Drug use was nothing new in New York City, but the crack epidemic of the early 1980s changed everything. Suddenly a rich person's drug was available at poor people's prices. The high was quick but so was the addiction. Neighborhoods like the Lower East Side saw an explosion of drug use, and with it increased crime and violence. The neighborhood gangs that had once been about local pride and protecting turf withered away or changed into drug operations. The media began to notice in 1985. By 1988 things were spiraling out of control, and that year saw the city's worst rates of murder and violent crime.

In 1986 a huge political scandal erupted surrounding the city's Parking Violations Bureau. By the time it was over, powerful politicians were taken down, dozens more convicted of bribery and other crimes, and longtime Queens borough president Donald Manes committed suicide when his role in everything was discovered. One of the

prosecutors of the PVB scandal was Peter Gallo, a young hotshot eager to distance himself from rumors of Mafia ties that often dogged Italian Americans in New York. He garnered praise for his honesty and prosecutorial zeal.

While the biggest names in city politics were embroiled in this and other scandals, something else was happening on the Lower East Side. Low income housing was being torn down to make way for condos and other real estate development. This contributed to a rise in homelessness, all the more ironic in a city that still had many vacant buildings. Tompkins Square Park had a homeless encampment, and was a regular hangout for punks, squatters, artists, gang members, and a cross-section of other people from the neighborhood. In the summer of 1988, the Parks Department put a 1 am curfew on the park. Community organizers rallied the park's denizens to protest the curfew. On August 6, the protest became a riot—at the hands of the police. Certainly, some of the protesters were obnoxious. Traffic was blocked, a few bottles and rocks thrown—hardly extreme for a NYC protest. In response, 400 police officers—mounted and on foot—went on a rampage, charging the protesters with billy clubs. Many covered their badges so they could not be identified as they chased down and beat protesters and anyone else caught in the area. The violence continued until 6 am. The Police Department eventually admitted responsibility but no officers faced consequences for their actions that night.

The Tompkins Square Park Riot was consequential in many ways. It would lead to reactions from all sides, and the rise of new heroes and villains.

VILLAINS OF THE LES

Make no mistake, all they want is your money
And all they need is your numb nod of approval
And all they demand is your silence
Are you gonna hand it to them?

—Born Against, "Born Again"

Peter Gallo made his name as a prosecutor fighting political corruption, and watched the footage from the Tompkins Square Park Riot with alarm. He wasn't angry that the police were out of control, but rather that the forces of law and order looked bad. And he knew who to blame: squatters, anarchists, and other scum of the Lower East Side. He wanted to bring cases against known troublemakers, but his boss quashed the idea, saying they had larger concerns than street agitators. This did not sit well with Gallo.

Disappointed by his supervisor's apathy, Gallo wanted to administer street justice directly. After being on the news frequently during the PVB scandal trials, he could hardly show his face while doing so. So began Gallo's transformation into the villain known as Riot Shield (use the **Psycho** archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, with an arsenal that includes a club, shotgun, and tear gas, and smoke grenades). Friends in the police force provided riot gear surplus from the '70s, which he painted black to cover the department markings. Then Riot Shield hit the streets. At first, he targeted thieving junkies and drug dealers because they were people no one would stand up for. Indeed, the mysterious man in black beating down such reviled figures won him fans in the neighborhood.

Riot Shield still goes after those targets, but slowly shifted to his true enemies. He began raiding squats, the offices of leftist political organizations, and independent newspapers. Soon he was not alone, as Gallo attracted like-minded vigilantes to his cause. Now he can call in up to a dozen other men, most current or former cops, to assist him in attacks. The violence of these raids has only increased. A shadow of fear has fallen over the squatters and their allies and that's just what Riot Shield wants.

GHENGIS

Riot Shield's opposite in many ways is Hector Díaz, who is known on the street as Genghis. He joined his first gang, the Hitmen, at age 12 and survived countless street fights and brawls. He saw firsthand how crack changed the scene. While many of his contemporaries moved out of the neighborhood or retired from gang life, Genghis saw opportunity in the vials littering the streets. Many gangs were moving crack but each controlled only a limited area. What the Lower East Side needed, Genghis decided, was a crack king to control the whole operation and who better than him?

Genghis's new gang, the Phantom Warlords, was a throwback to the 1970s but the organization was anything but. Back then beefs could be settled with knives, chains, or fists, but the Phantom Warlords built a thoroughly modern arsenal of pistols, submachineguns, shotguns, and even assault rifles. Genghis's goal was to get other gangs in the Lower East Side to join his operation. In this he has been quite successful, though there are holdouts. His biggest rivals are the Tongs of Chinatown, and the Phantom Warlords have clashed repeatedly with Tong-affiliated gangs like the Ghost Shadows and Flying Dragons.

Vigilantes and gangsters are nothing new in NYC, but there is another player on the Lower East Side amplifying the threat of Riot Shield and Genghis. The mysterious figure of Midas (use the Crime Lord archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*) is providing support to Riot Shield and Genghis, though neither realizes that they share a common benefactor. Riot Shield and his goon squad are getting cutting edge weapons and gear. Genghis is getting drugs at bargain basement prices, not realizing that the heroin and crack they are getting are laced with new, experimental drugs with wildly dangerous effects.

Midas is actually Merritt Forsythe, a wealthy man who got even wealthier on Wall Street in the early '80s. He used some of that money to buy Pilum, Inc., a weapons manufacturer that had tried to break into the market with technological innovation but failed because its original owners didn't know how to play politics. Forsythe used his Ivy League contacts in the Federal Government to get some Pilum prototypes in front of the Department of Defense. The testing went badly wrong, killing one soldier and crippling another. The DoD sent Forsythe packing.

Forsythe decided that Pilum's weapons, and the designer combat drugs he'd also had the company developing, needed field testing—which would be cheaper and easier to monitor in his own backyard. The Lower East Side pres-

ents a convenient laboratory for Forsythe, and he's more than willing to pay the human cost. Who's going to miss junkies and troublemakers? The next time he gets the attention of the Department of Defense, Forsythe will have field-tested, reliable products to show off. And then the contracts will roll in.

Forsythe also has an expanding portfolio as a real estate developer. When the Lower East Side has been thoroughly destabilized by the violence Riot Shield and the Phantom Warlords are unleashing, he plans to buy up property at rock-bottom prices. As gentrification spreads, he'll be in a prime position to benefit.

The weapons and combat drugs being tested in the Lower East Side can enhance the fighting abilities of normal humans, though the drugs still have debilitating side effects. There is an organization right in the city that monitors for these kinds of threats: The United Nations. However, the UN has six different agencies dealing with superhuman threats (UNISON is not formed until after the Terminus invasion of 1993) and not one of them has any interest in what's happening on the Lower East Side. It's only 30 blocks away, but as far as the UN is concerned it may as well be on the far side of the moon.

GHENGIS	PL 10 • 163 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 4 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 5 **FGT** 8 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: Arsenal (Array; Assault Rifle, Flash-bang, Heavy Pistol w/ Laser Scope, Sawed-Off Shotgun, Sniper Rifle, Submachine gun, Sword), Binoculars, Car, Gas Mask, Suppressor, Undercover Shirt.	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Assessment, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Diehard, Equipment 7, Evasion, Fascinate (Intimidation), Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Aim, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative 2, Languages 2 (Native Language, Russian, Spanish), Move-by Action, Power Attack Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 9, Startle, Takedown, Ultimate Effort: Aim, Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Break.	
Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Athletics 10 (+13), Close Combat: Swords 6 (+14), Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 10 (+11), Expertise: Tactics 7 (+8), Insight 5 (+8), Intimidation 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11), Technology 4 (+5), Treatment 3 (+4), Vehicles 5 (+10).	
Offense: Init +11, Assault Rifle +14 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 5), Flash-bang +14 (Burst Area, Ranged, Dazzle 4), Heavy Pistol +16 (Ranged, Damage 3), Sawed-Off Shotgun +14 (Ranged, Damage 5), Sniper Rifle +14 (Ranged, Damage 5, Crit 19–20), Submachine gun +14 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 4), Sword +14 (Close, Damage 6; Crit 19–20), Unarmed +8 (DC 18).	
Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 12, Fortitude 7, Toughness 7/4, Will 9.	
Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 0 + Advantages 41 + Skills 41 (82 ranks) + Defenses 23 = 163	

THE GORGONS

You wanna know why we suck?
I'll tell you
We can't afford rehearsal time in New York City
That's why we suck!

—Even Worse, "We Suck"

There is one team of heroes trying to protect the Lower East Side in the Iron Age: The Gorgons. Theirs is an unlikely but very New York story.

The three members of The Gorgons—Valeria Reyes, Gabrielle Washington, and Leah Goldblum—first met at punk rock shows in the early '80s. They kept running into each other at CBGB's hardcore matinees, and soon got to talking. They discovered they shared a love for UK anarcho-punk bands like Crass, Conflict, Omega Tribe, and Flux of Pink Indians, as well as many political and social views. They became good friends and developed a reputation on the scene as women who took no shit. They were not there to stand in the back and watch the boys mix it up in the pit. They were up front, giving as good as they got.

In 1986, they got a cheap apartment on the Lower East Side and moved in together. They had talked off and on for years about forming a band and finally decided the time was right. The New York hardcore scene was rather too testosterone-laden in their opinion, so inspired by bands like The Slits and Anti-Scrunti Faction they formed The Gorgons. They rehearsed at a studio called Tu Casa on Avenue B, but cheap as it was that was still proving too much for the cash-strapped young punks. Val had the idea to scope out some abandoned buildings. Perhaps they could find a usable rehearsal space there.

The Gorgons found their building on E. 7th St., east of Tompkins Square Park. It was sealed up tight, but still, they were surprised no one had squatted it yet. Leah found a way in through the basement and they were pleased to discover that inside the building was in pretty good shape. Gabi got the place hooked up to the electrical grid. Then they broke their lease and moved in. Now they could rehearse whenever they wanted, and they didn't have to worry about rent either. Soon the Gorgons were gigging regularly and developing a good following.

As part of her wiring renovations, Gabi uncovered a hidden staircase in the building's basement and a secret operations room frozen in time, with Silver Age electronics and yellowing maps of the city. The Gorgons soon realized that this was the secret headquarters of 1960s crimefighter, Nighttide. Her fate remained a mystery, but it seemed certain she never retired voluntarily. Nighttide's HQ looked like the hero simply left one day and never returned.

Val and Leah thought it was interesting and a cool secret for their squat, but Gabi was entranced. She was a techie who could appreciate how advanced the abandoned devices really were. There were several unfinished suits woven from bulletproof fabric. Other gadgets looked like strength enhancers and lightning projectors. Over several months Gabi tinkered with this gear, updating and upgrading the tech where she could.

All this was just a fun hobby for Gabi until the Tompkins Square Park Riot. The Gorgons were there and saw firsthand how the police violence spiraled out of control. When Riot Shield and the Phantom Warlords started claiming the Lower East Side, they decided someone from the neighborhood needed to step up and fight back. That's when The Gorgons went from being just a punk band to the new heroes of the Lower East Side.

The Gorgons face three main threats. First, Riot Shield and his goon squad claim the neighborhood in the name of police brutality, primarily targeting squats. The Gorgons plugged themselves into Eviction Watch, a phone list that alerts the various squats when trouble brews, and have begun showing up to turn back raids. At the same time, the ladies are trying to slow the march of the Phantom Warlords after seeing how easily heroin and crack can destroy squats from the inside; despite their lackadaisical views on recreational drug use, the Gorgons don't want to see the whole of the LES under one drug kingpin. The Gorgons' final threat are what they call "the Bickles"—white, middle-aged men inspired by the movie *Taxi Driver* and real-world vigilantes like Bernie Goetz. They come in from New Jersey with guns and the idea that they will "clean up the streets." They aren't organized, just a group of similar idiots who can still manage to get people killed. The Gorgons' contacts around the neighborhood keep an eye out for Bickles prowling around the LES in their station wagons. They try to scare them back to New Jersey, but some confrontations have escalated into gun fights.

The Gorgons are as yet unaware of Midas, though they do have suspicions of someone further up the food chain. They've had several encounters with raged out junkies of incredible strength and are deeply concerned about what this means for the neighborhood.

QUEEN VEE — **PL 8 • 120 POINTS**

STR 3 **STA** 3 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 4 **INT** 2 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3

Powers: **Gorgonwear** (Removable), Immunity 1 (Environmental Cold), Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Impervious Protection 6, **Hardcore** Immunity 5 (Sensory Affliction Effects)

Sonic Weapon (Array, 12 points; Easily Removable)
- **Blowback** Close Line Area Move Object 8 (6 tons; Limited Direction Away)
- **Breakneck** Cumulative Cone Area Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned; Limited Degree)
- **Feedback** Cumulative Cone Area Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware, Limited to Hearing)
- **Power Chord** Ranged Damage 8

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Connected, Contacts, Improvised Weapon 3, Inspire 2, Languages 1 (English, Spanish), Leadership, Luck

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Improvised Weapon 4 (+8), Expertise (PRE): Sing 6 (+9), Expertise: Current Events 5 (+7), Expertise: Poetry 4 (+6), Insight 6 (+9), Investigation 4 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Sonic Weapon 5 (+8), Treatment 4 (+6)

Offense: Init +2, Improvised Weapon +8 (Close, Damage 6), Power Chord +8 (Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 4, Fortitude 5, Toughness 9/3*, Will 9
*Without Gorgonwear

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 28 + Advantages 11 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 12 = 120

FVK — **PL 8 • 120 POINTS**

STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 3 **INT** 5 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 1

Powers: **Gorgonwear** (Removable), Immunity 1 (Environmental Cold), Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Impervious Protection 6

Lightning Gauntlets (Array, 15 points; Removable), Immunity 5 (Electricity Damage)
- **Lightning Bolt** Ranged Damage 7 (Precise)
- **Shutdown** Nullify Technology 7 (Broad, Precise)

Advantages: Beginner's Luck, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Move-by Action, Set-up, Speed of Thought, Taunt

Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+7), Deception 6 (+7), Expertise (PRE): Guitar 6 (+7), Expertise: Technology 5 (+10), Perception 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Lightning Gauntlets 5 (+9), Stealth 4 (+7), Technology 8 (+13), Vehicles 3 (+7)

Offense: Init +5, Lightning Bolt +9 (Ranged, Damage 7), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 5, Fortitude 7, Toughness 8/2*, Will 6
*Without Gorgonwear

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 29 + Advantages 8 + Skills 25 (49 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 120

GORGONWEAR

Gabi has refitted several costumes originally designed by the Silver Age vigilante Nighttide, which provide the team with bulletproof fabric and insulation against the city's harsh weather. Micro-layers of padding also diffuse the damage from falls, saving the band from an ugly end if they fall from a rooftop.

QUEEN VEE

Valeria Reyes (guitars, vocals) is Lower East Side born and raised. Her parents moved there from Puerto Rico in the 1960s, settling on Avenue C in the area that came to be known as Loisaida. Her parents were poets, and so were drawn to what was happening at the Nuyorican Poets Café in the 1970s. Val has a lot of love for that scene but feels like it really belongs to the older generation. She was drawn to punk and sets her own poetry to raging music. Where she does follow her parents' footsteps is activism. Val is deeply involved in ACT UP, a political group formed in 1987 to combat the AIDS pandemic. She witnessed many friends in the gay community die in the early '80s, and the utter indifference of the federal and city government enraged her.

Valeria's costumed identity is the bombastic Queen Vee. She will fight for her neighborhood and the desperate people in it, but is not interested in killing anyone. She asked Gabi to kit her out with sonic weaponry that can stun and disorient but that's as far as she'll go.

FVK

Gabrielle Washington (bass, vocals) grew up in the South Bronx. Whip smart and with an affinity for technology, she'd have ended up studying engineering at an Ivy League school if she was from somewhere else. As a black woman from the South Bronx though, she had to find a different path. A cousin of hers took her to CBGB to see the Bad Brains and this opened her eyes to a whole new scene. The band's energy and speed took her breath away. Soon she was spending so much time in the Lower East Side she found a squat to crash at and moved there full time. With her technical skills and ability to jury-rig, Gabi soon became in-demand among the squatters. Thanks to her, the band also began playing the "Squat or Rot" shows happening in the neighborhood.

Gariell's costumed identity is FVK, an homage to the Bad Brains. Her lightning gauntlets are her pride and joy. She can project electricity with very fine control, able to provide just enough juice to short out a circuit board or blast a fool across the street, all while grounding her from high-voltage hazards she works around. She also provides all the tech support for The Gorgons. The team would not be possible without her brilliance.

RED EMMA

Leah Goldblum (drums, vocals) is from Boston originally. Her grandparents immigrated to New York City during the 1920s, settling in among the Jewish community of the Lower East Side. Her grandfather was a union man and not afraid of a street brawl. When American Nazis held a rally in Madison Square Garden in 1939, he was on hand to punch them. Leah's parents didn't inherit this sort of zeal. They were content to make a middle-class life for themselves in Boston. Leah and her parents clashed, particularly when she got into punk rock. In 1980 she came to live with her grandfather, who still maintained an apartment on Rivington Street.

Leah loves punk rock but didn't love the machismo of the emerging hardcore scene. Soon she began replying to taunts of "bull dyke" with her fists, famously kicking the shit out of a Nazi skinhead in the pit at an Agnostic Front show. She has found the scene at ABC No Rio, an arts space that began having punk shows in the late '80s, much more to her liking. ABC is where the misfits of the New York punk scene get together. Its booking policy is "no racist, no sexist, no homophobic bands," and this is music to Leah's ears. The Gorgons now play there regularly.

Her costumed identity is Red Emma in honor of famous anarchist and longtime LES resident Emma Goldman. She wasn't interested in any of Gabi's fancier devices. She's a drummer who is good at hitting things. A boost to her strength and tonfas that could wallop like nobody's business and she was good.

RED EMMA	PL 8 • 120 POINTS
STR 7/4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Powers: Exo Muscle Rig (Removable), Enhanced Strength 3, **Gorgonwear** (Removable), Immunity 1 (Environmental Cold), Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Impervious Protection 6	
Equipment: Club (Damage 2), Truck	
Advantages: Close Attack, Daze (Intimidation), Defensive Attack, Diehard, Equipment 2, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Interpose, Languages 1 (English, Hebrew), Power Attack, Prone Fighting, Second Chance: Resisting Presence skills, Takedown, Weapon Break	
Skills: Acrobatics 3 (+5), Athletics 5 (+12), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+8), Expertise (PRE): Drums 6 (+8), Expertise: Law 8 (+8), Expertise: Philosophy 6 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 7 (+7), Insight 6 (+7), Intimidation 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+6), Stealth 5 (+7), Technology 2 (+2), Treatment 2 (+2), Vehicles 4 (+6)	
Offense: Init +6, Tonfa +7 (Close, Damage 9), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 7)	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude 9, Toughness 10/4*, Will 6 *Without Gorgonwear	
Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 17 + Advantages 15 + Skills 33 (66 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 120	

CHAPTER 5: ERAS OF ADVENTURE

Certain points in human history capture the imagination and hold on tight, some for the major events that took place, others because of cultural touchstones that give a sense of heritage and pride. And still others because they form a foundation for our modern understanding of the world. Superhero stories often delve into the legacies of these eras and how they affect the world today, and time-traveling heroes visit these handful of points in space and time more frequently than others.

Each era depicted in this chapter includes a broad overview and advice for using it both as a destination for time travel adventures alongside advice and rules considerations for running a superhero campaign set in those historical periods. Each also includes a handful of useful statblocks to help or attack your time-hopping Mutants & Masterminds characters. You can pick and choose the most useful elements to use for your campaign—setting your adventures in the modern world but including a temporal Wizard villain who can summon Roman legionnaires or dinosaurs with her magic—or re-skin materials to use in other eras; an Egyptian charioteer statblock works equally well as a Roman chariot racer or—with the addition of a shotgun—as a Wild West stagecoach driver.

The eras are presented chronologically, with descriptions based roughly on a specific year. Dates are given using CE (Current Era) and BCE (Before Current Era) notation. CE and BCE notation corresponds with the obsolete AD and BC notations, so a date listed as 875 BCE is the same year as 875 BC.

The eras presented in this book are not textbook-accurate depictions of history—even textbooks aren't especially accurate with regards to non-European history—but instead reflect the slightly mythologized take on the past you see in comic books and movies. Many major events of their respective time periods are omitted or complex issues glossed over for the sake of brevity. You can uncover a wealth of game material, setting details, and adventure ideas by researching any of these eras in more detail.

OTHER ADVENTUROUS ERAS

There are more exciting periods in history time travelers can visit than a book this size could possibly contain. This chapter covers a broad selection of time periods and points on the globe, but many other fascinating periods exist as possible temporal destinations or to be host to historically-set games.

Indus Valley (circa 2600 BCE): The Indus River Valley in modern-day Pakistan was the cradle of one of humanity's earliest known civilizations, and by 2600 BCE it hosted towns and cities along the river's length that boasted sophisticated art, architecture, mathematics, writing, and trade networks connecting it to far-flung corners of Asia and Europe. The writing system of this millennia-spanning

civilization remains indecipherable to modern scholars, so time travelers might visit to study the era or understand how and why it collapsed.

Old Testament (circa 1,000 BCE): A time of wonder, warfare, and tall tales, Judea in the first millennium BCE was an era from which many modern faiths were born, and in a world of superheroes, many of those myths may be rooted in fact. Time travelers may visit to uncover lost relics of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), or to stop others from manipulating or eliminating several of the modern world's largest religions.

Classical Greece (circa 420 BCE): Greece in the fourth century BCE was a time of war and exploration across hundreds of small kingdoms whose collective culture, science, and politics would help shape the European Renaissance and later the modern western world. In the world of superheroes, many of the iconic myths likely originate with real superhumans or gods. In addition to using this era to tamper with modern politics or mythology, time travelers might journey to ancient Greece to challenge the gods, who have since been barred from tampering as directly with the mortal world.

Great Zimbabwe (circa 1330 CE): The Kingdom of Zimbabwe was one of the great empires of southern Africa. Wealthy and home to some of the greatest artists and architects of its day, its capital, Great Zimbabwe, still stands mostly intact, and unlike many empires it never fell so much as migrated to conquer new lands while leaving its former capital behind. Much of the history of Zimbabwe was wiped out by later European conquests, and so time travelers may visit to study the culture and history of the region, or to profit from its fabulous stockpiles of gold, copper, and ivory.

The Incan Expansion (circa 1520 CE): The Incan Empire—the largest empire in the world in its day—controlled most of western South America by the time conquistadors arrived. They mastered architecture and terraforming, connecting their sprawling, mountainous empire with roads and bridges still in use today. As a kingdom of conquerors and the conquered similar to Rome, political intrigue, guerrilla warfare, and conspiracies ran rampant, and the future arrival of hostile Europeans and disease only added to the tension. Many of the greatest treasures of the empire were lost in civil war, and time travelers may arrive to uncover them, or change the outcome of the civil war that left the empire vulnerable to Spanish invaders.

Renaissance Italy (circa 1420 CE): A time of artistic and philosophical revolution, but also an era of deadly serious politics, assassins, and conspiracy. Italy—particularly Florence—remains an era of intrigue and mystery, with many of its riddles left unsolved and its facts obscured. Time travelers may visit to learn secret knowledge or to find the missing pieces of a conspiracy, to stop temporal villains from profiteering or changing Europe's future, or because powerful figures of the era—such as Cosimo de' Medici—may actually be immortal or time traveling villains.

Iroquois Confederacy (circa 1555 CE): An alliance of five major tribes along the southern coasts of the Great Lakes—the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca—all bonded by a common language, the Iroquois Confederacy was the most powerful mainland nation to directly face European invaders. Throughout the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries they were one of the major players in New World politics. Wary time travelers may visit the era to help preserve the extensive history and culture of the nation, while others might hope to help them better fare better against European disease and wars and maintain their land in the present day.

Sengoku Period Japan (circa 1580 CE): Also called the Warring States period, the Japanese empire at the end of the 16th century dissolved into civil war as local daimyōs battle over territory while the Emperor and the shogun are weakened after nearly a century of internal warfare and rebellion. The brilliant tactician Oda Nobunaga has held the capital of Kyoto for two years now, but spies and assassins lurk everywhere. It's an age of open warfare and dark conspiracies, with samurai, ninjas, and warrior monks battling for the future of the empire.

The American Revolution (circa 1777 CE): The American Revolution looms large in the minds of United States superheroes, with many patriotic heroes pulling inspiration, codenames, themes, or even their powers from the war's legacy. Villainous time travelers may aid the British in winning the war, creating a present where the "New World" remains a colony under the Queen's rule.

Catherinian Russia (circa 1782 CE): After organizing a coup against her own husband, Catherine II took the throne of Russia and spent the next thirty-five years transforming the provincial kingdom into a modern empire both feared and respected on the global stage. She expanded the kingdom's borders through conquest and diplomacy, granted expanded rights to serfs, modernized the economy, and introduced public education. Her expansions radically altered Russian daily life and charted a new course for the nation as a major player in world events. Visitors to the era may try to coax more progressive reforms—creating a more progressive modern Russia—or assassinate the prominent queen to prevent Russia's rise to the world stage.

Victorian England (circa 1888 CE): A time of rapid technological innovation and social re-invention, the Victorian era is often thought of as the peak of the British Empire, but was also an era of widespread disease, crime, warfare, and predatory working conditions. In super-heroic stories, it is also the home of "steampunk" technology and globe-trotting adventures. Time travelers may visit to travel alongside gentlemen adventurers and inventors of the era, while villains may try to maintain the prosperity of England as a global power or attempt to assassinate Queen Victoria and plunge the empire into chaos.

Spacefarers (circa 2360 CE): In an ideal future, humanity may overcome prejudice and greed and travel the stars to seek new worlds and new civilizations. Superheroes and others with extraordinary gifts would make ideal explorers and ambassadors, able to adapt to greater challenges and dangers than the average crew. The *Cosmic Handbook* contains a wealth of information for campaigns focused on space travel.

JURASSIC PLANET

CIRCA 175 MILLION BCE

Long before humans rose to prominence and spread across the globe, dinosaurs roamed the Earth, filling every ecological niche as readily as mammals and birds do today. Life in the Jurassic is a constant struggle for survival. The world is super-sized in every way, from the animals to the weather, and only the hardy survive. Volcanoes erupt, powerful hurricanes batter forests to the ground, and deadly droughts and gas pockets leave fields piled with bones. Vicious predators run through the forests in packs, glide through the water, or storm across plains. A glancing blow from an herbivore can kill even a powerhouse.

The world in this period is still a single continent surrounded by vast oceans, just before Pangaea begins breaking apart into what will eventually be the recognizable continents of the modern era.

Whether you're one of the early mammals struggling to evolve in a world where you're on the bottom of the food chain, or if you were cast back from some far-distant time, the Jurassic Period is no summer afternoon stroll.

The climate in the Jurassic periofd is violent and as super-sized as the fauna. The oxygen-rich atmosphere fuels forest fires capable of swallowing a herd of brontosaurs. Hurricanes that dwarf anything the modern world knows might lay waste to entire ecosystems. And the sea isn't any better—shallow and warm—it is at the mercy of violent winds and waves that dash sea life onto reefs or carry them far into the hills to be left stranded in trees. The plants and insects are larger, too. A party may shelter in a stand of ferns taller than they are or find themselves fleeing a horde of ants. Even the rain is more dangerous, hiding the sound of stalking allosaurs and smilodons.

