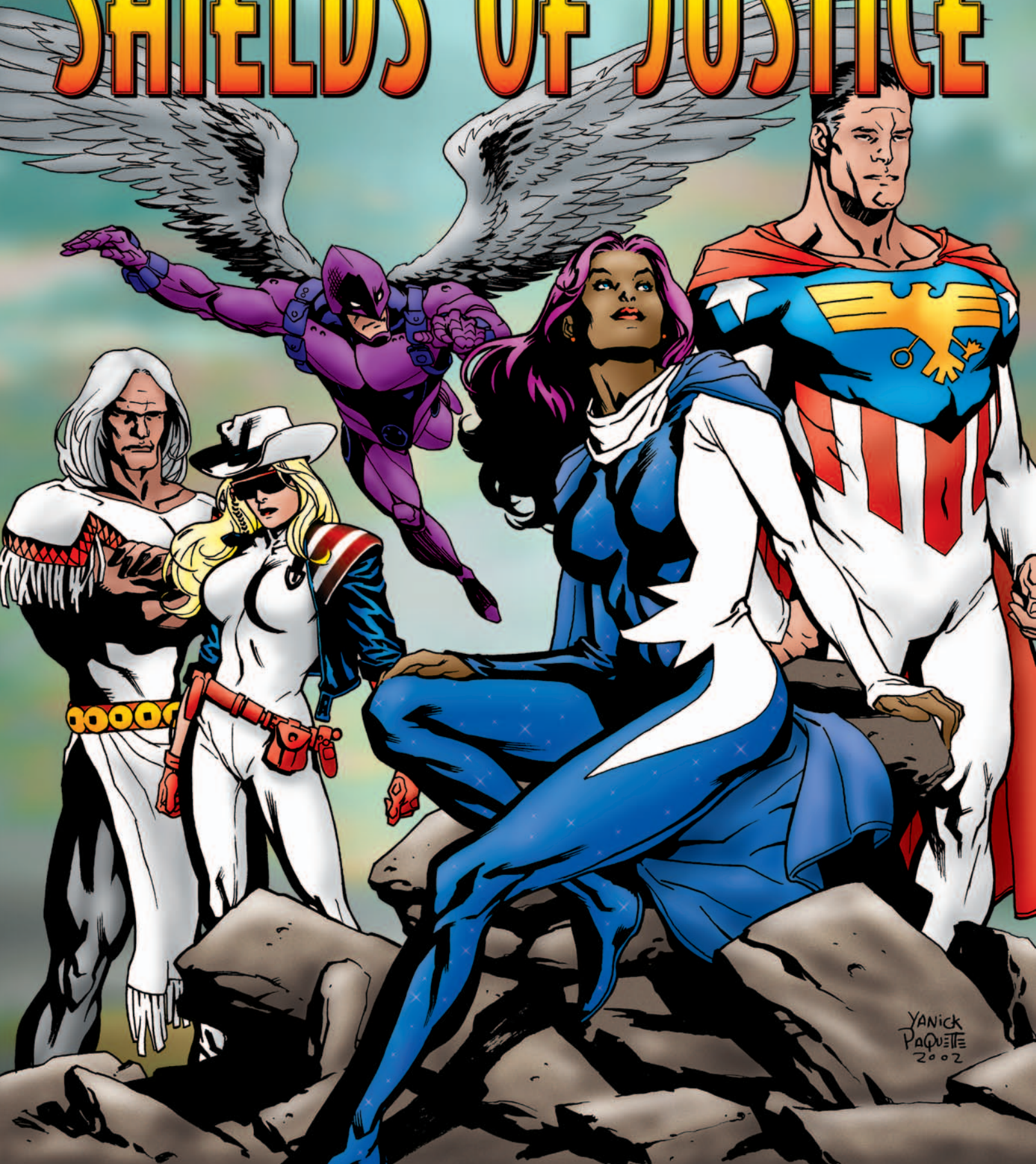


SILVER AGE SENTINELS

SHIELDS OF JUSTICE



YANICK
PAQUETTE
2002

SILVER AGE SENTINELS

SHIELDS OF JUSTICE

THE HERO'S ALMANAC

WRITTEN BY

Steve Kenson, Aaron Rosenberg, Jesse Scoble

ADDITIONAL WRITING BY

Matthew Keeley, Jeff Mackintosh

ART DIRECTION AND GRAPHIC PRODUCTION BY

Jeff Mackintosh

TRI-STAT SYSTEM™ DESIGNED BY

Mark C. MacKinnon

LINE DEVELOPING BY

Jesse Scoble

EDITING BY

Mark C. MacKinnon, Jesse Scoble

COVER BY

Yannick Paquette (illustration), Jeff Mackintosh (colouring)

INTERIOR ARTWORK BY

Andrew Cremeans, Terry Pallot, Chad Sergesketter, Chris Stevens, Bob McLeod

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Marcelo Figueroa, Nicholas Fortugno, Olga Perskaia, Lucien Soulbán, Devinder Thiara

PLAYTESTERS

John Fiala, Christopher Haynes, Tom Miskey, Brian Wong

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NOTES ABOUT GAME CONTENT

The game stats presented herein are for both the Tri-Stat System and the d20 System. Values presented on the left side of a character sheet are for the Tri-Stat System while numbers presented on the right side of the character are for the d20 System. Also, information presented outside of double square brackets, before a slash are for the Tri-Stat System while text presented within {{ double square brackets }}, after the slash are for the d20 System. Any reference to the "Level" of an Attribute also refers to the Attribute's "Rank" when using *Silver Age Sentinels d20*. Further, unless specified otherwise, "Stat" also refers to 'Ability Score' when using *Silver Age Sentinels d20*. For example, "Relevant Stat" also means "Relevant Ability Score."

For the character entries, some of the d20 System point costs are presented in brackets. This is done to indicate the number of points a character spent to acquire the given Attribute although the Attribute rank listed is higher than the point cost would suggest. This difference is due to the "special" bonuses gained from class level progression for the character's selected class(es).



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INTRODUCTION

Hello, and welcome to the Hero's Almanac! In this book we discuss every aspect of the superhero — concepts, codes, methods, powers, equipment, and more. The purpose of the Hero's Almanac is exactly that — to provide an all-purpose guide to superheroes, something anyone can use for quick reference on any hero-related topic.

The first question, of course, is “what is a hero?” Heroes are people with honour and integrity. They believe in something better. They believe that people should be protected and nurtured. Being a hero is more than that, however. Having values isn't enough. Heroes actively strive to share their values — they don't sit back and watch what happens in the world, or react passively to situations. The man who returns a woman's purse after she leaves it in a restaurant isn't so much a hero as just a nice guy. A man who stops someone from stealing the purse, or catches the thief and then returns the purse, is a hero. Heroes are not content to let the world handle its own affairs, or to let bad things happen to good people. They feel compelled to step in and make a difference. The woman who runs back to rescue a child from a burning building, the man who grabs an old man out of the way of a speeding bus ... these are heroes.

Heroism usually involves some personal risk. The woman could get burned herself, while the bus could hit the man. Stopping a thief is dangerous, because he could have a gun or a knife, but not all danger is physical. A worker who stands up to her boss when he bullies a co-worker is risking her job, not her physical health, and the men and women who march to protest political corruption are (usually) risking their reputations more than their safety. Heroes put the welfare of others before their own — they care more about the larger issues than about their own safety and well-being. That doesn't mean all heroes throw their lives away, but they are willing to risk themselves to safeguard others, and especially to uphold their beliefs.

REAL LIFE

Do we have heroes in real life? Absolutely. Firefighters and police officers are heroes — they put themselves on the line for others, every day on the job. Protesters and lobbyists can be heroes, bringing important issues to light and raising critical concerns. Everyday people can be heroes: the man who calls 911, the woman who helps a lost child, the co-workers who opposes discriminatory practices. Life is full of heroes.

Most people are not full-time heroes. Even law enforcement officers and rescue workers go home at the end of the day. In the real world, heroism is often an isolated incident — someone can no longer stand to stay quiet and let an injustice occur, or a person finds himself or herself in a position to help and does so without really thinking about it. Everyone is capable of acting heroically, and often such acts come from the most unlikely of sources — a person you would never have thought capable of a selfless act, who suddenly risks everything to protect someone else. Those brave individuals who travel to dangerous areas to bring food and tools and knowledge to the less fortunate are the closest we have to “full-time heroes,” since their shifts can last for months or even years, but eventually even they come home to rest and restore themselves.

FICTION

In fiction, heroism is more pronounced and dramatic. That's because fiction needs drama; unless the story is deliberately done low-key to emulate real life, situations will be dramatically tense with far more noble or villainous characters than exist in the real world. Heroism in fiction is often more involved, and because we can sometimes hear a fictional character's thoughts, we may discover either a shining purity of purpose or an internal struggle between idealistic action and practical self-protection. Heroes are the people who overcome that pragmatism, who realise that their actions may not change the world but who feel compelled to try nonetheless.

Fictional heroes are more likely to perform heroic acts on a regular basis. After all, depending on the fiction, the character may not have a real job. Pulp novels in particular were filled with well-to-do dilettantes who could spend their time rescuing others and performing good deeds without worrying about paying rent. The noble adventurer, who has no occupation beyond exploring the mysterious and rescuing those in peril, is a favourite of fiction. People want to believe that, given such freedom, more people would dedicate their lives to such selfless activities. Fiction also has heroes who consistently do good deeds despite monetary problems or other concerns, especially in stories where readers can watch the character struggle to balance his or her own needs with the desire to do good. Such characters provide role models, unrealistic but satisfying examples of men and women who ignore their own happiness in order to better help others.

COMIC BOOKS

Comic books are a visual medium. They combine words with pictures to tell their stories, usually on a handful of pages. Early printing processes could only handle a limited range of colours, and couldn't produce any blending or shading, so everything had a bright but flat look to it. Objects and people had sharp planes, clear features, and vivid hues. That style lent itself to stories of bold heroism, with exaggerated actions to match the colours. Stories were originally based on literary classics like the Three Musketeers or Robin Hood, but as demand increased publishers began to produce original characters and stories instead. Many of these were set during the current day, so that the reader could more easily identify with the characters. Heroes often fought crooks or foreign soldiers, protecting their fellow men and women but also protecting their nation's way of life. Gradually these stories increased in scale, and the heroes grew to match. Costumed adventurers gave way to men and women with actual superhuman powers. Fiction had a difficult time describing a man who could fly through the sky, but comic books could show the images easily and quickly.

As comic book readers grew older, however, many of them became tired with the four-colour

comic. Its heroes were better than real people in every way — not just stronger and smarter but immune to the usual problems and concerns, such as rent or work or romance. These heroes were hard to identify with. A new breed of hero appeared, starting with Spiderman and the Fantastic Four. These people not only had extraordinary powers, but were also still people behind the costumes, and faced the same uncertainties as anyone else. These characters became even more popular than their predecessors, because readers could empathise with them more closely and because their victories were more impressive for having overcome familiar obstacles.

This trend led even further, into the creation of the comic book “dark hero” (or vigilante hero). Such characters were commonplace in fiction, especially in noir thrillers and mysteries, but now they migrated to comics as well. Part of this related to better printing and colouring processes. Comic book artists could portray shadows more easily now, and could create more realistically coloured scenes and characters. The dark heroes of the comics generally worked in shadows, avoiding bright lights or fame, and often used questionable methods. Yet their basic intents were still portrayed as noble, even if their techniques were unpleasant, in a type of “ends justifies the means” motif.

Today, comic books run the gamut, from the four-colour hero to dark hero and beyond. At one end, the characters are idealised versions of ourselves, gifted with powers we could never possess. They are powerful enough to change the world, and courageous enough to try. On the other end are the dark heroes, who may have powers, but more importantly have phenomenal dedication and focus, enough to set aside society's laws and strictures and do what they think is necessary. All of these characters share something. They all believe what they do is right, and that it will make the world a better place. Their actions may not win approval from the authorities or even from the masses, but the characters believe in themselves and in what they are doing, and they are willing to sacrifice themselves to succeed. That inner strength, that willingness to tackle difficult tasks and to struggle against adversity, is what defines the true hero.



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QUALITIES OF THE VALIANT

QUALITIES OF THE VALIANT

A superhero is not defined by power alone, but by personality, principles, and behaviour. These three elements are what separate heroes from villains, and sometimes the demarcation is difficult to find — where does a heroic personality end and a neutral or even villainous one begin? This question is made more difficult by the fact that not all heroes fit the same mould; as with any other occupation, those who call themselves heroes vary widely. The only factor

THE ROAD TO HELL

The classic four-colour villain is an individual who delights in committing atrocities. These villains take candy from babies, stomp on flowers, push little old ladies in front of cars, and generally wreak havoc. They rob banks, kidnap heiresses, and hold entire cities hostage because they place no value on other lives, only on themselves and their own desires. But not every villain is like this.

Just as some heroes are more realistic in their attitudes, so some villains are more believable. Is the man who holds the mayor hostage a villain? What if he's doing so to force the mayor to sign a bill providing more funding for education and public housing? What if he knows the mayor is actually a crimelord, and is trying to force the mayor to confess? Or to be even more controversial, what if he is a guerrilla fighter, protesting a totalitarian government? What is the difference between a freedom fighter and a terrorist?

Some villains have noble goals, and strive to make the world a better place. What separates the hero from the villain, then? It's a difficult question to resolve, and most answers are subjective. In general, a hero does his utmost to provide for and protect others; a hero is courageous, noble, and selfless; a hero thinks of others before him or herself; a hero works for the good of society, humanity, and the world.

Of course, one peoples' hero may be another country's most wanted villain. It may always be a matter of perspective, with society, and history, as the final judges.

every hero shares is the desire to make the world a better place, and the willingness to risk personal health and happiness to accomplish that goal.

EVOLUTION OF THE COMIC BOOK HERO

To better understand the superhero, we need to consider how such characters developed. They did not simply appear full-blown, in their capes, masks, and space cruisers. No, the superhero has evolved, changing as the world around him or her has changed, and one can look back at the predecessors to see where these notions and activities first began. Doing so provides a clearer sense of the heroic legacy. Every hero and superhero is part of this long and noble line, and recognising that history provides a sense of continuity, as well as moral support from all those who went before.

OUTSIDE THE COMIC BOOK

It's important to understand that comic book heroes are merely the most recent in an even longer line of men and women who accomplished strange and wondrous deeds. This section talks about the evolution of the comic book hero specifically, but many of the types mentioned can be found in earlier literary fiction and before that in oral storytelling. Mythic heroes were generally demigods, half-human and half-god and possessed of strength and stamina beyond that of any mere mortal man; these would qualify as Anomalies, Protectors, or Paragons, depending on the specific character. War Heroes are also common in myths and legends. King Arthur, for example, would qualify as a war hero. People have always told stories about adventurers who travel to strange and distant lands. Since this book is concerned with the superhero, and specifically with the comic book superhero, this section concentrates on the clear development of those characters, as chronicled in the comic books themselves.

ADVENTURERS

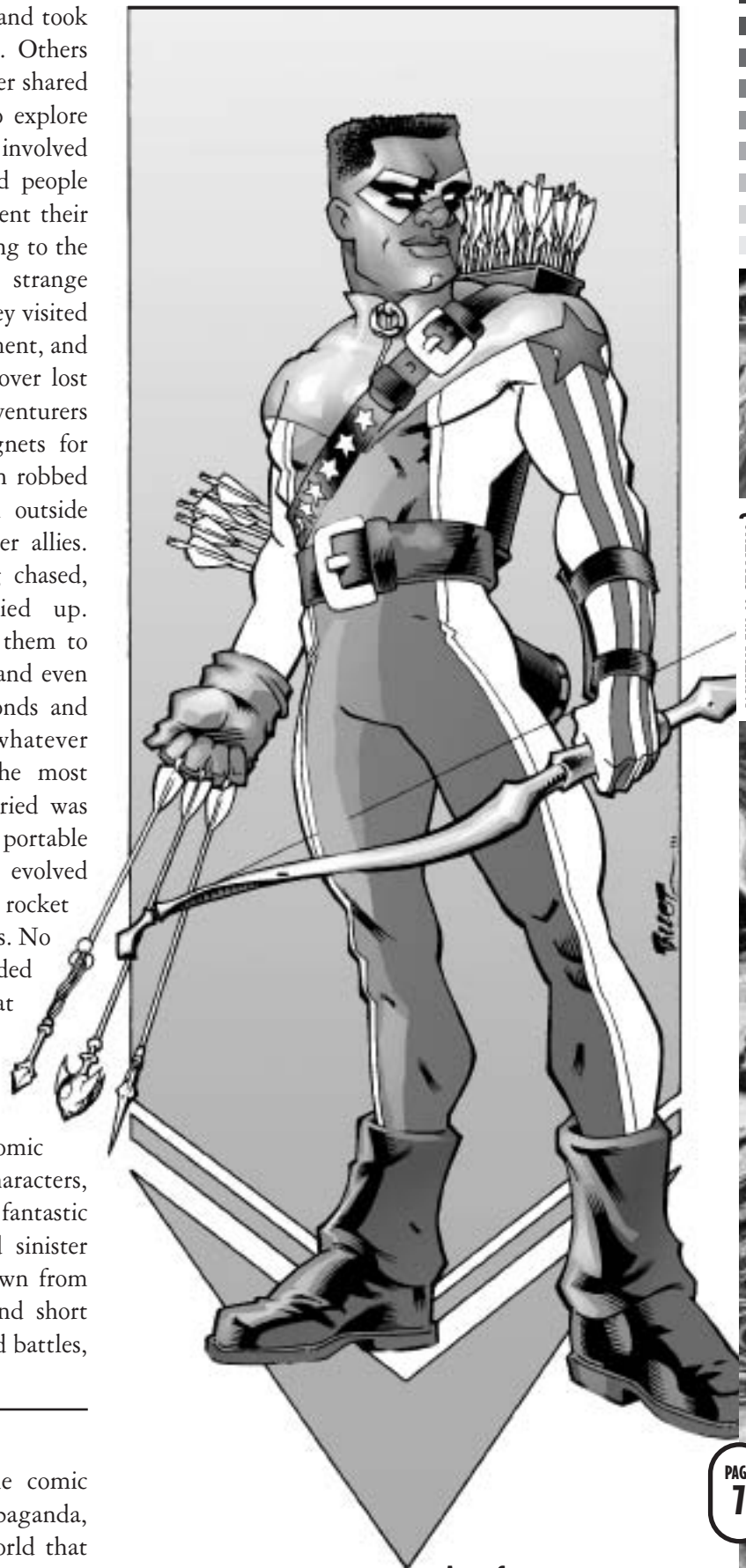
The earliest comic book heroes were the adventurers. These men and women possessed no special abilities. Most of them were physically fit, but not abnormally so — the type of people who lead active lifestyles. Many adventurers were wealthy

enough that working was never a concern, and took to adventuring as a way to pass the time. Others adventured to make money. Every adventurer shared two things, though: a burning curiosity to explore the unknown, and a willingness to become involved whenever good people were at risk or bad people stood to gain unfairly. Most adventurers spent their time gallivanting around the world, travelling to the far corners and exploring long-lost cities, strange valleys, high mountains, and deep caves. They visited any place that promised mystery and excitement, and gave them the chance of being first to recover lost treasure or knowledge. When at home, adventurers still had their hands full; they were magnets for damsels in distress, inventors who had been robbed or blackmailed, governments who needed outside assistance, and foreigners without any other allies. Adventurers often found themselves being chased, shot at, poisoned, kidnapped, and tied up. Fortunately, their time abroad had taught them to keep their heads in a crisis, and cool logic and even tempers often let them wriggle free of bonds and confinements and turn the table on whatever dastardly villains had captured them. The most advanced equipment most adventurers carried was specialised guns, concealed armaments, and portable recording devices. Later, these characters evolved further into the science-heroes, armed with rocket packs, stun-guns, and other advanced devices. No matter their trappings or abilities, they tended to use their intelligence and skills to defeat larger and more powerful opponents.