In a super-heroic version of the distant past, eldritch and magical elements are present, too. Immense primeval gods blunder dimly across the world—still unformed without sentient minds to worship them. Aliens tamper with DNA or create colonies. Evolved saurians begin to scent the darkness, wondering what is hiding beyond their awareness. With so little of the world's magical energy in use, a magician capable of channeling vast amounts of power may find themselves doing greater works than they ever dreamed. But beware, magic is as young and wild as everything else in this era, and those who are not strong enough to control it may find themselves burned to a husk.

This Jurassic Planet era in Mutants & Masterminds is loosely defined, covering many millions of years before the rise of human civilization, from the reign of the dinosaurs to the megafauna and early hominids that spread across the world after the asteroid impact. If you prefer a more realistic setting, mammals are still small rodents, and dinosaurs rule the land, free of people. For a more comic book setting, humans tame dinosaurs as mounts and battle more advanced kingdoms of sentient dinosaurs or alien colonists. Talk with your players about technology and difficulty: do they want to struggle for the basics of survival, or do they want a big, cinematic campaign that lets them punch a T-Rex in the face?

Some good inspiration for more cinematic adventures can be found in movies like *Kong: Skull Island*, *Primeval*, and the *Jurassic Park* series among many, many others.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

While many historic opponents seem less powerful than modern heroes, the foes in the Jurassic Period are bigger, badder, and far less intelligent than foes of later eras. Dinosaurs possess extraordinary physical strength, durability, and even intelligence to help them survive this primordial world. Doing so requires visitors possess similar abilities, as well as survival knowledge and some knowledge of flora and fauna. Because of the harsh climate,

heat hazards are common dangers (or cold hazards if the heroes arrive during an ice age), and starvation can become an issue over time.

Technology is in its earliest stages in this era, barely a glimmer of its eventual potential. Locals, utilizing a rudimentary understanding of Technology, build basic tools, weapons, and shelters, but a simple wheel is still a marvel to most. Some of the minerals necessary to create later instances of technology don't even exist yet.

Because the world is so big and open, there are many places for visiting heroes to land, meaning varied challenges: vast seas, active volcanoes, trackless jungles, sprawling deserts. They may never see another humanoid, but that should not lull them into a false sense of security!

Most character attributes will be unaffected in the Jurassic, but consider the following changes:

- **Skill—Expertise:** Food, water, and shelter are all far more difficult to acquire when the bow hasn't been invented yet, and the prey animals are the size of a car. The Expertise (Survival) skill can be used as a catch-all for finding water, edible food, and shelter, while other Expertise skills (like Botany or Paleontology) may be appropriate for learning more details about plants and animals, respectively.
- **Skill—Technology:** The Jurassic Planet era lacks even the most basic infrastructure for working on modern technology, and crafting anything more complex than rudimentary stone and wooden tools may be all but impossible. The Technology skill can still be used to craft axes, knives, and other tools, as well as traps and snares.
- **Advantage—Benefit (Prowess):** It is unlikely that travelers will be able to out-muscle dinosaurs. Speed and cunning help ensure survival. This benefit lets a character to use her Agility for Athletics checks rather than Strength.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Technology of the prehistoric era focuses on perfecting found objects rather than creating new gear from scratch.

BONE CLUB

It isn't fancy, but a club carved from the thigh-bone of a mammoth delivers impressive damage, even crushing the armor of adversaries and prey.

Bone Club: Strength-based Damage 3, Penetrating; Quirk (user must have a Strength of 4 or higher) • *5 points*

LEG SNARE TRAP

This simple trap grabs a creature's leg and hoists them into the air, where they are held until they can wiggle free or cut the vine. The snare described here is intended for human-sized prey; snares for larger prey have progressively higher ranks in Move Object.

Leg Snare Trap: Close Move Object 4; Triggered; Limited (only holds a creature in place) • *3 points*

PREHISTORY OF EARTH-PRIME

The Jurassic Period is still lightly populated by sapient beings. Some magical beings have arisen—entities like Ghorummaz and the Howling Dream (see the **Magic Powers** entry in *Power Profiles*)—and a few proto-hominids have appeared. Strange and deadly strains of known dinosaurs—perhaps the world's first manifestation of superhuman powers—occasionally appear and dominate their local ecosystems.

The prime power of this era are the nascent Serpent People nations. Not yet the masters of magic they would grow into, their culture is more akin to early humanoid civilizations like Sumer: city-states with laborers and armies directed by priest-kings. They spent tens of thousands of years forging empires, which collapsed into chaos and new nations once again, all now long forgotten to even their own descendants. The first Master Mage of Earth emerges during this era, the mantle settling upon a Serpent Person rather than a human. For more information on the Serpent People and what they would eventually become, see the **Sub-Terra** chapter in the *Atlas of Earth-Prime*.

Visiting supers and time travelers have thrown strange loops into the timeline: evolutions that came to a sudden and violent end when an asteroid wiped most of the life from the world; a tribe of apes discovered a bit of technology left by a visitor and now possesses the power of fire (or firepower); a Compsognathus tribe is building a village of cooperating families, ruled by a matriarch and her daughters, based on a glimpse of the future. Hell pigs, never the brightest, have discovered a place of high magical activity and are being driven wild by the fluctuations, devastating everything they come across. On the barren hills of a new continent, the Gigantosaur (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*) is taking its first earthly steps, scenting the air for prey.

Visiting far after the age of the dinosaurs but well before the rise of humans, time travelers may also encounter the alien Preservers tampering with early hominids to create off-shoot species like the winged Avians (see **Talona** in *Freedom City, Third Edition*) or the immortal Mastermind (*Threat Report*).

VELOCIRAPTOR HOOK

Made from the sharpened claws of an adult velociraptor, this long spear doubles as a hook for grabbing prey or tripping enemies. It has little penetrating power, due to the claw's sharp curve, but functions well to hamstring or trip a foe.

Velociraptor Hook: Strength-based Damage 2, Advantage (Fast Grab, Improved Trip) • *4 points*

VINE TRAP

The heavy, tough vines of the ancient rainforests are miserable to travel through even for large creatures, and may be an intentional trap or a natural hazard. This heavy net can capture creatures, or trip and entangle larger foes.

Vine Trap: Affliction 5 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile) Extra Condition, Subtle, Triggered; Limited Degree • *7 points*

VISITING HEROES

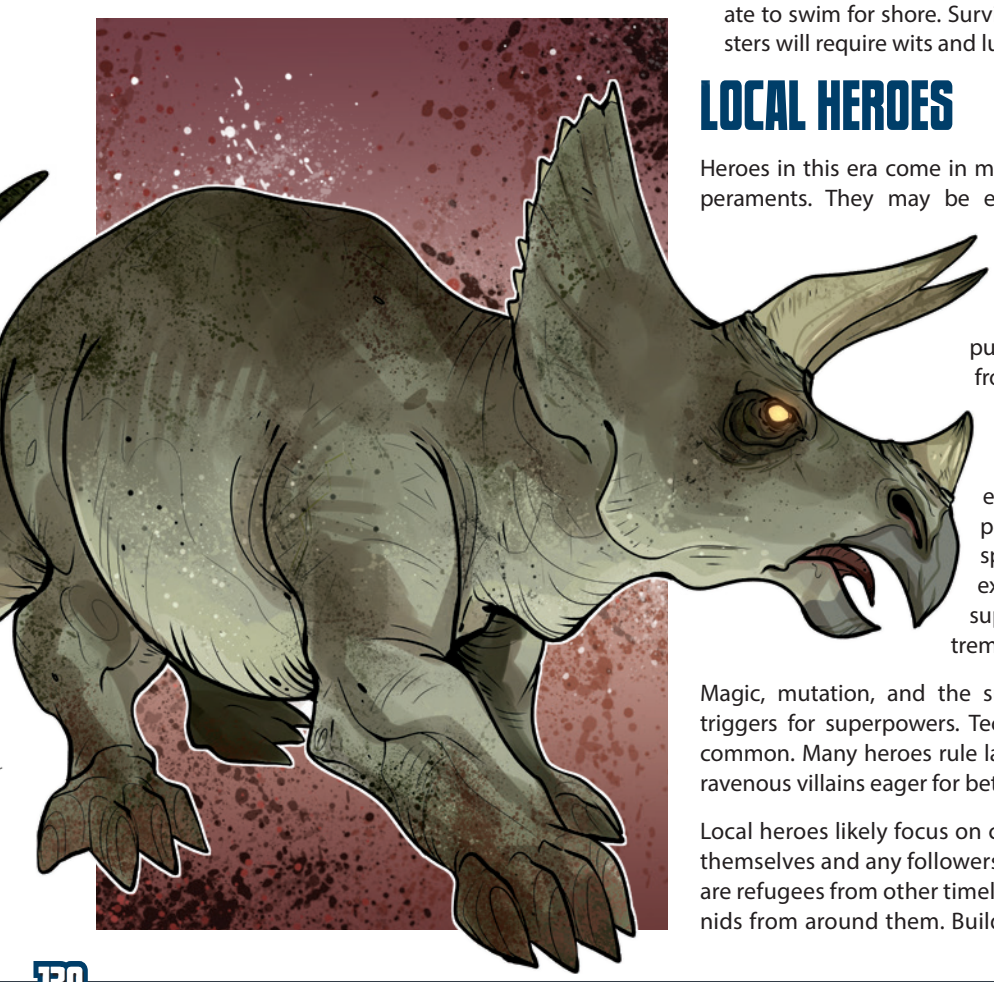
Superheroes and dinosaurs have been close partners since the dawn of comics, but all too often dinosaurs must visit heroes in the modern day. The Jurassic Planet era is a dangerous and thrilling era to visit. Most who travel here are trophy hunters or hope to prove something to themselves by tackling the deadliest predators to ever roam the Earth. Others want to study dinosaurs or collect DNA samples for experiments.

Because everything is super-sized, challenges are more difficult and carry higher risks. Lacking modern medicine or even shelter, heroes who do not bring their own medical supplies may find themselves in danger of infection from simple wounds.

The eras before human history and technology often become home to stranded time travelers—either those whose time machines broke down in an era beyond repair, or because benevolent authorities "imprison" them here where no one believes they can do any harm.

Possible plot hooks:

- Magic is raw and huge, unrefined by use and age. The supernatural is young, spirits still taking shape as they gain their first worshipers. They have chosen a few young champions—hominids and predators who show potential—and wish to test them against strange visitors from another time.
- A pack of unusually intelligent smilodons have claimed a territory that includes a hominid village. The hominids are in terror, hiding in their houses and slowly starving. They need much stronger champions than their own if they will survive.
- A wounded brontosaurus stumbles into the heroes' camp, fleeing two utahraptors. It has heightened psychic awareness, and takes a liking to the heroes. If the heroes choose to help, they will have a titanic new ally for the duration of their visit.
- A vicious young Serpent Person is hunting young hominids and Serpent People alike, sacrificing them in horrible ways to give a final form and intellect to a nascent deity who will rule over the primordial Earth. He eagerly seeks that special someone who will bring him to the attention of his deity.
- A group of powered villains have established a black market ring, providing live dinosaurs or the ultimate big game hunts for wealthy clients, traveling in and out of time with their quarry. However, they have little regard for the world around them, and are leaving mutilated beasts and useless waste in their wake. They need to be stopped, but the conspiracy stretches across many time periods, and involves wealthy, powerful clients.
- A time storm deposits a fleet of ships—possibly a fleet transporting a historically vital figure—into a terrifying past age. One by one, megalodons and mosasaurs pick the survivors apart, swallowing ships and those desperate to swim for shore. Surviving these legendary monsters will require wits and luck.



LOCAL HEROES

Heroes in this era come in many shapes, sizes, and temperaments. They may be evolved saurians, fearsome proto-human warriors, or hominids tampered with by aliens and time travelers. Heroes may have been pulled into a primordial time from another era, tossed into a primeval landscape they don't understand. Anachronistic early hominids who evolved far earlier than expected, fledgling guardian spirits, or victims of temporal experiments gone wrong, the supers of Jurassic Earth are extremely varied.

Magic, mutation, and the supernatural are the prime triggers for superpowers. Technological heroes are not common. Many heroes rule large territories, opposed by ravenous villains eager for better prey or more resources.

Local heroes likely focus on carving out a safe space for themselves and any followers they attract, whether they are refugees from other timelines or creatures and hominids from around them. Building a home base provides

them a launching point for their adventures, and a safe place to sleep. Advanced saurians or Serpent People might build the first foundations of their future empire, explore new realms, or contact strange beings from other planes as they discover the foundations of magic. Early humans may focus on hunts, spiritual journeys, and battling cunning predators, borrowing plots and tropes from the adventures of pulp-era icons like Tarzan or Conan.

A campaign in this era may bring together a truly eclectic party, with members including soldiers from ancient Egypt, explorers from other planets, Victorian adventurers, Chinese treasure-fleet captains, and more. Learning to survive will be a key component of any adventure here. Those seeking to escape may find themselves hunted by monsters either mundane or super. If they are fortunate, they may find themselves under the protection of a local hero, but they may as easily fall afoul of one protective of its family and territory.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are useful in this era:

COMPSOGNATHUS	PL 1 • MR1 • 7 POINTS
STR –2 **STA** –1 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 3 **INT** –4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** –2	
Powers: Senses 1 (Acute Smell), Speed 1 (4 MPH).	
Advantages: Benefit (Athletics Based on Agility), Hide in Plain Sight, Teamwork.	
Skills: Perception 2 (+4), Stealth 4 (+7).	
Offense: Init +3, Bite +3 (Close, Damage –2).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 3, Fortitude 0, Toughness -1, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities -2 + Powers 2 + Advantages 3 + Skills 3 (6 ranks) + Defenses 1 = 7	

Quick little pack hunters and scavengers, Compsognathus look cute, but their speed and agility make them a threat in numbers. They work together, guided by a senior female to herd and corner prey. While there's no evidence compsognathus were venomous like pop culture portrays them, the addition of a paralytic venom (Progressive Weaken Agility 1) increases their PL to 2.

This archetype can also represent many of the common raptors and microraptors (particularly with the addition of Flight 2 [Gliding]).

EARLY HOMINID	PL 3 • MR3 • 31 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 2 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0	
Equipment: Knife (Damage 1, Crit 19–20, Spear (Damage 2).	
Advantages: Equipment 2, Great Endurance, Tracking.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Expertise: Survival 6 (+6), Perception 4 (+6).	
Offense: Init +0, Knife +2 (Close, Damage 2), Spear +2 (Close or Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 2, Toughness 2, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 18 + Powers 0 + Advantages 4 + Skills 7 (14 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 31	

At one point in history, humans were one among dozens of species of hominids competing for resources. While many later hominids, such as Neanderthals, vary little from modern humans beyond appearance, earlier ancestors are more varied in form and abilities. Most are highly social, traveling in large communities and developing languages and religions to help them bond. Early hominids are likely to have special adaptations for their environment, such as Movement (Environmental Adaptation).

MEGALODON	PL 11 • MR5 • 66 POINTS
STR 12 **STA** 12 **AGL** 1 **DEX** –2 **FGT** 8 **INT** –5 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Strength-based Damage 1 (Bite), Growth 12 (Innate, Permanent), Protection 2, Senses 4 (Low-light Vision, Acute Smell, Track, Ultra-hearing).	
Advantages: Improved Grab, Improved Initiative.	
Skills: Perception 8 (+11).	
Offense: Init +4, Bite +8 (Close, Damage 13).	
Defenses: Dodge 8, Parry 5, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 32 + Advantages 2 + Skills 4 + Defenses 18 = Total 66 points.	

A shark of titanic proportions, this fearsome predator moves through the seas and deltas unchallenged. With its powerful jaws and deadly speed, there are few who can withstand it. Characters will need to utilize all their skills to thwart this monster!

This archetype may be used for Mosasaurus, Sarcosuchus, or Kronosaurus threats.

SMILODON	PL 7 • MR5 • 67 POINTS
STR 5 **STA** 6 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 6 **INT** –4 **AWE** 3 **PRE** –1	
Powers: Strength-based Damage 1 (Penetrating 6; Bite), Leaping 2 (30 ft.), Senses 3 (Acute Smell, Low-light Vision, Tracking).	
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Improved Initiative.	
Skills: Athletics 2 (+7), Perception 6 (+9), Stealth 4 (+8).	
Offense: Init +8, Bite +8 (Close, Damage 6).	
Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 7, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6, Will 4.	
Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 12 + Advantages 3 + Skills 6 (12 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 67	

Few predators are as iconic as the saber-toothed cat. A giant feline with curving fangs, the Smilodon is fast, canny, and aggressive. Hunting in prides, or more rarely lone males who've been driven out of family groups, Smilodon hunt like modern-day lions: herding and driving prey into the jaws of their pride-mates.

TITANOBOA	PL 9 • MR5 • 71 POINTS
STR 13 **STA** 12 **AGL** 1 **DEX** –2 **FGT** 5 **INT** –4 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Growth 10 (Innate, Permanent), Senses 6 (Accurate, Acute Smell, Darkvision, Infravision).	
Advantages: Fast Grab, Improved Grab, Improved Hold.	
Skills: Perception 6 (+9), Stealth 10 (+1).	
Offense: Init +1, Bite +5 (Close, Damage 13).	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 6, Fortitude 12, Toughness 12, Will 6.	
Totals: Abilities 16 + Powers 27 + Advantages 3 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 17 = 71	

A giant constrictor that prowled coastal swamps, Titanoboa could grow to 2,500 lbs. and over 40 feet long. Its sheer size allows it to crush nearly anything, and its bite not only does damage but may swallow prey whole.

OLD KINGDOM EGYPT

CIRCA 2500 BCE

Egypt's Old Kingdom feels familiar to modern eyes thanks to its prominence in pop culture depictions. It was the age of great pharaohs and pyramids, of grand cities and international trade. The civilization here is stratified by caste and wealth, but vibrantly diverse in other ways: people from all over the known world settle or pass through; gender is a fluid thing, even the gods are known to be flexible in their expression and presentation; families may be composed of two men, or two women and a man, or a single woman; anyone may serve the gods, practice a trade, or rule the world.

Daily life was busy—most Egyptians in the old kingdom farmed along the Nile river, taking advantage of its regular flooding cycle, which renewed the soil yearly—but plenty found new vocations in the expanding cities of the time. Brickmakers, construction workers, masons, and architects helped build the new urban centers while bakers, brewers, and doctors kept the crowded conditions livable. The daily grind stopped at sunset, and most laborers spent the nights drinking, gambling, and playing board games or sports. With the growing importance of social circles and politics, makeup, wigs, jewelry, and fashion became more important than they ever.

But the Old Kingdom was not a land of milk and honey. War and chaos threaten from without, corruption and entropy from within. Conflicting cults, scheming advisors, criminals, and spies from other nations create plenty of options for danger from within, while the monsters and enemies outside Egypt's borders require a constant sacrifice of heroes and villains to hold the line. While the bronze Age Collapse is over a thousand years away, the other powerful nations of the Mediterranean world—the Hittites, the Assyrian Empire, the Mycenaeans, and Minoans—all covet Egyptian wealth and the fertile Nile delta.

Mines and quarries supplied turquoise, malachite, copper, myrrh, electrum, and gneiss, providing ample materials for exquisite jewelry and titanic architecture. Trade goods included ebony, ivory, frankincense, gold, and cedar from Lebanon for their ships. Gardens and fields fed the populace on figs and pomegranates, wheat, plums, meat, fish, melons, dairy products, and more. Rich spices were common, both those from local fields and afar.

Egyptian rule was centered in Giza and Memphis, but the royal family routinely traveled to other regions and cities for war, to escape the heat, or for pleasure. Extensive trade created a powerful merchant class with worldly experience, and even the lowest servant might have traveled to the great Indus Valley or the cold lands far to the north.

In a super-heroic vision of Egypt, gods still rule over mortals, monsters roam the desert, and artisans create magnificent works with their thoughts and words. Superheroes may be touched by the gods or simply stand out as great heroes, and command powerful influence in society. Children who exhibit powers are taken to temples to be trained by the priests to use their powers in the service of the Pharaoh or Egypt herself. The gods also may take notice of those heroes they find interesting or useful. Art is filled with stories of the Great Gifts, those champions with powers which elevated them to the notice of the gods, though those stories seldom have happy endings. In a super-heroic version of the Old Kingdom, the pharaohs' claims to godhood may actually be true—they could be demigods born of the present Egyptian pantheon, or at least a dynasty of super-powered rulers.

For those more interested in an Egypt in decline, the arrive of the mysterious "Sea People" around 1200 BCE spelled the end for not just Egypt, but all the major powers of the day. Superheroes in this era might be fighting a losing war against an enemy modern historians still can't identify, leaving the nature of the invaders up to your imagination.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Technology is in a very early state in Old Kingdom Egypt, though what exists—particularly in the field of mathematics, chemistry, and metallurgy—is well-developed and reliable. Heroes from the modern world will find repairing modern technology with the tools of the era almost impossible except under extraordinary circumstances, and even these impose a –5 circumstance penalty.

Supernatural and magical powers are common, as are mutations and heroic abilities derived from rigorous training of the mind and body, but science-based powers are unusual. Because the society is caste-based, a character's social standing, wealth, and background will be more important than usual.

While land travel is possible, though dangerous in the unrelenting deserts, most of Old Kingdom civilization clusters around the Nile river. Water travel via barge is the most common way to move goods and people, and those who know how to pilot and maintain a ship will find steady work.

With the large-scale warfare of the era, Gamemasters may find the Mass Combat option from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* a useful addition to their heroes' visits to ancient Egypt.

Most character attributes will be unaffected in Old Kingdom Egypt, but consider the following changes:

- **Advantage—Language (Hieroglyphs):** Literacy rates in Old Kingdom Egypt were very low, in part because writing was taught exclusively to one social caste. Time travelers (or even locals) who can read and write hieroglyphs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Deception checks to pass themselves off as scribes, in addition to being able to read the local documents.
- **Advantage—Benefit (Status):** You were born into a better class than the common laborers, or your extraordinary abilities or personal education set you apart as valuable to your nation and your pharaoh. One rank of this Benefit represents a well-born merchant, scribe, or minor noble, and grants a +2 bonus to Persuasion and Intimidate checks against people of a lower class. Two ranks reflects noble lineage or training as a priest, increasing the circumstance bonus to Intimidate and Persuasion checks to +5. This benefit does not confer any wealth; you can easily be an impoverished but respected priest or a wealthy merchant from a common family or foreign nation.
- **Advantage—Benefit (Servant):** The lowest caste in Egypt, your invisibility grants you a certain anonymity, allowing you to move throughout the cities and even noble estates without drawing attention. This benefit functions as Hide in Plain Sight, but you may use the Deception skill to remain unnoticed in these circumstances rather than Stealth.
- Old Kingdom society tends to hold foreigners at arms' length, and so being an outsider—either a foreigner or a time traveler—counts as a Complication if the Gamemaster and player agree.

EGYPT OF EARTH-PRIME

In the Earth-Prime Egypt, the gods are not yet constrained by the Pact. They can and have meddled and shaped society for years, and Egypt is the shining star in their crowns: an empire filled with wealth, power, devotion, and learning. They adore it, insomuch as gods are ever devoted to anything, and as often happens when one is favored by one god (let alone so many), life is never boring or predictable for an Egyptian.

Mighty Heru-Ra—who would one day be reincarnated as the heroic Scarab—champion of the upstart Sun and its pet dynasty, towers over Egypt. He is said to cast light into the places where Egypt does not yet go and leads her armies to victory against the Sea Peoples, the Hittites, and other, more eldritch foes. The man who would one day become Overshadow, Tan-Aktor, was chief among these dark enemies, and saw seen his plans thwarted by Heru-Ra time and again. In the Old Kingdom, Tan-Aktor schemes in the shadows—wielding magic rather than the science favored by his future incarnation, working to take the Nile and to free Apep to devour the Earth. But Heru-Ra still opposes him in the palaces of Egypt, and Sutekh's champion, Sekhmak, strikes down his agents in the wastes with her mighty bow, Sutekh's Fang.

Other powers include Pharos, champion of light, and the god Horus, patron of champions, both mighty heroes who have distinguished themselves time and again in service to the Two Kingdoms.

The immortal inventor Daedelus, who spurned death in nearby Crete, lost his son only a few short centuries ago. While he wanders the world—including Egypt—it remains unknown whether he will apply his genius toward being a compassionate hero or a bitter villain.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Egypt saw the rise of military tactics like naval superiority and the chariot. Combat tended to be fast and fluid.

SLING

Simple but devastating in the hands of a trained warrior, the sling allows a soldier to hurl almost anything with speed and accuracy over an impressive distance.

Sling: Strength-based Ranged Damage 1 • *2 points*

SPIKED WHEELS

Set at shin-height, sharp blades fixed to chariot or cart wheels protected from anyone who tried to get too close, slicing their legs out from under them.

Spiked Wheels: Damage 4, Advantage: Move-by Action • *5 points*

STONE ARMOR

Soldiers of rank wore scale armor inset with semi-precious stones. Only the nobles could afford this armor; commoners generally went into battle lightly protected.

Stone Armor: Protection +2, Advantage: Second Chance (Persuasion checks to impress) • *3 points*

BARIS

The Egyptian naval supremacy was well-established on the back of their wooden sailing ships, stretching up to 90 feet in length. Lacking weapons of its own, a baris relied on archers drawn from the noble castes lining the upper deck to rain down fire on foes.

BARIS	9 POINTS
Size: Huge **Strength:** 8 **Speed:** 4 (water) **Defense:** –2 **Toughness:** 9 **Features:** Muscle-powered (and sail)	

WAR CHARIOT

The iconic Egyptian war innovation, the chariot was a mobile artillery platform holding two to three people. One handled the horses, the rest used their bows, javelins, or slingshots to soften up the enemy's infantry. The lighter chariots were pulled by two horses, while heavier artillery used three or four horses.

The chariot was eminently agile, maneuvering quickly around obstacles to strafe the enemy and disappear before opponents could retaliate.

WAR CHARIOT	13 POINTS
Size: Medium **Strength:** 3 **Speed:** 3 (ground) **Defense:** 5 **Toughness:** 7 **Features:** Muscle-powered	

VISITING HEROES

Heroes may visit Egypt for many reasons. As one of the crossroads of culture and power, it was the birthplace of many legendary superbeings. The conquests provided ample opportunity for glory and wealth, and a canny super could live a life of luxury as a favored confidant or guard of a wealthy noble.

Others may visit for more nefarious reasons. Artifacts of this period have always been desirable to colonizers. Gold and other precious metals are relatively cheap and common. People who go missing simply disappear forever, easily assumed to have been devoured by crocodiles or lions. There are ample opportunities for criminals.

Local superhumans are powerful in this era. Because of the network of intrigue, favor, and religion, many who would usually be classified as villains may be found in positions of power and responsibility. Visitors may face nobles or soldiers with superhuman powers, or even gods. On Earth-Prime, locals may pass off alien artifacts left behind by the Preservers as divine or magical weapons and not take kindly to strange outsiders arriving to take the key to their power. The descendants of refugees from lost civilizations like Atlantis may blend in among the locals, still hiding secrets or magic from their lost homelands. A few immortal or time-hopping villains may even originate in this era and use it as the model for the civilization they hope to build once they conquer the world.

Possible plot hooks:

- In a pitched battle against the Hittites, an Egyptian soldier's life is saved by a mysterious Hittite superhuman. He falls deeply in love and deserts the army to find his love, but deserters pay a heavy price, and the hunters are closing in quickly. They need help.
- A villain with elemental earth powers threatens to divert or dam the Nile, threatening thousands of people with drought, starvation, and flooding.
- A strange cult of Set-worshipers appears from the desert, manifesting chaotic powers and appearing to be part of a mind-web. Thebes is in chaos, and the Pharaoh demands that someone get rid of the cultists.
- The Pharaoh is a superhuman tyrant and institutes a cull of all superhumans, demanding that none should outshine him. He may be a dangerous adversary alone, but his armies and servants elevate him to a truly deadly foe.
- A group of Babylonian warriors commanding unheard of skills have targeted the Pharaoh, and have cut through everyone in their way.

LOCAL HEROES

Superheroes in Egypt are an accepted part of life, from the military to common laborers and artisans. While some may view them with suspicion, the Pharaoh welcomes all who would contribute extraordinary abilities to the black land. They are well-paid, and if the pet psychics and scryers watch them a little more closely than others, it is a small price to pay for comfort and wealth.

While supers have far more freedom than most, they are still caught within the power struggles endemic to this period. Their powers grant them status, but that status can be destroyed even by a non-powered being. Grudges between heroes are common, often resulting in bloody battles or duels. Supers in neighboring kingdoms may sway a monarch to or against war or sabotage a peace deal.

Superheroes of ancient Egypt may be people of extraordinary skill and training, demigods, magical creatures, mutations, or created by leftover alien or pre-historic civilizations. With the technical innovations of the era, technological superhumans may wield blades or impossibly sophisticated metals lost to history, chemists whose drugs and salves work miracles, or even—given the contemporary stories of Icarus and Daedalus across the sea—wearers of an ingenious flying harness. Whatever their origins, they likely serve the state in some capacity under the auspices of a pharaoh who may as well be a god for the absolute authority he wields. They may serve as priests or advisors or soldiers who battle foreign armies and superhumans as well as supernatural threats from the desert. As powerful guardians of the nation, a campaign focusing on PL 10 or 12 superhumans would combine the tropes form modern superhero campaigns with historic war stories.

Domestic heroes likely occupy a position of power and responsibility. A PL 8 team of minor nobles with superhuman powers may even serve as de facto rulers of a remote settlement, ruling it on behalf of the pharaoh and protecting it from natural disasters, threats from the

desert, and worker uprisings. The success or failure of that community brings the heroes glory or dooms them to obscurity.

The cities of the Old Kingdom represent the largest and most sophisticated urban centers of their day, and like any city they are rampant with seedy criminal endeavors. The rich exploit the poor, the strong prey upon the weak. An unusual historical campaign might position the heroes as minor PL 6 superhumans in this early urban landscape, trying to protect the helpless from urban predators, or even as rebels working to free an enslaved people or undermine the military expansion of the Egyptian empire. Additional adventure might require these vigilantes and rebels to brave the traps, curses, and guardians protecting the pyramids and other royal tombs to uncover treasures, artifacts, or literal buried secrets.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

CHARIOTEER	PL 4 • MR3 • 45 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 2 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Bow, Stone Armor, Sword, War Chariot.	
Advantages: Benefit (Status: Minor Noble), Equipment 6, Move-by Action, Second Chance (Persuasion checks to impress).	
Skills: Athletics 5 (+6), Intimidation 2 (+3), Persuasion 2 (+3), Technology 2 (+2), Vehicles 7 (+10).	
Offense: Init +3, Bow +3 (Ranged, Damage 3), Sword +2 (Close, Damage 4), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 2, Fortitude 3, Toughness 4, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 0 + Advantages 8 + Skills 9 (18 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 45	

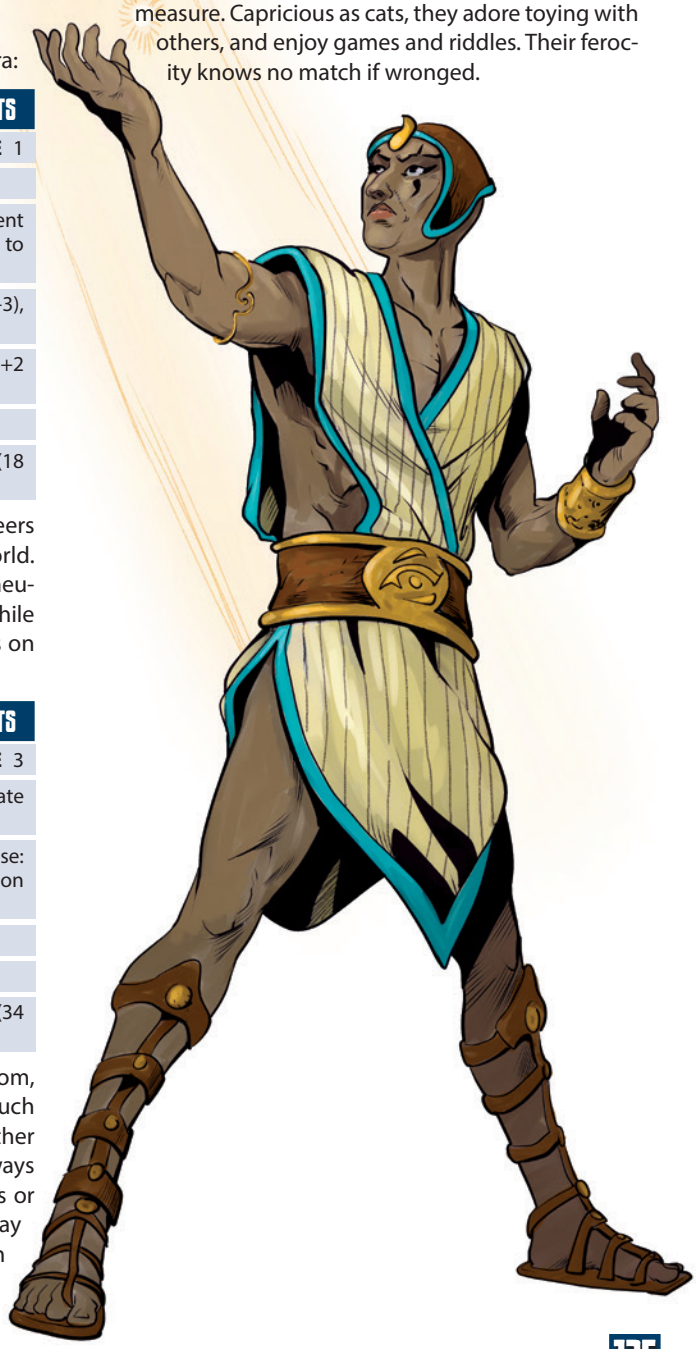
Drawn from noble families, Egypt's fearsome charioteers made their army the most feared in the Bronze Age world. A charioteer is the tank commander of his day, maneuvering across the battlefield with speed and grace while protected from harm and unleashing ranged assaults on enemy soldiers.

PRIEST	PL 1 • MR3 • 44 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 0 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 1 **INT** 3 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3	
Advantages: Benefit 2: (Status: Priest), Connected, Fascinate (Expertise: Religion), Language (Hieroglyphs), Ritualist.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+7), Expertise: Magic 5 (+8), Expertise: Religion 7 (+10), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+7), Persuasion 6 (+9), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6).	
Offense: Init +0, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 0, Parry 1, Fortitude 0, Toughness 0, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 5 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 0 = 44	

Among the most powerful people in the Old Kingdom, priests served as politicians and royal advisors as much as religious leaders, and existed to serve the gods rather than the people. Studied both in politics and the ways of magic, they can bring down the wrath of the gods or the nation with equal ease. More powerful priests may wield active magic, similar to the Arcane Cultist minion found in the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*.

SPHINX	PL 8 • MR8 • 110 POINTS
STR 5 **STA** 8 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 4 **INT** 6 **AWE** 4 **PRE** 5	
Powers: Flight 5 (60 MPH; Wings), Growth 4 (Innate; Permanent), **Tooth and Claw** Strength-based Damage 1.	
Advantages: Animal Empathy, Assessment, Daze (Intimidation), Power Attack, Ritualist, Seize Initiative, Well-informed.	
Skills: Close Combat: Natural Weapons 6 (+10), Deception 4 (+9), Expertise: History 6 (+12), Expertise: Magic 4 (+10), Insight 5 (+9), Intimidation 3 (+10), Perception 8 (+12), Stealth 4 (+4).	
Offense: Init +3, Bite and Claw +10 (Close, Damage 6).	
Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 6, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8, Will 8.	
Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 14 + Advantages 7 + Skills 20 (40 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 110	

With the bodies of big cats and the faces of humans, sphinx were guardians of ancient places—tombs, treasure vaults, mountain passes—who could be kind or wicked in equal measure. Capricious as cats, they adore toying with others, and enjoy games and riddles. Their ferocity knows no match if wronged.



IMPERIAL ROME

CIRCA 100 CE

Rome looms large in modern minds, with many modern western traditions and attitudes—from manners to the structure of roads—hailing from the empire that once dominated most of Europe, northern Africa and western Asia. The Pax Romana was a golden age of the Roman Empire that brought about economic prosperity, urbanization, travel, multiculturalism, and untold wealth. It is an age of exploration, scientific innovation, war, and conspiracy, where discovery and secrets flourish in equal measure. New foods, languages, and religions pop up weekly, and these rapid changes lead to a population both hungry for more and struggling to keep up. The sitting emperor in 100 CE, Trajan, is the first ruler of Rome not to be born in Italy, and throughout the empire attitudes are shifting to see everyone as a common nation, rather than dividing the populace into "Italians" and "other Romans."

But life isn't perfectly cosmopolitan. While the empire embraces new conquests, those foreigners and conquests who won't assimilate are targeted for violence and oppression. Many non-sanctioned religions, such as the druids, are persecuted and outlawed, and must practice in secret, even as elite Romans experiment with cults and secret societies to alleviate boredom. Slavery—mostly drawn from war captives or criminals and thankfully not generational—remains a backbone of the empire, while women are little more than livestock. Dissent and conspiracy run rampant, and those missed by the empire's booming economy turn to crime and violence to survive.

Everyday life for most Romans consists of short work days—stretching from dawn until noon—followed by a dip in the public baths and afternoon leisure. Theater is at its height, with every city featuring open-air amphitheaters featuring productions filled with violence, sex, and crass body humor—comedy and musicals loom large, as attendees can get their need for drama and bloodshed at the coliseum instead. Chariot races are so popular that citizens form clubs to support their favorite teams and riot over wins and losses. Urban streets are crowded with performers—animal trainers, musicians, acrobats, and nude mimes—as well as frequent festivals to various gods. Nights are for drinking and friends, though a lack of public lighting means most of the city grows deathly quiet and vacant soon after sunset. An enormous gulf separates the rich—who live in private estates, enjoy luxuries, and oversee hordes of servants and slaves—and the poor, who subsist on gruel and bread, live in one-room flats, and generally die young. The direness of poverty in Rome makes for a thriving criminal element similar to modern cities, with drugs, robbery, and extortion all rampant.

Despite the name Pax Romana ("Roman Peace"), war remains the business of the empire, with active fronts in Dacia (Romania) and Parthia (Iran). Many conquered people refuse to be ruled; the Celts of Britanni, for example, rebelled only to be put down violently in 61 CE, and even now their island remains a highly hostile frontier in the empire. Likewise, conservative Romans have no tolerance for this new wave of acceptance for outsiders in their empire, and nationalist Roman groups form to shape politics or attack convenient targets. The empire's great expanse means that dangers can arrive from almost anywhere in the ancient world, from corrupt royal guards to Persian spies to Chinese traders smuggling illegal goods. In a super-heroic past those dangers are doubled as the magical practices, gods, weird science, and strange creatures from Europe, Asia, and Africa mingle.

For a grittier Rome, the empire begins its decline around 180 CE, and by 400 CE it has lost most of its former territories to local uprisings and foreign marauders. Ruins and near-empty cities mark sites of former glory, and the collapse of infrastructure mirrors a post-apocalyptic world as survivors struggle to feed themselves let alone trade or

build anew. This is a Rome ideal for bleak, Iron Age-style vigilantes or foreboding warnings to visitors about what may lie ahead for the modern world.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Travel in Imperial Rome is overland via walking or—more rarely—horses and animal carts. While high-quality roads speed travel, the result is still a much larger world than the modern one. Movement powers provide a larger advantage story-wise than they would be in a modern game. Likewise, the large number of languages spoken across the empire makes Comprehend quite useful.

Most character attributes will be unaffected in Imperial Rome, but consider the following changes:

- **Skill—Technology:** Much of Roman engineering is based on mechanical design, using gears and pulleys—and some clockworks "borrowed" from the Greeks—to construct a huge variety of industrial technology such as cranes, mills, and pumps. While computers and engines don't exist in Imperial Rome, the Technology skill is still broadly used. Using Roman tools to repair or build modern technology imposes a –5 circumstance penalty.
- **Advantage—Benefit (Status):** Status in Imperial Rome begins with citizenship, and characters who do not have Benefit (Roman Citizenship) cannot benefit from any other statuses they might possess within imperial Rome unless they can believably fake their citizenship.
- **Advantage—Languages:** Latin is the most common language in the empire, with Greek being the language of intellectuals and academics. Coptic (the language of Egypt) is common along the empire's eastern half. Gothic, Celtic, and other languages of the northern frontiers are considered vulgar.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Rome makes good use of earlier innovations, such as the chariot (see **New Equipment** in **Old Kingdom Egypt**) and the ballista. Some of the most iconic include:

BALLISTA

Developed by the Greeks, ballista are crossbow-like siege engines that fire javelin-sized bolts. A ballista must be reset and reloaded (a Standard action) before it can be fired again. Larger ballista do more damage but tend to be less accurate. The Romans also used a polybolos, or repeating ballista, another Greek development, which replaces the Increased Action flaw with Unreliable (5 uses).

Ballista: Ranged Damage 6 (Penetrating; Increased Action, Inaccurate) • *11 points*

PLUMBATA

These lead throwing darts are smaller and easier to maneuver than a javelin. Unlike a javelin, plumbata can't be used in melee combat.

Plumbata: Strength-based Ranged Damage 2 • *4 points*

ROME OF EARTH-PRIME

Perhaps the most iconic superhero in Imperial Rome was Simon Magus, the Master Mage. Magus fought against incursions by the Greek, Etruscan, and Norse gods and established the Pact, a binding ritual that radically altered how powerful supernatural creatures could move to and from Earth, requiring them to be called by a vessel or bound to an anchor. Afterward, many gods saw Earth as more trouble than it was worth, but others saw the Pact as an affront to their divinity and renewed their attacks on the realm, operating through cults and champions. Magus operates from his native Alexandria.

Just as Rome inherited much of its science and religion from Greece, it also inherited many superbeings. The immortal sorceress Medea leads her own all-cabal of wizards in the heart of Rome itself, while the inventor Daedalus traveled and performed heroic deeds alongside his friend, the heroic golem Talos. The resurrected minotaur, Taurus, hunts Daedalus at the behest of Hades, but lacks much of the hard-won intellect and skill that he possesses in modern Freedom City. The secretive serpent folk were an active threat as well, replacing powerful citizens with their own shape-shifting agents and sparking new, human cults to their unnamed god.

PILUM

A javelin with a long, barbed iron tip, the pilum is designed to lodge itself into shields and armor, making them too heavy and awkward to use.

Pilum: Strength-based Ranged Damage 2, Linked to Ranged Nullify Equipment 4 (Alternate Resistance: Parry; Limited to Defenses) • *6 points*

GLADIATOR ARMOR

Gladiators wore a variety of armor to fill different roles, but most of it offered little protection and relied on a wearer's skill to protect them, as well as shields or their own bulk.

Gladiator Armor: Protection 2, Advantage (Improved Defense) • *3 points*

LORICA SEGMENTATA

The segmented cuirass of the Roman legions offered protection and mobility.

Lorica Segmentata: Protection 3 • *3 points*

TRIREME

The backbone of the Roman navy, a trireme is a fast, maneuverable vessel that uses sails or over a hundred rowers depending on the sea conditions. Equipped with a grappling arm called a corvus, they can seize other vessels for boarding, or rely on ballistae and small catapults (increase the cost for appropriate Damage ranks) for exclusively naval warfare.

TRIREME	15 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan **Strength:** 12 **Speed:** 3 (swimming; Quirk: surface only) **Defense:** 4 **Toughness:** 11 **Powers:** Impervious, Toughness 8 **Features:** Manipulator (corvus), Muscle-powered (plus sails)

VISITING HEROES

Time travelers generally arrive in Rome in search of knowledge about (or to alter) European history or long-standing western conspiracies. With many secrets of Roman engineering and many spoils of conquest now lost to time, the only way to uncover a lost stronghold or historical treasure may be time travel. Villains looking to destroy the United States or modern Russia may travel back to destroy the republic that inspired them, while a megalomaniac may become the immortal emperor of Europe's largest empire and create a future where the empire never falls.

Rome is a civilization of cities, and may look familiar to 21st-century visitors. Their engineering and concrete allows for dense urban centers filled with three-to-seven story apartment buildings lined with ground-floor shops, as well as expansive libraries, universities, theaters, and parks. Ample restaurants, running water, and indoor plumbing all improve the quality of life. Following the Great Fire under Nero, streets were renovated to be wide and accessible—perfect for super-heroic brawls. The cities are diverse, with foreign populations and even transgender citizens sharing their daily lives with their neighbors.

But in many ways, Rome stands apart. The population is conservative; they consider rich clothing and ornamentation—especially on men—crass, and people are expected to not stand out or demand attention. Like Egyptians, Romans kept slaves, and although their model for slavery—usually imposed on criminals and prisoners of war, or else an indentured servitude professionals could sell themselves into—differs greatly from later chattel slavery, it remains a delicate topic and best discussed with players if you want to include it as a plot point. Likewise, ancient Roman culture had distinct, strict, and limited roles for women that is best glossed over at a modern game table or else discussed with players beforehand.

Possible plot hooks:

- The heroes find themselves standing between the Roman army and a force they are besieging, and both sides assume the odd strangers work for their enemies.
- The heroes learn of an assassination plot against a Roman emperor who isn't assassinated (as far as the history books know).
- The heroes are thrown into the coliseum and must battle gladiators and dangerous animals before they can escape.
- The heroes must find Simon Magus and learn how the Pact was created so they can maintain it (or destroy it) in their time.

LOCAL HEROES

Rome viewed education as a virtue and a family responsibility, with tutors and private schools common across the empire, and so heroic backgrounds related to education are especially appropriate. Gadgeteers focus on mechanical wonders, perhaps even constructing steam-powered robots and clockwork battle suits. While mages are more likely to follow the path of study—Hermetic magic—than spiritual traditions. The nation's extensive trade networks and roads mean fighting styles from all over the world; Celtic berserkers to Arabian aesthetics to swordfighters from the east may congregate in the same city to teach their skills or battle for control.

Inborn or granted powers—such as psychic powers, mutations, and powers gained through random accidents—are less in-theme, with the exception being demigods and divine vessels. Heroes with "un-earned" power are generally viewed with suspicion, and the expectation that any misfortune that befalls them is somehow more deserved.

Local heroes are likely to focus on the peace and stability of the empire (or at least their own city) rather than adventuring abroad. While all roads lead to Rome, many massive cities exist within the empire and call out for champions—Alexandria in Egypt, Byzantium on the Black Sea, Carthage in North Africa, and Corinth in Greece—while the stretches of land in-between host small towns, farms, rugged wilderness, and the ruins of older civilizations. Dangers may hail from the new, such as mechanisms and weird science of the era, or threats may come from the past in the form of unearthed magic, undead, or forgotten secret societies.

With its cosmopolitan cityscapes, Imperial Rome is an ideal setting for an anachronistic superhero game that plays fast and loose with history and mythology, translating modern concepts by associating them with historical Roman traditions, institutions, and public figures. The heroes may be part of an elite Praetorian guard serving the emperor and stopping superhuman threats, or independent vigilantes battling crime, corruption, weird mechanisms, and supernatural dangers. A "Defenders of the Empire" campaign could easily be a standard PL 10 superhero game with a thin coat of Greco-Roman paint, with many of the heroes hailing from high-born families and battling unlikely foes ranging from giant monsters to gods to automated war machines gone haywire.

A campaign inspired by *Hero High* may revolve around an elite school for demigods, or a training academy for super-powered beings being trained as gladiators. Students struggle to find their place in a very strict society, or make friends with others they ultimately know they need to battle. While the typical *Hero High* game is set at PL 8, one focused on young gods or demigods could easily be expanded to PL 10 or 12—ideally still limited to 120pp, forcing players to make some hard choices about their skills and powers.

Low-powered urban vigilantes can take advantage of the empire's intrigue and mysteries, fighting corruption, taking on dangerous cults, and enforcing a justice that the decadent empire won't. Such champions of the downtrodden are likely drawn from the common people—laborers, servants, slaves, and immigrants—who rely on skills, muscle, and a sharp blade to deliver justice. For a PL 6 to 8 Roman vigilantes game, foes might range from urban criminals and crime lords to stealthy supernatural predators to ancient curses.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

CHAMPION GLADIATOR	PL 7 • MR6 • 82 POINTS
STR 4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: Gladiator Armor, Net (+2 Grab checks, Advantage [Fast Grab, Improved Hold], No Damage), Trident (Close Damage 2, Advantages [Improved Disarm, Improved Critical], Reach).	
Advantages: Assessment, Attractive, Benefit (Status: Champion Gladiator), Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll, Diehard, Equipment 3, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Taunt, Weapon Bind.	
Skills: Athletics 5 (+9), Deception 8 (+10), Expertise (PRE): Working the Crowd 6 (+8), Expertise: Popular Culture 2 (+2), Insight 2 (+3), Vehicles 8 (+10).	
Offense: Init +4, Net +7 (Fast Grab +6), Trident +7 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 4).	
Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 8, Toughness 7/4*, Will 4 *Without Defensive Roll and Improved Defense.	
Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 0 + Advantages 15 + Skills 16 (31 ranks) + Defenses 17 = 82	

The superstars of Rome, gladiators commanded incredible respect and privilege despite despite originally being slaves and convicts. Rome had several standard roles for gladiators to play in the coliseum, complete with custom equipment and weapons. This champion is outfitted as a retiarius, a fisherman-themed gladiator wielding a net and trident and wearing only an arm guard and shoulder plate as armor.

For less imposing or trainee gladiators, use the statistics for a **Crook** (*Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*), replacing their pistol with a sword and small shield. This increases their Defenses to Dodge 3, Parry 3 and provides the additional attack Sword +2 (Close, Damage 4).

LEGIONARY	PL 5 • MR4 • 48 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 3 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 2 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 0	
Equipment: Lorica Segmata Armor, Medium Wooden Shield, Pilum, Spear, Sword.	
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Equipment 5, Favored Environment (Large Formations), Quick Draw, Set-up, Teamwork.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+7), Expertise: Survival 4 (+4), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+4), Intimidation 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Thrown 5 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+2).	
Offense: Init +1, Pilum +5 (Ranged, Damage 5), Spear +4 (Close, Damage 6), Sword +4 (Close, Damage 6), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 3).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 4, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 11 + Skills 12 (23 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 48	

The backbone of the Roman armies, legionaries are professional soldiers armed with the latest military technology of their day. Trained in close and ranged combat, they are especially deadly when fighting as a coordinated unit, with each legionary looking out for the soldier next to him. While soldiers first and foremost, they also served the empire as a police force and engineers. In Rome's decline, mercenaries replaced the well-trained legionaries.

SENATOR	PL 3 • MR3 • 45 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 0 **INT** 2 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3	
Equipment: Knife.	
Advantages: Connected, Contacts, Equipment 1, Fascinate (Persuasion), Inspire, Second Chance (Insight Checks).	
Skills: Deception 6 (+9), Expertise: Politics 7 (+9), Expertise: History 3 (+5), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+7), Persuasion 8 (+11).	
Offense: Init +0, Knife +0 (Close, Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 1, Fortitude 2, Toughness 1, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 18 + Powers 0 + Advantages 6 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 4 = 45	

Roman senators are cunning and educated politicians whose plots shaped the lives of millions. While far from dangerous in a fight, their skills and connections allow them to weave great webs of intrigue.

ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE

CIRCA 900 CE

The Islamic Golden Age, under the Abbasid Caliphate, spanned continents and centuries and provided the foundation for the science and technology essential to the modern era. During this period, collecting and growing human knowledge is both a mission and a mandate. Caliph Harun al-Rashid opens the House of Wisdom in Baghdad as the center for learning and innovation, and scholars, scientists, doctors, astronomers, mathematicians, and alchemists from around the world gather to share ideas and make use of the growing library of human knowledge. These academics come from across the Middle East, Africa, and China, and the knowledge and wealth they generate spreads throughout the caliphate.

After overthrowing the Umayyad dynasty in 750 CE, the Abbasids rule over Persia, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Spain. Their caliphate establishes a new and more international era that determines members of the empire through shared faith rather than Arab ancestry.

Education flourishes through madrassas and universities, the first—the University of al-Qarawiyyin—established by Fatima al-Fihriya in Morocco in 859 CE. This accessibility also ensures knowledge is not strictly the realm of the wealthy and connected, and promising individuals can receive rigorous in their fields of choice regardless of gender or background. The arrival and widespread use of paper from China, along with a simplified Arabic writing system, democratizes knowledge, with high literacy rates among the general population. The wealth in the region means major trading cities from Madrid to Timbuktu sell handwritten Arabic books, and therefore the latest innovations. In contrast to the Dark Ages taking place in Europe during the same period, the Arabic world's medical science—from an understanding of nutrition to how to treat wounds and disease—breaks from the previous theories and drastically improves the quality of life. Hospitals and 24-hour pharmacies provide universal healthcare, and doctors are required to treat any patient who comes to them for aid. Among the many scientific advances during the time, engineering, astronomy and alchemy make particular strides, leading to an abundance of mechanical inventions, interstellar findings, and alchemical innovations.

The Golden Age is equally a time of artistic expression and growth, and many find their living and even fortune in music, art, literature, poetry, dance, architecture, and legal or religious philosophical thought. The caliphate encourages and sponsors these disciplines as much as the sciences, and the prevalent travel and cultural exchange of the time fuels an evolution of a wide range of ideas and forms of expression from diverse voices. The collection of folktales that will eventually become known as *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights* in the modern era first takes shape during the 10th century, along with the literary genre of philosophical novels and poems.

This era holds great opportunities for heroes who are self-motivated scholars, curious inventors, or fortune seekers. Those with superior intellect or incredible will have the environment and resources to become master inventors or alchemical prodigies, using their power to uncover and fend off the daily onslaught of both human and supernatural threats arriving in Baghdad and other major metropolises. Adventurers can find government or private patrons to sponsor trips to newly conquered lands, neighboring kingdoms, or unexplored territories to bring back the latest knowledge and magic.

In a super-heroic version of the Golden Age, the Caliphate has a vested interest in keeping the peace and prosperity of the time. Just as the Caliphate devotes resources to guards for its palaces, important buildings, and city streets, those brought up in madrassas with more unique gifts are tasked with protecting the empire from both human and supernatural threats. Unfortunately, neighboring empires and creatures of legend aren't the only dangers to the caliphate. Not every madrassa student graduates with noble intentions for their abilities or knowledge: heroes can find themselves facing former peers attempting to overthrow

the caliphate, alchemists untroubled by the morals of their experiments, or members of fading magic lines striking deals with jinn to reclaim their power and prestige.