The comic book adventurer migrated directly from the pulp novels, specifically thrillers and strange adventure tales. Comic books were perfectly suited to these characters, because the artists could create images of fantastic places, rare treasures, and mysterious and sinister adversaries. These characters were also drawn from the early television serials, radio serials, and short films, and inherited their sound effects, rapid battles, and cliff-hanger endings.

WAR HEROES

As America went to war, so did the comic books. In part, this was a form of propaganda, showing children a skewed view of the world that idealised American soldiers and demonised the



ARCHER GOLD

enemy. Comics were also sent to the soldiers themselves, and served to encourage them by showing the enemy defeated again and again by superior American characters. Normal people forced to protect their country, and possessed of amazing endurance and determination, became legendary soldiers, or war heroes. The war heroes were usually enlisted men or low-ranking officers, rather than top commanders. They fought for their country and for the ideals that nation embodied. War heroes were often squad leaders, capable of pulling their team together and getting them out of deadly encounters through a combination of luck, intuition, and combat savvy. Many were fighter pilots or tank commanders, while some were boat captains or infantry or even scouts and spies. War heroes were often reluctant — many despised bloodshed, but went to war out of duty and fought to protect themselves and the men in their units. Those men often gave their leaders nicknames, and sometimes named the squad after them as well, even adopting distinctive patterns on their helmets and uniforms to honour their commander. War heroes were rarely strategists; they generally followed orders, but could adapt to new situations and problems quickly and always put their men's safety and the success of the mission above their own survival.

In many ways, the war hero was merely the adventurer gone to war. They recognised the gravity of their situation, and the value of their country's ideals, and committed themselves wholeheartedly to the battle. War heroes couldn't take the time to indulge their curiosity, though, the way the adventurers could. They had jobs to do, and that had to come first.

DAREDEVILS

After adventurers came daredevils. These men and women lived, not to explore the unknown, but to take risks. They loved to defy death, whether by taming wild animals, performing stunts on the wing of an airplane, or climbing skyscrapers and leaping from rooftop to rooftop. Daredevils were thrillseekers, deliberately courting danger. They were just as happy in the city as in the jungle or desert, as long as their lives and health were at serious risk. Daredevils did not have any special abilities either,

but their physiques were honed to near-human perfection by constant exercise and training, and most were capable of gymnastic feats so impressive as to appear almost supernatural. Daredevils were often well-to-do, just like adventurers, and could devote every waking hour to training or to actually seeking danger. Whereas adventurers usually wore practical clothes while travelling, and normal attire while at home, daredevils began the costume trend, wearing distinctive clothing and accessories so that everyone would recognise them. Adventurers enjoyed fame and recognition, but daredevils thrived on it. Defying death was no good if no one remembered your name or face. Daredevils also started the trend towards personalised equipment, often giving their tools or vehicles fanciful names. In many ways, the daredevils were inspired by the heroes of dime novels, like Buffalo Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickock, and Flash Gordon, and created colourful nicknames for themselves as well. The daredevil's fondest wish was to be immortalised in prose, so that his feats would live on forever.

The daredevil characters appeared after the wars were over and the readers turned their attention homeward. After years of reading about heroes who shot down planes or blew up tanks or tore down bridges, stopping burglars seemed too tame. So the daredevils stepped up to provide thrills as intense as armed combat, but far less serious. With their colourful costumes and fanciful names, daredevils were essentially half-clown, and that was deliberate. They let the reader laugh at their antics, and showed that life could be fun and silly again, while still providing enough chills and thrills to satisfy tastes developed on war stories. Daredevils demonstrated with every crazy stunt that the war was over, and that people could turn their attention to more frivolous things.

ANOMALIES

Daredevils, for all their adrenaline rushes, were still completely human. The next group was the first to push that envelope. Anomalies were men and women who possessed strange abilities, abilities that seemed beyond those of a normal person. Some were stronger than anyone their size should be. Others could see further, or shoot unerringly and without

looking, or run faster than anyone thought possible. Most anomalies were completely normal in every other regard — someone who could run fast was still only as strong as an average person and still tired as quickly, while someone who could shoot and never miss might have flat feet and a glass jaw. Anomalies often took jobs in carnivals, or became performers and entertainers, using their unusual skills to make the act more memorable and unique. Unlike adventurers and daredevils, anomalies usually did not want fame, but rather wanted to fit in with the rest of the world. Most adopted stage names and costumes, so that after a performance they could put on normal clothes and disappear into the crowd. Many anomalies found themselves helping people and solving problems, simply by being in the right place at the right time and by having that one superhuman ability that was unexpected by the villains. Of course, most performers recognised the value of such good publicity, and some even actively sought out problems to solve. Most simply had the bad luck to wander into situations, though and found themselves forced to act.

The anomalies developed in part because of television. TV was showing daredevils, both real and fictional, and so the comic book characters had to go beyond that in order to compete. No real man could outrun a cheetah, but a comic book artist could easily draw that scene, and so comic books turned to more powerful characters in order to maintain their readers' interest. At the same time, as technology advanced, anomalies became necessary in order to stop criminals with increasingly better equipment. Back when all cars had the same top speed, a clever hero could catch up to a fleeing group of bank robbers, or at least tail them to their hideout. When villains could acquire cars with superchargers or rocket packs, however, the heroes needed to either have even bigger superchargers or be able to outrun the cars on foot. Anomalies generally rely on their own bodies and minds, rather than external equipment. A sharpshooter may prefer to use his twin pearl-handled revolvers, for example, but he's actually a crack shot with any gun he picks up, because the real key is his innate skill.

MUTANTS

While anomalies had only one unusual trait, and it only marginally surpassed the norm, mutants were clearly beyond the mundane. Most mutants had only one special ability, but that ability often affected their entire body. A man born with wings had lighter bones, sharper eyesight, stronger tendons, and almost feathery hair ... all adapted to improve his ability to fly. A mutant with the power to shoot energy blasts from his eyes had skin immune to that same energy, so that his blasts would not burn through his own eyelids. Mutants were clearly beyond the norm, and people often believed they were completely inhuman, and shared nothing in common with general humanity. Unlike anomalies, most mutants could not hide their true nature — even those with powers that could be turned off (like shooting energy blasts) either had visible traits linked to their powers or could not control themselves well enough to hide indefinitely. As a result, many mutants went public instead, adopting colourful personas. These mutants spent their lives proving that mutants were not all evil, and could use their strange abilities to aid others. Mutants are an unusual case for heroes, since many of them are heroic out of desperation rather than personal choice. They can either help others or be accused of evil, even if they have done nothing wrong.

Mutants are a more recent development in comic books, dating back only forty or so years. In part, their existence owes to advances in scientific knowledge. It was no longer enough to say that someone had been bitten by something or irradiated by something or immersed in something and gained powers from that. Instead, heroes were born with their powers genetically encoded. Readers may also have been tired of the four-colour hero, with his lack of personal problems and his shining reputation. Mutants are, by definition, outcasts and outsiders, and have to struggle for acceptance; that struggle makes them both more sympathetic and more heroic.

PARAGONS

If superheroes are men and women with superpowers, paragons are superheroes with superpowers. These men and women were almost gods. Many were immortal, some were linked to elemental forces, and each had the power to reshape whole continents or even planets. Paragons had not

one or two but several powers, all linked together, and all of immense strength. Most paragons were impervious to normal damage, and many were immune to dangers such as radiation, poison, and disease. Paragons were the best and brightest, heroes so impressive they seem more than human, as if all flaws and weaknesses were burned away and only strength and nobility remained. Of course, most paragons were still human, and still had doubt and personal concerns and even fears, but they carefully hid those from the rest of the world. To the world, they were beyond such petty problems, and lived only to aid those less fortunate. Some people resented the paragons, for their superiority and apparent perfection, but most people looked up to them, admired them, and wanted to be just like them. Some paragons were always present, ready to appear for even small problems, while others appeared suddenly when needed most desperately and disappeared just as quickly afterwards. A handful of paragons even became active as social reformers, speaking out against injustices and encouraging such things as environmentalism and education.

The first paragons appeared back in the early days of the comic book superhero, as little more than another daredevil or anomaly. As the characters gained more fame and popularity, their powers increased, until they were virtually godlike in ability. In some ways, this was a reaction to other superhero types. Dark heroes are interesting but many readers still want a hero to which they can look up and admire. As more and more of the planet was explored and exposed, and as technology made normal crooks more and more powerful, paragons increased in power and also in scope, rising above others to provide a clear example of strength, nobility, and purpose.

ALIENS

This last group of heroes is not human at all, because they are not from Earth. Beings from other planets, brought here either accidentally or by design, aliens are Earth's foster-children. For whatever personal reasons, these aliens have chosen to adopt Earth, and wish to protect her from danger. Most aliens have superhuman powers as a result of their alien physiology. Some are from denser planets, and so have stronger muscles and thicker skin, while

others are incapable of physical speech and so have developed telepathy instead. Some aliens look enough like humans to pass among us unnoticed, others are similar but have distinctive features or coloration, and some are clearly nonhuman at a glance. Many of these aliens cannot leave Earth, and thus are forced to adapt to the planet and aid it out of self-preservation. Others come and go freely, and return not from need but out of love and respect and duty. Unlike protectors and paragons, most aliens do not bother with fanciful names and costumes — their own appearance, native clothing, and names are often colourful enough. Many have been given strange nicknames by the press or by people they have encountered, but aliens rarely have family to risk, and are often more open about their presence because of that. Perhaps it seems strange to consider an alien as the most evolved form of earthly hero, but what is

HEROISM WITHOUT RISK

Does heroism require risk? To some character types, especially the godlike paragons, the mundane world presents little threat. What does a man or woman who is invincible fear? If bullets bounce off your character's chest, is stopping a mugger heroic? If you have no secret identity, or emotional ties, do you risk anything socially or personally?

If nothing in the world can hurt you physically or emotionally, you have not designed a hero. At best, you have a nice guy, and at worst a cold, one-dimensional figure. In most comics, and games, the threats rise in scale to endanger a character; Sentinel would not be as heroic if he only stopped muggers, nor would the story be particularly interesting. Therefore, he is forced to confront everything from tidal waves to alien invasions ... things that can hurt him physically.

Additionally, heroes must care about their world; they should be concerned with more than vengeance or cold justice. Grim angels of death who feel no compassion or mercy are hardly ideal role models. Likewise, stories about characters with nothing invested in the world tend to become repetitive slug fests. While there is nothing wrong with a superbrawl once in awhile, the best stories go far beyond that.

more heroic than dedicating oneself to the well-being of an entire planet, and one which is not your native home?

Aliens have appeared in comic books almost since the form first began, but most were evil beings that took pleasure in tormenting hapless humans. As science discovered more about outer space, however, and explored the solar system more fully, people became more comfortable with the notion of life on other planets. Aliens are also an easy metaphor for any outsider, someone from another culture or community. These alien heroes demonstrate the beginnings of mutual respect, and of open-mindedness. Many of them are openly not human, and instead of being forced to conform, their differences are admired and appreciated, even as common ground is found. Heroism is not restricted by birthplace, gender, skin colour, or anything else beyond dedication and commitment.

EVOLUTIONARY THEORIES

Humanity is fascinated by superheroes. After all, these men and women can do things normal people cannot, and protect people from terrible calamities and deadly crises. A favourite topic is “why have superheroes developed?” We have already examined the evolution of the comic book hero, and particularly how they changed to reflect changes in reader interest and attitude. That was from the perspective of a comic book reader, though. From the perspective of someone living in a world where superheroes really exist, where did these extraordinary men and women come from? What caused the first superpowered man to appear, and what made more appear after him? People in a variety of fields are constantly studying this very question, searching for an explanation as to how and why heroes have changed over the decades. Many believe that, if they can find the answer, they can alter the process, slowing or speeding it up, and perhaps even influencing who is affected.

As in most scientific endeavours, the first step to answering a question is to develop a working theory. Herein are a few of the more popular theories.

REFINEMENTS

Engineers favour the refinement theory.

According to this notion, superhumans are simply refined humans. As the species develops, it gains new abilities and powers. The evolution from anomaly to mutant to paragon would certainly fit this belief, since each step developed more impressive abilities than the last. Evolution is rarely a constant progression, though — usually it occurs in fits and starts, with as many steps back and sideways as forward. If superhumans are simply more refined or advanced humans, why do so few exist? Refinements also usually serve some purpose, adapting a species or individual for a particular job or situation. What situation requires superpowers? This theory’s particular weakness is the sheer variety of powers demonstrated by superheroes. If such beings were really more refined humans, and refined for a particular purpose, it would be more likely that each superhuman would share the same basic gifts. Of course, the theory’s proponents claim that this is simply the first stage of the process, as Nature considers its options. But powers have become more varied over the years, rather than less, which suggests that either the theory is incorrect or the right refinements have still not been discovered.

CONTAGIONS

Some leading virologists have suggested that humanity has contracted a disease of some sort, and that this disease is responsible for the birth and evolution of superhumans. They claim that the disease has infected DNA and RNA, and is mutating the human genome. This would explain why powers are increasing, as the genome is altered further and further from the original. The question becomes what disease could have caused this, and what is its ultimate goal? Is the disease intelligent, and acting from some ulterior motive, or is it mutating the genome as a side effect of its own existence? What does the disease gain from the process? Is it leeching off elements from the genome in some way? Does it gain nourishment from ribosomes, completely unaware that it is unlocking the human DNA structure and creating new configurations? The other question is one of origin — where could such a disease come from, and how could humans have contracted it?

ANTIBODIES

This theory is a favourite among medical researches and specifically among immunologists. They believe that heroes are the planetary equivalent to antibodies, organisms created with the express purpose of defending the planet and its inhabitants from attack. Antibodies can adapt to situations, and heroes have done the same, their powers and physiology altering as opponents become stronger and more superhuman. This theory could explain why superheroes today have much stronger powers than those of the past, and why more of them are appearing all the time. This does lead to another question, however: if heroes are antibodies, what are they meant to destroy or block? Supervillains? Most villains are also Earth-born, however, and only differ from heroes in goals and principles. Are supervillains supposed to be antibodies as well, and simply deviated from their purpose, much like a cancer? What could threaten the Earth so severely that she needs an army of superhumans to fight it?

EXPOSURE

Anthropologists tend to favour the Exposure theory. They feel that humanity has always possessed the potential for these superhuman powers, and that people throughout time have had such powers and used them. Culture determines what is acceptable and what must be hidden or disguised, and this would hold true for superpowers as it does for faculty with languages or numbers. In certain eras, mankind was not prepared to acknowledge its own potential for power. Anyone who revealed such gifts was either killed as a demon or venerated as a god. In this modern day and age, mankind has become more tolerant, more open-minded, and so more people are discovering within themselves these gifts, and are able to reveal them to the world. This theory suggests that superpowers are as much a matter of will as of anything else, and that those people with such powers are simply the ones with enough self-control to subconsciously unlock their gifts. Many new-agers also support this theory, and hold prayer meetings designed to lower the floodgates and allow each person's innate powers to come forth.