The Islamic Golden Age also offers heroes a chance for weird science adventures and street level campaigns, from investigating strange events to vigilantes keeping order in a metropolis. The strides in astronomy present the chance for discovering alien visitors; and earthly explorations of both knowledge- and glory-seekers stumbling across imprisoned jinn, uninhabited desert tombs lurking with shapeshifting ghuls, and booby-trapped vaults.

Though this society flourishes for centuries, Baghdad and the House of Wisdom are ultimately sacked during a Mongol invasion in 1258 CE, and an untold number of books and the knowledge in them are lost.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

The Abbasid Caliphate extends across multiple moder nations. Lands from Queen Gudit and the Zagwe Dynasty in Ethiopia to the reunified China under the Song dynasty are accessible through well-traveled trade routes on land and sea. Whether traveling or in a major city, characters with Comprehend or skills in relevant languages are required for any type of local interaction, with Arabic absolutely essential and the more languages the better given the diversity of the caliphate and surrounding lands.

The advancements in science and especially medicine in this era means visiting characters only suffer a –2 circumstance penalty to use local tools for Treatment checks and Technology checks involving chemistry, but suffer a –5 penalty for most other applications of Technology.

- **Advantage—Languages:** Arabic is the primary language of the Caliphate, but Greek, Latin, Spanish, Syriac, Persian, and Mandarin are all prevalent and likely to be spoken by merchants and scholars.
- **Skill—Expertise (Science):** Though time travelers will have to be wary of how much they impart if they are concerned about altering the course of history, sharing knowledge that advances any science, including chemistry, biology, physics, and astronomy, are immediate paths to greater status, access, and regard.
- **Skill—Expertise (Alchemy):** Alchemy exists as a distinct science in this era, and Gamemasters may allow local heroes and villains to substitute Expertise (Alchemy) checks to use the Artificer and Inventor Advantages.

NEW EQUIPMENT

The Caliphate absorbed Greek, Roman, and Chinese inventions, improving daily life and scholarly study. The Golden Age's particular advancements include:

SURGICAL TOOLS

On hand at major hospitals and doctors' practices, the surgical tools of the Islamic Golden Age are the most advanced in this period.

Surgical Tools: Enhanced Skill (Treatment 2), Feature (tools; Treatment), Advantage: Second Chance (Treatment checks to stabilize) • *3 points*

DAMASCUS STEEL BLADE

Developed in Damascus, Syria, these swords are uniquely durable and sharp. They are identifiable by the water-like patterning on the blade, though most people have only heard of them and never expect to see one. The forging technique was lost in the centuries following the Islamic Golden Age. Anyone seen carrying a Damascus blade is reasonably assumed to be the artisan who made it, meaning they are of rare talent and skill even in a highly educated era, or at least absurdly connected and wealthy.

Damascus Steel Blade: Strength-based close damage 3, Penetrating, Advantage: Benefit (Status: Elite Artisan) • *7 points*

ALCHEMY LAB

The standard ingredients of an alchemist's lab provide the building blocks for transforming one type of matter into another. The reactive agents are limited, their effects permanent, and they are volatile and may produce unexpected results if deployed by an unskilled scientist, so the Caliphate closely monitors these items. Consequently, many alchemical components and tools are kept under lock and key in official laboratories and madrassas.

Alchemy Lab: Transform 2 (Broad [solids to solids], Continuous; Check Required [Expertise: Alchemy, DC 15) • *4 points*

THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE OF EARTH-PRIME

Master Mage Simon Magus's Pact has sealed the gods away from the world of mortals by now, but does little to guard against lesser supernatural threats which still prowl the world. The Abbasid Caliphate encompasses what was once Colchis—modern day Georgia—the home of the sorceress Medea (*Freedom City, Third Edition*), and several of the mystical creatures mentioned in the myths of her homeland, such as harpies and dragons, still prowl the mountains there, defying the rise of science. Medea herself remains largely absent from the region during its golden age, however. The gathered knowledge of the era made the caliphate home to a succession of Master Mages during its 500-year lifespan, and even those Master Mages not native to the region visited to exploit its expansive libraries.

The era is home to many other wonders and threats in modern-day Earth Prime. The immortal master of life called Amir ibn-Azoth al Khem—now known as Doctor Azathoth (*Threat Report*)—poses a serious threat to Alexandria in this era as his increasingly reckless experimentation brings more and more dangerous beings to life. While it originates in a far earlier era, the Khanjar of Vengeance (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*) appears repeatedly in this era to confound politics and prosperity. One of the great corruptors of the Golden Age, the Caliph Vathek the Appeaser (*Rogues Gallery*) was still a mortal sorcerer and scientist, well under the sway of his infernal master. Use the **Mystic** hero archetype from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* to reflect his abilities in his home era.

VISITING HEROES

The Islamic Golden Age holds a wealth of scientific innovation and magical discoveries—much of it lost when the Mongols destroyed the empire centuries later—and time travelers likely arrive to obtain or alter them. Villains can set a multitude of modern sciences back centuries, including medicine or mathematics, while aliens keen to remain undiscovered can sabotage the Golden Age's observatories and delay human space exploration.

Villains with an anti-Islam agenda have an abundance of targets: many rulers not under the Caliphate also practiced Islam, including later-era kingdoms in Ghana, Mali, and Ethiopia, and played an essential part in the wealth, trade, and sharing and cementing of religious and academic ideas. Disruption or destruction of any part of this flourishing society can easily ripple out not just into the realms of human knowledge, but can actively damage later empires such as the Ottomans, likewise setting back modern nations and culture. Such destruction could also set back Europe's climb out of the Dark Ages, as the introduction of knowledge preserved in Abbasid libraries helped jump-start the Renaissance.

Medical science, mathematics, physics, and astronomy all operating on an early form of the scientific method. Education and medical care are accessible, and the architecture of these city centers—especially buildings of societal and cultural significance like mosques or universities—reflect the latest in structural engineering and fine art. The Caliphate encompasses multiple major cities, with hubs of travel and learning from Spain to North Africa to modern Iraq. Diverse populations are not only common but welcome. Visitors whose notions of Muslim society were informed by 21st-century pop culture may be surprised to discover the acceptance of many sexualities and genders. Visitors may encounter individuals who would later be labeled homosexual, bisexual, transgender, agender, and gender non-conforming all living in the caliphate openly.

Those acquainted with modern Islam or Middle Eastern culture will also find much of Golden Age society familiar. In addition to the flourishing sciences, the Islamic Golden Age was a period of discussion and development of Islamic law, philosophy, and jurisprudence, with scholars dedicating their lives to these pursuits. Though major cities and the roads and oceans between them see a multitude of people hailing from Spain to China, the dominant culture and social norms are intrinsically Muslim. Visiting heroes (and players) operate best with an understanding of and respect for the culture and religious practice.

Possible plot hooks:

- The heroes arrive in search of a scientific secret rediscovered in modern times that causes untold damage, to destroy or hide it before it to undo this catastrophe.
- The heroes pursue alien invaders to stop them from interfering with human extraterrestrial exploration.
- The heroes are lost in time and need to collaborate with the scientific minds of the era to return home.

LOCAL HEROES

The caliphate sponsors scientists, scholars, academics, poets, and many other people of learning, without restriction to gender or background, to pursue their field of specialty. Heroes naturally emerge from this pursuit of knowledge, sometimes on purpose with self-experimentation yielding superhuman gifts, and sometimes by accident, with the classic lab explosion bestowing strange abilities to scientists or hapless bystanders. These scientific discoveries are often applied to a lesser extent to guards, soldiers, caliphate-sponsored traders, adventurers, and spies to grant advantages in their lines of work. A PL8-10 game based in Baghdad could pit super-powered scientists (or science experiments) defending the capitol city against magical and supernatural threats—a clash of heroes to reflect the clashing ideals of the era.

Heroes of world-class skill can easily find their home in this era where madrassas cultivate both specialists and jacks-of-all-trades from a young age, and the most promising minds and talents are encouraged and sponsored. Brilliant gadgeteers and alchemists as well as fighters trained in styles that span the empire can find careers serving in any of the major cities, could strike out on their own as adventurers and fortune-seekers, or work as street-level heroes protecting those who might otherwise slip through the cracks.

Magic powers, either studied or inborn, might still be found in the early decades of the Golden Age, but are increasingly frowned on as both unscientific and against Islam. Any who find themselves from magic houses or lineages, or who pursue magic study against all odds, will at best struggle to justify their value in a logic-driven world, and increasingly be viewed as threats to society. Supernatural beings like jinn and ghuls are boogeymen that loom large in the public consciousness even if encountering them is rare, and anyone bearing similarities to these creatures would be treated as inherently dangerous.

Much as the people of the Golden Age aren't geographically restricted, adventures aren't either: caravan roads and shipping routes lead to Spain and Portugal, through China to the coast, and south into landlocked kingdoms like Mali and the Kanem-Bornu Empire in North Africa, all of which have their own bustling trade centers, fonts of wealth and wisdom, and interests in collaborating with or defending against one another. Whether on a mission for the caliphate or adventuring independently, traveling heroes can find themselves in demand from rulers of empires to wealthy merchants and scholars to the everyday person in need of a bit of help.

With frequent travel in the empire, and new discoveries coming in and out of Baghdad daily, heroes can also find themselves investigating weird happenings, stopping unsanctioned science experiments, and capturing supernatural creatures run amok. A science detective squad of PL8 heroes could serve to uncover and eliminate these threats before they grow out of hand; while similar level heroes equipped for travel and exploration could seek out the weirdness within the empire and its neighbors to acquire it for power, profit, or simply the pursuit of knowledge.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

ALCHEMIST	PL 3 • MR4 • 60 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 0 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 1 **INT** 4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 2	
Powers: Alchemy Continuous Transform 4 (Anything to anything; Check Required 6 [Expertise: Alchemy, DC 15], Slow [Full Round]).	
Advantages: Benefit (Status: Leading Academic), Eidetic Memory, Inventor, Languages 3 (Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Spanish).	
Skills: Expertise: Alchemy 8 (+12), Expertise: Philosophy 6 (+10), Insight 2 (+4), Technology 4 (+8), Treatment 2 (+6).	
Offense: Init +1, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 3, Fortitude 1, Toughness 0, Will 4.	
Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 14 + Advantages 6 + Skills 11 (22 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 60	

Specialists in the emerging art and science of alchemy, these scholars have dedicated themselves to the study so thoroughly that they have managed to imbue themselves with the ability to transmute matter. As caliphate-sponsored academics and researchers, they have exclusive access to particular research libraries in major cities. They're generally well-regarded by their peers in academia and the general public for their contributions to society, as well as for their dedicated embodiment of the tenants of Islam to gather and grow knowledge.

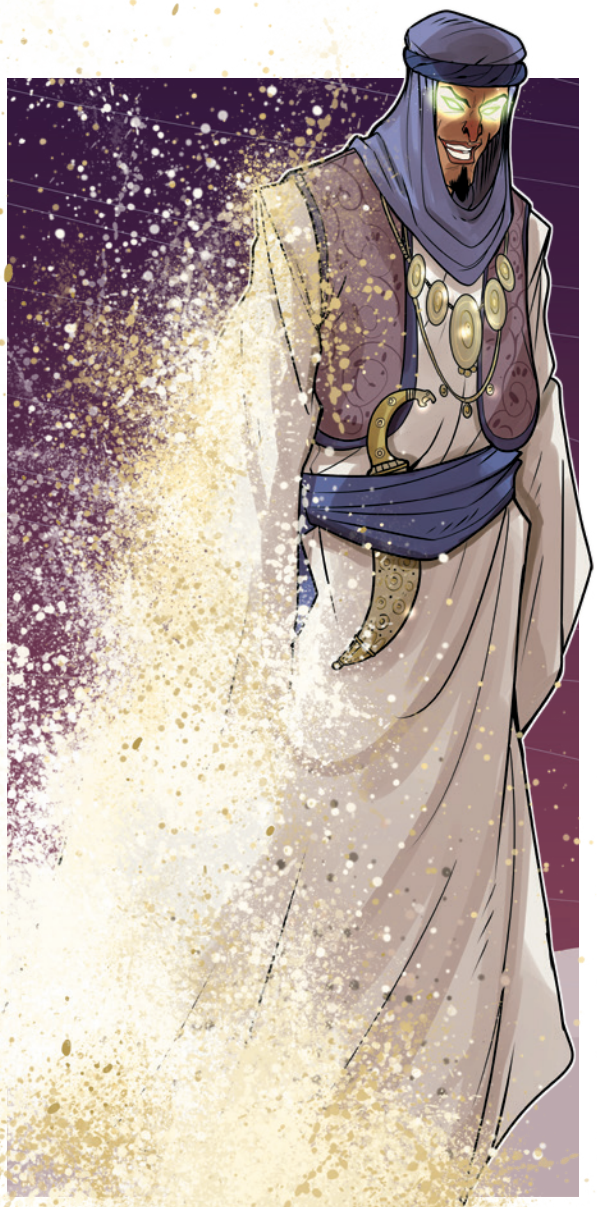
JINN	PL 7 • MR9 • 135 POINTS
STR 6 **STA** 6 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 2 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 5	
Powers: Element Control Ranged Damage 7, AE: Move Object 7; **Born of the Wind** Flight 8 (500 MPH); **Inconstant Form** Insubstantial 3, **AE:** Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses), **AE:** Morph 3 (Animals).	
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Fascinate (Persuasion), Ranged Attack 3.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+9), Intimidation 4 (+9), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+9).	
Offense: Init +2, Element Control +5 (Ranged, Damage 7), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 6).	
Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6, Will 7.	
Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 48 + Advantages 6 + Skills 9 (18 ranks) + Defenses 14 = 135	

Less powerful than djinn (see *Atlas of Earth-Prime*), jinn straddle the divide between natural and supernatural. They are shapeshifters and children of the elements, pushed out to the remote deserts by the expansion in size and power of the caliphate. Though not inherently evil, jinn are self-serving, and are keen to meet their need for fine food and treasure by taking it or by striking one-sided bargains with foolish locals. While most jinn can command a specific element, such as fire or water, more powerful subjects have been able to possess people, summon swarms of insects or rats, or teleport across the world in a moment.

Jinn have no intrinsic ability to grant wishes, but often take advantage of human ignorance by promising to, and eventually bringing some version of that wish into being through a combination of their powers and favors owed. But they aren't bound to keep their word as djinn are.

ROYAL GUARD	PL 6 • MR5 • 71 POINTS
STR 4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 5 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Bow, Chain-mail, Scimitar (Damage 3).	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Diehard, Equipment 3, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Interpose, Second Chance (Resisting mind control), Teamwork.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+8), Insight 4 (+7), Intimidation 4 (+5), Perception 6 (+9), Ranged Combat: Bow 4 (+5).	
Offense: Init +6, Bow +5 (Ranged, Damage 3), Scimitar +5 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 4).	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 7, Will 7.	
Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 0 + Advantages 11 + Skills 11 (22 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 71	

Guards charged with protecting important people and locations are skilled and highly trained, often hailing from madrassas. With the era's support of education, many are also trained in unexpected skills, such as music, philosophy, or history.



MEDIEVAL EUROPE

CIRCA 1000 CE

The Middle Ages were a paradox: a time of beautiful literature, soaring architecture, optimism, and expansive growth, riddled with religious intolerance, danger, and crushing poverty. It was also headed for the triple disaster of economic failure, cooling climate, and plague. Although the time between the Roman Empire and the Renaissance is referred to as the "Middle Ages" or the "Medieval Period," this period of history can be broken down into smaller eras: The "Early Middle Ages," (500-900 CE) The "High Middle Ages," (1000-1200 CE) and the "Late Middle Ages" (1200-1300 CE). Each of these eras within the Middle Ages were distinct periods in time. A "broad strokes" approach, one that blends these different eras into one, would take the primary themes and images: knights and manors, fields and markets, and make a generalized "Middle Ages" setting. The opportunity exists to play earlier into the age, during the more turbulent—almost post-apocalyptic—time as the Roman Empire was wiped away and the Middle Ages were just getting underway, or later, when the countryside and cities are ravaged by disease and famine, for a more dangerous setting.

The collapse of the Roman Empire cast Europe into a dark age for centuries as an untold amount of technological and philosophical progress was lost. People scrambled just to survive as trade networks and governments fell apart. Grand architecture of the empire decayed, as there was no one left with the time, money, and/or skill to repair it, while looters tore iron supports from the walls of great stone buildings.

As society stabilized, the Middle Ages saw a series of innovations and inventions that changed Europe. The implementation of the 3-field system of farming and the heavy plow and horses all improved agriculture in the Early Middle ages. These advances—coupled with a warmer climate and period of relative peace following Charlemagne's conquest of western and central Europe—contributed to a population boom that in turn fueled the expansion of cities and the increased collection of smaller farms into manors. As new methods of mining and quarrying developed, construction of new churches and manor houses turned to stone. Later in the medieval era, roads improved, bringing back trade. As guilds began to form and more people became skilled in crafts, households that were once forced to make everything they needed began visiting fairs and markets. Forges, smithies, mills, and workshops became more plentiful and more efficient.

Most of the population lived in rural areas on small scattered farms or bustling estates. Manors consisted of the manor house, where the lord and lady, their family and their servants lived; a church; farmland belonging to the manor; clusters of homes of the peasants and serfs who worked at the manor; and the personal plots of land they farmed to feed their families. The grounds often included orchards, woods where the lords could hunt, or a stream or pond for fishing. Peasants were free people who farmed the land. Serfs on the other hand were bound to the farmland, either as chattel or through debt bondage—they could not move away from the manor without the lord's permission and could be sold along with the land if the lord or lady wished it. They worked the manor's farms part of the week and tended to their personal plots and gardens on the others. Serf families would share expensive resources such as oxen and come together during busy seasons to help each other.

As the population grew so did towns, and as they became more crowded buildings grew more narrow and taller to make room for the expanding population; fire was a constant danger thanks to wooden houses and thatch roofs. Cities were noisy, and crowded, and the people there shared their space with pigs and cows, who lived either

near or even inside houses where the windows were often covered with oiled parchment and smoky fires were the primary light source. Poorer families occupied one floor of the house or even a single room, while wealthier families would use the first floor of the house for business, middle floors for their living spaces, and top floors for their servants. The center and heart of these cities was the church and the house of the bishop or priest who led it.

The Church was the true power to be reckoned with during the Middle Ages—and for all intents and purposes there was only the one church until the 16th century. The seat of power remained in Rome, as the home of the Pope. Below the Pope, control was maintained by archbishops and bishops who came from wealthy families, priests who oversaw smaller parishes and had humbler origins, and monks and nuns who lived in monasteries, separate from societies around them. The latter, while observing vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, also performed daily labor, and monasteries served as schools, hospitals, safe places for travelers to stay, and places to care for the poor or sick. The power of the church was not only spiritual; the church had its own laws, collected taxes, and wielded political power equal to, or exceeding, that of sovereigns.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Most character attributes are unaffected in medieval Europe, but some Social skills might operate differently—medieval society is highly stratified, and a peasant or serf speaking out of turn to a noble or church official may be ignored, fined, or imprisoned. Time traveling characters can use Deception to pass themselves off as individuals of higher standing, but suffer a circumstance penalty unless they have appropriate Expertise skills (such as History for nobles, and Theology for priests) and can speak Latin.

- **Advantage—Benefit (Status):** Status is very important in medieval Europe, dictating where a person can travel, who they can communicate with, and what they can own. Without any status, a character (or visitor) is assumed to be a peasant with few rights, while being a serf is a Complication. One rank of Status is the equivalent of being a guild artisan, a minor lord, local priest, or nun, and generally allows a character to move about and speak freely. Higher ranks of Status reflect more social power (granting a circumstance bonus to presence skills involving others of lower Status), up to major positions of power such as baron (Status 2), cardinal (Status 4), or queen or pope (Status 5). Knighthood is an additional status beyond noble birth which allows a character to openly carry weapons, participate in tournaments, and serve in respected roles in the military.
- **Advantage—Favored Environment (Mounted Combat):** While the Athletics skill (or the optional Riding skill; see **Animal-Related Skills** in **Chapter 2**) can keep a player from falling off a horse and make them generally able to control where their horse goes, many knights and messengers of this era truly shine in the saddle. "Mounted Combat" is an acceptable choice for the Favored Environment Advantage, granting a character a +2 bonus to Attack or active Defenses while mounted.

MEDIEVAL EUROPE OF EARTH-PRIME

Without the constraints and patrols of the Roman Empire, magic ran amok in medieval Europe while it was being heavily constrained in the Middle East, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Europe throughout the Dark Ages became a sort of supernatural free-for-all, where supernatural creatures could stalk humans as prey once more or carve out petty fiefdoms. Much of the knowledge that could be used to contain them was lost, and while the Master Mage of the era, Merlin, assembled an entire nation of crusading knights to end the chaos, he ultimately failed.

The most powerful of these arcane threats was the Lemurian sorceress, Melusine (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*), who carved out her own arcane kingdom across modern France and Germany and created many of the "dragons" that would prowl the continent for centuries to come. The immortal Mastermind (*Threat Report*) likewise took advantage of the chaos and attempted to create a utopian nation only to be foiled by human greed and petty jealousy.

NEW EQUIPMENT

While earlier ages saw armored combatants on horse as the epitome of power, those same mounted warriors can now be brought low by a relatively untrained soldier using a crossbow.

CATAPULT

Though developed in earlier eras, the catapult became a staple of siege warfare in the Middle Ages thanks to its ease of construction and transport. The small onager was portable and easy to aim, reload, and fire with a team of two. More powerful catapults, like the trebuchet, could lob massive boulders through city walls, but required large support crews.

Onager: Ranged Penetrating Damage 7 (Indirect 1 (overhead); Increased Action, Inaccurate) • *14 points*

Trebuchet: Ranged Penetrating Damage 11 (Indirect 1 (overhead); Increased Action, Inaccurate, Limited [requires a 10-person crew]) • *11 points*

ENGLISH LONGBOW

One of the premiere longbow designs, the 6-foot English longbow changed the face of warfare beginning in the 13th century. While difficult to master—requiring strength, endurance, and practice—they enabled a peasant to strike down an armored knight.

English Longbow: Ranged Penetrating Damage 4 (Quirk: requires STR 3 or higher) • *11 points*

LANCE

Effectively a spear or polearm, the European lance was a preferred weapon for the cavalry charge and could easily pierce multiple soldiers and their armor in a single charge.

Mounted Lance: Strength-based Penetrating Damage 3 (AE: **Cavalry Charge** Line Area Damage 6; Limited [must be mounted]) • *10 points*

ARMOR

The armor of the day is often piecemeal and not the plate armor from paintings and illustrations (see **Gadgets & Gear** in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*), which wouldn't enter the battlefield until the 14th century. This can lead to interesting variations on armor, as each suit is custom made, remade, and modified over its lifetime.

Customized suits may work various Advantages into the armor they wear: All-out Attack (taking the form of armor segments that can be moved aside to grant the wearer more mobility and control), Defensive Attack (representing the opposite), Evasion (representing a particularly heavily-armored side that can be turned to brace against attacks), Improved Defense (incorporating reinforcements and extra padding), and Weapon Bind (reflecting hooks, flutes, and ridges that can snag enemy weapons).

VISITING HEROES

Travelers coming to medieval Europe will encounter crowded and growing towns and cities, interspersed by a countryside dotted with farms and large, seemingly impenetrable forests. Merchants, knights, pilgrims, vagabonds, and bandits all travel the roads. Visitors to this time may find company on the roads, or a safe place to stay in a town or monastery, but will also have to contend with knights asking them their business and most towns' gates being barred at sunset. A hierarchy of power is in place and easily communicated through dress and action and will provide added complication for those not of this time. News travels quickly within cities or manors, but slowly between them, and the nights are pitch-dark and filled with wild beasts. The Middle Ages were a time of transition and intrigue, and time travelers with a clear goal could quickly lose their way and become embroiled in any number of political or legal events.

The weight of the Roman Catholic church's immense power may also feel new and oppressive to time travelers, depending on their background. Characters running afoul of religious officials can see considerable resistance to their actions. While the witch hunts won't take off until the 13th century—and in fact the church banned the execution of suspected witches for much of the early medieval period—they were still unwilling to embrace strangers exhibiting unusual powers or knowledge.

While much of the knowledge and history of the era is unrecorded—and in fact, some time travelers may arrive here to lie low—a few larger-than life legendary figures exist that could draw curious visitors. The most prominent is the legendary King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, who ruled the British kingdom of Camelot in the 6th century. A visit to Camelot—a fiction in the real world but likely as real as anything else in a superheroic world—would conjure forth all the jousts, courtly intrigue, mystic trials, and grand quests a modern superhero could want. Heroes may also visit the vigilante Robin Hood and his Merry men in the 13th century, or battle a wyrm alongside St. George the Dragonslayer in the 11th century.

Possible plot hooks:

- A traveling medieval merchant has arrived in a modern city. Can the heroes determine how and return him and his goods to his own time without exposing him to too much modern knowledge?
- After a hiccup in the timeline, the Spanish Inquisition now begins 400 years earlier than it should. Who has changed history and why?
- A temporal villain kidnaps or executes Robin Hood, and another hero of the people must rise in England to take his place.
- A dragon is too powerful in the future and must be slain during the dark ages.

LOCAL HEROES

While heroes possessing magic and extraordinary skill are the stereotype of medieval roleplaying campaigns, Medieval Europe is very much a time of nostalgia for the "good old days" of the Roman empire (see **Imperial Rome** in this chapter), and so any of the power types appropriate to Rome can fit medieval superheroes as well. These heroes may even be legacies, uncovering the legendary equipment or training manuals of Roman heroes and using them to bring justice and enlightenment to a world that seems to have lost its way. The prominence of the Church during this era also means that heroes might be angels (or devils) trying to do right in the world, or possessors of divine relics, and even those heroes not empowered by their god(s) are still likely to draw inspiration and themes from Catholicism.

Many of the medieval heroes of legend were possessed of great bravery and skill, sometimes aided with a magical relic, spellcasting mentor, or divine providence. A PL 6-8 campaign fits the mold of these extraordinary heroes while still placing them far above common soldiers. This level of campaign is gritty and can draw upon the human concerns of the Middle Ages: medical help, sanitation, transportation, supplies, and companionship. Powers that help characters deal with these issues would be even more significant here than in other settings.

Higher PL campaigns, ranging from 8 to 10, might center truly extraordinary "high fantasy heroes" who command impressive magic, command vicious beasts, or carry a bit of inhuman blood. The high-PL campaign could easily see the characters taking up leadership roles and facing off against other superhuman national leaders. Fear and superstition could come into play in ways that are not as common in modern campaigns. As much as players may be ready for a hero flying through the air and throwing beams of quantum energy from their hands, the average folk of the Middle Ages are not prepared to witness it.

Gamemasters can draw inspiration from their favorite medieval fantasy-themed roleplaying games to create adventures and rivals, letting heroes hunt monsters terrorizing their community, fight wars with neighboring kingdoms, explore the ruins (and treasures) of lost empires, and destroy evil wizards.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

JESTER	PL 3 • MR5 • 70 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 1 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 1 **INT** 1 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 4	
Advantages: Fascinate (Expertise: Humor), Great Endurance, Instant Up, Taunt, Well-Informed.	
Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+8), Athletics 4 (+5), Deception 4 (+8), Expertise (PRE): Humor 7 (+11), Expertise: Politics 7 (+8), Insight 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 5 (+9), Stealth 3 (+5).	
Offense: Init +2, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 4, Fortitude 2, Toughness 1, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 0 + Advantages 5 + Skills 24 (48 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 70	

While not skilled in combat, jesters are dangerous for several reasons: they have the ear of their lords and know the comings and goings of the manor. They are clever and silver-tongued, and are physically gifted, especially in terms of mobility and avoiding damage.