EXTREMES

This theory is most popular with social theorists and psychologists. It states that humanity, as a species, is constantly pushing its own envelope, testing to find the limits of acceptable and viable human life. Superhumans are simply the latest test, an attempt to determine what abilities can be increased (or even diminished) while still maintaining a functional and useful individual. Under this theory, supervillains are failed experiments, or negative extremes, people with powers but without the ability to lead a normal and productive life. Superheroes are the opposite extreme, of course — people with superhuman powers who are more productive and beneficial than any normal person. While the Refinement theory claims that superpowers have some greater purpose for the species, the Extremes theory suggests that the only goal is to push the boundaries. The powers are important only because they increase the variety of humanity, not because they can accomplish some task or fill some niche. The problem with this theory is that it links powers to mental states, since a hero and a villain might both have the ability to fly; what makes one a hero and the other a villain? Clearly the powers are not the only alterations, and either chemicals or mysterious brain structures have also been manipulated to produce such opposing personalities. This theory also has problems with antisocial heroes and heroes who kill, since they are beneficial but are not normal members of society and do not function well with others.

EXPERIMENTS

Alien conspiracy theorists support the Experiment theory. This claims that humanity is being manipulated by outside forces, specifically by more intelligent alien races, who are modifying DNA and causing superpowers to manifest. Why another race would do this is unclear. Some think they are using mankind to test their own powers of genetic manipulation, others that they wish to build an army of superhumans for their own wars, and still others that they want only to help humanity reach the pinnacle of its own potential. Naturally, the biggest problem with this theory is the lack of proof. If the human race were being manipulated by another race, where is the evidence of that race? What are their motives?

SUPERHEROES IN THE FIRST WORLD

Why are there so many more superheroes in the First World, and the United States of America in particular? The simplest answer is the most obvious: superhero comics were created in the US, and have remained predominantly a North American industry. North American readers want to read about things with which they identify, and since the majority of writers are North American and want to write what they know, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Of course, places like the UK have adopted comics wholeheartedly, and probably have the next largest share of audience and superheroes, while Japan has adapted the comic form to *manga* (most of which is centred around Japan for the same reason).

Thus, this also holds true for role-playing games — a predominantly North American market, played and written mostly by North Americans. But what it doesn't give is a logical hypothesis for inside the game world. What do the characters of *Silver Age Sentinels* believe, for example?

There are several working theories. There are metahumans and costumed adventurers scattered throughout the world, as the rulebook illustrates, yet the predominance are still located in North America, and Empire City in particular. Does diet and health care play a part? Does a higher standard of living lead to an increased chance to be born enhanced? Or, conversely, do metahumans have a higher death rate, and thus First World medicines are what keeps people alive long enough to mature into their powers?

What about scientific or ecological contamination? Certainly, the environment is polluted in other parts of the world, but perhaps the chemicals and radiations are more potent in the First World ... or maybe this is where health systems truly factor in.

Finally, there is a good chance that the number of metahumans in the rest of the world is much higher than anyone suspects. Totalitarian regimes and oppressive governments work hard to quash those that pose a risk to them ... while others may not want the limelight, and do their best to avoid international attention.

Grant Industries Conference on Metahumans: The Origin of the Hero

April 10-14
Empire City Grand Marquis Hotel
Conference Agenda
Monday, April 10

-
- 8:00 a.m.** • Registration Begins
-
- 9:00 a.m.** • Brunch for Attendees
-
- 10:00 a.m.** • "Irradiation: Metahumans and Exposure"
Dr. Milius B. Dunn,
Western Room
- "Influenza as a Model for Metahuman Contagion" Dr. Barbara Warther and Dr. Adam St. Jordain.
Southern Room
-
- 12:00 p.m.** • Lunch (Special Guest Archer Gold, Marquis Garden Café)
-
- 12:30 p.m.** • Keynote speaker Professor Johnson Davies Marlberry: "Superheroes in Prehistoric Myths"
-
- 3:00 p.m.** • "Superhuman or Inhuman?" Allan Barr and Fumiko Kuni,
Northern Room
- "Brainwave Receptors and Transmitters"
Dr. Stephany Baker,
Western Room
-
- 5:00 p.m.** • Dinner (Special Guest Slipstream, Marquis Garden Café)
-
- 6:00 p.m.** • Panel: "Superhuman or Homo superior?"
Moderator: Johnson Davies Marlberry.
Eastern Room
-
- 8:00 p.m.** • Film: "Sentinel: a Biography."
Southern Room
-

MORAL CODES

What separates the hero from the villain? Not his abilities, for often the two are in perfect check. Not her determination, for many villains are as focused and obsessive as any hero. No, the one thing that most clearly separates the two is how their deeds and goals relate to themselves. Heroes think of others first and themselves second, while villains think of themselves first. But does that mean heroes never



ANASAZI

think about themselves? Not at all. A true hero always considers himself, because he considers his actions and their consequences. Many heroes have even developed a code of personal conduct to govern their own actions, or at least to codify them. This code helps guide the hero, by reminding him or her exactly what is and is not allowed.

SPECTRUM OF HEROIC MORALITY

Does every hero follows the same code? Of course not. Each hero is different, and his or her beliefs are unique as well. A personal code is shaped by background, upbringing, education, past encounters, previous traumas — all the same things that shape a personality. They are also shaped by the person's intelligence, determination, faith, and life. Even if two people had exactly the same experiences and opportunities, they would handle them differently, and thus would develop different codes.

The basis of the hero's code is simple enough: "to do good." Every hero believes in making the world a better place. Some do this on a small scale — stopping crime in their neighbourhood, shutting out drug dealers, putting out fires, stopping people from driving drunk, etc. Others look at larger goals — stopping crimes throughout the city, for example, or saving people from natural disasters as well as from criminals. Every hero believes he or she can make a difference.

Where does the hero go from there? That depends on the individual. Some heroes consider all life sacred, no matter the details. Others believe the guilty must pay. Some feel all laws should be followed, while others only obey laws they feel are just. Millions of variations are possible and even heroes who have similar codes may not agree on every point. Consider the heroic code as a spectrum. At one end, the hero holds all lives and all laws as sacrosanct, while at the other the hero believes killing is justified to achieve noble ends and feels that laws are for those too weak to form their own codes. Every hero falls somewhere along this spectrum.

A few of the more common heroic codes are outlined in this section. Note that these are by no means all the codes possible, but they provide a few clear locations along the spectrum. Also remember that some heroes do not have a code, or at least not a conscious one. Most people do fall into certain

WEEKLY WATCHERS CHRONICLE

February 6, 2003

Entertainment

C1

What Type of Hero are You?

Boy scout or bad boy, role model or rock star, vigilante or virtuous fellow? Too new at superhero-ing to know what kind of hero you really are? Well, take our quiz below, and find out the truth! But be warned — this test isn't for villains, or for wimps! For each question, just pick the answer that best suits you:

1. I do not believe in killing

- ☐ a. anyone
- ☐ b. anyone who has not been proven guilty of murder
- ☐ c. anyone I think is innocent of murder
- ☐ d. anyone I think is innocent of any crime
- ☐ e. anyone who might be useful

2. I do not believe in lying

- ☐ a. about anything
- ☐ b. about anything important
- ☐ c. about anything I could get caught at later
- ☐ d. about anything that could mean life or death
- ☐ e. unless it is useful

3. I believe the law should be obeyed

- ☐ a. always
- ☐ b. unless it is clearly unjust
- ☐ c. unless obeying could cause me trouble
- ☐ d. unless it slows me down
- ☐ e. if I find it useful

4. If someone is in danger

- ☐ a. I will drop everything to help
- ☐ b. I will help as soon as I can
- ☐ c. I will help if no one else can
- ☐ d. I will help if I think it will make a difference
- ☐ e. I will help if it does not delay me

5. Criminals

- ☐ a. will be punished by the law
- ☐ b. should be punished as much as the law will allow
- ☐ c. should be punished appropriately, even if the law does not
- ☐ d. deserve whatever they get
- ☐ e. should be removed, unless they are useful

Now score your answers. Every time you answered "a" is four points. Each "b" is three points. "c" is worth two points, "d" is worth one point and "e" is worth zero points. That means your total should be somewhere between twenty and zero. Now look at the chart below:

20 to 16: You're a regular boy scout, square-jawed and insufferably noble.

15 to 11: Not bad — you're a decent guy, the kind mothers want for their daughters.

10 to 6: An average bloke — not too shabby, but not medal material either.

5 to 2: Ouch, just back from the war zone? Relax a little!

1 to 0: Whoa, killer, no need to get defensive! Try smelling the flowers — not chopping their heads off!

patterns, based on what they think is right or acceptable. Heroes are no different, but not every hero has consciously developed this into a clear code. Many just do what they feel is right, and let their emotions and instincts guide them more than reason or logic. That doesn't make their code any less valid, just subtler and perhaps more variable.

BOY/GIRL SCOUT

This is one end of the spectrum. The hero firmly believes in law, order, justice, truth, honesty, and life. Even white lies are not allowed. Laws must always be obeyed, even if that means letting a criminal get away. The legal system is responsible for prosecuting

and punishing the guilty, not an individual, no matter how powerful. Life is always sacred — even a mass murderer must be saved when his life is at risk. Heroes don't kill, don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal, and don't break laws. Period.

GOOD SAMARITAN

The Good Samaritan is a decent person. He or she believes that life is worth protecting, that honesty is important, that generosity is the closest humans can come to being divine, and that most laws are good ones. The Good Samaritan won't tell a major lie, but will mislead, or tell white lies to protect someone's feelings. Laws should be obeyed, unless the

laws actually inhibit justice and generosity, in which case the law can be bent. Lives are valuable, and worth saving, but a convicted killer's life may be forfeit to pay for the lives of his or her victims. The actual laws are less important than the intent.

AVERAGE JOE/JANE

This is the middle of the spectrum, the moral code of the average man or woman. Life is valuable, and killing is wrong, but self-defence is valid, and killers may be executed both to pay for their crimes and to protect the lives of potential future victims. Lying is wrong if it will hurt someone. Laws should make sense and be fair to all people. Some laws should never be broken. Others, like no left turn on

a red light or no crossing in the middle of the street, are guidelines that can be bent or broken if reasonable caution is exercised.

HARDENED VETERAN

The veteran has seen some horrible things, and been forced to make some hard decisions. Do you kill the one person to save four others? Do you leave someone to die if doing so means you might be able to save someone else? Do you follow orders, or get the job done through unconventional methods? Life is valuable, but you have to consider all the factors — if sacrificing one life can save many, that may be a worthwhile trade. Most lies are unimportant and telling the truth only matters in life or death situations. Laws are good guidelines, but cannot account for every possibility; sometimes they must be ignored to do what is necessary. Your own conscience and integrity are more reliable, and they're based on results rather than niceties. If you need to kill, make sure the job will save more lives than it will cost. As long as the balance is positive, you did the right thing.

THE COLD-BLOODED OPERATIVE

This is the other end of the spectrum from the Boy Scout. The operative sets his or her goal, plans out the mission, and then carries it through. Nothing is allowed to interfere with the mission. If people are in the way, and killing them is the only way to keep moving, then killing is acceptable. Truth is what you make of it, and lies can be extremely useful. The operative does not kill for fun, or even hurt people for fun. That would be counterproductive. He or she is completely goal-oriented. It may not even be a question of losing one life to save many; if the goal is to rescue a key diplomat, and ten guards have to die for the rescue to succeed, those deaths are acceptable. The diplomat is more important than the guards. Cold-blooded operatives do not let emotion interfere with their tasks. Anyone who does is weak, and those who blindly obey the law are foolish. Note that the operative does not even care about protecting others, unless that is the mission objective. If helping an innocent victim would jeopardise the mission, the operative won't lift a finger.

Remember that what makes the hero different from the villain is selflessness. The cold-blooded operative doesn't do things because they help him personally. He does them because he thinks they're important to the world at large, or at least to other people. He may seem like a villain to some, but his willingness to give up everything in order to make a difference is ultimately his saving grace.

POWER

What separates the superhero and the supervillain from other heroes and villains? The word "super," of course, which distinguishes these men and women as possessing superpowers, abilities no normal person could ever possess. Obviously, then, when discussing superheroes, one must talk about their powers as well. As with moral codes, every superhero is different — some have similar powers, some have wildly different powers, and some have powers that all but defy description. So where do you start?

FINDING THE LEVEL

The first question is "how powerful is he or she?" This is a difficult question to answer. Is an elemental heroine more or less powerful than a shapechanger? She can control weather, but he can change into multiple forms. Which one is more powerful? How do either of them compare to a third hero, who is superstrong, superfast, and can fly? He cannot control energy, and does not change his shape, but bullets bounce off his chest, while the other two are both vulnerable to gunfire and other conventional weapons.

Is it necessary to know how powerful a hero is? For gaming purposes, yes, absolutely. If you do not know the power level of the characters, the GM cannot determine whether an adventure or scenario is set to an appropriate level and the player cannot get a sense of his or her character's strength in comparison to other heroes and villains. Heroes need to know whether a particular villain is too powerful for them to take on alone, or too weak to pose a real threat. You also cannot tell whether a group of characters is all of comparable level. It is possible to have characters of wildly different power levels within the same team, but both the GM and the players should know this beforehand, so that everyone is prepared for that situation. Otherwise you have a GM who expects all the characters to be of equal strength, and might overwhelm some of the characters (by using threats or villains who are all strong enough to pose a threat to the strongest of the player-characters). You also have players who expect their characters to be on par with everyone else and are shocked and surprised to learn that their characters are far weaker or far stronger. Stronger characters need tougher challenges, or they'll defeat their opponents too easily and feel cheated (victories should take effort, otherwise they're meaningless). Weaker characters need smaller-scale challenges, or some way to level the playing field, or they'll be consistently defeated and will eventually lose faith and quit.

How, then, do you determine power levels? The easiest way is to divide superheroes into several categories. Do not worry about numbers; just place the hero in the right category. Everyone else in that category will be of roughly the same power level, regardless of power types. The three aspects to consider, when determining a hero's power level, are number, intensity, and area.

Number is fairly simple — this is the number of separate powers a hero possesses. A hero with a weak superpower is not in the same class as a hero with the same weak power plus three other powers of similar strength.

Intensity is the degree to which the power is beyond normal human abilities. Being able to lift and hurl a grown man across the room may count as Superstrength, but that is technically within the



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ability of a normal human; a powerful bodybuilder could manage that feat. Hurling a small car is beyond any normal human, and hurling a skyscraper even more so. Of course, most powers are well beyond the ability of most people, but you can still measure intensity. A pyrokinetic, someone capable of starting and controlling fires by sheer willpower, who can start match-sized flames and make small flames dance has a much less intense version of the power than a pyrokinetic who can light himself on fire and become a living torch.

The third aspect is influence, which means just how far a power extends and how many people it can affect. Someone with Superstrength has no influence beyond him or herself — the power does not grant anyone else increased strength, and does not extend beyond the hero's own skin. A telepath who can send images two miles away is more powerful than a telepath who can only communicate with people a block away, but less powerful than the telepath who can send messages around the world. The telepathic twins who can communicate with each other anywhere in the world but cannot mentally contact anyone else are on par with the middle telepath — they have a greater range, but can only affect each other.

Several categories for power levels are:

Nonpowered

These are normal men and women. They have no superpowers at all; everything they can do is within expected human limits. That does not mean the hero cannot be stronger and faster than anyone else around, but a professional bodybuilder could match his strength and an Olympic runner could match his speed. No mental powers beyond strong intuition are possible for this category, nor are any abnormal abilities such as flying, shooting eyebeams, or speaking with the dead.

Low-Powered

Heroes in this category have one or two low-level powers. Their abilities are not human, but they are low-intensity, and only have a limited influence. For example, a hero might have a sonar-like sense. This is clearly not normal, but it only works for the hero and only covers a hundred-foot diameter.

Another hero might be a pyrokinetic, capable of controlling and shaping flames into any form he desires, but only if he stands within twenty feet of the flames and only if the flames already exist (he cannot create flames of his own). It is possible for the hero's power to be impressive, but to have severe limits. For example, a hero might possess eyebeams capable of burning through solid steel, but he cannot shut them off or reduce their intensity, and is forced to either close his eyes or wear protective headgear to avoid accidentally incinerating everything in his vicinity.

Mid-Powered

Heroes in this category have either one impressive power or several low-range powers. For example, a hero strong enough to lift a car, fast enough to dodge bullets, and able to climb up walls and ceilings would belong in this category. All of his powers are personal (no external influence) and low intensity (he can only dodge bullets if he senses the shot being fired), but he has several of them. A man with superspeed, fast enough to weave between bullets and outrun planes, would be mid-powered if that were his only superpower. Remember that some lesser powers can be tied to the primary ability. For example, the runner above might have superhuman stamina and healing, because his body is built to handle moving at such high speeds, but those powers rely upon his superspeed.

High-Powered

This category is for heroes who possess several powers, each of which is at least mid-level intensity and has significant influence, or for those who possess a single impressive power with a variety of uses. A woman who controls the elements would be high-powered; her only real power is weather mastery, but she can use that to fly, summon lightning, create mist and rain and fog and snow, hurl people and objects about, change temperatures, and more. A hero who is superstrong, superfast, and can alter his own density (becoming intangible or diamond-hard), fly, and fire energy blasts is definitely high-powered.

Deific

This category is reserved for those heroes with multiple powers where every power is high-intensity, or has an extreme reach of influence, or both. These

heroes often have absolute mastery over a single element. A hero with tremendous superstrength, superspeed, invulnerability, and flight, is deific — all of his powers are at high intensity despite their lack of range. A master mage, capable of casting complex magical spells with a single thought and able to duplicate almost any known superpower and even to

alter reality, would qualify as deific. In superhero games and comics, actual gods do appear from time to time, and those would also fall into this category. For example, a Norse thunder god with superstrength, invulnerability, dimensional flight, and the power to control weather would certainly be deific.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

How do power levels affect heroes, really? After all, sitting around and arm-wrestling is one thing, but in a genuine crisis does it really matter whether a hero is low-powered or mid-powered? The answer is yes. Not because the heroes are competing with one another, or because they ignore anyone not in their own category, but because you cannot use your abilities to their best effect if you do not know their strength. Knowing their own power levels helps heroes use their powers more efficiently, by letting other people handle things they cannot and concentrating on tasks they have a chance of accomplishing.

Here are two examples of different crises, one for handling a flood and the other for handling an alien invasion. Each crisis will examine how heroes of each power level might react and what they can reasonably hope to accomplish.

CRISIS 1: FLOODING

For the first crisis, a small city is threatened by an enormous tidal wave. If the wave hits, it will flood the city immediately, turning the entire area into a lake higher than many buildings. How can the heroes respond to this?

Nonpowered heroes will be useless against the wave itself. What can any person do to stop a tidal wave, after all? But they can help organise the evacuation beforehand, and they can round up people who are cut off, using their agility and strength to manoeuvre across the flooded city, seeking out those people trapped in buildings or perched on top of sinking roofs.

Low-powered heroes will also be best at saving individuals. A sonar sense can locate refugees trapped underwater or in small spaces, while eyebeams can cut through walls and doors to rescue

those people. Someone with pyrokinesis can stop small fires — the tidal wave knocked power lines loose, and small fires will have erupted wherever those lines hit dry wood or cloth.

Mid-powered heroes can tackle the wave itself. They cannot stop it entirely, but they may be able to reduce its effects. The wallcrawler, for example, can use his superstrength to build a stronger dam, piling cars on top of the sandbags to block the water further. The speedster can also shore up the dam, adding sandbags at superspeed, but he could also create a funnel of air by running in a rapid circle, and this funnel might slow the wave and push it back slightly. After the wave hit, these heroes could be invaluable in search-and-rescue, tearing apart walls to retrieve people and reaching them seconds before the water pours in.

High-powered heroes are capable of stopping the tidal wave before it hits, though it may be a close thing. The elemental heroine can summon winds to drive the wave back, or she may have control over water and be able to affect the wave directly. The hero with density control can use his strength, speed, and energy blasts to build an enormous dam, or he can create a massive prow and dive into the centre of the wave, splitting it in two so that it hits on either side of the city.

Deific heroes can stop the wave before it comes close to the city. The hero with superstrength and superspeed and flight can fly around the wave and generate a funnel, the same way the speedster did but more powerfully and before the wave reaches its full height. He can also do the same thing by swimming at superspeed, and can force the wave back before it hits. The thunder god can summon storms and winds to shatter the wave or calm the seas — while similar to the elemental heroine, his control and range are greater.

CRISIS 2: INVASION

The second crisis is an actual invasion by alien forces, flying down from outer space in small, fast ships and destroying everything in their path. Once they land, the aliens form up into platoons and march through Earth's cities, herding people before them and killing anyone who resists.

Nonpowered heroes will be useless against the spaceships, but they may be able to take out individual aliens. Their best use, however, would be in organising resistance, and in rescuing key people from the aliens' pens.

Low-powered heroes will also be most effective in forming a resistance, though several of them could band together to create a safe zone. The pyrokinetic can keep fires burning around the perimeter, to ward off attacks, and the hero with sonar can detect any attacks early enough to ready defences or retreat. The hero with eyebeams could actually take out ships as they approach as well.

Mid-powered heroes will be able to go after individual ships to stop the aliens from landing. The wallcrawler can hurl cars at them, and he can also land on one ship and cause it to crash into another. The speedster is most effective on the ground, but he can run rings around the aliens, disarming whole platoons before they can blink and leaving them to the tender mercies of their would-be captives.

High-powered heroes can take the fight to the aliens, attacking their ships before they reach

human cities. The elemental heroine can strike ships down with lightning and slam them into one another with gale-force winds, while the hero with density control can smash through ships with his bare hands, or ghost through several in a row to disrupt their controls so they crash into one another. These heroes will also be the leaders of the resistance movements, as they are strong enough to openly defy the alien forces.

Deific heroes will take on entire wings of alien ships, or go for the mother ships themselves, out in space. The hero with superstrength and flight can target motherships and fly through them, disabling the ships and preventing them from releasing the attack fleets. The thunder god's lightning can destroy entire wings at a time, and he is personally strong enough to hurl ships about like bowling balls. These heroes may not technically join the resistance, in order to focus their efforts and unleash their full powers. They may rescue key people, but will otherwise concentrate on destroying the fleet or eliminating entire platoons at once.

Obviously, these are only two examples, and only a few examples of each power level, but they should provide some ideas. Once you know what category your hero fits, in terms of power levels, consider these two crises from his or her perspective. What would he or she do in these situations? What would the most effective course of action, provided it did not violate the hero's moral code?

CONSISTENCY

When talking about a superhero's powers, one needs to consider consistency. This does not refer to whether all the hero's powers are on the same level — that question should be dealt with when considering the hero's power levels. Rather, consistency refers to whether or not a hero's powers remain stable throughout his or her career.

STABILITY

Often, a hero's powers do remain stable — the hero gains the ability at a certain level, and that never changes. Some powers cannot change; for example, how would the ability to walk up walls and ceilings become more powerful? Strength and speed can

change, and in normal people they do, based upon factors like age and exercise. These are superpowers, though, and are not necessarily bound to those factors. A man who can lift a car is doing something beyond human ability, and his strength, whether it came from an irradiated spider or cosmic rays or solar energy, may stay at the same level until he dies.

Note that this does not refer to skill at using a power, but only to the actual power level itself. A pyrokinetic might never become any stronger with his power, never gaining the ability to manipulate flames from further than twenty feet and never learning how to create flames from nothingness. With practice, however, the character does learn how to shape the flames more accurately, going from rude

shapes to actual lifelike images, and it requires less concentration for him to manipulate them. The power level is still the same, but his skill with the power has increased from practice.

Are stable powers a problem or a weakness? Not really. The hero can become comfortable with his or her abilities, learn to use them more effectively, and possibly find new ways to use them. Remember that being a hero is not about how much you can lift or whether or not you can fly. It is about how you use what you have to help others. Characters with stable powers are often very stable themselves, with solid moral codes and a clear sense of their goals and methods.

FLUCTUATION

Not every power remains consistent in level. Some powers do fluctuate, becoming more or even less powerful over time. Certain powers fluctuate as part of their nature. For example, someone with control over storms may be influenced by lunar cycles, which affect tides, and by seasonal shifts or even temperatures. Other powers may fluctuate based upon the hero's own state, becoming stronger when the hero is rested and well-fed and weaker if the hero is tired, hungry, in pain, or confused. Many

heroes have powers tied into their emotions, and those powers can become stronger depending on the emotional state of the hero — for example, a hero with superstrength, might grow stronger as he grows angrier, and become weaker when he is calm.

Powers can also fluctuate over longer periods of time. One reason for this is age. As the hero grows older, his or her powers might increase from use, or decrease as the body wears out. Star signs, weather conditions, the Earth's bio-electric field, solar and lunar eclipses — all of these can alter a hero's powers, particularly if the power is related to one or more of these activities. A hero with star-based powers, for example, could easily be affected by the position of the planets and the Sun, or even by solar flares and comets.

Are fluctuating powers bad? Not necessarily. True, the hero has to adapt each time his or her power changes, but that keeps the hero alert. Heroes with stable powers learn to rely on them, and sometimes become too comfortable, while those with fluctuating powers prepare any possibility. Powers can fluctuate by becoming stronger, which could be a good thing, although that would require relearning control. That is probably the hardest part about fluctuating powers



LEGACY AND ANASAZI STRUGGLE TO CONTAIN IRON DUKE

— a hero who can lift cars has learned how much pressure to use when shaking hands, but if suddenly he can lift skyscrapers he needs to learn control all over again.

If you feel your hero should have fluctuating powers, discuss the idea with your GM. If the two of you agree, consult the section on mechanics, later in this chapter (page 34).

CHANGING POWERS

Even more unusual than a fluctuating power is a power that actually changes, not just in intensity, but in effect or influence. Some heroes (and some villains as well) develop or alter powers — this is not common but it does happen. Changing powers can be both good and bad. On the plus side, the hero may gain more control over a power, or develop new uses for it, or even gain access to a new ability altogether. These can make the hero more potent, more effective, and also harder for old enemies to predict and counteract. On the negative side, gaining a new power or altering an existing one means learning control all over again, and discovering new limits and possibilities. This can take time, and until the new or altered ability has been mastered, the hero may be hesitant, something which can prove deadly in a crisis or a pitched battle.

REASONS FOR CHANGE

Why would someone's powers change? Some of the more common reasons are detailed herein, though certainly many more possibilities exist. Each hero reacts differently to situations, and those reactions, plus the source of the hero's powers, determine the most likely cause.

EXPERIENCE

Some powers simply become more refined with time, as the hero learns to control the power better. For example, a hero with cold-based powers might be able to coat himself in a layer of self-generated snow to protect himself from harm. As he gains more command over his abilities, he might learn to coat himself in ice instead, to gain more protection and enhanced mobility. The power has not really changed, but the hero has learned to use it more fully.

This reason is difficult to handle in game play, if only because there is often no clearly defined "moment" in which the change occurs; at what point has the character gained enough experience to justify altering his or her powers?

EVOLUTION

The power, or the hero, may evolve to a higher level. This is not the same as experience, since it is based either on some internal timetable (a hero could evolve after a few weeks, or after a decade) or on external stimuli (the power may evolve during a crisis, because the hero needs it to). When a hero evolves, he or she may change physically, becoming some more advanced version of humanity, and powers will change to suit the new form. A heroine who can fly, for example, might initially be simply a woman with wings, but over time her body adapts further for flight: her feet become clawed, her eyesight sharpens, and her reflexes speed up, all to evolve her into a more bird-like individual. A hero who can store solar energy and use it for strength might also discover, during a crisis, that he can fire bolts of solar energy as well. This was not a matter of experience because he did not learn he could do this or even experiment with such a possibility. He simply needed to stop someone from a distance, and suddenly manifested this new aspect of his power.

TRAUMA

Undergoing a traumatic experience can alter anyone's personality and life outlook. Thus, it makes sense that trauma could alter superpowers as well. This can occur in two ways: the hero can manifest a new power during the trauma, most likely as a way to end the situation, or a power could alter or appear after the trauma as a result of the emotional scarring. For example, a telepath may discover after surviving an assault that she can generate a psychic "knife" for protection and attack. This power was not present beforehand, but the trauma triggered a need for something more combative and the telepath's powers responded to the demand. Obviously, trauma does not always trigger a new power, or superheroes would have thousands of powers each. The trauma must be truly severe, powerful enough to permanently alter the individual's view of the world.

EXPOSURE

This is perhaps the most common method for changing or gaining powers. The hero is exposed to something, either related to the original source of power or something that can affect an individual's body, mind, or soul. For example, a hero struck across the face by irradiated waste material might gain a sonar-sense, while a man whose body was altered into a monstrous man-like creature by cosmic ray bombardment might change still further if struck by additional cosmic rays. Since many heroes gained their powers from exposure to some powerful substance, it makes sense that additional exposure could produce new alterations. Other substances may also have an effect. For instance, a heroine with water-based powers may change appearance and ability when exposed to ancient aquatic creatures, as her existing powers are influenced by the presence of such powerful beasts.

CHANGES

So how exactly does one change a hero's power? How does the player or the GM decide what will happen? Look at the hero's power, and consider it carefully. First, is this particular power subject to change? A character with superstrength can get stronger, but that is not a real change, just an increase. Consider the reason for the character's superstrength. Does he or she absorb solar energy? If so, the character is actually a living solar battery — that is the real power, and strength is merely the expression of that power. As a battery, the hero is far more versatile and may be able to discharge the energy in other ways (such as energy blasts) or harness it to perform other feats (such as flying). What if the hero's strength is actually a form of telekinesis, with the hero's mind lifting the object and the hero's own body as a focus? If that is the case, with practice the hero may learn to lift things without grabbing them physically, and may learn to fly by lifting him or herself off the ground. Consider the hero's true source of power — which the hero may not know him or herself — and ask what how else could the power be expressed?

Another question to ask is "why was the hero created?" This doesn't mean heroes were created by outside forces for specific ends, but every ability has a purpose in life, and superpowers are no different.

Each power is meant to help the hero do something, and most heroes have powers which all fit together into a single purpose. A hero with superspeed and superfast reflexes was created for moving from one place to another very quickly. A heroine with power over wind and rain and lightning was created to control weather. A hero with superstrength, amazing agility, the ability to climb walls and ceilings, and a danger sense was created to resemble a spider. Once the hero's underlying purpose is known, consider how the hero might become even more suited to that purpose. Teleportation would take a hero from one place to another instantly — perhaps the speedster gains the ability to teleport, or simply to create wormholes and thus shorten the distance. Becoming one with the weather would provide increased awareness and control. The elemental heroine may discover she can transform herself into rain and wind and lightning, and that she can sense storms and weather patterns around the world. A spider has eight legs, mandibles, and web spinnerets; the spider-like hero might gain the ability to create webs, and eventually might develop extra limbs and protruding mandibles.

Some changes are not pleasant — growing four extra limbs would make it impossible for the hero to blend in with normal people. That is a logical extension of the hero's current powers, though, and the underlying notion behind those powers. Such a change could be good; the hero would be even more spider-like, and could do more things with his extra limbs. For most heroes, blending in with nonpowered humans has nothing to do with their true purpose, and may even be at odds with it.

PLAYER CONSIDERATIONS

The first question is whether a hero's powers should change or not. If the player is against any alteration, the hero should not change permanently beyond minor refinements (after all, it is the player's character). Changing powers can add a new level to the character, both because he or she has different powers and because the hero has to adapt and adjust to such a personal change.

If the player decides to change the hero's power, he or she should discuss the idea with the GM. If the GM agrees to allow a change, the two need to decide exactly how the hero will change, and consider ways

to cause that transition. This does not mean the player should say, “Well, I’d like her to experience a terrible trauma, and have her powers alter because of that.” Doing this eliminates any suspense for the player since he or she knows exactly what is in store for the character. Instead, the player might say, “I don’t see experience changing her significantly, and I can’t think of any substances that could affect her through exposure, so it would have to be either evolution or trauma.” Then it is up to the GM to decide exactly what could cause the change, and to set the events in motion. This way, the player is still surprised when it actually happens, and can more effectively role-play the surprise of the character.

The player also should not know exactly how the character’s powers will change. He or she may have an idea — “I want her to become more birdlike” or “I’d like him to be able to fire energy bursts” — but the GM will ultimately decide how to alter the powers, or what new powers to add. This is, again, so that the player can be surprised by the changes. This adds to the suspense and the excitement, since even the player is not quite sure what will happen.

GM CONTROLS

Why should the GM let a player change his or her character’s powers? First and foremost, it keeps the game interesting. If every character stays the same throughout a long campaign, the players may eventually get bored with the characters. Life is about change, and heroes are exposed to more extreme situations than anyone else. It stands to reason that they would change from time to time as a result. Letting a player alter the hero’s powers satisfies the player, and renews his or her interest in the character and in the game. It also interests the other players, both because they could alter their own characters (you have now established that such alterations can occur) and because their characters have to adapt to their teammate’s new abilities.

Carefully consider Character Point totals. Most players want to either increase the strength of a power or add a new power. These are expensive improvements, in terms of Advancement Points. If you, as the GM, allow the player to make such changes without cost, that unbalances the game. You should then allow everyone else make similar changes

without cost, and now people will alter their characters whenever they want because it is free to do so. You may instead prefer the player to save up experience for the desired changes. This means that the other characters are also improving at the same speed. They may not gain new powers but their existing powers may grow stronger, and so the entire group is still in balance.

You can offer to reduce the cost of any changes, in return for having more control over the outcome. For example, a player might say, “I’d like my character to gain the power to fly.” You might simply let the player buy that power directly, but there’s another way that’s more interesting. Tell the player to put points into the Unknown Superhuman Power Attribute (See SAS, Chapter 2). The player knows the character will get a new power at some point (most likely Flight), since the points are available, but you get to decide how the power first appears and why, how it manifests, and if it has any side effects. This keeps the player guessing, and lets you work the power in when it makes the most sense. For example, a hero with solar-based powers might gain the power to fly after exposure to intense solar radiation. In order to use this power, however, he has to absorb all the sunlight from an area — everything around him goes pitch-black, for a sixty-foot radius. Now the hero can fly, but he is also an easy target, and his allies are all left blinded by the sudden darkness.

The point here is not to be mean, but to make sense. A new power might have consequences or aspects that are less than positive. The cost of these new powers can thus be reduced by applying new Defects. By creating such consequences, you make it clear that changing powers should not be done lightly. If a player is really wants change, he or she should seriously consider the matter first. It also reassures the other players that you are not playing favourites or allowing too much player freedom. Clearly you will make such drastic alterations costly, and not just in Advancement Points. Finally, these consequences allow for even more character development, as the character learns to adjust and compensate for the situation.

A change may improve the power, or improve the hero’s ability to accomplish his or her underlying

purpose, but it may be detrimental to living a normal life. That should also make the player think twice. Changing a power should be less about becoming more powerful and more about developing the character in a new and interesting way.