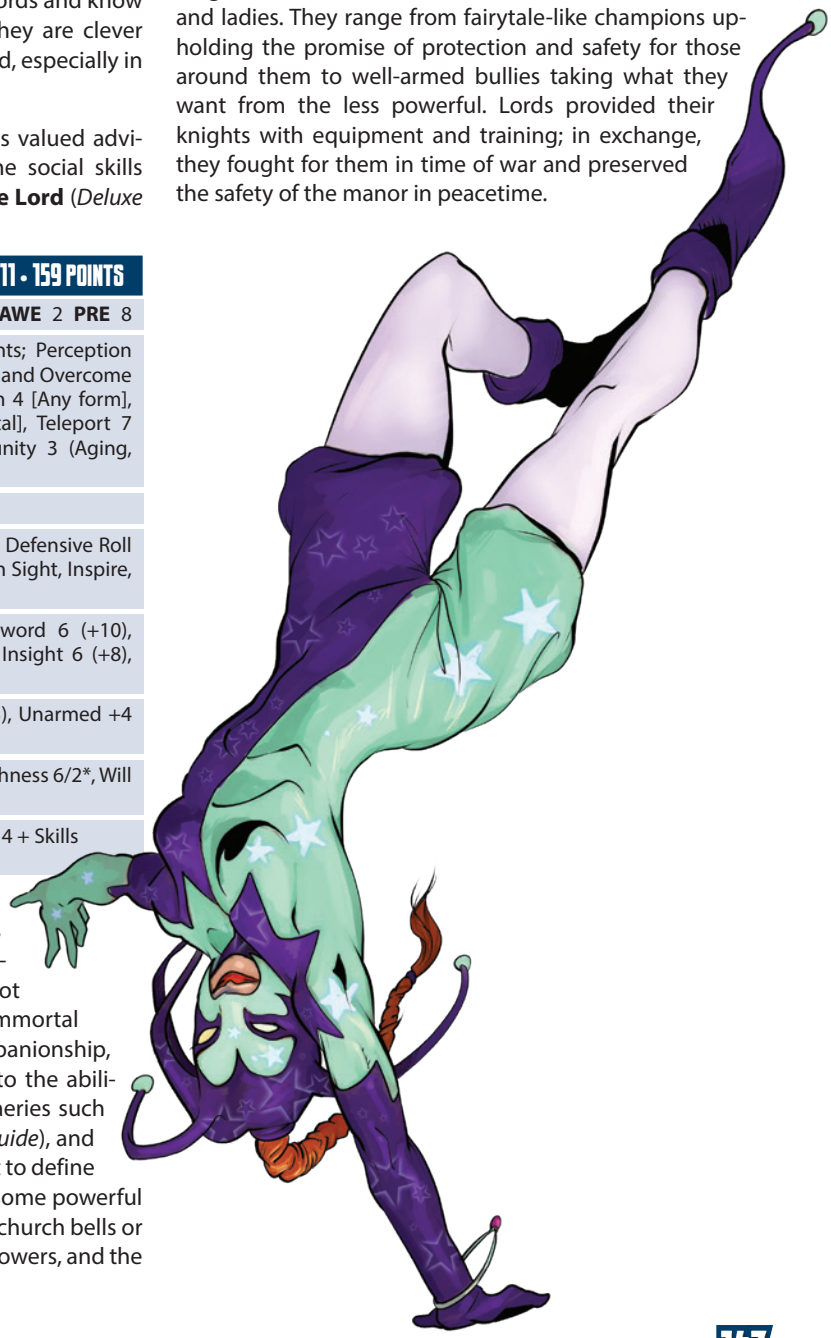
More politically-savvy jesters even serve as valued advisors or spymasters, adopting many of the social skills and advantages from villains like the **Crime Lord** (*Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*).

FAERIE, SIDHE	PL 8 • MR11 • 159 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 6 **DEX** 6 **FGT** 4 **INT** 4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 8	
Powers: Fey Magic (Dynamic Array; 32 points; Perception Cumulative Affliction 8 [Mind Control; Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled], Morph 4 [Any form], Movement 2 [Dimensional: Fey Realms; Portal], Teleport 7 [Easy, Extended; Turnabout], **Timeless** Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Starvation).	
Equipment: Sword.	
Advantages: Agile Feint, Artificer, Attractive 2, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 1, Grabbing Finesse, Hide in Plain Sight, Inspire, Seize Initiative, Uncanny Dodge.	
Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+10), Close Combat: Sword 6 (+10), Deception 2 (+10), Expertise: Magic 8 (+12), Insight 6 (+8), Sleight of Hand 3 (+9), Stealth 7 (+13).	
Offense: Init +6, Sword +10 (Close, Damage 3), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6/2*, Will 9 *Without Defensive Roll.	
Totals: Abilities 64 + Powers 42 + Advantages 14 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 21 = 159	

Long-lived and powerful magical creatures, sidhe wield strong magic that lets them beguile mortal minds or warp themselves and the world around them. While not evil, they are capricious and emotional immortal beings who long for entertainment, companionship, or power just as humans do. In addition to the abilities listed here, many control additional faeries such as jinx or tricksters (*Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*), and control magical dimensions where they get to define and change the rules. Most sidhe possess some powerful weakness—such as vulnerability to iron or church bells or some sentiment—that robs them of their powers, and the secret of which they guard jealously.

SHINING KNIGHT	PL 6 • MR4 • 58 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 3 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: Bow, Plate-mail, Lance, Sword.	
Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 2 (Status 2: Knighthood, Minor Nobility), Close Attack 2, Equipment 5, Favored Environment: Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Sidekick 2 (horse).	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+7), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+4), Intimidation 4 (+6), Persuasion 2 (+4), Ranged Combat: Archery 2 (+4).	
Offense: Init +1, Bow +4 (Ranged, Damage 3), Lance +6 (Close, Damage 6), Sword +6 (Close, Damage 6), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 3).	
Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 8/4*, Will 4 *Without armor.	
Totals: Abilities 32 + Powers 0 + Advantages 14 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 4 = 58	

Knights are bound to follow the commands of their lords and ladies. They range from fairytale-like champions upholding the promise of protection and safety for those around them to well-armed bullies taking what they want from the less powerful. Lords provided their knights with equipment and training; in exchange, they fought for them in time of war and preserved the safety of the manor in peacetime.



THE GREAT MING EMPIRE

CIRCA 1410 CE

The Great Ming Empire, now known as the Ming Dynasty, lasted for nearly 300 years and was rife with military campaigns and political plots, but also artistic expression and extravagant demonstrations of prosperity. China had just ejected the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty through peasant rebellion, followed by a generation of civil war. The emperor, the nobles, the military, and the court eunuchs all wrestle for control, but all agree that China must return to traditions like careful diplomacy, academic and bureaucratic reform, and the restoration of the nation's once-grand engineering marvels like terracing, canals, and the Great Wall. From 1402 to 1424, the Yongle Emperor rules over China. Both prior to and during his reign there are many executions and assassinations in the struggle for power, making court a dangerous place for anyone even tangentially connected to political games.

Under the Yongle Emperor's rule, the eunuch secret police—the Eastern Depot—are created and spies suffuse the court. In the center of Beijing, the Forbidden City is under construction. Over a million workers build the city-within-a-city from precious materials over the course of fourteen years. Concubines and eunuchs—who make up the overwhelming bulk of the imperial household and staff—become involved in their own power struggles, and those who fail find themselves exiled to Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam, and other outlying territories as human tribute. While many threats within the Forbidden City are real, some are imagined. It is difficult not to see would-be assassins around every corner after surviving the first attempt on your life. Alliances are made and torn apart by betrayal or suspicion, and bids for power turn into desperate struggles to stay alive. However, amid all this conflict there is also economic, educational, and military reform that improves life for the common citizen.

Outside of the Imperial Court, life is different. In the city, people can easily find specialty and luxury shops. Public bathhouses, taverns, teahouses, and blacksmiths line the streets. Professions pass down through families, though apprenticeships provide children a chance at an education and respectable future. But crime operates through the urban centers as well, with a booming trade for smugglers and assassins to cater to the nobility's dark needs.

Rural areas provide fewer luxuries. Small towns run basic schools and hold events, religious festivals, and temporary markets. In the north, farmers grow wheat and millet, while in the south they fish and farm rice. Though life may seem peaceful, there are secrets and hardships beneath the surface: Pitiless scholar-officials set on ruling their territories as tiny emperors make life impossible for citizens just trying to get by. An official who narrowly escapes execution might go into hiding in a small village, potentially attracting dangerous attention to an otherwise sleepy town. And bandits ambush traveling merchants and terrorize villages that can't defend themselves, setting them ablaze if the residents don't cooperate.

Religions differ a little from town to town, but Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are prevalent everywhere. Islam has also planted firm roots, with the faithful constructing mosques. The monks of Shaolin Monastery in the Henan province practice kung fu, documenting their techniques in manuals that spread across the empire. Over time, more and more people—particularly military experts and even the occasional poet—take interest in the fighting style and travel to the monastery to learn from the monks. Some travel there to prove at any cost that they are stronger and more powerful than even the monastery's best fighters.

At this time, the arts are growing more accessible to people at large, not only the wealthy. Popular artforms enjoying a resurgence include woodblock printing, poetry, ceramics, painting, literature, music, and especially opera.

Artists overwhelmingly depict the acts of great heroes in, though these fictionalized interpretations embellish the truth, landing some heroes in hot water if they offend the wrong artist. A movement towards individualism and autonomy, arising from anti-official sentiment, goes hand in hand with a literary trend of sensuality. As a result, many art consumers pursue romantic ideals and relationships of the kind they wish to lead—more like those depicted in their favorite stories. Occasionally these stories inspire ill-prepared ordinary people to try to become heroes by attacking bandit camps and exposing conspiracies, introducing some to heroics and others to an early grave.

China's neighbors are embroiled in their own drama. Vietnamis in rebellion against Ming rule. In Korea, the 500-year Joseon dynasty has just begun, importing Confucian ideals from China and beginning its long persecution of Korean Buddhists. Chinese shipbuilders construct a fleet of giant treasure ships that sail to bring gifts to territories around the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and—reportedly—a mysterious new continent far to the east. The fleet aims to impress neighbors with China's wealth and power, and to control maritime trade.

While historically much of the drama of the Great Ming Empire was spaced out over three centuries, fictional depictions can have some events overlap in the interest of increasing drama. Additionally, martial arts in popular culture can take on borderline supernatural qualities, so certain superpowers already fit nicely with the existing image of the era. The Ming Empire of popular narratives often has fictional emperors instead of real ones in order to suit the needs of the story, and you should feel free to do likewise in order to build the game you desire.

If you desire a China filled with high stakes and more dire conflicts, set the game during the Ming dynasty's downfall and the rise of the Qing dynasty in the 1600s. Famines, floods, and an epidemic wreak havoc across the country, and in 1556 the deadliest earthquake in recorded history hits Shaanxi, leveling mountains, reshaping rivers, and killing approximately 830,000 people.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

While the towns and cities of the Ming Empire are far-flung across a massive nation, well-maintained roads and canals makes travel easy and modern. Canals in particular make China a nation of fast and easy trade, allowing for the transport of produce, minerals, and luxury goods from remote towns to the capital and vice versa.

Other changes worth considering include:

- **Advantage—Benefit (Security Clearance):** Not just anyone can enter the Forbidden City, so clearance is needed if a hero is to enter legally. This can take the form of clearance as a worker helping to build the Forbidden City, an official, or an authorized guest.
- **Skill—Technology:** On the civilian side, brick-making and sticky rice mortar are important elements of construction, but much of the most impressive technology of the Ming Empire is military-based. Gunpowder is used in a lot of weaponry, including two-stage rockets and exploding cannonballs. Fragmentation bombs, land mines, and naval mines are other common weapons. Expertise in chemistry will go a long way with constructing gunpowder weapons. Visitors suffer no penalty using Ming-era technology for chemistry-based Technology checks, and a –5 penalty to otherwise build and repair modern equipment with local tools.
- **Skill—Expertise (Art, History, Popular Culture):** Knowledge of art—particularly opera—allows a hero to hold conversations with other aficionados, of which there are many. At the Gamemaster's discretion, these Expertise skills may be used in place of a Persuasion check to coax a favor or gather information.

MING CHINA OF EARTH-PRIME

Imperial China under the Ming Dynasty boasted at least one Master Mage, Jinshi Shunfu, who helped tame many of the foreign supernatural threats that had arrived with the previous dynasty's Mongol emperors and paved the way for Ming scientific advancement.

The modern Golden Dragon Society (*Emerald City*) has its roots in one of the many secret societies that competed for the emperor's attention and imperial power during the Ming Dynasty. Some even say that it's master, the Dragoneye (use the statistics for the modern Dragoneye in *Emerald City*, with the addition of Benefit: Status, Contacts, and Well-Informed Advantages), killed Jinshi Shunfu, either to prove his worth to his dragon master, or possibly at the creature's behest.

NEW EQUIPMENT

The Great Ming Empire has a wide array of gunpowder weapons, and as in many other eras clothing can convey a message more loudly than words. Some of the most useful weapons, outfits, and marvels of this era include:

CIVIL OFFICIAL'S OUTFIT

A civil official's uniform includes a red lanshan (robe) and black putou (winged cap). Embroidered badges—known as Mandarin squares—indicated rank. Scholars' badges used birds (including egrets, pheasants, and cranes) to differentiate who held what power, while military badges used animals instead (including lions, tigers, and rhinoceroses). This uniform allowed a bureaucrat easy access to government buildings inspired deference.

Civil Official's Outfit: Enhanced Skill (Persuasion 4), Advantage (Benefit: Security Clearance) • *3 points*

DINGJIA ARMOR

Dingjia armor is made of riveted rectangular metal plates with fabric over top. Intended for an officer. Other soldiers, and even civilians, know to show respect to anyone wearing it.

Dingjia Armor: Protection 3, Enhanced Skill (Intimidation 2) • *4 points*

FIRE LANCE

Dating back to 950 CE, the fire lance is a spear with a small shotgun-like cannon attached near the tip. It is capable of firing once, and afterwards functions as a spear.

Fire Lance: Cone Area Damage 4 (Unreliable), AE: Strength-based Damage 3 • *5 points*

ROCKET

An arrow with a tube of gunpowder and fuse, this early rocket is fired from a hollow wooden or bamboo tube. One rocket comes with five arrows.

Rocket: Ranged Burst Area Damage 5 (unreliable: 5 uses) • *10 points*

TREASURE SHIP

Built for stability and cargo capacity, a treasure ship carries well over five hundred crew. It is designed specifically to withstand rough weather and waters, with holes in the prow that fill with water when the ship pitches forward and floating anchors that are cast off the sides. When dropped, its floating anchors give it a +2 circumstance bonus to resist movement and avoid capsizing. While a treasure ship is not a warship, it still carries twenty-four cannons. Refer to the 6-Pounder Long Gun (Roundshot) under **Golden Age of Sail** (in this chapter) for stats.

TREASURE SHIP	33 POINTS

Size: Awesome **Strength:** 20 **Speed:** 4 (water) **Defense:** 4 **Toughness:** 15 **Features:** Cannons, Dock, Floating Anchors, Living Space, Personnel

VISITING HEROES

Time travelers visit the Great Ming Empire for a wide variety of reasons. Some merely visit to seek answers to questions left unanswered by surviving historical documents or to interview important political and philosophical minds of the day. Others aim to radically rewrite history by assassinating an emperor or by attempting to bring the Ming Dynasty to an early end before China can stabilize itself after foreign rule and civil war—potentially breaking up modern China into many competing states.

Larger cities will be familiar to visiting heroes, as will the snootiness of urban dwellers when it comes to visiting rural areas. Pop culture thrives in China, with opera popular among even the poor, and a visit to the cities of Ming China promises the chance to take in plays, hear music, shop, and dine out.

The Ming Empire's greatest contribution to transit is the refurbishment and expansion of the Grand Canal, an 1,100-mile long structure connecting many of the nation's greatest rivers and cities. Originally built in the 6th century, it had largely fallen into ruin during the Tang and Yuan dynasties, and its restoration brought economic booms to every town and city along its length while enabling the easy flow of news, travelers, and goods.

The intensity of the court intrigue makes the stakes high for any noble character. The interpersonal dynamics in court are also likely to be unfamiliar to those who have not studied them before visiting. The imperial harem is completely off limits, which complicates communicating with any of the consorts—the people in the capital most likely to know important political secrets.

Possible plot hooks:

- The heroes must engage in courtly games of political intrigue when a supervillain travels back in time to pose as the emperor's advisor.
- The heroes must stop a well-meaning but inconsiderate art historian from stealing a valuable treasure.
- A collapse of one of the Forbidden City's buildings (that was not supposed to happen according to the history books) is blamed on the visiting heroes, and they must prove themselves innocent by finding the real culprit.
- The heroes encounter a petty bureaucrat running a small remote town like his personal kingdom, but can they help the locals without altering history?

LOCAL HEROES

Local heroes may come from very different backgrounds. While magic is largely gone from the cities, it remains an everyday reality in the countryside. Shamans, alchemists, and wizards may all take on apprentices to train in magic, and certain ancient items, especially those stolen from graves, may bestow powers or come with ghostly advisors. Nature spirits may likewise imbue travelers with gifts (or useful curses) in exchange for services or to entertain themselves. Some heroes are born with extraordinary abilities with no true explanation—though these are generally limited to extraordinary feats of strength, speed, intellect, and other talents within human ability—and are simply acknowledged to be the chosen of heaven.

On the technological side, a hero might be a mechanical soldier powered by clockwork and gunpowder, or a genius inventor trying to keep her next-generation weapons away from the army. The same technology that creates rockets may even allow technologically savvy heroes to fly faster than any bird. Training and discipline in all professions remain powerful aspects of society whether urban or rural, and so the stereotypical martial arts masters and traveling swordfighters may be joined by ace detectives, innovative doctors, and the first deadeye gunslingers.

Heroes who are well known likely find themselves caught up in court intrigue—the emperor and his enemies all have uses for talented individuals and aren't accustomed to refusal. Heroes who want to work for themselves will have a hard time avoiding officials who want to track them down and make them an asset, especially if they visit cities. The spread of poetry, music, plays, and stories chronicling (and often embellishing) their larger-than-life deeds makes keeping a low profile still more difficult.

There are plenty of mysteries that need solving in this era. Sabotage attempts against the Forbidden City, scholar-officials who go missing while traveling, and stolen martial arts manuals all warrant investigation and may lead to

larger conspiracies. Larger-than-life mythic heroes battling invading armies, hostile dragons, and reclaiming lost corners of the empire from tyrants and supernatural threats all require heroic attention..

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL	PL 2 • MR4 • 46 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 0 **INT** 4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3	
Equipment: Civilian Official's Outfit, Clipboard.	
Advantages: Benefit (Security Clearance), Benefit (Wealth), Connected, Contacts, Equipment 1, Jack-of-All-Trades, Well-informed.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+7), Expertise: Politics 8 (+12), Insight 5 (+7), Investigation 5 (+9), Persuasion 4 (+11).	
Offense: Init +0, Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 3, Fortitude 1, Toughness 1, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 6 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 46	

Scholar-officials are government officials with a wide range of responsibilities decided by their rank and the nature of their position. Aside from overseeing community affairs and assisting the government, they sometimes teach, preside over special local projects, investigate crime, and lead ceremonies. Whether in a town or city, if citizens have a legal dispute it is likely to be taken to a scholar-official to be resolved. Would-be scholar-officials must go through schooling and take a series of exams.

WARRIOR MONK	PL 6 • MR7 • 92 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 4 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 7 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Extraordinary Training Leaping 1 (15 feet), Speed 1 (4 MPH).	
Equipment: Staff (Damage 2; Reach, Split).	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Assessment, Defensive Attack, Equipment 1, Improved Critical: Unarmed, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Power Attack, Takedown.	
Skills: Acrobatics 7 (+12), Athletics 7 (+10), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+9), Expertise: Concentration 6 (+6), Expertise: Religion 8 (+8), Insight 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+6), Treatment 4 (+4).	
Offense: Init +9, Staff +7 (Close, Damage 5), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 3, Crit. 19–20).	
Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 4, Will 6.	
Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 2 + Advantages 10 + Skills 21 (42 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 92	

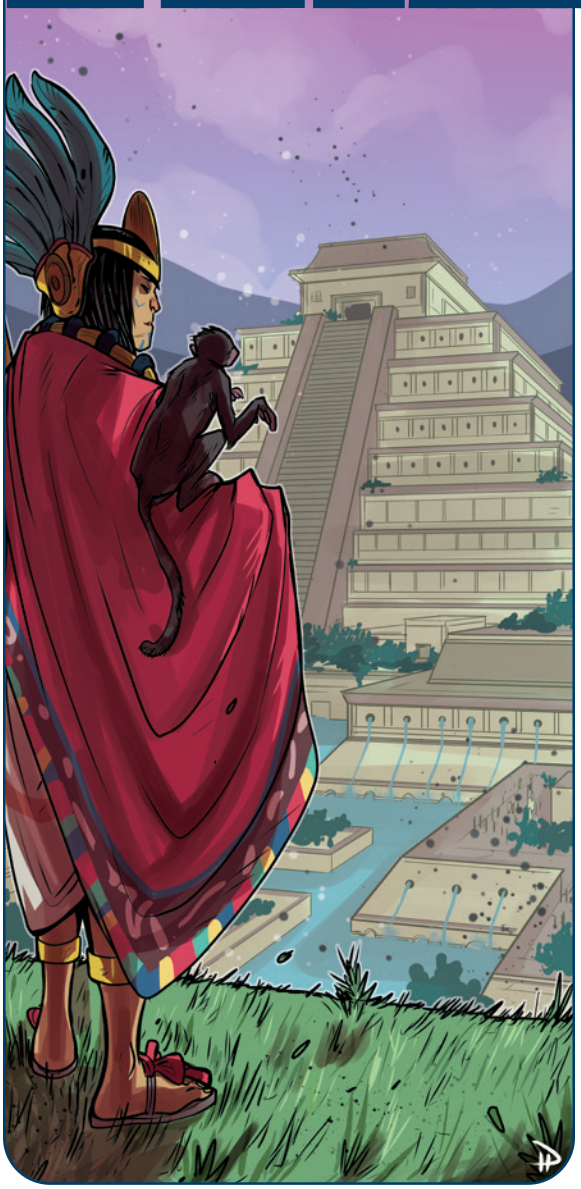
Warrior monks are skilled martial artists, beginning as humble religious scholars who needed to fend off bandits. Their practice requires extreme physical, mental, and spiritual discipline, and many come to temples to learn their techniques. The warrior monk described here is skilled in both unarmed combat and fighting with a staff, but other monasteries may focus on the use of swords, daggers, or hardening a monk's fists into deadlier weapons. More cinematic warrior monks may also command extraordinary powers, like leaping into the sky, dancing weightlessly across treetops, or projecting bolts of chi energy.

LONG	PL 12 • MR21 • 309 POINTS
STR 12 **STA** 12 **AGL** 6 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 12 **INT** 9 **AWE** 9 **PRE** 9	
Powers: Comprehend 8 (Speak to and Understand Animals, Speak and Understand All Languages, Understand Plants, Communicate with Spirits), Flight 6 (120 MPH), Growth 12 (Innate, Permanent), Movement 2 (Dimensional: Magical Dimensions 2), Protection 3; **Water Control** Perception Move Object 12 (100 tons; Limited to Water); **Weather Control** Environment 12 (8 miles; Extreme Cold, Extreme Heat, Impede Movement 2, Visibility (-5)).	
Advantages: Fearless, Inspire 5, Jack-of-All-Trades, Move-by Action.	
Skills: Expertise: Magic 2 (+11), Expertise: Philosophy 2 (+11), Insight 5 (+14), Perception 7 (+16).	
Offense: Init +6, Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 12), Water Control — (Perception, Damage 12).	
Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude 14, Toughness 15, Will 10.	
Totals: Abilities 98 + Powers 180 + Advantages 8 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 309	

Long are wingless dragons of immense power, who enforce the celestial order; to some this means aiding humanity, but to others it means teaching humans obedience. They can control weather and bring about natural disasters, such as floods and storms. Most long are interested in keeping the order of the multiverse intact and take a keen interest in time travelers.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

CIRCA 1500 CE



Rising from Lake Texcoco atop artificial islands, the mighty metropolis of Tenochtitlan beats at the heart of the formidable Triple Alliance, a militant Mesoamerican empire built upon prophecy, warfare, and the oft-forgotten ingenuity of three states: Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan. Better known today as the Aztec empire by modern scholars, the Alliance dominated its neighbors, crushing all opposition with fearsome warriors dressed to invoke eagles and jaguars. These conquests also brought a measure of peace and prosperity, with traders importing valuables from thousands of miles away to bedeck Tenochtitlan in feathers, jade, and other treasures.

Yet even by 1500 CE this empire was still young, having stood for less than a century. The Mexica people arrived in the 13th century, emigrating from a mythical realm known as Aztlan and its seven caves to settle in the Lake Texcoco basin. The region already supported numerous peoples, and the Mexica were relegated to inferior territory before settling the small lake islands, citing the prophetic appearance of an eagle killing a snake atop a cactus. Using ingenious engineering to expand the islands into a thriving city, the Mexica waged war on their neighbors, ultimately uniting with Texcoco and Tlacopan to overthrow the nearby overlords of Azcapotzalco. This Triple Alliance subsequently expanded outward to conquer not just the Texcoco basin, but also countless settlements beyond.

The Alliance's invasions stemmed in part from the desire for tribute, but Aztec myth pointed to an even greater need: the preservation of the universe. Their patron deity, the tireless god of the sun and war Huitzilopochtli, had slain his sister (in some tales, casting her into the sky to form the moon) and repelled his hundreds of brothers, yet these siblings ever conspired to destroy Huitzilopochtli, the sun, and the world. Only with the help of his mortal faithful channeling their own power to the god—often through the sacrifice of animals and humans—could he remain strong enough to defend existence. Thus, what the popular imagination preserves as a bloodthirsty culture obsessed with sacrifice in fact wages war to preserve all of creation.

Thanks to the productivity of the innovative *chinampas*—artificial islands—Aztec agriculture is extraordinarily productive, with only a tiny fraction of the population required to farm. Others produce intricate crafts, filling the markets of Tenochtitlan and distant cities with thousands of traders. The surplus allows for education, including priestly training, schools for noble children, and prolific military academies that trained vast armies. When not busy with work, the Triple Alliance regularly hosts festivals, citywide religious ceremonies, and cutthroat ball games.

Aztec society is stratified across several levels. Although women and men received fairly equal respect and standing, their professional roles remained separate, with men working outside as warriors, traveling traders, and farmers, and women serving as local merchants, doctors, and caregivers. Commoners could own basic possessions and wealth, yet they were denied access to certain areas, types of clothing, and prestige goods. All the while, nobles could command commoners' labor and serve as military leaders, while in turn deferring to rulers known as *tlatoanis*. Below them all stand slaves, though slavery is not an inherited status but one of punishment for debtors or captives. Upward mobility comes from military service; a commoner who regularly defeats and captures foes can achieve numerous rights and even noble standing.