CHARACTER REACTIONS

How does the character react to growing an extra limb, or gaining the ability to fly at the cost of casting a circle of darkness, or learning he or she can generate small wormholes? That will depend largely on the character and, by extension, the player. What sort of person is the hero? What is his or her outlook on life, and level of self-confidence? A hero who firmly believes that he or she was given powers for a purpose will adapt more easily to new powers, since obviously they must aid that purpose. A hero who has doubts about being a superhero, and who really wants to be normal again, might fight against any changes, especially if they make him or her more obviously abnormal. Think about the character's personality and outlook. Consider whether the character has friends and a life in the normal world, or is a full-time superhero. Full-time heroes will adapt more easily, because they have less to lose — if you are openly a superhero, and associate almost entirely with other heroes, growing an extra pair of arms does not limit your existing lifestyle.

Account for the source of the change as well. A hero who underwent severe trauma will have to deal with those issues and scars before coping with any new powers, and the new powers may serve as a painful reminder of the initial incident. Exposure to radiation can cause various health problems, and that may take precedence over learning to fly or generate wormholes. Experience and evolution require less additional recovery, but suggest that the hero was actively working to improve. After gaining new powers or changing existing ones, the hero will most likely return to work immediately, to study and perfect these new abilities.

It is important to remember that most new powers or changed powers will not be immediately comfortable. The hero will have to learn how to use the new ability, and test out its range, intensity, and control. This can take a great deal of time, depending on the character. A young hothead might

simply charge back out to show off his new abilities, while a careful and logical character would study every aspect of the new abilities before using them for any reason.

CONTROLLING POWERS

Power control can mean two different things. It can refer to the mechanics of actually rolling dice to activate and use a power, but this section is about the hero mastering his or her own abilities and making conscious decisions about how to use those powers.

FOLLOWING THE CODE

Conscious control means deliberately choosing what to do. This is where the hero's moral code comes into play. How does this relate to powers? A hero has to decide how he or she will use those supernatural abilities. If the hero can magically compel someone to tell the truth, should that be used on everyone, or only in life-or-death situations? The hero has to decide. Can the hero's disintegration beams be used on people, or only on inanimate objects? These choices, and the ability to abide by them, shape the hero's every action.

WILLPOWER

Control means willpower, the ability to master one's thoughts and emotions and to act in a carefully considered manner, rather than simply reacting or acting without thought. Willpower is the mark of a true hero, because it shows the hero's determination and self-control. Amateurs and lesser heroes may have little or no willpower; many of them act without discipline or forethought. Even these heroes have more control than most villains, however, because the heroes think of others before themselves.

What shows a character's willpower? Not doing something desperately desired because it would violate the hero's code. The villain just killed the hero's best friend, and now lies beaten on the floor. The hero could easily kill him for his crime, but won't let himself stoop to that level. The hero is asked by the President of the United States to support an unbalanced law enforcement act. The hero wants to show support, and knows that objecting will only cause trouble between authorities and superheroes everywhere. She is known to always tell the truth, however, no matter the circumstance ... and thus she



openly declares the law to be unjust.

True heroes also test their convictions constantly. Lying may be something the hero never does, but he considers it often. Would it be okay to lie about small things? Or perhaps to lie on rare occasions? Is it acceptable to beat a confession from a villain the hero knows is guilty? By asking these inner questions, the hero constantly re-evaluates his or her convictions. Only if the convictions withstand this testing are they still worth following, and only by such vigilance can the hero be sure of following a proper path.

A true hero does what he or she believes is right, regardless of the consequences. Those consequences can be obvious and severe, but the hero will still carry through, because failing means betraying one's own self, and it is impossible to be a true hero and not be true to personal principles.

Willpower means being able to make the hard decisions and resist temptation.

CAN DO vs. WOULD DO

Obviously, a hero with superstrength could crush a man's spine without effort, but he may refuse to do so. What about the hero who can lift a car, yet cannot hit hard enough to shatter bone? The mind is an interesting thing, and capable of deceiving the body and even itself. Some heroes have powers they do not acknowledge, because they could never bring themselves to use that power to its full extent.

This is important when creating a character. What are the limits of the hero's powers? Are those real limits, or are they self-imposed? A speedster may be able to run faster than the speed of light, but believes he can only go as fast as the speed of sound because his own hero and mentor could only reach that top speed. A heroine might be able to shape dreams into reality, but can only bring herself to create brief illusions because she feels her powers are wrong and dangerous. One way to add more depth to a character is to give the character a power but not allow him or her to use its full range. The best way to do this is to ask the GM to handle it — give the GM a certain number of points, and let him or her increase one or more of the character's powers in secret. These enhanced powers may reveal themselves subtly over time, or all at once. Imagine a hero with the power to cool objects by a few

degrees. This power has been slowly increasing, so that the hero can now use this power to put out fires, freeze water, etc. Neither the player nor the character knows the power's full strength, however. The hero confronts his flame-powered nemesis, after watching that villain murder his best friend, and turns his power on the villain, announcing that he wants to use the power at maximum intensity. He intends to quench the villain's flames and hit him with intense cold as hard as he can, and is shocked when he accidentally kills the villain by turning him into a solid block of ice! This is an extreme case, of course, but suddenly the player and the character have to deal with this new manifestation, and with the discovery that the hero can kill someone with his powers — and just did.

This same concept can be used for changing powers. Perhaps the hero was always capable of freezing a person to death, but had a mental block preventing the power from reaching that level. Now, whether from age and experience or because of some specific trauma, the hero has changed and no longer considers a villain's death to be unacceptable. The mental block comes down, and the power can now be accessed at this higher degree of intensity. The advantage to this method is that the change fits the character's new attitude, and the power has not changed so much as it has been unfettered, freed from psychological restraints.

Some heroes know their own strength, of course, and are well aware that they could kill someone. For those people, not using the powers to their fullest extent is always an act of will. That can also be an exciting challenge, creating a hero with a power he or she will deliberately never use, or not to full effect. For example, a character with the power to leech energy from others can easily kill people by draining them dry, yet the character believes all life is sacred, and refuses to drain that much energy from anyone. The character is capable of the feat, the power is there, but she will not touch it. This means, of course, that the player spent those points during character creation, knowing her heroine would never tap the power fully. The points are lost, but create an opportunity for more role-playing, which is a worthwhile trade.

CONSEQUENCES

What if a character does violate his or her own moral code? What if the hero does kill a villain, or tell a grave lie? What happens then? The action must have consequences, or else the hero may be tempted to break the code again, and again. Each time it will be harder to justify not breaking the code, if killing and lying have no negative repercussions. These can wreak havoc with the hero's convictions, and thus with their very identity as a hero.

CONSCIENCE

The first and most obvious consequence is an attack of conscience. If a hero accidentally kills someone, violating his belief that all life is sacred, he should feel terrible about the accident. He should punish himself mentally for allowing it to happen, and will probably vow never to be so lax again. He will test himself constantly, to make sure that he will not fail again. Additional self-punishments may occur. Perhaps the hero will insist on informing the victim's family what happened, or will build a memorial, or will finish the victim's last task himself. It will certainly be a very long time before the hero can forgive himself for his actions, unless the trauma causes a major personality change.

When considering how a hero will react to what happened, look closely at the hero. If the character is spiritual, he or she may seek solace in religion, doing penance and asking for forgiveness. If the character is extremely physical, he or she may use physical exertion to try to forget what happened, or as a personal punishment. More cerebral characters may brood, pondering what happened and analysing the situation from every angle. Each hero will react differently, based upon personality and background.

Some heroes may choose to set aside their own powers. This is easier for someone who uses a device or tool, of course, but even a hero with innate abilities could swear never to use his energy blasts again, or never to use superstrength. Whether the hero can hold to that vow, especially when other people need help, is a difficult question, and can only be answered through playing out the situation. Such a vow is an option, however, particularly for a hero who reveres life and honesty and who would rather deny a gift than use it poorly. This is a classic superhero story.

Something causes the hero to question whether he or she is doing the right thing — is being a superhero really doing any good? The hero renounces costume, powers, and heroic acts, and attempts to live a normal life instead. Of course his or her conscience won't keep quiet, and every time anyone gets hurt or robbed the hero blames him or herself: "If only I had been there, I could have stopped it." Eventually, the hero's desire to help should overcome other reservations, and he or she should don the mask and costume once more. In some cases, however, the character decides to do things differently, and may even craft a new superhero identity to reflect the new attitude. These storylines are great for character development. Just be careful not to force the player into anything. Don't make the character renounce heroism, or pick it back up again. It has to be the character's own decision each time, and it has to fit the character and the situation.

REPUTATION

Another potential consequence for breaking the code is the hero's reputation. If a hero known to always tell the truth is revealed to have lied, suddenly every previous and future statement of the hero will be called into question. It also puts the character in a dilemma. Surely he or she will be asked directly about the lie. Should a second lie be told, claiming that it was not a lie or there were mitigating circumstances? That might salvage the hero's reputation, but at the cost of breaking the code a second time. Or should the hero tell the truth, and admit to the lie? That will shatter the hero's reputation for honesty, but will let him or her cling to the code once again.

For some heroes, reputation is not important. A few even cultivate a negative reputation. If the criminals believe the hero capable of murder, they will talk more freely and offer far less resistance. Many heroes, however, value their reputation, especially those who stand as examples of good behaviour. For those heroes in particular, damage to their reputation is a severe blow.

How can a hero recover from such a problem? The only way is to prove over and over again that the incident was a single, isolated moment of weakness, and that it will not happen again. Heroes with such a mission may become obsessed, constantly searching

for chances to prove themselves to the world again. This can lead to carelessness, fatigue, poor planning; if continued, such action could lead to disastrous failures, far worse than the initial situation itself.

Some heroes never recover their reputation. They try for a while, and then give up, disgusted with the fickleness of public opinion, insulted that a single wrong move should cancel out so many heroic actions before it. These heroes often undergo a personality change, becoming darker and more pessimistic. Their moral code may slide downward as well, becoming tarnished and pragmatic as the hero's own idealism and faith fade away.

LEGAL PROBLEMS

The third major consequence is the law. For example, if a hero (like Caliburn) kills someone, even a villain, he may find himself arrested and charged with murder or manslaughter. Caliburn now faces a dilemma. He did kill the villain, but he has also saved countless other lives. Should he stand trial, confess to the murder, and accept whatever punishment the court hands down? Or should he refuse, on the grounds that being free allows him to save yet more people and thus balance the scales in his favour again? Refusing is more pragmatic, weighing one lost life against many recovered ones, but it also suggests arrogance and a belief that the hero is above the law.

Either way, the hero may suffer. If Caliburn does allow himself to be judged, he may be convicted as a criminal. Even if acquitted, his reputation as a hero and his life under the mask may be affected. After all, if Caliburn turns himself in and goes to court, he will be compelled to reveal his identity. If he reveals his secret identity, he will most likely lose his job, his friends, and any other prospects. After serving his time, he may find himself without prospects, just like many other ex-cons, many of whom return to crime because they have no other options left.

Of course, if the hero refuses to be arrested and tried, he is now a criminal, someone who will not trust the system or allow justice to be done. How can one be a hero and yet spurn the country's legal system? This means nothing to a dark vigilante, of course, since he or she may spurn the legal system anyway, but for a hero who strives to be honest and dutiful and just, this can create a major crisis of conscience.

Criminal charges are not the only possibility, either. The hero may find himself or herself facing civil lawsuits — violating someone's civil rights, slander, libel, public defamation of character, even negligence or wrongful death. Minor criminal charges like breaking and entering and assault can also appear. A hero could wind up receiving new lawsuits and charges every week, if he or she continues to rescue people and stop crimes. What are the options? Stop a criminal without violating his rights or hurting him in any way, including calling him names or yelling at him? Save a kidnap victim without breaking down the door or tearing open the vault? How specific is the character's moral code, and how will that code fare when faced with the reality of shifty lawyers and frivolous but time-wasting lawsuits?

As the GM, you should be very careful with this. There's a huge difference in campaign themes between a game where a hero is pushed to kill a supervillain, and another where every mugger Captain Wonderman stops files a lawsuit. Having a mugger sue the hero for injuring him is funny the first time you do it, because the character (and the player) never expected it, but may be completely out of place for a more serious campaign. The uses should make sense, and be appropriate to the style of game you are playing. Think about the type of people the villains and other bit characters may be, and how they would react in the stories you've created. If a mugger in your world really would sue, then you should definitely have him press charges. Just don't be surprised when your heroes declare martial law and establish a judicial system of their own.

CHARACTER CREATION

The *Silver Age Sentinels* rulebook discusses character creation, but this section examines it in more depth. The most important element for building a good hero is consistency. Every aspect of the hero has to fit together clearly. This does not mean every aspect has to be complimentary. A hero may have private concerns about his own powers, in which case the character's personality and self-image are at odds with his powers. Such disparities must occur for a reason, however, and the player should have a specific character reason for them.

THE AMERICAN SUPERSOLDIER

One of the most beloved hero concepts in American comics is the American Supersoldier, which can take several different forms. At one end, the Supersoldier is tall and good-looking, kind and generous, chivalrous and polite — a Boy Scout with combat training. But the Supersoldier can also be a true soldier, grimy and gritty and tough, usually with a cigar in his mouth and often with scars and other war wounds. He talks tough, drinks a lot, and starts bar room brawls. Both sides of the concept share certain traits. They are extremely patriotic, and love the United States and her ideals. They believe in freedom and justice, and in protecting their own. And they never back down from a difficult job or a dangerous mission if they believe it's the right thing to do. Perhaps the concept has these two sides because America has different faces, and the heroic image has adapted to match — sometimes clean-cut and noble, other times gritty and tough. Or perhaps readers simply realise that no one character could embody every thing they want to see. Both types are straight-shooters, and deal fairly with allies and even with enemies — lying and deception are for lesser men. And both would die to protect their friends and loved ones, and to protect the American way of life.

PLAYER SENSIBILITIES

When creating your character, think about what you would like to play. Ignore the powers to start with, and concentrate on personality, moral code, and method. Does a boy scout, who is stalwart and noble, honest and very law-abiding, appeal to you? What about a dark avenger, brooding and cautious and more than a little paranoid? Or a comedian, quick and agile and playful? Look at the moral code section earlier, and decide where your character falls along that spectrum. Then devise a list of potential purposes for the character. Keep these vague — to protect people from harm, to be one with the weather, to serve as a shining example, etc. Only pick purposes you think would be enjoyable to play. Now start selecting your character's powers. Do you want powers that fit the character's personality, or clash with it? A brooding avenger suggests someone



ALICE DISRUPTS RAZE AND WHITE HAT'S TRIP TO THE SHOPPING MALL

quick and strong and silent — selecting energy blasts and electrical storms could be fun for contrast. A comedian suggests speed and colour, and flashy but generally harmless powers; playing a funny, playful powerhouse could be interesting. Boy scouts suggest strength, endurance, flight, and other direct powers — magic or water control or some other complex, subtle, versatile power would create an unusual mix. Show the GM the selected powers, in case any do not fit with the game, or with the character's true purpose.

GM SENSIBILITIES

When overseeing character creation, consider four things: Is the character consistent? Will the player enjoy playing that character? Will the character fit with the other characters? Does the character have room to grow? For the first and last question, consider the character's true purpose. Some powers may seem unrelated on the surface, but will actually have some subtle connection. Consider the character's origins, as well. If a hero's purpose is to carry burdens across space, and the character's powers came from an alien artefact, why do those aliens want or need a carrier? What caused them to pick that person, and that planet? Not every purpose was created by an outside agency, but some character origins lend themselves to such possibilities, and these can be used as the focus of a later adventure or campaign.

Players will create characters they want to play, so they should have fun with their own characters. You should also consider the character in context. Is the first game all about political intrigue? If so, a character who is too naive and shy to speak to others will not have much to do, and the player may not enjoy the game. Is the game about fighting a massive opponent in outer space? If so, how much fun can a player have with a nonpowered swordsman? Make sure each character will have something worthwhile to do during the game.

You should also consider the characters as a group. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2: The Hero Team (page 38), but here are a few quick suggestions. Do not let two characters play the same type unless they are either related or in clear opposition; most groups do not need more than one brooding avenger, but a mentor and student will

work very well together. Consider a mix of different origins, so everyone feels special; conversely, if the entire team has a common origin point, they may bond more naturally. Everyone wants to feel like they are part of the group, and that is aided by giving each character their own niche or role.

CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE

The *Silver Age Sentinels* core rulebook has a questionnaire for players, intended to help develop an initial character. Those questions are geared more towards general character development rather than towards heroic attitudes and personalities. The questions below are specifically oriented toward heroism. Answer them from the perspective of your character in order to clarify the character's own ideas and approaches.

- What made you become a hero?
- What does "good" mean, in terms of "doing good"?
- What does it mean to be a hero?
- What is your greatest power, not in terms of the strongest but the one you value the most? Why?
- How do you feel about lying?
- Do you ever lie? When?
- Do you think liars can be trusted?
- Is there is a difference between natural law and human law, or are all laws equal?
- Can a law be unjust?
- What should you do when faced with an unjust law?
- Does the legal system work? Why or why not?
- Are you part of the legal system, an alternative to it, or an opponent of it?
- Is someone ever guilty, even without proof?
- What kind of punishment is appropriate for robbery? Kidnapping? Rape? Murder?
- Who is authorised to punish criminals?
- Which is more valuable — the antidote for a deadly disease or the life of a child?
- Who is more important to save, a talented world leader or a newborn infant?
- Are you ever wrong about people?
- Are you better at dealing with natural disasters, invasions, epidemics, robberies, or insane supervillains?