The Triple Alliance is less an empire of indoctrination than it is a network of client states that funnel tribute to the alliance's three founding peoples. With military service among the most lucrative professions and the religious elite demanding greater offerings for the gods, the

Aztecs possess not only the most fearsome army, but also command the most resentment from their neighbors. Any number of city-states would eagerly retaliate against the Triple Alliance if they stood a chance of winning, and this inspires regular uprisings, rebellions, and raids to weaken the superpower. In 1500 CE, first contact with the Spanish and eventual conquest are still a generation away, but a game set in a more turbulent time may jump forward to this era of brutal warfare, plague, and genocide.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

The sizable Triple Alliance at its height seemed all the larger thanks to the lack of draft animals, carts, and mounts. Any mundane travel occurred on foot or in shallow boats, making superhuman means like flight and teleportation extraordinarily useful in traveling the region.

Most character attributes are unaffected in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, but consider the following changes:

- **Skill—Technology:** With its metallurgy limited to ornaments of gold, silver, and copper, as well as its complete lack of draft animals, the Mesoamerican technology of the era seems simple—and makes repairing modern technology with local tools impossible, or at least imposes a –5 circumstance penalty. However, the empire's mastery of mathematics, astronomy, architectural engineering, and medicine were exceptional, and related Technology checks suffer no penalty.
- **Skill—Treatment:** The local understanding of medicine and surgery are more advanced than in Europe, and characters suffer no penalty using local tools.
- **Advantage—Benefit (Status):** Mexica society is sharply divided between nobility and commoners. Without noble status, a character is socially prohibited from displaying wealth or entering key religious and administrative areas.
- **Advantage—Languages:** Thanks in part to the empire's expansion, Nahuatl acted as the region's lingua franca, supplemented by dozens of local languages like those of the Otomi, Mazahua, and Pame linguistic families. Some might understand Mayan languages like Ch'ol and Tzotzil, viewing speakers with a mix of caution and mystical reverence. Writing primarily featured pictograms and ideograms designed for specialized subjects like genealogies and resource inventories.

NEW FLAWS

Power flows from life in the Triple Alliance, and the following flaws are appropriate:

Sacrificial (–1 Cost per Rank): Like the gods, some heroes must expend a portion of their vital essence in order to manifest their greatest powers. An effect with this flaw drains life force in order to function, either drawn from your own health or channeled from a nearby creature. As you use the power, make a Toughness resistance check against the power's rank. If this damage would incapacitate you, you can resolve any of your power's instantaneous effects before being incapacitated. Rather than resist the damage yourself, you can direct the damage to a willing or helpless creature adjacent to you whose PL is at least half the effect's power rank. If the creature's PL is too low, the creature takes the damage, but the effect automatically fails.

Remember that themes of creature sacrifice aren't appropriate for all groups, so consider restricting the sacrificial flaw to damaging only the user.

Vainglorious (–1 Cost per Rank): You must defeat a foe before you can use this power. You cannot use an effect with this flaw unless you incapacitate a foe whose PL is at least half your own, after which you can use the effect for a number of minutes equal to the foe's PL. If you incapacitate a foe whose PL equals or exceeds your own, you can instead use the effect with this flaw for 24 hours. This flaw might represent drawing a token amount of life force from the fallen foe, or it could represent a fickle ability that rewards only victorious warriors.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE OF EARTH-PRIME

The Teotl—the gods of the Aztecs—did not abide by the Pact, seeing no reason to obey the edicts of foreign cousins and sorcerers half a world away. Only the conquest of the respective empires drove the gods away from the mortal realm, and many remain bitter about their exile. The deities of the Maya were likewise banished as part of European conquest, though their relationship with their human empires was already strained after two Mayan heroes journeyed to their spirit realm of Xibalba, tricking and ultimately defeating several key deities.

At this time, the Mexica noble Tlacaelel (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*) was a mortal man still searching for the Spirit of the Mexica—use the **Warrior** hero archetype from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* to reflect the complicated noble prior to his ascension.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Common weapons of war include bows, javelins, clubs, and small and medium shields. Several of the Triple Alliance's most iconic weapons are practically unknown in the modern era. Key examples include:

ATLATL

The atlatl is a hooked shaft used to propel heavy darts with extraordinary force and accuracy.

Atlatl: Strength-based Ranged Damage 2; Advantage: Improved Critical (Atlatl) • *5 points*

MACUAHUITL

A hardwood club studded with rows of obsidian blades, the macuahuitl behaves like a heavy sword whose devastating sharpness makes up for its relative fragility.

Macuahuitl: Strength-based Damage 2; Enhanced Skill (Intimidation 2), Advantage: Improved Critical 2 (Macuahuitl); • *5 points*

ELITE MEXICA ARMOR

The most formidable Triple Alliance warriors donned armor fashioned from jaguar hide or eagle feathers, obscuring the leather greaves and sturdy breastplates beneath. The imposing panoplies lent basic protection, and granted their wearers unshakable courage and ferociousness. The two armor designs provided equal protection, but unique morale benefits.

Elite Mexica Armor: Protection 2; Advantage: Fearless (eagle only) *or* Startle (jaguar only) • *3 points*

VISITING HEROES

European contact forever changed the Americas, and time travelers might seek out late pre-Columbian societies like the Triple Alliance to change history, such as by destroying Hernan Cortes, equipping the Mexica against the incoming invasions, or provided the Alliance's conquered peoples with the tools to fight back before the arrival of Conquistadors. Likewise, much of Mesoamerica's written history and treasures were lost or deliberately destroyed in the conquests, and time travelers might seek out forgotten lore or ancient artifacts infused with power—snatching them from the jaws of destruction. With its severe military tradition and dedication to Huitzilopochtli, the Triple Alliance might stand out as a place for dedicated martial artists to learn now-lost techniques.

The capital of Tenochtitlan has many of the trappings of a modern city and is suitable for heroic confrontations: wide plazas and broad causeways to skirmish with villains; bustling markets and interconnected canals ideal for chases and heists; and colorful stadiums and temples for climactic showdowns. However, many of the similarities end there. The sprawling city seems to float above the lake, with much of the land standing on artificial islands and platforms. The resulting network of channels not only acts as a sanitation system but also a transportation network for canoes (and hiding place for aquatic villains or monsters).

The Triple Alliance's state religion depicted its people and their patron, Huitzilopochtli, as embattled, always under threat from other divinities unless their god received enough tribute. That tribute often came in the form of blood, which can be a delicate subject. Human sacrifice has also historically been used to demonize Mesoamerican populations and excuse their persecution, so it is worth discussing with your players if you intend sacrifice to be a major plot point. It is possible to reframe themes of sacrifice as the personal sacrifices we accept in modern culture: the dedication of one's life toward something greater and the willingness to face death to protect others.

Possible plot hooks:

- A time storm displaces the heroes to the Triple Alliance, but they appear among captives queued for sacrifice.
- To learn the secret of a villain's power, the heroes must seek the counsel of pre-Columbian sages from an independent city-state under siege by Mexica warriors.
- Huitzilopochtli is sending jaguar warriors forward in time to acquire the descendants of Cortes as sacrifices to grant him greater strength. By chasing these warriors back in time, the heroes might defeat the god, or they might aid him, ensuring he's strong enough to repel the cosmic invasion... or European invasion.
- As outsiders, the heroes must win respect and status to gain access to a person or artifact they need, and the only sure ways to move ahead are to take captives in war... or win at the Aztec ball game *ullamaliztli*.

LOCAL HEROES

At the heart of the Triple Alliance's rise and religion lies conflict, whether the battles that united its people, the warfare that conquered its neighbors, or the struggles that keep supernatural catastrophes at bay. As a result, heroic backgrounds connected to the empire's military strength and religious fervor are especially appropriate. Many youths enter martial schools known as telpochcallis, which train future soldiers' athleticism, courage, and skill at arms. This education could result in extraordinary speed and strength derived entirely from training rather than supernatural gifts, or the grueling regimen could awaken a hero's superhuman abilities.

Inherent magical powers are rare, most often attributed to those with supernatural parents. The gods hold dominion over elemental forces like wind, fire, and rain, making energy controllers an excellent fit. Myths of shapechangers stem from were-jaguars and other therianthropic beings. Where innate powers don't manifest, powerful priests can channel divine fury on par with demigods. Likewise, mortals who gives their lives in sacrifice or in service to the gods may find that they have not died but instead become vessels for holy power, their heartless chests filled with and sustained by divine energies.

Even though most forms of technology aren't available in this period, the Mexica looked to their predecessors like the Teotihuacanos and Olmecs with awe, and both mystical artifacts and technologies from these precursor societies could equip a soldier or be the foundation for a gadgeteer's own inventions.

The Triple Alliance often holds a simple view of powerful beings: they are imperial citizens, mortal threats to be subdued, or supernatural beings to be appeased. Local heroes are likely to be loyal to the Triple Alliance, its prosperity, and its continued survival—both as a culture and in its duty of aiding Huitzilopochtli against the divine threats. Closer to home, the heroes might be responsible for keeping the peace in the city of Tenochtitlan, particularly as the embittered champions of conquered cultures infiltrate the empire. Heroes of PL 8 could represent near-human exemplars in such a "Champions of the Alliance" campaign, operating as independent crime fighters or perhaps as operatives in a special wing of the military dedicated to identifying and neutralizing hostile superhuman forces. At PL 10 the heroes are as likely to face divine threats to their home as mortal ones. By PL 12, the heroes might be battling on the front line against divine beings who would extinguish the world itself.

For a rebellious twist, you could set the heroes against the Triple Alliance. They could be all that stands between the surrounding city-states and imperial domination, or they could fight back as rebels in one of the conquered city-states. Such adventures are an excellent fit for PL 6 or 8, and by PL 10 or 12, the heroes could be shattering entire armies. For a higher-powered game of PL 12 or 14, you could even cast Huitzilopochtli as an envious tyrant who lords over the sun and Mexica civilization, with the heroes as supernatural beings (even his siblings) intent on overthrowing his selfish regime once and for all!

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

AHUIZOTL	PL 9 • MR8 • 117 POINTS
STR 4 **STA** 3 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 4 **FGT** 5 **INT** 0 **AWE** 3 **PRE** 3	
Powers: Claws Strength-based Damage 3 (Reach); **Monstrous Form** Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Underwater), Protection 5, Senses 2 (Acute Tactile, Low-light Vision); **Prehensile Tail** Elongation 1 (15 feet; Limited to Tail), Extra Limbs 1; **Helpless Cry** Enhanced Advantage: Fascinate (Deception), Feature 1 (Mimicry).	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Chokehold, Close Attack 3, Fascinate (Deception), Favored Environment: Lakes and Rivers, Improved Grab, Move-by Action.	
Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+9), Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 6 (+9), Insight 6 (+9), Intimidation 4 (+7), Perception 6 (+9), Sleight of Hand 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+13).	
Offense: Init +5, Claws +8 (Close, Damage 7).	
Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 8, Will 8.	
Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 17 + Advantages 7 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 117	

The terror of lakes, an ahuizotl resembles a spiky-furred coyote with a long tail tipped with a human-like hand. Ahuizotls haunt waterways and ambush travelers, even going so far as to mimic the sounds of children in distress to attract prey. Once in striking range, an ahuizotl snatches its prey, drowning foes and leaving their bodies on the shore—seemingly unharmed yet lacking any eyes, nails, or teeth. This archetype can be used for other river predators that lure and drown travelers, such as a rusalka.

ENGINEER	PL 2 • MR3 • 34 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 0 **INT** 4 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Obsidian Knife, Toolkit.	
Advantages: Equipment 1, Improvised Tools.	
Skills: Expertise: Engineering 8 (+12), Perception 2 (+4), Persuasion 2 (+3), Technology 4 (+8).	
Offense: Init +0, Obsidian Knife +0 (Close, Damage 1; Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 1, Fortitude 1, Toughness 1, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 4 = 34	

Engineers are capable craftspeople able to build anything from hand tools to monumental architecture, and these professionals have a keen eye for spotting weaknesses and directing their crews. This archetype can be used for any educated manufacturer, such as a modern architect or medieval siege engineer.

JAGUAR WARRIOR	PL 7 • MR6 • 80 POINTS
STR 3 **STA** 4 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 5 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Powers: Incapacitating Strike Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated; Vainglorious).	
Equipment: Atlatl, Elite Mexica Armor, Macuahuitl, Medium Wooden Shield.	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Benefit, Status, Daze (Intimidation), Diehard, Equipment 4, Improved Disarm, Improved Hold, Startle.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+7), Close Combat: Macuahuitl 3 (+8), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 6 (+10/+8*), Perception 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Atlatl 5 (+8), Stealth 4 (+8) *Without armor.	
Offense: Init +4, Atlatl +8 (Ranged, Damage 5; Crit. 19–20), Macuahuitl +8 (Close, Damage 6; Crit. 18–20), Incapacitating Strike +5 (Close, Affliction 7), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 3).	
Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 7, Fortitude 4, Toughness 6/4*, Will 6 *Without armor.	
Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 4 + Advantages 10 + Skills 15 (30 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 80	

Few can match the ferocious reputation of the jaguar warriors, among the finest soldiers of the Triple Alliance. These elite combatants train to capture their foes alive, striking to stun and subdue as often as draw blood—such feats earn a warrior prestige. This strategy often causes units to lose cohesion as jaguar warriors split off into duels or chase captives—at least until a deadly threat rallies the warriors against a single foe. Within Mexica society, jaguar warriors have status equivalent to lesser nobles, granting them numerous liberties.

GOLDEN AGE OF SAIL

CIRCA 1715 CE

Modern fiction recalls the Golden Age of Sail as a time of adventure, lawlessness, camaraderie, betrayal, and obsessive ambition. Sailors risk their lives at sea to place themselves on the path to fame and fortune, but only those with the right combination of skill, cunning, and luck become legends. Cargo is stolen then lost, pirate crews band together only to mutiny when their captain fails to deliver, and all the while the Royal Navy hunts down any outlaws that become particularly inconvenient. Still, in this chaos there are those who choose to conduct themselves with honor even if they do not live by the law, and these individuals serve as curious beacons of hope in violent and uncertain times.

Historically, pirates had a complicated relationship with the law. They made a living by stealing from trade ships, and while many were more interested in business than violence, conflicts often ended in bloodshed. Life aboard ship involved heavy labor, disease, and shortages of food and water. The pirates of popular media tend to live very different lives. These pirates dedicate themselves to adventure, freedom, loyalty, vigilante justice, and the hope for a better future, with little attention paid to the difficulties of weeks-long voyages. A legendary pirate only engages in violence when forced, and their crew is as important to them as family.

Not everyone stealing cargo at sea is a pirate. While a pirate is someone who commits theft at sea, a privateer is someone who has a letter of marque—a license, from one nation's government to attack, raid, and capture ships from an opposing nation. A pirate's activities are never legal, but a privateer's thieving is excused in the eyes of the nation they serve. Should one of the nations they've stolen from capture them, however, their captors have a different opinion about the legality of their actions.

While any one naval captain might be set in their determination to destroy their foes, the European navies as a whole are fickle. One day they are set on eliminating piracy, and the next they are ready to let things slide so long as a royal pardon has been issued. Though they would paint themselves as the heroes of the story, they have their own reputation for mercilessness and violence. As with privateers and pirate ships, sometimes the ethics come down to the particular crew and their captain.

On dry land, life is a hardscrabble colonial existence, occasionally punctuated by fabulous wealth and luxury. Those who aren't slaves in the Caribbean still work backbreaking physical labor, isolated from their extended families. Infrastructure is spotty beyond what is needed for industry and trade, with towns and ports scattered across hundreds of islands and continental coastline, and so disease outbreaks may devastate a town and the law only exists to protect the wealthy. Successful merchants and politicians live lavish lifestyles—with food and clothing imported from Europe at great expense—and rule their portside towns like tiny kings. For many, pirates are the equalizing force, attacking the untouchable, and so pirates can often find safe haven among the poorest districts.

At the heart of most pirate stories is, of course, buried treasure. When necessary, pirates hide treasure for a time until it is safe to retrieve it, but the map to the hiding place can go missing or become damaged so that treasure turns to legend. A captain may cause tension and even mutiny in their crew if they are driven to continuously chase after a treasure that may not even exist or is lost forever. However, those who stick to the hunt, following each clue to the next, could find themselves wealthy beyond compare, which is enough to motivate some sailors. Adventures centered around lost treasure are ideal for leaning into the romantic image of piracy.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Many sciences are beginning to advance by the Age of Sail, and visiting heroes can generally use this era's tools with only a –5 circumstance penalty, but only a –2 penalty for repairing and controlling vehicles. Sailors can use either the Technology skill or Expertise: Carpentry to make repairs to a ship, and Ranged Combat for firing a ship's cannons.

In an era where building infamy as a famous pirate helps determine whether the enemy fights or surrenders, the Reputation rules from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* would also be appropriate.

Here are some other rule adjustments to consider:

- **Advantage—Tracking:** Although traditional tracking is difficult at sea, you may be able to spot a ship on the horizon and tell what direction it is moving in, smell gunpowder or hear cannon fire if there is a distant battle, notice birds if you are near land, or feel which way the wind is blowing. For a campaign set in this era, use the Vehicles (or Sailing) skill instead of Perception to predict where a ship will be based on winds, weather conditions, currents, available ports, and the target ship's build, speed, and any peculiarities in how it's sailing.

NEW SKILL

Most adventures in the Golden Age of Sail take place at sea. Ships and sailing are integral to this era, as is marine navigation. For an adventure in which the Heroes are just visiting, relying on the Vehicles skill in order to sail a ship works just fine. However, for a campaign set in this era, you may choose to apply the Sailing skill.

SAILING

AWARENESS • TRAINED ONLY • MANIPULATION

This skill allows Heroes to sail ships of any size and covers steering, navigating, handling the rigging, and gauging potential dangers such as inclement weather or sandbars. This only applies to ships with sails, not motorized or oared ships. You can make Sailing checks to perform different tasks with a ship as listed. In ship-to-ship combat, a pilot may maneuver into an advantageous position as a Standard action with an opposed Sailing check; success provides anyone firing shipboard weapons a +2 circumstance bonus on their attack rolls for one round.

DC	Task
10	Chart a course to a known port; Survey damage after a battle
15	Chart a course to an obscure port; Quickly change direction; Spot surface dangers like rocks and strong currents; Predict the weather for the next 24 hours
20	Chart a course to a secluded port; Spot hidden dangers, such as reefs and sandbars; Keep a ship from capsizing

EARTH-PRIME'S AGE OF SAIL

Tales of the Crimson Corsair and the vicious Johnathan "Bloody Jack" Carter remain popular among sailors, and a few pirate captains aspire to that level of infamy. Though Bloody Jack's treachery in the Caribbean took place over eighty years ago, the Royal Navy still refers to his wickedness in cautionary tales. While the last sighting of the original Crimson Corsair was decades ago, occasionally an ambitious privateer attempts to take on the name.

Though native to contemporary times, the space pirate Captain Kraken (see *Freedom City, Third Edition*), is enamored with Hollywood's depictions of the Golden Age of Sail. Cinematic portrayals of this era inspire the way he dresses, speaks, and even his antics, so he may very well jump on the chance to travel back in time to experience the world of piracy firsthand, with or without his crew and space cruiser.

DC Modifiers	
–2	Calm waters
+2	Navigating without a chart; Navigating without a compass
+2	Ship has suffered minor damage (1-2 failed Toughness checks)
+2	Rough Seas
+5	Navigating without a chart and compass
+5	Ship has suffered heavy damage (3+ failed Toughness checks)
+5	Violent Weather

NEW EQUIPMENT

Pirates often use grenades, which can use the same stats as a grenade from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*.

BLUNDERBUSS

A blunderbuss fires a massive round bullet that can pierce multiple targets. It takes one Standard action to reload and can only hold one lead ball or improvised ammunition at a time. If using improvised ammunition, reduce ranged damage to 4.

Blunderbuss: Line Area Damage 5 (Limited: Standard Action to Reload) • *5 points*

CUTLASS

The short, curving blade of a cutlass is easier to use in the tight confines of shit-to-ship combat than a sword.

Cutlass: Strength-based Damage 2 (Improved Critical) • *3 points*

FLINTLOCK PISTOL

Like the blunderbuss, the flintlock is an early firearm that takes considerable time and effort to reload. A flintlock is built and balanced to be used as a club once it is fired.

Flintlock Pistol: Ranged Damage 4 (Limited: Standard Action to Reload; AE: Strength-based Damage 2) • *5 points*

TELESCOPE

A telescope allows you to see ten times as far as you would otherwise.

Telescope: Senses 1 (Extended Vision) • *2 points*

6-POUNDER LONG GUN

A light piece of artillery, the 6-pounder long gun can be fired from the upper gun posts of a ship and can be moved from one spot to another with relative ease. "6-pounder" refers to the weight of the projectiles it fires. When loaded with grapeshot, the 6-pounder long gun fires a bundle of small metal balls spreading lesser damage out over a wider area. Grapeshot is an Alternate Effect on the standard cannon on most shipboard guns.

Roundshot: Ranged Damage 8 (Burst Area 4) • *20 points*

Grapeshot: Cone 2 Damage 5 • *15 points*

CORVETTE

For traveling quickly by sea, a corvette is the best candidate. Though it only has eight guns to defend itself, its speed makes it difficult for enemy ships to catch.

CORVETTE (VEHICLE)	33 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan **Strength:** 13 **Speed:** 5 (Water) **Defense:** 4 **Toughness:** 11 **Features:** Living Space, Six-Pounder Long Guns (roundshot and grapeshot)

MAN-OF-WAR

The man-of-war is a warship armed with heavy cannons and propelled by sail. This three-masted ship is ideal for maritime battles and carrying large cargo hauls.

MAN-OF-WAR	52 POINTS

Size: Colossal **Strength:** 16 **Speed:** 4 (water) **Defense:** 4 **Toughness:** 15 **Powers:** Impervious Toughness 15 **Features:** Heavy Cannons (Ranged Damage 10 [Burst Area 5]), Holding Cells, Living Space

VISITING HEROES

The number one reason time travelers visit this part of the world during this era is to locate hidden treasure before it is lost forever, especially lost wonders of the New World plundered by invaders. Sometimes people seek these treasures because of their monetary value, other times because the object is a family heirloom or a document important to understanding history. Villains may visit the era to fill their coffers with gold or seize control of major shipping routes, or simply to play pirate for a time.

Time traveling heroes may be surprised to discover how business-minded pirates are. Quite a few would thrive in contemporary corporate culture, and they take their codes of conduct very seriously. Similarly, sailors bond over drinks the same way many people have throughout history, and come to see their co-workers as friends and family. People get by on very little aboard ship as space is limited and luxuries are not prioritized; it's impossible *not* to get close to others.

Possible plot hooks:

- In the heroes' time, a villain locates a giant stash of lost treasure and uses it to fund insidious endeavors. The heroes must go back to keep the treasure from being lost in the first place (or make sure it is so thoroughly lost it will never be at risk of being found in the future).
- A pirate crew has struck a deal with dissatisfied Atlanteans, attacking ships that violate Atlantean waters in exchange for safe haven and lost technology or magic.
- History insists Johnathan "Bloody Jack" Carter to be long dead, but a pirate captain claiming to be him and flying his flag has been terrorizing merchant, naval, and pirate ships alike. Local sailors are too frightened of what they believe to be the resurrected villain.
- The heroes are tasked with delivering a cursed jewel to its rightful owner because it is considered too dangerous, but greedy pirate crews keep attacking in order to steal the priceless gem.

LOCAL HEROES

The classic "hero pirate" is a swashbuckling corsair, devoid of "super powers" beyond an experienced sword arm, boundless charm, and extraordinary luck, with plenty of room for crew members to differentiate themselves by the weapons and skill they bring to bear. Vigilantes intent on fighting injustice after having witnessed cruelty at the hands of both the navy and pirates alike might decide to take matters into their own hands.

While powers beyond vague magic are rare in pirate fiction, life on the sea is incredibly dangerous and there are plenty of opportunities for heroes to come into their powers through hardship. Heroes could gain their powers by handling cursed treasure, or after being rescued by mermaids—though these heroes are likely to be considered cursed. Pirate crews are full of sailors who feel rejected or mistreated by the rest of the world, so it makes perfect sense for heroes to turn to a life of piracy because of their powers—especially if those powers provide an unnatural appearance.

Technology is advancing rapidly in this era, with clockworks and lenses accomplishing amazing things. A technology-oriented hero might build pirate-themed equipment, such as guns that fire grappling hooks, advanced diving suits, or clockwork prosthetics.

Pirates with supernatural abilities may rise in the ranks because their powers promise protection from enemies. A half-Atlantean pirate can see underwater without much light and could have command over the sea through Element Control. A cursed captain might come back as a "ghost" commanding a ghost ship, and use that reputation to intimidate other crews.

Local heroes are likely to either want to make a name for themselves on the sea, or to protect and enforce justice when nobody else will or can. Some heroes may be former slaves who now work toward a better world by attacking slave ships and freeing those onboard.

Humans of extraordinary skill but little superhuman merit may be a tough-as-nails team of sailors holding up ships, hunting treasure, and battling imperial governors in a PL 5 campaign. For a campaign focused on vigilante justice at sea with sea monsters, high weirdness, and minor superhuman ability, PL 7 is appropriate. In a PL 10 campaign, the heroes are a crew with extraordinary powers battling entire fleets or challenging other powered pirates.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

BUCCANEER	PL 4 • MR4 • 53 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 3 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: Cutlass, Flintlock Pistol.	
Advantages: All-out Attack, Equipment 2, Favored Environment: Ship, Move-by Action, Quick Draw.	
Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+4), Athletics 5 (+6), Close Combat: Swords 2 (+5), Expertise: Carpentry 5 (+5), Expertise: Caribbean Lore 3 (+3), Intimidation 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+5).	
Offense: Init +2, Cutlass +5 (Close, Damage 3; Crit. 19– 20), Flintlock Pistol +4 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 2, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 0 + Advantages 6 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 53	

Buccaneers have a solid understanding of their ship—its decks and rigging and how she handles—and fight with uncanny skill on the high seas. Many also possess useful trades or musical skills in addition to the skills listed here, and may suffer disorientation when leaving their swaying ship for the unsettling stability of dry land.

DREAD PIRATE	PL 6 • MR7 • 53 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3	
Equipment: Blunderbuss, Cutlass, Flintlock Pistol.	
Advantages: Assessment, Attractive, Daze (Deception), Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 3, Fascinate (Intimidation), Inspire, Languages 2 (English, French, Spanish), Move-by Action, Quick Draw, Tracking, Uncanny Dodge.	
Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+6), Athletics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Swords 2 (+8), Deception 5 (+8), Expertise: Maritime Lore 6 (+7), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 5 (+8), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 3 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+5), Vehicles 6 (+8).	
Offense: Init +4, Blunderbuss — (Area, Damage 6), Cutlass +8 (Close, Damage 4; Crit. 19– 20), Flintlock Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 7, Fortitude 6, Toughness 5/3*, Will 4 *Without Defensive Roll.	
Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 0 + Advantages 16 + Skills 22 (44 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 92	

As charming as they are deadly, dread pirates stand above rank-and-file pirates, thriving both in the rough world of pirates and the more "proper" world of trade and business. They can be a charming diplomat one minute and ready to fight an entire room of Royal Navy marines the next. A dread pirate may serve as the captain of a ship, commanding buccaneers, or may be the elite crew of an even more skilled (or empowered) captain.

SIREN	PL 4 • MR6 • 90 POINTS
STR 4 **STA** 3 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 5	
Powers: Enchanting Song Cumulative Burst Area 4 Affliction 4 (120-foot radius; Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled; Sense-dependent: Auditory); **Aquatic** Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Swimming 5 (16 MPH).	
Advantages: Attractive, Daze (Deception), Fascinate (Sing).	
Skills: Deception 4 (+9), Expertise (PRE): Sing 8 (+13), Perception 8 (+9), Persuasion 6 (+11).	
Offense: Init +3, Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 4).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 4, Fortitude 3, Toughness 3, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 24 + Advantages 3 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 6 = 90	

A danger to all sailors, sirens' magical gift for song can drive victims to drown themselves or crash their ships. With the addition of Morph 1 (Horse), this archetype can also represent the Irish kelpie, while exchanging the Aquatic power for flight may represent the Greek harpy.

THE WILD WEST

CIRCA 1870 CE

The Wild West's heyday was brief, from the Civil War's end to just prior to perhaps 1910. Westward expansion started years prior, sparked by land lotteries and emboldened by the 1849 California gold rush; the era closed when barbed wire fences and extensive railways replaced federal land grants and cattle drives. The events which took place during this period hold an outsized place in the American psyche, with films, TV shows, and books recounting stories of deputies and desperadoes, range wars against land barons, and anarchic frontier towns like Dodge City.

In truth, the West was never as violent or romantic as portrayed. Reality was tougher and dirtier than fiction. In folklore, cowboys break broncos while riding tall in the saddle and dispatching varmints to Boot Hill. Cowboys actually do the exhausting work of driving herds and rounding up stray steers. Popular media casts cowboys as overwhelmingly anglos, but the Wild West was diverse—black cowboys alone, many of them freedmen, made up 25% of the range-cattle industry, and the rest of the West was heavily populated by Mexican *vaqueross*, Indigenous peoples, and immigrants from Asia. Cowboys' attire and methods for handling cattle are actually taken from the vaqueros, down to their southern counterparts' wide-brimmed hats and leather chaps. But the West was a time of bravery and danger, with the likes of Crazy Horse and "Wild" Bill Hickok becoming legends.

Expansion is driven by "Manifest Destiny", the notion the United States is "ordained" by its god to stretch from sea to sea. The promise of free farmland and ample resources draws settlers, and entrepreneurs, fortune hunters, and outlaws follow. The U.S. Congress uses Indigenous pushback against the invasion to justify military action to displace them under the Indian Resettlement Act, but encounters fierce resistance from Comanche, Kiowa, Navajo, and many other peoples. The Sioux Nations and Apache assail smaller tribes, leading these to sometimes ally with American military. Indigenous warriors ransack civilian settlements for supplies, especially when bison dwindle (the army killed many herds to starve tribes into submission); settlers raid their villages in retaliation. These so-called Indian Wars continue until 1890, when the last tribal nations are defeated and exiled into small reservations. While glamorized in popular media, the Indian Wars were a period of unabashed genocide against native people, and you should discuss this element in particular with players before including it in your campaign.

Living on the frontier is not easy—farming is grueling labor, with homesteaders working dawn to dusk to survive against insects, weather, and predators. Ranching is equally taxing, endlessly tending herds, repairing fences, and clearing rocks. Clean water is often scarce—settlers build near streams when possible, and dig wells or build rainwater catch-basins when not. Isolated locations make tempting targets for bandits, so homes are kept stocked with weapons. Towns provide amenities—a bank, post office, church, and apothecary—along with professional services like doctors, lawyers, and surveyors. Even small towns usually had a sheriff to keep order, assisted by deputies. They usually comprised the only authority within a week's travel, with U.S. marshals even further away.

Because the ranks of peace officers are so thin in most areas, abusive, corrupt, or inept sheriffs constitute genuine danger to the citizenry. If local law enforcement is bought off, run out of town, or killed, it falls to ordinary townsfolk to defend themselves. Minorities and pariahs can only rely on themselves, as the law sides with "decent folk" and no one else stands up for their rights.

Taming the West was an era of danger, but also adventure that still informs how many Americans see themselves.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Distances too far to cross afoot are traversed on horseback or other pack animals (obscure fact: imported camels existed in the West until 1940); Consequently, the new skills mentioned in **Chapter 2**—Animal Empathy and Riding—are very appropriate in the era. Stagecoaches and trains are the only vehicles to regularly traverse the American west—especially after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869—but in a super-heroic take on the Wild West, all manner of steam-power cars, dirigibles, and walkers might clutter the landscape.

Firearms develop rapidly through the era, but guns of the age are unreliable compared to modern weapons: jams and misfires are common, revolvers kick up smoke clouds (granting partial concealment to shooters and targets for a round), and water or mud can render them useless. This is a 1 pt. Quirk: Finicky; on a roll of a "1" to use the power, it backfires to create a complication or stops working until it can be repaired with a Standard action. Heroes can also buy "masterwork" guns that lack this trait as devices.

In the historical Old West, sophisticated electronics are nonexistent and internal combustion engines are rudimentary. Most Technology skill checks to work on mechanical equipment suffer only a –2 circumstance penalty, but electronics impose a –5 circumstance penalty.

- **Advantage—Benefit (Paired Guns):** Characters with this advantage can wield a firearm in each hand, using a single Standard action to fire at two targets or fire at the same target to add their damage together. The total damage from both weapons cannot exceed the character's PL limits. This combined damage determines how high a character's maximum attack bonus can be, rather than the damage of an individual weapon. This is essentially the Split Extra, applied to equipment.
- **Advantage—Languages:** While American English is the common tongue of the west, freedmen Creole, railroad work-gangs' Cantonese, Dakota, Navajo, Spanish, and multiple other tongues are common.
- **Advantage—Minion/Sidekick:** Trusty animals are a mainstay of Wild West heroes, and are purchased as Minions (for ordinary examples of their kind) or Sidekicks (for unusually smart, brave, and loyal specimens).

NEW EQUIPMENT

Some of the most iconic equipment of this era includes:

COLT FRONTIER SIX-SHOOTER

The classic Wild West pistol, there were many Colt models, including one which was the U.S. Army's standard sidearm. The hammer could be "fanned" to fire a burst of shots at the cost of accuracy, represented with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check.

Colt Frontier Six-Shooter: Ranged Damage 3, AE: "Fanning the Hammer" (Ranged Damage 4, Check Required [DC 10 Dexterity], Inaccurate); Quirk: Finicky • *6 points*

THE WILD WEST OF EARTH-PRIME

The Pale Rider, alias Adam Prophet, is the seminal champion of the range, with ghostly theatrics backed by flashing fists and blazing guns. Late in his career, Pale Rider leads a loose affiliation known as Prophet's Crusade, hunting down arch-fiends such as Jack-A-Knives, mad inventor Dr. Rakub, and Confederate war criminals. While the Crusade's membership varied, a mainstay was Emily Swift, creator of the "Steam-Man of the Sagebrush" and Prophet's eventual wife. The Crusade would never have existed without Broken Crow, the shaman who revived the lifeless Prophet and set him on the path of justice. The Sioux medicine man harnessed the Magic Mesa's wild energies and wore the mantle of Master Mage, before falling at Wounded Knee.

The Old West of Earth-Prime teems with fantastic elements: Deep Ones (*Atlas of Earth-Prime*) reside in the waters outside New Orleans, refugees from raids on Innsmouth; excavators in Veracruz uncover artifacts of the extraterrestrial Ku-Tu The Eternal (*Threat Report*); a reinvigorated Spirit of Liberty incarnates in a Chinese immigrant, who battles racial injustice as the American Promise; and the Eightfold Web cult (*Threat Report*) works to exploit the dimensional nexus on which San Francisco sits.

GATLING GUN

Multiple barrels revolve around an axis via hand-crank, allowing the Gatling gun's barrels to cool between shots.

Gatling Gun: Ranged Damage 5 (Multiattack; Increased Action, Quirk: Finicky) • *9 points*

LARIAT

A lightweight rope tied into a lasso, the lariat is an indispensable tool for wrangling animals but equally useful for restraining criminals. A lariat grabs a target with the equivalent of Strength 3, but a wielder can use their own Strength rank to pull a target closer after they are grabbed.

Lariat: Strength 3 (Reach 4; Limited: Only for grabbing) • *7 points*

SHARPS DERRINGER

Favored weapon of card sharps and confidence men, this four-shot, small caliber pistol could be concealed under a sleeve and propelled into the wielder's hand by a spring-loader. A derringer's small size provides a +10 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks to conceal the weapon somewhere on a person's body.

Sharps Derringer: Ranged Damage 2 (Feature: Concealable, Advantage: Improved Critical; Diminished Range, Unreliable (4 uses), Quirk: Unreliable) • *2 points*

WINCHESTER RIFLE

"The gun that won the West" debuted in 1866. One of the first repeating rifles, it was a lever-action firearm which held up to fifteen rounds. Lawmen often paired it with the Colt Frontier pistol, as it used the same cartridges.

Winchester Rifle: Ranged Damage 4 (Quirk: Finicky) • *7 points*

STAGECOACH

Stagecoaches were instrumental in carrying passengers, light freight, and especially mail between distant towns until the expansion of the railways. They were pulled by a team of 4–6 horses which were switched out for fresh steeds at waystations situated every 15–20 miles along routes, allowing roughly 60 miles of travel each day. Stripped-down mud-wagons were used to cover muddy flats or rocky paths. Ripe pickings for bandits, stagecoaches were driven by two person teams, with the passenger holding a ready firearm—literally "riding shotgun."

STAGECOACH	3 POINTS
Size: Huge **Strength:** 8 **Speed:** 2 (ground) **Defense:** 7 **Toughness:** 7 **Features:** Muscle-Powered	

STEAM LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE

The "Iron Horse" would eventually help end the cowboy era, but in the Wild West's heyday, trains were notable for being prime targets for armed robberies, leading to railroad companies stationing armed detectives on board. Lifting (let alone stopping) a locomotive engine requires a Strength of 10 or higher.

STEAM LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE	20 POINTS
Size: Huge **Strength:** 15 **Speed:** 4 (ground) **Defense:** 4 **Toughness:** 11 **Powers:** Impervious Toughness 10	

VISITING HEROES

Time traveling heroes may be investigating mysteries involving their Wild West predecessors, while tech-based characters could be looking into the origins of American "mad science." Less scrupulous visitors are treasure hunters, hoping to seize "lost" caches of train robbery loot, or preemptively "claim-jump" discoveries of gold. Likewise, time-traveling adventurers (and criminals) are drawn to the rough-and-tumble era, when government authority was much weaker. Others have grander motives like changing the outcome of famous events such as the O.K. Corral shootout, or the disastrous Indian Wars. Wild West aficionados may simply wish to meet idols such as Bass Reeves, Sitting Bull, and other famed figures.

While the culture, technology, and languages of the Wild West are familiar, stark differences remain. Death and disability from disease, misadventure, and everyday occurrences such as childbirth are common, and most people hold stoic views about life and death. Personal hygiene and sanitation are slipshod by modern standards—fresh water is a commodity, and few commercial grooming products exist. Saloons and bordellos serve as social centers. Tobacco use is everywhere. Mob vengeance against suspected criminals is swift and lethal, judgment overriding justice. Women remain second-class citizens, though states such as Wyoming have women's suffrage (though only for white women). Racism is casual and open. Heroes with flashy costumes or unusual appearances draw attention (and derision); wielding obviously superhuman powers can have them hailed as miracle workers or decried as "East Coast weirdos."

Possible plot hooks:

- A frontier monster recorded dead in the 19th century manifests in the present to wreak destruction. The heroes discover it is bleeding temporal energy, making the monster "unstuck" in time. They must force it back to the proper time and place, then surreptitiously aid the local champions in the final defeat of the creature.
- The heroes discover an extraterrestrial huckster supplying settlers and Natives alike with futuristic but shoddy and malfunctioning weapons; they must drive the alien arms-merchant from Earth, then confiscate and destroy the anachronistic technology.
- A minor villain team stumbles upon a gateway to the sagebrush era and opt to relocate to a time before superheroes were around to stop them (or a time with relatively few heroes or other law enforcement).
- Archaeologists discover a dusty version of one hero's iconic device or costume in a recently-excavated tunnel under San Francisco, which had been sealed since the 1880s, and the team must travel back to investigate how it ended up there.

LOCAL HEROES

The Wild West is replete with extraordinary individuals—Annie Oakley's superlative shooting, John Henry's strength, Sitting Bull's visions—whose exploits inspire tall tales across the deserts and prairie. Heroes are typically normal humans who rely on bravery, cleverness, and talents. As people from an array of backgrounds can be found in the American West, nearly any skill set can be found, including big game hunters, martial artists, and eccentric inventors. With interest in the paranormal rising after the American Civil War, heroes with supernatural abilities—including spirit-talking, mesmerism and other powers of the mind—aren't unexpected. PL 6-8 heroes are most appropriate, and any actual powers should match the milieu. Enhanced attributes, super-senses, and movement powers being most typical. Energy blasts, shrinking, teleportation and other non-genre powers should have (very) solid rationales.

Heroes may be agents of a secret federal organization, recruited for their elite skills to combat exceptional dangers. Alternately, they might be a special posse put together by a wealthy philanthropist for righteous pursuits. Their missions range from capturing a notorious gang, to quelling a subterranean attack on a silver mine, or thwarting Confederate holdouts from unleashing a Southern "wonder-weapon."

The American Frontier era supplies ample fodder for a heroic-horror campaign. During this period of extensive immigration, Old World terrors such as vampires and werewolves follow their human prey from Asia and Europe to hunt on the open range. They exist alongside Indigenous monsters such as skin-walkers and sasquatch. The heroes are holy women, gunfighters turned monster hunters, and occult detectives, armed with knowledge and dedicated to scourging these nightmarish creatures from the plains.

Alternately, the player characters are benevolent true magicians and supernatural beings, engaged in a clandestine struggle protecting mankind against their malignant kin. The latter campaign allows for Power Levels between 8-10, but arcane abilities should fit the setting; shapeshifting into a coyote suits a Wild West setting better than changing into a dragon. But a GM should allow the campaign's "Big Bad" any abilities whatsoever—Circe or Dracula could well make an appearance!

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

HIDEBEHIND	PL 7 • MR6 • 77 POINTS
STR 5 **STA** 6 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 5 **INT** –3 **AWE** 1 **PRE** –1	
Powers: Claw and Fang Damage 2 (Strength-based), **Hide Behind** Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses; Limited: Only within 30 feet of an inanimate object), Movement 3 (Slithering, Sure-footed, Trackless), Protection 2, Senses 4 (Acute Scent, Darkvision, Tracking).	
Advantages: All-out Attack, Fast Grab, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Initiative.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+9), Close Combat: Natural Weapons 2 (+7), Perception 4 (+5), Sleight of Hand 14 (+14), Stealth 12 (+14).	
Offense: Init +6, Claw and Fang +5 (Close, Damage 7).	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 8, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 18 + Advantages 4 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 77	

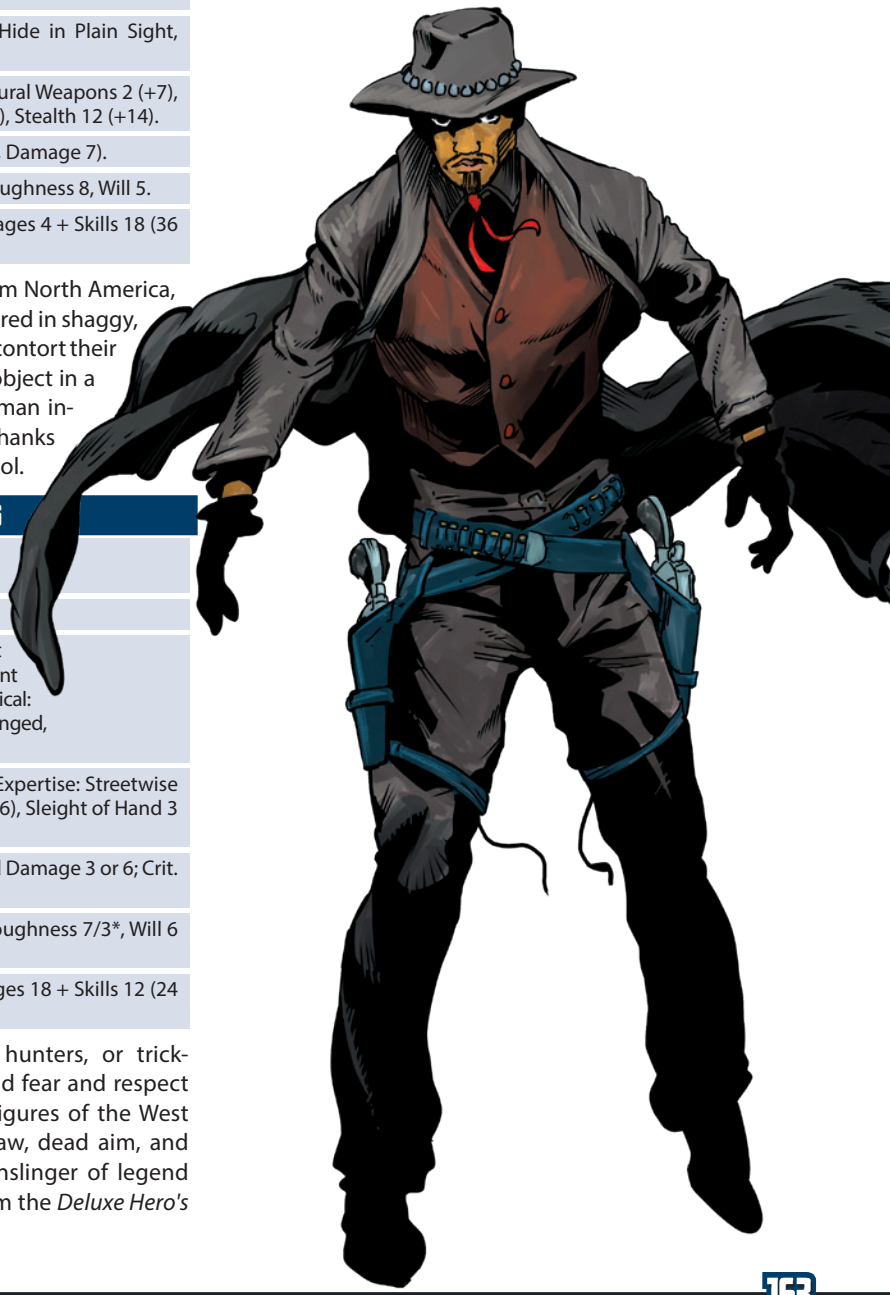
One of the "fearsome critters" that roam North America, the hidebehind is a rail-thin beast covered in shaggy, black hair. Quick and flexible, they can contort their lanky forms to hide behind any solid object in a flash. They feed on flesh, savoring human intestines, but drunks have been saved thanks to the beast's allergic reaction to alcohol.

LEGENDARY GUNSLINGER	PL 7 • 88 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 5 **DEX** 6 **FGT** 3 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 2	
Equipment: 2 Colt Pistols.	
Advantages: Accurate Attack, Benefit (Reputation), Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 3, Fearless, Improved Aim, Improved Critical: Pistol, Improved Initiative, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Ranged Attack 2, Startle, Takedown.	
Skills: Athletics 5 (+7), Deception 2 (+4), Expertise: Streetwise 3 (+4), Intimidation 5 (+7), Perception 4 (+6), Sleight of Hand 3 (+9), Stealth 2 (+7).	
Offense: Init +9, Colt Revolver +8 (Ranged Damage 3 or 6; Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 7/3*, Will 6 *Without Defensive Roll.	
Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 0 + Advantages 18 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 10 = 88	

Whether lawmen, outlaws, bounty hunters, or trick-shot specialists, gunslingers command fear and respect throughout the West. The defining figures of the West are those blessed with a lighting draw, dead aim, and nerves of steel in a gun fight. A gunslinger of legend instead uses the **Weapon Master** from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*.

SMOOTH-TALKING HUCKSTER	PL 2 • MR4 • 48 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 1 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 1 **INT** 2 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 4	
Equipment: Sharps Derringer.	
Advantages: Equipment 1, Fascinate (Deception), Luck, Ultimate Effort: Sleight of Hand.	
Skills: Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Gambling 4 (+6), Insight 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 7 (+9), Stealth 2 (+4), Treatment 1 (+3).	
Offense: Init +2, Derringer +2 (Ranged, Damage 2; Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 2, Toughness 1, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 0 + Advantages 4 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 2 = 48	

Fast-talking and deft of hand, these characters make their fortunes (or not) through guile and trickery rather than the sweat of their brow. Among their number are brothel madams, gentlemen gamblers, and wandering miracle men selling faith healing or patent medicine.



CYBER REVOLUTION

CIRCA 2060 CE

In the near future, the continued consolidation of money and information means the ultimate consolidation of power: a few corporations hold the economy and the government in their sway—in effect *are* the money and the government—and common people adapt their lives accordingly. The average person in this technological dystopia lives in a "company town," where a corporation provides housing, utilities, amenities, entertainment, and work—all at a price. Little work, comfort, or infrastructure remains outside these megacities, so those who can't or won't serve the oligarchs fall through the cracks and must survive on whatever scraps they can pull together.

Inside these company towns, life can be comfortable for the gainfully employed. Yet for all but the top 1%, work is gig-based, irregular, highly competitive, and never guaranteed. Automation and convenience are at their peak, with self-driving transit, smart homes, door-to-door delivery, and endless on-demand entertainment. Humans aren't actually needed for much: call centers, maintenance, and farm work make up most of the labor force, with positions in music, entertainment, advertising, and similar creative fields coveted above all. Academic and research jobs, programmers, hardware engineers, lawyers and medical providers are still largely human, too, but with education a wholly for-profit enterprise few can train for these roles. Those who do find themselves fighting too many people for too few jobs, and their massive debt cancels out the better wages. The corps keep this economic engine running by ensuring there is always somewhere new to shuffle a critical mass of people, allowing individuals to earn just enough to buy the newest trend.

Anyone born in or working in a company town forfeits their anonymity by default, with companies collating personal and medical data from birth and monitoring online conversations. Companies also deploy sophisticated AIs on social media to imitate human conversation, sometimes for faux-viral marketing campaigns, sometimes to create dissent where there is none and fragment social movements. All this makes it almost impossible for peoples' constant, low-level discontent to build into any kind of truly organized large movement capable of change. These corporate-owned communication channels don't make a habit of silencing dissent, but instead provide noise to drown out and distract from these calls in the first place.

There are always people who live at the fringes of society, and in the Cyber Revolution era those people live "off-grid," stealing water and power and food and bartering with each other for goods or the remaining, tattered bits of paper money. The city slums overflow with these "unemployables," who turn to crime—often providing illegal services to the corporate elite—just to survive.

Cutthroat corporate politics cause most of the strife and violence of this era. The undesirables of the urban landscape make the foundation of this future's criminal element, and high-risk, high-reward corporate ventures often recruit this scum as deniable assets to attack other corporations, assassinate rival managers, or kidnap valuable employees. Those who do well might even find themselves gainfully employed, provided with all the comforts of corporate life once more. Organized crime still exists, as commodified and branded as any legitimate corporation, and often work alongside the plutocrats on mutually beneficial rackets, providing services that a "family friendly" corp can't or won't.

Creeping regulations on superhero autonomy and ubiquitous surveillance have made independant super-heroics almost impossible. Many corporations sponsor their own name-brand heroes and teams as an elite service that

customers can subscribe to. Corporate interests—profit and good PR—come first, and any good done is largely a side effect. To provide their "heroes" with villains to fight, corp propaganda labels independent would-be heroes as dangerous terrorists, and when not enough of those exist they simple hire their own villains—as fake as their heroes—to help raise brand awareness.

The corporate consolidation of wealth and power has been a worldwide phenomenon, and players need not limit themselves to a single U.S. city or even the United States at all. Shanghai, Tokyo, Berlin, London, Paris, Johannesburg, Lagos, and Dubai offer similar chances for megacity adventures, with their own unique origins and cultural nuances.

While the aesthetics remain the same, some power other than corporations might control the world in a super-heroic version of the Cyber Revolution. A powerful villain or hero-hunting robots may control the globe and maintain the dystopian status quo. It may also exist side-by side with the Post-Apocalyptic future, with the Cyber Revolution represented in walled "mega-cities" dotting an otherwise blasted, apocalyptic world of mutants and warlords.

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

Visiting heroes will find a lot of technology familiar if opaque, like an especially complicated remote control to a new TV. They can guess at what it does, but those unfamiliar with the era's tech will suffer a –2 circumstance penalty on Technology, Treatment, and Vehicles skill checks to use it.

With the ubiquity of computers, Gamemasters setting a campaign in the Cyber Revolution era should consider separating out all the computer-related functions of the Technology skill into its own, distinct Computers skill to avoid making the Technology skill too powerful.

The online world is more richly developed in the Cyber Revolution, and can function as an alternate dimension, with small implants providing Movement 1 (Dimension Travel: Internet; Limited: Leaves Body Behind) costing only 1pp. This allows heroes to project their minds online to adventure inside the internet or raid companies' digital assets. Use the same rules for the digital world you would use in the real world—heroes' sense of themselves is so strong it dictates their capabilities inside the digital realm—with some "hacker" powers using the Limited: Only Online flaw to represent cool code that doesn't function in the real world. Gamemasters should decide at the beginning of the campaign what dying online means for a character's physical body: Are they simply kicked offline? Are they knocked unconscious? Or does the psychological shock cause the body to start dying as well?

- **Advantage—Benefit (Cipher):** In the Cyber Revolution era, the cipher benefit represents someone with no obvious records. Even people without official corp ID generally have basic records—medical records, school records, criminal records—tied to their biometrics. Ciphers have either altered their computer records or their biometrics enough to divorce them from their past.

THE CYBER REVOLUTION ON EARTH-PRIME

Earth-Prime's near future is a little more optimistic than the dystopia described here, but even the Freedom League hasn't managed to entirely hold back the creeping power of large corporations. City-wide corruption and advancing age lead many heroes of Freedom City to retire, disillusioned, with few young optimists to take their place. AEGIS was gutted by their ongoing battle with SHADOW, and many suspect SHADOW now controls much of the United States government. Much of Freedom City—and the East Coast's—government and infrastructure now rest in the hands of Grant International, and thus Labyrinth.

The future isn't hopeless, however. Freedom League veterans like Centuria, Thunderbolt, and Chase Atom (see *Freedom City, Third Edition*) lead a new generation of heroes in protecting the world to the best of their abilities, while trying to inspire the populace to action against the creepy, economic fascism that controls so much of the Western world.

- **Advantage—Benefit (Identity Record):** The hero has a publicly-registered and traded ID (real or forged) that allows them to operate on-grid. It is both an advantage in certain situations and a serious liability in others. The lack of any record, even a forged one, means a character can't log online, get a job, or make basic purchases.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Some special or restricted equipment includes:

BOOM BOX

A palm-sized device cobbled together from spare parts, a boom box uses a concentrated electromagnetic field to temporarily disable nearby electronics. Disabling electronics in most urban areas automatically alerts security, but by its nature the Boom Box tends to eliminate evidence of who placed it.

Boom Box: Close Burst Area Nullify Electronics 2 (Continuous) • *6 points*

DOC PATCH

The one-use doc patch is a clear plastic patch available over-the-counter at corporate pharmacies. When applied to bare skin, it provides painkillers, coagulants, antibiotics, and stimulants to stabilize injuries. An affected character removes a Dazed, Fatigued, or Stunned condition.