- Where are you most effective: on land, in the air, underwater, underground, or in space?
- What is your team role? Leader? Scout? Strategist? Big gun? Other?
- What type of hero do you most want to be?
- What type of hero are you afraid of becoming?
- What is the hardest thing for you as a hero — not in terms of power, but in terms of self-control?
- Could anything make you give up your powers? What?
- Would you rather have different powers? Which ones?
- Is there anything you wish you could do with your powers and can't? What?
- What other superheroes do you look up to?
- Would you make a good villain? Why or why not?

DAILY LIFE

No one can be heroic twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Even the most powerful and most dedicated of heroes have to stop and take a break some time. What do they do when they are not out saving the world? They say "life is what happens while you're busy making other plans." What is life like for a superhero?

SECRET IDENTITY

The first question, when asking about a superhero's life, is whether or not he or she has a secret identity. Does he take off the cowl and the cape and put on normal clothes? Does she make her costume turn into a skirt and blouse and put on a wig? Who is the hero during the day?

Note that many heroes keep their own identity; they gained or revealed powers after birth, and so they already have a normal name and at least the foundations of a normal life. Of course, not every hero is this lucky. Some heroes are from other planets, and arrived here full-grown and alone. Others fled their old lives and have to create new ones. Which type is your character? Did he or she have to create a whole new identity from scratch, or can your birth name still be used openly?

Another question is how the hero changes from heroic identity to normal identity. For some, it's as

easy as pulling off a costume and putting on normal clothes. Others disguise themselves, strapping down wings or putting on glasses. Sometimes it's even more complicated — saying a spell to change appearances, or using makeup to hide unusual colouring. Think about your hero's true appearance, without any equipment or costume. What colour are your skin, eyes, and hair? Are your features human, bestial, alien, or something else entirely? How easily can you pass for normal?

OCCUPATION

The next question is one of occupation. If the character is not a hero full-time, he or she probably has an occupation (or is a student, which is a job in itself). What does the hero do to earn money? Everyone has to eat (well, almost everyone). Is the character a professor? A scientist? A cartoonist? A reporter? Think about the character's skills and aptitudes. For what sort of job is he or she suited? Did the hero go to school and get a degree and train for this job, or did he or she acquire the job later, using phony diplomas and forged records?

What the hero does for a living is one thing, but how successful is he or she at it? Is he a good cartoonist and in demand, or does he struggle to find jobs and to make ends meet? Is she a reporter on a small town weekly paper, or a star reporter on a major city daily paper, or on the six o'clock news? This is partially based on the character's abilities and aptitudes, but also depends on luck and desire. Some people are perfectly happy with a job at a small-town paper, and it might be relaxing after a long day battling aliens or putting out forest fires. Others are more ambitious in their daily life, and want to be as successful there as they are at stopping bank robberies and rescuing kidnapped congressmen.

Knowing the character's occupation is important for several reasons. First, it indicates how much money the character makes, and thus what lifestyle the hero can afford. Second, it tells us what the hero does with his or her time, and suggests interests. A cartoonist obviously loves art and loves to draw, but also enjoys watching people and trying to guess at motivations. A professor loves to teach others, and enjoys learning as well. A scientist enjoys solving

puzzles using logic and clues, and looks at most things in a very rational way.

HOME LIFE

Once the hero's occupation has been established, the hero's home life can be examined. Does the hero live alone or with someone else? Is that someone else a friend and roommate, a wife or husband, a brother or sister, a mother or father, or something else entirely? Does the hero live in an apartment or in a house? In the city, in the suburbs, or in a rural area? Consider the hero's occupation and success; what can he or she afford? A house might not be feasible for a struggling artist, unless his parents left it to him, but a house makes perfect sense for a teacher or reporter in a small town. In the big city, a scientist probably lives in an apartment, although he also has a lab somewhere for his work.

Think about what the hero does every day when he or she gets home. Is there someone to say hello to? Does the hero have pets? Is dinner cooked at home, or ordered in? Does the hero watch television, play on a computer, go online, or talk on the phone for hours? What is this person like?

One of the more basic questions is whether the hero is a morning person or a night owl? What hours does he or she keep when not out saving the world?

PERSONAL HISTORY

If you are having trouble answering these questions, you probably do not know enough about the hero's background. Look at the character's personal history and fill in any gaps. Once you know who the character was, you can figure out who he or she is now.

BASICS

Start with the basics. How old is the character? Male or female? Human, alien, or something else? What race or ethnicity is the character? What does he or she look like as a child? Don't worry about things like height and weight yet — those are for the character's current appearance, and you are starting with the character as a small child.

UPBRINGING

Where was the character born? What did his or her parents do for a living? How much money did

they have? Some of these answers will fall together. For example, if the character was born in the late '60s and his parents were hippies, they probably did not have much money. Does the character have any siblings? How many, what gender, and how old are they each? Were the parents strict, lenient, or in between? Was the character good in school?

HOBBIES

Move the character forward a few years, to early teens up through college. What were the character's interests? Any hobbies? Did the character like to read, play sports, or build model cars? What were the character's best subjects in school? Which were the worst? Did the character go to college? What did he or she major in? Did the character graduate, or drop out?

PRE-HERO OCCUPATION

While some characters become heroes while still in their teenage years, many do not grow into their roles until later in life. Before he or she became a hero, what jobs did the character have? Were they all in his or her field, or did the character have to take menial jobs at first, to survive? Has the character managed to get into the chosen career, or is he or she still struggling at some other job just to pay the bills? What does the character want as an ultimate career (aside from being a superhero)?

OLD FRIENDS

Who were the character's friends as kids? Did he or she have many friends, or just a few close ones, or no one at all? Does the character keep in touch with anyone? At this point you can update the family history as well. Are the parents still alive? Are any of the siblings? Does the character live with any family members?

You should now be able to go back and answer the questions about secret identity, occupation, and home life. You know who the character was from childhood, and can mentally update the character to the current age. Obviously you can have changes; a hero may have started as a research scientist, but now he is wanted by the government (on false charges) and can only get odd jobs. This sort of discrepancy creates some nice character development opportunities, as long as you deliberately plan it out. However, if the hero loved science all his life and



DRIFTER

suddenly became a cartoonist as an adult, either you need a good explanation or you should go back and rework the character's history.

COVERING ABSENCES

It is difficult for a superhero to constantly run off whenever a crisis occurs and come back without anyone noticing. Look at the hero's occupation. Does his or her job allow for sudden disappearing acts? A reporter can claim to be tracking a story, and a scientist can disappear into the lab, but a school teacher needs to show up every day for classes and a nightly news anchor has to be in front of the camera at nine sharp. How does the hero manage?

On a related note, does anyone know the hero's secret? If a co-worker is in on the hero's identity, he or she can cover for the hero. Perhaps a family member knows, and can explain the hero's disappearance each time. The more people who know, the easier it is to leave when necessary, but the more chance there is that someone else will find out the hero's true identity. Is that worth the risk? What will happen if people do find out? Will the hero's parents be proud or furious? Will the heroine's husband want a divorce? Will the hero's boss fire him, or congratulate him and let him take off when necessary? These all depend on the NPCs around the hero, and such details should be worked out with the GM. Most GMs will allow the player to dictate the situation, provided it makes sense (a character who works for a cranky, biased newspaper publisher will probably not hear his boss say, "Glad to hear you're a hero! Take off whenever you need to!").

Think about the hero's range, as well. If the hero can run at superspeeds, getting home from halfway across the country may take only a few seconds. If the hero can only leap across rooftops or hitchhike on the back of busses, however, he or she needs to stay in a smaller area to avoid being missed. Local heroes sometimes stay in a single town or neighbourhood, which makes it much easier to get away when necessary and more likely that the hero can get home again undetected. Owning a house also allows for sneaking back in, while apartments have neighbours and rarely have roof or backyard entrances.

BALANCING ACTS

Not every hero has a secret identity. Some are

heroes all the time, and have publicly announced their name. For some, it's almost impossible not to — most people don't have blue fur covering their entire body, and concealing that is more trouble than it is worth. Yet the question must still be asked, what do they do in the off hours? Even the largest, most corrupt city has days where nothing terrible occurs, and that leaves the hero with no one to save. So what does he or she do during that time? Every hero needs hobbies and interests. Perhaps the hero loves to read, and spends quiet evenings at home with a good book. Maybe she is a scientist, and spends any free time in the lab inventing new devices. He may be an explorer, and sometimes takes an afternoon or a day to hike or spelunk or hang-glide. Even if all the hero does is sit and brood and study criminal case files, he or she has to do something. Take the time to develop your character's history and decide what he or she does when not being heroic. It will give the character more depth, make him or her more believable, and give you and the GM something to play with in-between alien attacks and roaring tidal waves.

MECHANICS

Here are several new optional rules that you may wish to use in your *Silver Age Sentinels* game. Since these were not included in the main rulebook, GMs may wish to allow players to swap in new Attributes for Character Points immediately, or wait until they have earned Advancement Points before allowing them to acquire the Bases or Feats Attributes/ Likewise, if players want to assign these new Defects, they should discuss various options with their GM, from simply adding them in a metagame fashion, to asking the GM to provide an opportunity for their characters to acquire them in game.

NEW ATTRIBUTES BASES

This is also a new Characteristic. See page 65 in

Chapter #3 for details.

d20 SYSTEM FEATS

COST:	1 Point / Level
TYPE:	Characteristic
RELEVANT STAT:	Variable
PMVs:	None
PROGRESSION:	Linear, starting at 1 Feat (Level 1) increasing to 10 Feats (Level 10)
REDUCTION:	None
RESTRICTIONS:	None

The Feat Attribute allows a character to develop new capabilities or improve ones he or she already has. Each Level gives the character one Feat, as described in other d20 System games (GM's permission is required). One Feat that cannot be obtained in this manner is Leadership (see Servants or Henchmen Attributes in *Silver Age Sentinels*). Characters must still fulfil all requirements and prerequisites of a Feat, as normal.

NEW DEFECTS

BLIND EYE

Linked to Power Attribute. The Attribute does not register a particular substance, such as wood, metal, lead, marble, etc., or a specific colour such as yellow, blue, or green. The Attribute cannot detect items of that substance or colour, and does not function against them. Note that this can only be used with Attributes that affect or sense items directly. Speed, for example, affects the character, not a substance, and so Blind Eye will not work with it. Note that the substance does no more damage than normal, if used as a weapon — the Attribute, not the character, has a weakness toward the substance.

1 BP The substance or colour is rare (a particular shade of yellow, a particular type of granite)

1 BP The substance is uncommon (marble, teal)

2 BP The substance is common (wood, blue)

HAYWIRE

Linked to Power Attribute. One of the character's Attributes is unstable. Whenever the character encounters a particular substance, the Attribute fluctuates wildly, and this process cannot be controlled by the character. The Attribute may cease to function, or only operate at Maximum Force,

or even temporarily increase (or decrease) several Levels. The effect is up to the GM at any particular time, but the change to the Attribute is temporary. The GM should keep in mind that this is a Disadvantage, and will cause difficulty for a character, but he or she must also show restraint and not be needlessly cruel to a character.

1 BP The substance is rare (meteor rock, saffron, eucalyptus), and the fluctuation lasts for one scene.

2 BP The substance is uncommon (platinum, ginger, bamboo), and the fluctuation lasts for one hour.

3 BP The substance is common (gold, cinnamon, maple tree), and the fluctuation lasts for one day.

PUSHING POWERS

The *Silver Age Sentinels* rulebook defines the action of Pushing One's Power fairly rigidly in Chapter 3. This method was devised in order to keep a careful balance, yet maintain the possibility that in dire circumstances a character could go beyond his or her abilities. In a point-based system, when the GM lets a character "bend the rules" and do more than he or she should, the GM is effectively giving that player extra points. Ideally, a point spent on one Attribute should equal, in game utility, a point spent on any other Attribute. When characters can exceed their abilities without cost, what is to keep them in check?

On the other hand, this is just a game, and its intent is to model comics, which often break the rules. Chapter 6 of *Silver Age Sentinels* provides two other options for modelling power pushing, but they are only described briefly.

Here are several expanded options for Pushing Powers. All of these are optional, and to be used at the group's discretion.

DYNAMIC POWERS

The best way to both give players unlimited flexibility and simultaneously keep the points accounted for is to suggest every character have a low level of Dynamic Powers. This would be designed around their hero's theme, such as Dynamic Powers: Superstrong Webs, Dynamic Powers: Quickness Force, or Dynamic Powers: Duct-Tape Ingenuity.

While most of these themes would be classified as minor or small categories, 10 Points per Level is still

quite expensive. The GM could simply assign a few free Levels (up to 3), or could suggest Reductions (One Aspect) or Restrictions (Only in Dire Circumstances, Only Once Per Session), or other appropriate Defects (such as high Levels of Backlash or Burns Energy — pushing powers is dangerous, after all).

NEVER STRIKES TWICE

In comics, one of the reasons characters don't abuse their ability to push their powers is because such dramatic occasions occur only rarely. In fact, characters often use their powers in unique, never repeated ways because that set of circumstances is indeed unique. Fate has created a single circumstance that can only be overcome with a particular application of a speedster's energies, or a narrow focus of x-rays, etc., and the hero can't abuse the application because that circumstance will never be repeated.

Of course, this is harder to enforce in a role-playing game. If the group decides this option is best for them, characters can push their powers whenever is dramatically appropriate, but must strive to never create the same effect twice. The players must trust the GM to determine if the situation is truly that dire, and must also have faith in the GM if he or she rules against a push, either because the character has not run out of options, or because the character has done something too similar.

EXHAUSTION

An easier rule to adopt is that pushing simply causes exhaustion. The problem with this rule is that the side effects are minor (comparatively), and this may encourage players to push often. If the GM and group accept this, then this is a great method for them.

A character can push whenever he or she desires, and there is no penalty to the attempt. The side effect, however, is fatigue and complete exhaustion.

If a character pushes an Attribute by four Levels, all Stats/[Ability Scores] drop to 1, and the character is unconscious for at least an hour.

Immediately after the character pushes successfully, his or her Stats/[Ability Scores] drop for as long as is dramatically appropriate (one scene to one hour is generally acceptable).

If a character pushes an Attribute by one Level, all Stats drop by 25%.

If a character pushes an Attribute by two Levels, all Stats drop by 50%.

If a character pushes an Attribute by three Levels, all Stats drop by 75%.

PUSHING POWER ATTRIBUTE

A final rule for pushing powers is to say that all characters are allowed to push a power once per session. This roll is made normally, although the GM may apply any penalties or bonus that are appropriate. A character can, however, increase the number of times he or she is allowed to push by purchasing the Pushing Power Attribute.

PUSHING POWER

COST:	2 Points/Level
TYPE:	Power
RELEVANT STAT:	Variable
PMVs:	None
PROGRESSION:	Linear, starting at pushing one extra time per session (Level 1) increasing to pushing 10 extra times per session (Level 10).
REDUCTION:	None
RESTRICTION:	Only push one Level higher; More exhausting

A character possessing the Pushing Power Attribute has trained him or herself in exceeding normal limits. The player can decide, before an action is rolled, that his or character is pushing a power. Every Level that is pushed takes one "push action" (so a character with Pushing Power Level 3 could push her Flight by one Level three times in a session, or could push her Flight by three Levels once in a session). A character can never push his or her abilities by more than three Levels at any one time, however. The Level dictates the number of times Powers can be pushed in a single role-playing session, though the GM can alter this time frame as desired.

MECHANIC CLARIFICATIONS AND RULES ERRATA

ARMOUR: SHIELD ONLY

The cost for the Shield Only option under the Armour Attribute is incorrect. It should actually be 1 Point / Level, and every Level of Shield provides 20 Armour for the Tri-Stat edition (or 10 Armour for the d20 System edition).

FORCE FIELD: SHIELD ONLY

The Shield Only Disability for Force Fields

should actually count as three (3) Disabilities. Therefore, Alice, Queen of Hearts' Force Field should be listed as: Stops 80 for the Tri-Stat version (or Stops 40

DESIGNER'S NOTE

While it may seem that Armour: Shields are much cheaper than Force Field: Shields, remember that Force Fields are often flexible and mutable, and can also have additional Abilities and Disabilities added to them.

for the d20 System edition).

DEFENDING OTHERS

The *Silver Age Sentinels* rule book discusses defending other people with your powers, but does not explain how to block for someone else, or even how to shove them out of harm's way. As with protecting yourself, there are two general categories for defending another: you can either push/pull them out of the way, or you can interpose yourself in between them and the danger.

The first option, pushing or pulling (or grabbing them as you swing by), is similar to a Dodge/Parry. You spend a defence action, and roll a Defence Combat Value check (or defence roll in the d20 System edition). It is difficult to defend someone else, however, and the attempt usually suffers a significant penalty (see Table 1-1). Obviously the action has to make sense — if you have no way to reach a target who is

at long range, you cannot defend for him or her.

To shield another, however, is akin to a Block Defence. Like any other Block Defence, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll (or +2 to Armour Class in the d20 System edition), and you must have the Block Ranged Attacks Combat Technique in order to defend against missile weapons. You can Block for another person with a Shield, weapon, extendable Force Field, or simply by standing in the way and absorbing the brunt of the attack.

If you are out of defence actions, however, you normally cannot attempt to defend another (although in dire situations a GM might allow you to make a roll with the normal cumulative penalty for additional defences, plus any other modifiers).

SPECIAL ATTACK: ALTERNATE ATTACKS

When a character has a variety of Special Attacks, be they in Alternate Forms, in Items of Power, etc., he or she still only has to pay the full cost for the Primary (or highest Level) attack. Thus, while Skybreaker (see page 124) has some Special Attacks as Powers (like "Giant Crush" and "Thunderclap") and some within his Item of Power: Stormbands ("Lightning Strike" and "Calling Thunder"), he only has to pay the full cost a single time.

Otherwise, a character with several Items of Power with different Special Attacks would be penalised unfairly.

TABLE 1-1 DEFENDING ANOTHER

Defence Situation	Modifier
Target (or attacker) is within reach	-2
Target (or attacker) is at medium range	-4
Target (or attacker) is at long range	-6
Target (or attacker) is in an awkward position	-2
Defender is in an awkward position	-2
Target concealed by trees or bush	-2
Target concealed by darkness, smoke	-4
Defending against additional attacks	-4 (cumulative)
Defender is surprised	Defence Check Not Possible
Defending against Undetectable assailant	Defence Check Not Possible

THE HERO TEAM



ADVENTURE
COMICS
ENTERTAINMENT

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Amazing Presentations



THE HERO TEAM

This chapter focuses on bringing disparate heroes together into a cohesive unit, a hero team. Since *Silver Age Sentinels* is most likely to be used for group-play, a hero team is the common unit for the player characters. A well-designed hero team can provide a solid foundation for the start of a superhero campaign while a poorly designed one might not quite “click.” This may pose challenges for the campaign.

BUILDING A BALANCED HERO TEAM

Ideally, players should design their characters with an eye toward the heroes joining together as a team. While it's possible to take a group of random characters and throw them together to make a group, it's often easier — and more satisfying — if the players puts a little forethought into the team's makeup and then builds their characters accordingly. Not only can this make the team fit together better, but it can also help ensure that players do not feel “left out” because their character does not have a unique role to play.

POWERS

While it's certainly possible to create a hero team where characters have similar or even identical Powers, most teams in the comics feature a wide range of different Powers and abilities. Having a character with unique Powers can help each player feel that he or she has a special role to play in the group. While some Powers (such as Armour or Superstrength) may be quite common, each hero should have some unique ability that allows him or her to stand out.

Some superteams in the comics have rules that require members to have a unique Power in order to join. Such a rule is one way to ensure that the characters have a diverse range of Powers, but it's usually not necessary; most players want their characters to be unique, so they'll tend to choose Powers different from the rest of the group.

In addition to fitting within the Character Point total set by the GM, the heroes' Powers should also

fit within reasonable guidelines in terms of their usefulness and power level. For example, it's possible to create a hero with a large portion of his or her Character Points in a single Power while other heroes have a wider range of Powers at lower levels. There's nothing wrong with a hero who's a powerful one-trick pony (having, for example, a massively powerful Special Attack but no other significant Powers). The character's player should realise, though, that overwhelming Power does not entitle the character to more attention than any of the other characters in the group, and the character's weaknesses (such as a lack of defence and movement attributes) may also come into play.

Players can choose their characters' Powers with an eye toward the characters' roles within the team and certain Powers suggest certain roles that suit the characters well.

SKILLS

Nearly as important as Powers are the characters' choice of Skills. Skills can be an oft-neglected aspect of superhero characters; characters become collections of Powers with no other abilities to back them up. The selection of a few choice Skills can often add depth and utility to a character and enhance that character's role within the team.

For example, a character with the Medical Skill may find it far more useful than the ability to punch through steel plate when it comes to saving a heart attack victim. A hero with the Management and Administration Skill may be able to cut through governmental red tape that is binding the team's hands, allowing them to act freely. Police Sciences are sure to come in handy when it comes to unravelling the clues to a villain's mysterious crimes, etc.

Some heroes choose to specialise in Skills over Powers; their “Power” is their extraordinary range of skills. It can be difficult to have more than one “Skill-master” character on a team at a time unless the characters focus on different areas of expertise or have other Attributes to make them unique. As with Powers, players who have similar character concepts should discuss matters so they can determine how to give their heroes individuality and their own places within the team.

That's not to say that characters cannot have some of the same Skills. Many Skills (particularly Combat Skills) are likely to be common for most of the team. It's more important to consider what Skills help make the hero unique and give him or her something to contribute.

RESOURCES

In addition to Powers and Skills, there is the question of what other resources the hero brings to the team. Often all heroes have to offer are themselves and their abilities, but some heroes have Attributes like Gadgets, Henchmen, Organisational Ties, and Wealth that they can present to the rest of the group. A hero with Gadgets may allow other characters to use them on occasion (although the GM should monitor the "loaning" of Gadgets on a regular basis). Henchmen may form a kind of support staff or backup team for the heroes, and Organisational Ties can help smooth out obstacles in the team's path or cut through bureaucracy. A hero with Wealth can provide all kinds of resources for the team, bankrolling the group's operations if the character is wealthy enough.

It's best if resources are not all that a hero has to offer the group. If a character merely supplies the team with Gadgets, and pays for their headquarters and costume dry-cleaning, then the role is probably better handled by an NPC. Still, offering resources can be one way to differentiate otherwise similar characters.

ROLES

In a team, every member has a part to play. In a hero team, each character should have a unique role of some sort. Sometimes these roles overlap, and heroes may fill more than one of them, particularly on a smaller team. Some of these positions go unfilled for teams, because the members lack the necessary capabilities or because the team has never felt a need to fill that role.

The roles described here focus on what a hero does within the team. Players will find certain personalities are better suited for specific roles, and vice versa. One way to differentiate between heroes with similar roles is to give them different archetypes and personalities. Even though they serve the same

function within the team, they become very distinct characters in their own right.

Here are the major roles heroes play within a team. Players are encouraged to experiment with these and come up with their own definitions and roles to suit their particular campaigns.

LEADER

The leader is an important role within the team because he or she is the person who holds the team together and directs it towards a goal, whether that is overcoming a supervillain in battle or dealing with a stubborn and authoritarian government representative. The leader is responsible for the actions of the team and, sometimes, for keeping the other heroes in line and ensuring that the team's rules are followed. Good leaders take their job seriously, even though some may have a somewhat irreverent attitude. Often the lives of their teammates are in their hands, and so they cannot afford any mistakes.

Some teams divide leadership duties rather than placing it all on one person. For example, a team might have a field leader who takes charge when the team is in action, such as at a disaster scene or while fighting supervillains. An administrative leader handles reports, paperwork, organisational tasks and, occasionally, discipline within the team. A spokesperson or team liaison is the public face of the team, dealing with the public, the media, and the team's various contacts with the authorities, the government, other teams, etc. Large teams may have multiple field leaders answering to a single administrative leader, with a spokesperson handling public relations and liaisons with various other groups and organisations. Smaller teams tend to concentrate leadership onto fewer characters or an individual.

An important consideration for the leader character is the ability to lead the other player characters. While heroes bucking authority and questioning leadership are common plot elements in comic books, the players should at least make an effort to treat the leader of the team with respect and follow orders. If the players constantly ignore the leader's orders, or if the player of the leader does not feel comfortable ordering the other players' characters around, the group should discuss the problem and come to a mutually agreeable solution.

HEAVY-HITTER

A heavy-hitter is one of the powerhouses of the team, a hero with immense offensive capabilities such as Superstrength or a Special Attack sure to inflict a lot of damage on an opponent. Teams usually rely on their heavy-hitters to engage the most powerful opponents in battle. The character either takes the villains down directly or keeps them busy until the rest of the team can organise to aid in the battle. Heavy-hitters often have the ability to take just as much damage as they can dish out, letting them go head-to-head with the toughest opponents.

Conversely, heavy-hitters tend to draw fire as well. Opponents often go for the heavy-hitter first, figuring that if they can take out the team's toughest member, the rest will be easy pickings. Heavy-hitters are sure to get plenty of attention on the battlefield. A common trick in the comics involves giving the heavy-hitter a big problem to deal with (a powerful villain, giant monster, imminent disaster, etc.), while allowing the other heroes to act on a smaller scale while he or she is busy. Alternatively, the GM can disable the heavy-hitter using a weakness or a specially designed trap or weapon. GMs should use this option sparingly, though, since the heavy-hitter's player can become understandably frustrated if the hero is constantly hamstrung.

SNIPER

A sniper's primary ability is ranged attack. This can be particularly effective if the sniper's target does not have any similar attacks with which to strike back (although superpowered opponents often create makeshift ranged attacks using everything from water mains to hurled buses). Although snipers most often have an energy blast or weapon, more exotic Special Attacks — Mind or Soul Attack, or Tangle — can be just as effective.

TRANSPORTER

Whereas a speedster is adept at getting around quickly, a transporter is capable of bringing the rest of the team along for the ride. Transporters can often fly teammates along using telekinesis, powerful winds, force field bubbles or platforms. In some cases, a transporter can simply teleport the whole team from place to place (with a sufficiently high Targets PMV on Teleportation) or Transfer movement

abilities like Flight or Superspeed to others, allowing them to move as the character does. A transporter may also have a vehicle large enough for the whole team, which is fast enough to get them where they need to go.

Hero teams often have vehicles of their own to get around (see Transportation, page 63). In situations where those vehicles fail or are unavailable, a transporter character can be invaluable. Sometimes two heroes can combine forces to serve as transportation for the team, such as one hero creating a bubble or platform to carry everyone, and another hero picking it up and flying the whole group to their destination. This is a good example of the sort of teamwork GMs should encourage.

COMMUNICATOR

It's important for a hero team to be able to coordinate its efforts and that requires constant communication. A communicator is a hero able to keep the members of the team in touch, allowing them to co-operate and pass information on to one another. The classic communicator in the comic books is a telepath able to act as a mental "switchboard," forming a telepathic link between the members of the team. This requires Telepathy with the necessary Area and Targets PMVs to affect all the heroes at once over a great distance. A hero with Computer Scanning might also be able to link a group of heroes together using computer-controlled communicators.

A communicator character may also have the ability to overcome language barriers, allowing the team to communicate with aliens, people who speak different languages, or other strangers they might encounter. With Level 6 or higher Telepathy, a telepath with the appropriate Targets PMV can even temporarily impart understanding of different languages to others, allowing them to speak and understand each other.

In the absence of a team communicator, heroes usually rely on Gadgets to stay in touch with each other (see Tools of the Trade, page 58).

PROTECTOR

A protector has abilities that safeguard others. The classic protector has the ability to project a Force

Field with a sufficient Area PMV to enclose a group of people. When necessary, the protector can shield the entire team from harm. Other common protector Attributes include Adaptation (with Transfer), Invisibility, and Environmental Influence.

GMs should beware of protector characters able to shield the entire team without interfering with their combat effectiveness. Protectors in the comics often have the Both Directions Disability on their projected Force Fields — the protector blocks the heroes' attacks while defending the team. A protector who can provide teammates with additional Armour with no corresponding penalty may make the team too tough for many opponents (although if the protector is taken out of the fight, watch out!).

MEDIC

Sooner or later, heroes get hurt, and sometimes badly. It's those times when a medic is needed. A medic specialises in healing, either by using the Medical Skill, the Healing Power, or both. Healers are often also protectors, although there's no reason why they cannot be heavy-hitters, too. Medics in the comics are often powerhouses, balancing their ability to heal with the power to harm.

As with transportation and communication, hero teams without a medic usually rely on technology or NPCs to get the job done, either an "auto-doc" or other healing device at their headquarters or an NPC healer or physician (possibly one who specialises in working with superhumans).

SCOUT

A scout is the team's forward observer, the one who goes on ahead to examine the situation. Scouts are often speedsters, since they can get in and out quickly, but a scout can also be a hero with Heightened Senses, Heightened Awareness, Sixth Sense and a high Area PMV, or even a stealthy character able to slip into places where most people cannot go. A scout can provide the team with an overview of a situation before they charge in, allowing them to plan accordingly. Scouts sometimes run into more than they bargained for, though, and end up captured, perhaps even used as hostages, and so they have to be careful. Villains who know how a hero team operates will be prepared for the possibility of a scout, and will react accordingly.

SNEAK

While heroes usually operate in the open, sometimes a subtler approach is desired. The sneak is a hero who specialises in stealth, disguise, and misdirection, able to slip unseen past guards and security systems to infiltrate and spy on the team's opponents. Sneaks include heroes with tremendous Stealth Skill (usually coupled with a decent Body / {{ Dexterity }} Stat) as well as heroes with Alternate Form (Cosmetic Changes), Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Invisibility, and Teleport.

The tactical uses of a sneak are manifold. Sneaks can act as scouts to spy and gather information. They can infiltrate an enemy's ranks, passing information on to their team and sabotaging the enemy's plans. They can make surprise attacks or go after another objective while the rest of the team keeps the enemy occupied elsewhere. Since they work best alone, sneaks are often loners.

THINKER

The thinker is the brains of the outfit, the hero who figures out puzzles and problems. Thinkers may be detectives, scientists, scholars, or some measure of each. They're best at coming up with plans and devices to tackle the team's problems. A high Mind / {{ Intelligence }} Stat is essential for a thinker, although high Levels in various Mind / {{ Intelligence }}-based Skills, particularly sciences, are useful as well.

While the GM should encourage players of thinker characters to come up with innovative ideas and solutions of their own, he or she should also allow the players to make checks for the character when stumped for an answer. Thinkers are usually smarter than any player possibly could be, and thus it is reasonable to allow the player to use the character's abilities to full advantage.

Not all thinkers are leaders. Many thinkers are not cut out for leadership, either because they lack the presence and personality or because they're simply too abrasive or condescending (common faults for thinkers).

MENTOR

A mentor is a guide, teacher, and advisor to the team. Whereas the leader commands the team in the field and oversees their activities during a mission, a

mentor helps guide the team's growth. A mentor may also be the team's leader, or the team may have a field leader, while the mentor acts as the team's administrative leader. Mentors are typically older and more experienced than the rest of the team and may not accompany the team into action.

A mentor is an excellent role for an NPC because it gives the GM a "voice" on the team and allows the GM to directly offer advice and suggestions to the players using the mentor as a mouthpiece. In the role of the mentor, the GM can guide the heroes in particular directions and help them with their teamwork (see *Teamwork*, page 55).

Of course, the team's mentor can also be a player character, in which case the mentor is more likely to take an active role in the group. This is a good role for older, veteran heroes working with younger rookies who can benefit from their years of experience (whether they want to or not).

PATRON

A team's patron helps provide the support (material and financial) that a team of superheroes needs. Headquarters, vehicles, and superscience equipment are not free, and a patron can help arrange for them. Patrons may provide more than just financial support; a patron with the right connections can get a team government sanction, cooperation from the authorities, coverage in the media, and similar perks.

Like a mentor, a patron is a good role for an NPC if the GM does not want the players to worry about finances. If the patron has a say in how the team is run, it gives the GM the opportunity to offer in-character suggestions. Alternatively, a player character patron may give the team greater choices, freeing them from dependence on outside sources of support (and the strings often attached to them).

HERO TEAM ASPECTS

Just like characters, hero teams have certain aspects that define them: the team's purpose, it's size, how it's organised, whom it deals with, and so forth. Every team is unique, but all teams can be defined by certain guidelines. Examine the aspects in this section and consider them when creating a new hero team.

CHANGING THE TEAM ROSTER

In a role-playing game players may occasionally change their characters. While character death is fairly rare in the game (as it is in the comics), some players like variety and may come up with ideas for new characters. In addition, there's the possibility of adding new players to the gaming group or having current players drop out for various reasons. All of these add up to being able to change the line-up of a team without disrupting the campaign too much. While it may never come up, it's something GMs should be aware of and plan for in advance.

Some team concepts are easier to add to or change than others. For example, a team of heroes based in a major city and dedicated to protecting the world can incorporate a wide range of characters. Old heroes may leave the team for personal or professional reasons, and may even take a leave of absence or accept "reserve status" for a while, allowing new characters to rotate into the roster. Likewise, the team may periodically accept new members, or even have membership drives should their numbers decrease. A team that's directly run by a major organisation like a government or corporation is even more mutable. The team administrators can reassign characters as needed, add "mission specialists" to the team, or suspend some team members from duty for a time.

Tightly-knit teams are harder to change without more advance planning. For example, a team made up of characters who are all relatives, perhaps part of a family where Powers are inherited, might occasionally discover a "long-lost cousin," but that can only happen so often before it starts to stretch suspension of disbelief. The characters are not just members of a team, they're part of a family. Even if they leave the team, they're still family. Those ties make it easier to bring old characters back into the group, but harder to integrate new characters.

When developing a team concept with the players, it may be a good idea to discuss the possibility of new character additions or current characters leaving the team in context of the group. If it happens, the team will be ready for it.

The answers to some of the questions posed here may be self-evident, but others may require a bit of thought and can provide additional depth and structure to the team.

PURPOSE

What is the team's purpose? At first this might seem like an obvious question; most hero teams band together to fight for truth, justice, liberty, and peace. That may be the case, but does the team have a particular agenda beyond a desire to do good deeds? On what does the team focus? What sort of activities (if any) does the team forbid?

For example, hero teams often avoid politically-charged situations: they do not depose the heads of sovereign nations or put an end to wars. Other hero teams do what they feel is right regardless of the letter or the law or the demands of diplomacy. These groups may find themselves embroiled in political issues or fallout as a result.

Many teams have a charter or mission statement that describes the team's purpose and goals. If the players want, they can write up such a statement for their team. Other groups do not have clearly stated goals, they deal with each situation as it arises, which may lead to some controversy or conflict within the group during play. So long as the players are having fun with it, there's no problem. If a controversy is taking up too much game time or turning into a protracted (and unpleasant) argument, then it may be time for the GM to step in and put a stop to things, suggesting a way of handling the issue "off-stage" and returning to the game.