Doc Patch: Luck Control (Recovery; Affects Others; Advantage: Luck) • *3 points*

ELECTRO-SWORD

Standard issue for both human and robotic security staff, this sword uses an electrified edge rather than a cutting blade to stun and incapacitate.

Electro-Sword: Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Linked to Close Damage 1 • *6 points*

SPECTER

A hacker staple, the specter, or "ghost computer," is an illegal laptop or smartphone constructed from untraceable parts and loaded with security exploit software that cloaks its presence on networked systems. They operate invisibly in digital spaces while accessing any digital equipment. More advanced versions can even override and control technology; treat these specters as devices with ranks in the Affliction (limited to machines) and/or Move Object (limited to machines) effects.

Specter: Comprehend 2 (Machines), Concealment 1 (Digital), Feature 1 (Technology toolkit), Senses 2 (Detect Networks, Tracking [Digital]) • *9 points*

VISITING HEROES

Time travelers making one-off trips aren't pulled into the future as often as they are to the past, but there are always a few crises they might avert by going forward rather than back. Time travelers can visit this era to assist a diminished and tightly controlled superhero population at a turning point in history, fighting to keep hope alive rather than letting the era slide into a full-on apocalypse. Heroes can visit in reaction to time travelers to their era—cyberpunk villains wreaking havoc in a modern city—trying to change their future, perhaps even encountering the older, more powerful versions of villains they've already defeated (or villainous versions of themselves). This opens the door for causal paradoxes in the PCs' modern lives, rather than time travel hazards isolated in the past.

Some of the Cyber Revolution will be vaguely familiar to modern era heroes, in concept if not execution. The people of the Cyber Revolution are always connected, with many opting for small implants that allow direct retinal/aural feeds that provide extra income through watching ads in spare minutes between work gigs. Megacities operate 24/7 for the sake of efficiency, and corner pharmacies and net shops sell everything from energy boosters and mood enhancers to sleeping pills in massive quantities. Companies have similarly enhanced the food and drink: corporate-sponsored tap water provides vitamins and minerals (and possibly mood stabilizers to keep workers docile), while labs produce vat-grown meat, and city-sized greenhouses grow fruits and vegetables regardless of season. Labs have filled the world with imitations of anything not easily mass produced, and few people alive know what a real banana or chocolate bar tastes like anymore.

The heroes' lack of familiarity with societal structures, common technology and product availability, and the absence of their personal data records can raise serious alarms and throw off an otherwise simple mission.

Possible plot hooks include:

- A second-rate villain is suddenly a major threat, and the PCs discover his future self—finally out of jail—has been sending temporal "care packages" to his younger self to prevent his defeat.
- A well-intentioned time traveler plucks the heroes out of the present, moments before history records them all dying and kicking off the chain of events that leads to this bleak future.
- After a villain from the distant future uses superior powers and technology to invade the modern era, the must heroes seek out the villain's younger and weaker self in the near future.
- A devastating alien plague paralyzes the modern era, and the heroes must travel forward in time to when it have already been cured.

LOCAL HEROES

Local heroes fall into two major categories: on-grid and off-grid. On-grid heroes were born into society as it is and have detailed personal records, with their abilities known to corporate controllers. Those with innate superhuman abilities are assigned to corporate academies to master their gifts. Like unpowered civilians, superpowered individuals are assigned to roles as needed, though they have considerably more perks and job stability given the relative rarity of their abilities, as well as the investment made in their training. The more civic-minded heroes will find themselves working high-level security and protection, acting as megacity police or investigation forces, or serving on sponsored hero teams that exist as much for PR as any genuine heroics. Characters may become disillusioned with their lot in life, and even rebel against it, but everyone starts firmly in the company's pocket.

In contrast, off-grid heroes, born and raised without a watchful corporate eye, can have the same mix of genetic powers and a much greater chance of excelling in tech or combat. Their freedom comes with much more limited and hard-won resources: hackers operate with cobbled-together tech from stolen parts, fighters learn directly from fellow off-grid teachers, and superpowered individuals learn to control their abilities through trial and error. All these heroes likely have some mix of survival skills and knowledge of the wilderness, as off-grid communities have no one to rely on but each other.

While those born with innate superpowers or alien heritage are familiar if not common, others have powers provided via technology, such as chemical augmentation, genetic engineering, and especially cybernetic implants. Magic is often a rare commodity in the tech-focused future, but what exists is commodified and categorized like other powers.

This setting is ideal for revolutionaries, from off-grid or on: PL 10-12 campaigns could involve corporate-employed heroes discovering the extent of societal corruption, and deciding whether to try to fix things from the inside, break the whole system and start fresh, or throw in the towel and join an off-grid community to protect those who have escaped. Street-level heroes at PL 8 can fight for forgotten neighborhoods, fomenting a revolution that spreads to the rest of the city; and off-grid investigators and bloggers at a similar level could try to expose especially damning corporate practices to inspire the masses from outside. For down-and-out grim freelancers running shadowy jobs against corporations, PL 6-8 is more appropriate.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

CYBER RONIN	PL 7 • MR7 • 99 POINTS
STR 6/4 **STA** 4 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Armor Implants Protection 3 (Impervious 7); **Cyber Arm** Enhanced Strength 2 (Limited to Right Arm); **Cyber Eyes** Senses 4 (Darkvision, Distance Sense, Ultravision); **Reflex Augmentation** Enhanced Advantage (Improved Initiative 2), Leaping 2 (30 feet), Quickness 2 (Limited to Physical), Speed 2 (8 MPH).	
Equipment: Electro-Sword, Heavy Pistol.	
Advantages: Agile Feint, Assessment, Close Attack, Equipment 3, Great Endurance, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative 2, Instant Up, Uncanny Dodge.	
Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+7), Expertise: Bushido 5 (+5), Expertise: Corporate Politics 5 (+5), Insight 3 (+4), Ranged Combat: Guns 7 (+9), Stealth 6 (+8).	
Offense: Init +10, Electro-Sword +7 (Close, Damage 7 and Affliction 5), Heavy Pistol +9 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 6).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 7, Fortitude 8, Toughness 7, Will 5.	
Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 23 + Advantages 10 + Skills 16 (31 ranks) + Defenses 12 = 99	

A popular trope of dystopian corporate futures, anachronistic swordfighters enhanced with cybernetic implants have been templatized and deployed as company defense and deniable freelancers.

HACKER	PL 2 • MR3 • 39 POINTS
STR 0 **STA** 0 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 2 **INT** 4 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 1	
Equipment: Light Pistol, Specter.	
Advantages: Benefit (Cipher), Equipment 3, Second Chance: Technology checks with Computers, Speed of Thought.	
Skills: Deception 5 (+6), Expertise: Criminal 3 (+7), Expertise: Pop Culture 6 (+10), Investigation 4 (+8), Technology 8 (+12).	
Offense: Init +4, Light Pistol +1 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0).	
Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 2, Fortitude 0, Toughness 0, Will 3.	
Totals: Abilities 16 + Powers 0 + Advantages 6 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 4 = 39	

Digital warriors for an information age, hackers specialize in breaking computer security through brute force or clever con games (or "social hacks"). Corporate hackers operate out of cube farms, spying on and corrupting rival companies. Criminal hackers do the same work while remaining inconspicuous, selling what they find to the highest bidder.

If the internet exists as its own dimension for adventures in your Cyber Revolution, you can add the following powers as well, increasing the hacker's PL to 5 while online:

Powers: Interface Implant Movement 1 (Dimensional: Internet; Limited: Leaves Body Behind); **Overclocked Avatar** Enhanced Dodge 4, Enhanced Parry 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Advantages (Improved Smash, Weapon Break); Limited: Online Only

INFORMATION BROKER	PL 3 • MR4 • 59 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 1 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 1 **INT** 2 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3	
Equipment: Leather Armor, Light Submachine Gun.	
Advantages: Connected, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 2, Leadership, Well-informed.	
Skills: Deception 3 (+6), Expertise: Business 7 (+9), Expertise: Law Enforcement 5 (+7), Expertise: Streetwise 9 (+11), Insight 5 (+7), Persuasion 7 (+10), Ranged Combat: Guns 2 (+3), Sleight of Hand 4 (+5), Technology 4 (+6).	
Offense: Init +2, Light Submachine Gun +3 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 3, Fortitude 1, Toughness 2, Will 2.	
Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 0 + Advantages 7 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 3 = 59	

Brokers fill a business need between people who have information and don't want to be caught selling it, and people who don't want to be seen buying it. Unlike hackers, they operate almost entirely offline, with the most successful brokers able to memorize information (or carry it via implant) and pass it on verbally or in code.

POST-APOCALYPTIC EARTH

CIRCA 2120 CE

All good things come to an end, and great civilizations have fallen before thanks to hubris, greed, or climate change. The modern world is no different. At some point, humanity all but destroys itself, and leaves the world littered with the rubble of once-glorious cities. In the Post-Apocalypse Earth era, the only people left are desperate survivors—likely mutated by toxic waste, radiation, or whatever else caused civilization's downfall—and perhaps a few elites sealed away inside hermetically-sealed shelters.

A post-apocalyptic world allows you to explore the idea of what a society can or should do when they no longer feel safe. This era contrasts with the present-day lives of the heroes, letting them see what might happen if they make certain choices or fail to stop a villain, serving as a springboard for character development and future adventures.

Post-apocalyptic worlds are varied, from ruins reclaimed and overgrown by nature to dying worlds covered in endless desert. Focus on a few questions to provide structure to the post-apocalyptic era:

- What was the setting like before the apocalypse?
- What happened to bring about the apocalypse?
- What themes do you want to explore?

Deciding what the world was like before the apocalypse helps you define how people responded to the disaster, as well as what's left. For example, were there superheroes before the fall, and did they help prevent the collapse and fail, or did they cause it? How did society think about itself? Was there a sense of optimism and hope for the future, or was there some awareness that things were not going well, or even that the apocalypse was coming? What was the level of technology before the fall? A world that saw the end coming would prepare, leaving shelters and stockpiles scattered around the world.

The cause of the fall tells you how the world was changed. A world bathed in nuclear fire will still have hotspots of radiation and craters of glass where major cities once stood, but one where climate change destroyed food and water supplies will mean abandoned cities and desperate battles over the few remaining resources. A disaster that releases some mutagenic element, like nuclear weapons or a bio-engineered plague, may also create a world now swarming with dangerous mutants. A zombie apocalypse changes little about the world except rendering other people as an omnipresent hazard.

Finally, the themes you explore help you decide what about this world you need to convey to your players and how a visit to the post-apocalyptic future affects your current campaign. Do you need to foreshadow the rise of a deadly villain or the arrival of a hostile alien armada? Showing the PCs the consequences of failure can drive home the seriousness of the threat. Themes of scarcity might mean adventures helping survivors find water or build sustainable farms, and can also drive home the need for environmental protections in the present day.

Whatever their details, the Post-Apocalyptic Earth era is one where humanity is stripped of its civility and factors of society are writ large and without context. Extreme human augmentation, tricked-out muscle cars, monolithic hivemind societies, and bunker-dwelling xenophobes who refuse to acknowledge the world has changed are all common set dressing.

You can even change the nature of the apocalypse every time the heroes return to this era, jumping from a super-villain-induced desert planet to a climate-change-induced global ocean, but with the same NPCs and communities (adapted differently for their new timeline).

RULES CONSIDERATIONS

The collapse of society means that heroes will need to be able to find their own food, build and maintain their own gear, and survive without outside assistance. Anything that requires a lot of energy or special material to make or maintain—such as microchips for electronics or complex chemicals (like many medicines)—will be rare and precious, likely impossible to replace with local tools and workshops. Heroes needing to repair their time machines will need to scavenge for necessary parts.

Gamemasters will find the rules for Starvation and Radiation hazards (**Environmental Hazards** in **Chapter 8** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*) useful in this era.

- **Power—Immunity:** Many immunities are relevant in post-apocalyptic settings. Food and water are scarce, and the destruction modern industrial sites means large areas will be chemically toxic, radioactive, and/or have air that is unbreathable. Additionally, if the cause or effects of the apocalypse are still ongoing, portions of the planet may be too hot, too cold, and/or underwater. For local heroes, Gamemasters may wish to increase the cost of some or all Immunities, or eliminate the power entirely.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment in Post-pocalyptic settings is often scavenged, jury-rigged, unreliable, not generally available, or irreplaceable. Some ways to reflect that include:

- Having limited uses per scene or adventure (particularly appropriate for weapons where ammo is scarce, or an electrical device that is recharged very slowly using solar cells).
- Being unreliable, requiring a skill check to activate it or keep it going once it's started.
- To reflect equipment that characters build from "what's available," the player and GM might work together to set aside a certain amount of EP to reflect what a character has right now. When equipment is lost, broken, or consumed, the EP is refunded, and can be put towards a new gadget or vehicle the next time the character would be able to make one.
- Having reliable technology that would not cost EP in other settings count as a device.

Finding "spare parts," ammunition, tools, or weapons is also a common adventure seed, and can represent a smaller reward than a power point that Gamemasters can hand out more frequently. This allows one additional use for equipment with limited uses.

VEHICLES

Heroes using scavenged vehicles is a common trope in Post-Apocalyptic settings, particularly ones where humanity is forced to be nomadic because of the circumstances of the apocalypse. Even in less travel focused settings, procuring fuel or electricity, or defending fuel stocks from raiders, is a common source of encounters. You can customize existing vehicles by adding powers and advantages to the car itself. A few possible options include:

- **All-Terrain Tires:** Movement 1 (Sure-footed) • *2 points*
- **Armor Plating:** Protection 3 • *3 points*
- **Caltrop Dispenser:** Shapeable Area Environment 1 (Impede Movement 2) • *2 points*
- **Custom Paintjob:** Advantage (Benefit: Status) • *1 point*
- **Flame-Thrower:** Line Area Damage 6 • *12 points*
- **Flexible Fuel Source:** Immunity 1 (Running Out of Gas) • *1 point*
- **Hovercraft:** Movement 1 (Trackless) • *2 points*
- **Low-Rider:** Movement 1 (Slithering) • *2 points*
- **Machine-Gun:** Range Damage 5 [Multiattack] • *11 points*
- **Nudge Bar:** Damage 6 • *6 points*
- **Overthruster:** Advantage (Extraordinary Effort) • *1 point*
- **Retooled Carburetor:** Advantage (Great Endurance) • *1 point*
- **Side Spikes:** Advantage (Move-By Action) • *1 point*
- **Smokescreen:** Cloud Area Concealment Attack (visual) 2 • *4 points*

POST-APOCALYPTIC EARTH-PRIME

For generations, heroes stood vigil against the threat that Omega (*Freedom City, Third Edition*) would return. The Lord of the Terminus returned to Earth 2081, and to the heroes' horror, their decades of preparation weren't enough. Omega's war machines slaughtered millions, unleashed engineered plagues to destroy the biosphere, and bombarded fuel reserves. He sought not just the extermination of life, but of Earth's ability to even sustain life.

After years of struggle, the war ended. Some believe—and hope—that Omega was driven off or killed. But what remains is a burned-out husk of a world stripped of its water and fuels and still haunted by the Terminus's engines of war. Some survivors still eke out a living in the few places where food can grow. Others scavenge the war-torn cities. Others take what they want or need from others. Most of those who helped defend the planet, hero or villain alike, bore terrible wounds or died, while the villains who hid—many of whom were the least empathetic to regular humans—now rule as warlords, their powers making them de facto leaders in this new world.

It is a time still badly in need of heroes.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Post-apocalyptic equipment is about making do with what you have on hand, forcing survivors to be creative. Some of the most iconic items include:

MOTORIZED MELEE WEAPON

A lawnmower, jackhammer, chainsaw, or other tool from before the fall, turned into an intimidating, if impractical weapon. A motorized melee weapon relies on its engine for damage, but still requires decent strength to wield.

Motorized Melee Weapon: Damage 6; Inaccurate, Quirk (minimum STR 3 required) • *4 points*

SLINGBOW

This upgraded crossbow is modified with a sling and allows the user to fire a variety of improvised payloads, based on what they have available. Some of the more exotic ammunition is harder to find and make, restricting how often those options can be used per encounter.

Slingbow: Weapon Array (12 pts; **Sharpened Hubcap:** Ranged Damage 6; **AE: Crossbow Bolt:** Ranged Penetrating Damage 4; **AE: Bow-Propelled Explosive:** Ranged Area Damage 4; **AE: Sedative:** Ranged Affliction 6 [Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated; Unreliable: 5 uses]; **AE: Net:** Ranged Affliction 4 [Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered, Immobile; Incapacitated]) • *16 points*

SPIKED LEATHER JACKET

A common sight in the post-apocalyptic era, the jacket provides both protection and a useful backup weapon in a pinch.

Spiked Leather Jacket: Protection 1, Strength-based Damage 1 • *2 points*

REBUILT ROADSTER

Modified for greater performance and the ability to use a variety of fuels, the roadster has some armor, but focuses on being light and maneuverable.

REBUILT ROADSTER	14 POINTS

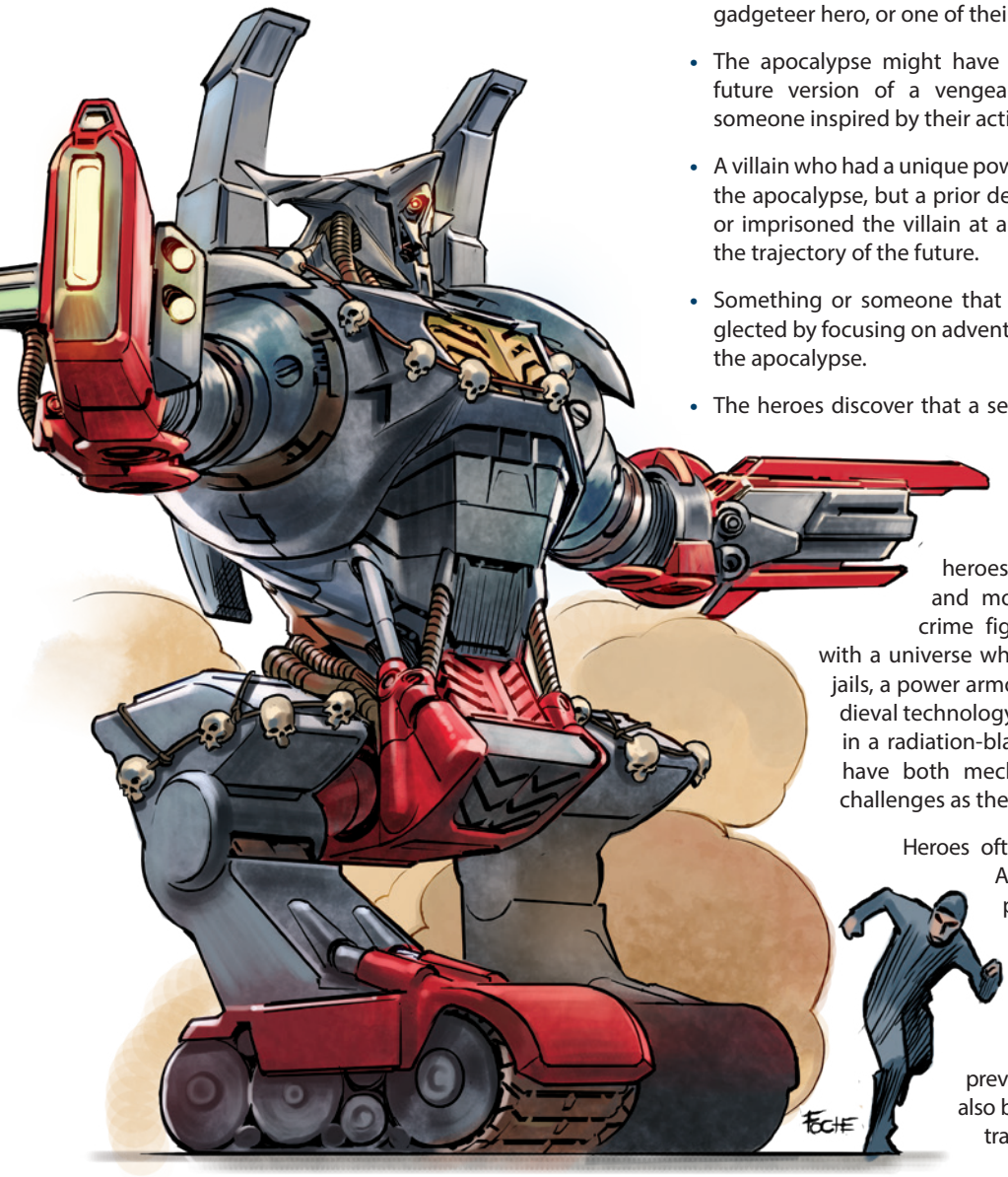
Size: Gargantuan **Strength:** 6 **Speed:** 5 (ground) **Defense:** 9 **Toughness:** 9 **Powers:** Flexible Fuel Source (Immunity 1 [Running out of Gas]), Nudge Bar (Damage 6), Side Spikes (Move-by Action)

VISITING HEROES

The Post-Apocalyptic Earth era lets you personalize adventures to unsettle and challenge your heroes. Gamemasters can include elements of the fall that relate directly back to major characters in your campaign, or the backgrounds and personalities of your heroes.

Possible plot hooks:

- A genocidal AI might be derived from the work of a gadgeteer hero, or one of their rivals.
- The apocalypse might have been caused by a dark future version of a vengeance-motivated hero, or someone inspired by their actions.
- A villain who had a unique power could have prevented the apocalypse, but a prior defeat by the heroes killed or imprisoned the villain at a key moment to change the trajectory of the future.
- Something or someone that the characters have neglected by focusing on adventuring eventually leads to the apocalypse.
- The heroes discover that a series of escalating battles with their villains lead to the apocalypse.



This era can also set a harsh contrast with the heroes' expectations, powers, and morality. A "by the book" crime fighter having to grapple with a universe where there are no laws or jails, a power armor pilot in a world of medieval technology, or a protector of nature in a radiation-blasted wasteland—all will have both mechanical and roleplaying challenges as they adapt.

Heroes often first discover a Post-Apocalyptic era when a person or message from that setting travels back in time. Time travelers from this era might jump back to the heroes' present to prevent the apocalypse. It may also be the end result of a time travel mishap or hazard.

Possible plot hooks:

- Time travelers approach the heroes, claiming they came back in time to prevent their past from happening.
- A disease is ravaging present-day Earth and will create the Post-Apocalyptic future. The heroes must go to the future and study the survivors who have now developed immunity.
- A villain from the future manipulates the heroes into doing things that genuinely do help people in the present, but make the apocalypse more likely to occur.

LOCAL HEROES

The specific cause of the apocalypse often will give a guideline as to what powers work within a setting. A plague or sudden shift in the planet's environment might leave survivors mutated, granting them superhuman or psychic abilities. Heroes showing any powers that regular people don't have will likely instill awe and fear, particularly if those powers seem to be linked to the cause of the apocalypse. Leftover technology also represents a major power source, and a hero with a reliable assault rifle and tactical armor is as much a superhero in the wasteland as a billionaire in powered armor is to the modern world.

Powered heroes in Post-Apocalyptic settings may have the power to change the world, but their powers, and their effects, can help immerse the players in the setting. Humans desperately fighting off alien invaders may have grafted alien organs to their bodies in order to survive, or gadgeteers may have to disassemble ancient and irreplaceable machines to make their weapons and tools. Likewise, a mage who drains the life from the living to power their spells, even if they use those powers for good, can be a constant reminder of the fall, and its causes.

Rather than fighting to maintain a status quo, Post-Apocalyptic Earth heroes often fight to improve the world: Recovering lost knowledge, finding steady supplies, leading their people to a fabled valley where plants still thrive. They may be learning to govern their survivors, or serving a warlord—perhaps even a former villain—who handles the day-to-day drudgery of leadership.

STATBLOCKS

The following statblocks are especially useful in this era:

DEATH MACHINE	PL 10 • MR11 • 160 POINTS
STR 8 **STA** — **AGL** 2 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 5 **INT** –2 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 4	
Powers: Growth 4 (Innate, Permanent), Immunity 60 (Fortitude Effects, Will Effects), Movement 1 (Sure-footed), Impervious Protection 10, Senses 5 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Radio, Time Sense), Speed 3 (16 MPH), **Weapon Systems** (Array; 24 points) **Blasters** Ranged Damage 12, **AE: Missiles** Burst Area Ranged Damage 8, **AE: Retractable Blades** Strength-based Damage 4 (Accurate).	
Skills: Perception 8 (+8), Ranged Combat: Weapon Systems 8 (+8), Technology 6 (+4).	
Offense: Init +2, Blasters +8 (Ranged, Damage 12), Retractable Blades +7 (Close, Damage 12).	
Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 6, Fortitude —, Toughness 14, Will —.	
Totals: Abilities 16 + Powers 125 + Advantages 0 + Skills 11 (22 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 160	

Massive engines of war, death machines prowl the world to eliminate their targets even generations after the nations that commissioned them are gone.

GIANT ROACH	PL 2 • MR1 • 14 POINTS
STR 1 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** –1 **FGT** 2 **INT** –5 **AWE** 1 **PRE** –3	
Powers: Immunity 3 (Radiation, Disease, Poison), Penetrating 1 (on Strength Damage; Mandibles), Movement 4 (Sure-footed 2, Wall-crawling 2: full speed).	
Advantages: Close Attack.	
Skills: Stealth 4 (+6).	
Offense: Init +2, Bite +3 (Close, Damage 1).	
Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 3, Toughness 2, Will 1.	
Totals: Abilities –2 + Powers 12 + Advantages 1 + Skills 2 (4 ranks) + Defenses 1 = 14	

One of the clear winners following the fall, the giant roach has mutated, growing to the size of a dog to fill ecological niches left abandoned during the mass extinction. While cowardly on their own, they are highly aggressive in groups, and can overrun even well-armed survivors to feast on the juicy meats inside.

MUTANT SURVIVOR	PL 5 • MR4 • 51 POINTS
STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 2 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0	
Powers: Immunity 1 (Choose Cold, Disease, Heat, or Radiation).	
Equipment: Club, Rifle, Scrap Armor (Protection 3).	
Advantages: Close Attack 3, Diehard, Equipment 3, Improvised Tools, Ranged Attack 3.	
Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Expertise: Survival 4 (+4), Stealth 4 (+5), *and* either Technology, Treatment, or Vehicles 4.	
Offense: Init +1, Club +5 (Close, Damage 4), Rifle +5 (Ranged, Damage 5), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 2).	
Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 4, Fortitude 5, Toughness 6/3*, Will 3 *Without Scrap Armor.	
Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 1 + Advantages 11 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 51	

The mutated humans who survive the apocalypse are better adapted to their harsh world. This example is light on useful mutations and represents a more grim "hard science" mutant who is saddled with complications.

More fantastic or unusual mutant survivors will have additional mutations, or even outright super powers. Select one or more of the following for more radical mutations:

Aquatic: Immunity 1 (Drowning), Senses 1 (Darkvision), Swimming 5 • *8 points*

Animal Powers: Enhanced Strength 1, Enhanced Stamina 1, Enhanced Fighting 1, Senses 4 (Acute Smell, Low-light Vision, Tracking, Ultra Hearing) • *10 points*

Bulk: Enhanced Strength 3 (Inaccurate 1), Impervious 6 on Toughness • *11 points*

Energy Blast: Ranged Damage 5 • *10 points*

Radiation-Eater: Immunity (Disease, Poison, Radiation Damage, Starvation) • *8 points*

Spines: Reaction Damage 3 • *12 points*

Wings: Flight 2 (Wings) • *2 points*

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