Team members may work at cross-purposes. People of good conscience can (and do) disagree about what is "good" and "right" for individuals and society. When the power to decide such issues is placed in the hands of individuals like superheroes, conflict is almost sure to arise. If you do not want these sorts of conflicts in your game, steer clear of controversial topics and moral dilemmas in your adventures, keeping the division between right and wrong clear and unambiguous. Heroes will still get into brawls because of misunderstandings or villainous manipulation, of course, but conflicts over issues of morals or purpose will be less likely.

THE GUARD'S MISSION

Liberty. Justice. Security. Peace. These are the four pillars of a better world; a land of hope, freedom, and truth, where life is not a burden to endure but a joy to experience. There are threats you cannot conquer, tragedies you cannot avoid, and sins you cannot punish. We are here to help. We will support you when you stumble, keep watch when you sleep, and help you achieve the unreachable. We will show you how to touch Paradise. We are The Guard, and you are safe on our watch.

— Max Liberty, the Sentinel, 1983

Some of the major goals of hero teams are discussed herein. Not all teams will seek all of these goals (indeed, some of them are mutually exclusive), but they should provide some idea of the diverse range of purposes that a team can have.

DISASTER RELIEF

The team responds to (and perhaps even tries to prevent) various sorts of disasters, both natural and man-made. Most of the time, all heroes can do is respond to news of a disaster and do their best to contain the damage and aid the victims. Heroes can put out fires, divert or block tsunami, contain oil and chemical spills, etc. They can also evacuate people endangered or injured by the disaster and offer assistance locating victims and getting them medical attention. With enough warning, heroes may be able to prevent some disasters. With a precognitive teammate or patron, the team may even have forewarning of disasters before they happen. Of course, what if a stubborn tanker captain does not believe them, or if a city official refuses to order an evacuation based on their say-so? It can also be interesting if weather-controlling heroes try to keep hurricanes and tornadoes from happening. Might there be long-term repercussions of tampering with the world's weather patterns?

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The heroes want to protect the environment from harm. This includes pollution and contamination as well as environmental damage caused by clear-cutting, strip-mining, and other industrial techniques. This may put the heroes at odds with the authorities, since many activities that

pollute or endanger the environment are legal. Law-abiding heroes can still go after illegal polluters, promote conservation, and perhaps use their abilities to help clean up the environment (transmutation and some superscience inventions can help tremendously here). Extremists may go after the worst polluters to shut them down, legally or otherwise, even becoming superpowered “eco-terrorists” (which may bring them into conflict with more law-abiding heroes).

LAW ENFORCEMENT

This is a common purpose for superheroes. The team works to uphold and enforce the law, usually by pursuing and capturing criminals and preventing crimes in progress. In most comic books, superheroes can make “citizen’s arrests” without any problem and authorities have little trouble convicting criminals captured by hero teams, but this may vary in your campaign depending on the team’s sanction and the desired level of realism (see page 101 for more details). Stopping petty crimes is a good thing for a hero team to do with its spare time, although it may raise the question of heroes having to pick and choose which crimes they should let the local authorities handle. Heroes may also be faced with enforcing laws that they consider unjust; this is more

of a problem for sanctioned hero teams, but other groups may still be questioned if they pursue some criminals but not others.

PATRIOTISM

Patriotic hero teams support their home nation. This may range from encouraging civic pride and duty to actually working as government operatives, or even becoming the government! Most Silver Age heroes are patriotic to at least some extent, with a few examples of true “flag-wavers” who strive to embody the ideals of their nation (whether or not their nation is managing to live up to them).

Patriotic heroes can get caught up in political issues. If they answer to the government, they may be asked or ordered to perform tasks with which they do not agree. If they support their country no matter what, they may be the targets of terrorism or forced into conflict with equally patriotic heroes from an opposing nation. At the extreme end, patriotic heroes can take matters into their own hands, executing a *coup d’état* to depose a corrupt government and setting themselves up as a new government (or the enforcement arm of a new government). Some may consider such “patriots” villains rather than heroes.



MAGISTRATE AND BRITANNIA RESCUE A FISHING BOAT THAT IS BESIEGED BY A HARSH WINTER STORM

PEACEKEEPING

Beyond law-enforcement is ensuring peace between nations and peoples. Most heroes are believers in the cause of peace, but how they go about achieving it varies. In the Silver Age comics, most superheroes support the ideal of peace and do what they can to encourage and inspire people and their governments to work toward it. In other cases, heroes may take the matter into their own hands to ensure peace: intervening to stop wars; confiscating or destroying weapons; deposing violent regimes; putting down rebellions; etc. They may do so as sanctioned agents of a peacekeeping force, such as the United Nations or some sort of world-government, or they may do so on their own, facing the possible wrath of angered and threatened nations.

PROFIT

Superheroes in the Silver Age comics are extremely altruistic — they would not think of accepting any sort of reward for what they do. At best, any reward offer to a hero goes toward funding the hero's further good deeds or is donated to a suitable charity. There are heroes and hero teams that want to make some money from what they do, though. Some do it through licensing and marketing their image. Just imagine all the money comic book companies make from comics, toys, novels, movies, cartoons, etc., going to the actual superheroes. Some heroes may even charge for their services, either becoming mercenaries or balancing paid and *pro bono* work. Profit-seeking heroes may receive some disdain from the heroic community (and perhaps even the public), depending on their approach to earning their money.

RELIGIOUS DUTY

A theme that's rarely seen in the comics, but possible for a *Silver Age Sentinels* game, is a hero team that focuses on a sense of duty to the tenets of a particular religion. They see heroism as their religious duty. Perhaps they believe that their Powers come from their god or gods, and perhaps they're even right. If the religion is hierarchical, the team may answer to religious authorities. They may also become the focus of worship themselves, particularly if the faithful come to see the heroes as saints,

avatars, prophets, or similar religious figures. A religious hero team is likely to be associated with both the good and bad elements of their religion, whether they are true or not.

RESEARCH

Hero teams often include brilliant scientists and scholars and many superheroes have capabilities that make exploration of the universe's mysteries easier. They may be able to travel unaided through space, see atomic nuclei and DNA molecules, or access energies or dimensions completely unknown to science. This offers boundless opportunities for a hero team to focus on scientific research and exploration. They might do so with the intention of benefiting humanity with their discoveries, patenting and profiting from a new invention, or simply out of curiosity. Scientific research in the comic books often goes awry, creating opportunities for adventures, and there are certainly villains nearby to steal and exploit any discoveries the heroes make.

SEARCH & RESCUE

Some heroes focus on finding and rescuing missing people, which is closely tied with disaster relief. This may include victims of disasters and accidents, such as those lost at sea or in the wilderness, people who have been kidnapped or abducted, or even runaways. Some heroes may do this as a matter of course while others may work like private detectives or bounty hunters.

SOCIAL AGENDAS

Finally, the members of a hero team may have a particular social agenda to advance locally or worldwide. Environmentalism is just one example. Other possibilities include civil rights (for all people or for a particular minority group), democracy, socialism (not likely to make the heroes popular in the Western world), education, or any number of other social causes. This type of purpose is best suited to a gaming group that's interested in exploring stories involving a particular cause. The GM should make sure that the players are interested and that no one will feel uncomfortable or bored with the issue beforehand. Social agendas can be sensitive topics, so they should be handled with care.

SIZE

How large is the hero team and does it include a support staff of non-powered personnel? This breaks down into a few options: a small group of player characters, a large “pool” of player characters, or a mix of player characters and non-player characters.

A small player character group tends to be the default size for most gaming groups. Each player has one hero character and the characters together make up the entire team, with maybe one or two NPC heroes or a handful of supporting characters. This is the simplest arrangement, since each player controls only one character and the group is self-contained and easy to manage. The prime opportunities for interaction within the group are between the players, rather than the players and the GM.

Another option is for each player to have multiple heroes, choosing a particular one to run each game. In this way, a team may have a much larger membership — two, three, or more times the number of players in the group — but the action only focuses on a small group of characters at any one time. This allows for a lot of variety. Players can switch characters from time to time to experiment and keep from getting bored and can mix-and-match their characters for new opportunities for interaction and role-playing. On the other hand, each individual character gets less “screen time,” and so character development may be slower (perhaps too slow for some).

Finally, the team can consist of the player characters and any number of NPCs controlled by the GM. In this case, the players have many characters with which to interact, but much of the burden is placed on the GM to create and control the NPCs. The GM also has to be careful not to let the NPCs dominate the action, otherwise the players may feel like spectators rather than participants in the game. One of the better options for a combined PC/NPC team involves the player characters making up a “team with a team” — a smaller unit of a larger (perhaps much larger) group. For example, the characters could be a “franchise” of a national or international team, with numerous branches. The player characters may be the only members of their organisation in their home city, but there’s another team franchise in a nearby city they can contact, along

with the people at the “home office.” Alternatively, they could be a covert or “black ops” team within a larger team, operating largely on their own.

ORGANISATION

How is the team structured? Organisation deals with who leads the team and what roles the other team-members play in the group. The larger the team the more important organisation becomes.

Does the team have a single leader who makes all the decisions for the team or are there multiple leaders, depending on the circumstances, such as a tactical leader, an administrative director, a spokesperson, etc.? Some teams may have a leader make certain decisions absolutely, such as during a mission, while other matters are handled democratically, by a vote of the membership (perhaps with some members’ votes having more “weight” than others).

Does the team have a deputy leader or second-in-command? If not, who (if anyone) takes over when the leader is unavailable or incapacitated? Does the deputy leader have the authority to relieve the leader of command under certain circumstances? In less formal groups these roles may not be spelled out, simply understood (although that can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts). More formal organisations will have clearly defined roles for members of the team.

Consider which style suits your group and whether or not the team’s organisation and structure should be clearly defined. Large groups may want an organisational chart, perhaps even military ranks, showing the chain of command and who reports to whom within the organisation.

RULES AND TRADITIONS

All groups have rules, whether they’re unspoken conventions of behaviour, long-standing traditions, or written regulations on conduct, with clear penalties for violating them. Unless a hero team is a complete anarchy (which may be the case for some teams), it will at least have some unwritten rules or traditions. It’s important that players understand the group’s policies so they do not violate them unintentionally. The GM should remind players

about these conventions when they seem to have forgotten them. The players and the GM should also discuss what rules are suitable for the team and the campaign.

Teams may have rules covering nearly every area of conduct, although usually they tend to be broad and flexible (unless the group is saddled with a particularly bureaucratic nature or patron). Team traditions are often unwritten practices the members expect of each other. A few traditions can help give a team character and individuality and the GM should be on the lookout for opportunities to start a new tradition within the team. Most groups tends to develop their own customs over time, and the player characters may modify the team's rules and traditions as the campaign progresses.

The following section describes some of the occasions for which teams may want to develop rules or traditions.

CHOOSING NEW MEMBERS

How does the team choose its new members? For some hero teams this is a strictly informal process. If the team meets a new, suitable hero and they get along well enough, they may invite the newcomer to join the group. Other teams have a more formal review process. Perhaps they have certain requirements an applicant must meet before being eligible to join. Applicants may be tested or interviewed before a decision is made. The group might require a vote of the general membership, the approval of a patron (such as a government body), or various clearance and background checks. There's also the matter of whether or not the applicant must reveal his or her true identity to the team. Some teams respect their members' privacy while others prefer to err on the side of security and require full disclosure. Finally, there is the question of whether or not rejected applicants can re-apply later.

It's usually best if the players at least have some say in the matter of new team members. A patron or NPC might be able to override them occasionally (making for some interesting conflicts), but if the player characters have absolutely no say in the matter, the GM should not saddle them with too many troublemakers.

INITIATING NEW MEMBERS

What can new members of the group expect? Officially, training may be required (and perhaps a required expenditure of Character or Advancement Points on certain group Attributes and Skills). Newcomers may have a probationary period where their performance with the team is evaluated prior to awarding them full membership. They may have to pass certain tests or security checks, and their interaction with the team and its facilities may be limited.

Unofficially, there may be certain things the team does to welcome a new member. Maybe there's a traditional fight to test the newcomer's abilities. Can he or she hold out against the rest of the team for five full minutes? An inaugural session in the team's training facilities is also a common tradition, often with the settings at their most difficult to keep the new trainees humble and give them something to think about. Perhaps the team members introduce the new people to their favourite watering hole or hangout, or throw a party to make them feel welcome. Not doing these things may also be a way to snub new members that the team does not like or feels were forced upon them.

CHOOSING A LEADER

How does the team select its leader, and how often (if ever) is a new leader chosen? Groups with a patron, particularly an authoritarian one like the government, may have an appointed leader (and deputy leader), with a new leader appointed whenever the patron sees fit. More democratic groups may elect their team leader. This might involve a short "campaigning" period (which can be fun to role-play, if the group is so inclined) or it might just be a quick show of hands or secret ballot at a group meeting. The team sets the length of time that a leader serves. Some team leaders — particularly patrons and mentors — effectively have the job for as long as they want it. Other team leaders only serve for a set time, perhaps a year, then another leader is chosen (or leadership is rotated automatically). There may be a limit on the number of terms (or consecutive terms) a leader may serve.

As with choosing new members, it's usually best if the players have a say in which character becomes team leader, and best if the leader is a player character, unless the players are particularly inexperienced and need the guidance of an NPC leader.

USE OF LETHAL FORCE

Something that teams should consider in advance is a rule about the use of lethal force in combat. In the Silver Age comics, most heroes and hero teams hold to strict codes against killing, and expect their teammates to do the same. Only in the most extreme circumstances will a hero kill, and the penalties for doing so may be severe. In other comic books, heroes have no compunctions about killing their opponents and may even be expected to do so in combat; in these hardcore units, a pacifist hero may be a liability to the team (or be a source of great conflict for role-playing, if carefully handled). Where the team stands on the issue of lethal force has a great influence on how likely individual heroes are to use it, regardless of their opinions.

The decision should be based on the style and tone of the campaign. In a four-colour setting, heroes should be reluctant to kill, if not completely opposed to it, and team ideology should be the same. The occasional character or circumstance may lead to a use of lethal force, but it should be a rare happening. In a grittier, darker game heroes are more willing to kill, although the team may still officially frown upon it (as any law-abiding organisation should). Circumstances may play an important role. Killing in self-defence or in a time of war (for supersoldier characters) is quite different from murdering a helpless victim.

OBEYING THE LAW

Are team members required to uphold and obey the law? While it might seem self-evident that superheroes concerned with justice should obey the law, it's not always so cut-and-dried. Even the most law-abiding heroes may find it necessary to violate the law in order to uphold justice or to enforce a more important ideal. Other hero teams have little regard for the letter of the law, focusing on its spirit or on their own agenda, no matter what laws they have to break.

The greater the team's sanction the more likely it is expected to obey the law. Of course, very highest level of sanction may exempt members from local laws, so long as they are following the commands of a higher authority. Unsanctioned teams are still expected to obey the law, of course, but do not have to worry about losing their sanctioning if they do not (since they have none). Hunted teams usually acquire that status because of their willingness to flout the law when it suits them.

DISCIPLINE

When a member breaks the team's rules, what happens? Usually it depends on the nature of the rule, the severity of the violation, and the circumstances. Unless the team enforces its own rules, though, they're meaningless. There must be some measure of discipline unless the group has no rules to enforce. Discipline may be up to the team's leader or it may require a review board, or even court-martial, comprised of several team members. If the team reports to a higher authority, then discipline may come from it. The team's leader is usually empowered to handle minor infractions, with more serious matters handled by the team as a whole, although the leader may handle all behaviour problems in more authoritarian teams.

Punishment is usually a loss of privileges or some kind of "grunt work" for a set time. More serious violations may involve a suspension from the team and some sort of mandatory training, while the most serious violations may result in expulsion from the team. There's also the matter of whether or not the character is liable to face criminal charges for his or her actions and how the team deals with that (turning the character over to the authorities, covering the matter up, or doing nothing).

In a *Silver Age Sentinels* game, team discipline can be a sensitive issue, since it brings the player characters into conflict. It's usually easiest if an NPC or the will of the majority hands out discipline, so that one player is not always forced to be "the heavy." While some players enjoy playing out such conflicts, others do not. The GM should take note if the players seem uncomfortable with a disciplinary situation and be prepared to take a hand to help deal with it, if necessary.



A HEROIC VETLAN VISITS THE MONUMENT OF A LOST FRIEND

HONOURING THE FALLEN

While character death is often quite rare in the comics, heroes do die, and sooner or later most teams have to deal with the loss of a teammate and friend. Teams with a long-established history have probably already done so at least once, while new teams may need to in the future.

How does the team honour its fallen heroes? Some teams may have a special cemetery, crypt, or mausoleum where their deceased can be interred. Perhaps the government or the grateful people of the world have set aside such a place for all heroes, where the most honoured are laid to rest. Teams are known to create memorials to their honoured dead, such as galleries of portraits, or statues, or public monuments in parks. Perhaps the team creates a charitable trust or organisation in the deceased's name, particularly if it's a cause that the late hero championed. These sorts of legacies can add a sense of history and meaning to the campaign.

SANCTION

The term "sanction" refers to the degree to which a hero team's activities are endorsed, approved, and supported by the authorities. Sanction can grant a hero team the ability to side-step a great many legal entanglements but it may also come with strings of its own attached, which can enmesh the heroes in politics and bureaucracy.

There are four levels of sanction, described herein. GMs and players should give some thought to the level of sanction that the heroes want and are willing to maintain. The team may begin sanctioned, particularly if it is established or made up of heroes with sterling reputations, or the heroes may have to earn the trust of the authorities. The second option can make sanction and the trust that comes with it a reward the heroes can earn during the campaign. The players may be more likely to value their respected status if they earn it than if it is simply handed to them. Of course, it's possible that the heroes are not concerned about becoming officially sanctioned at all, and the campaign will go in a different direction.

SANCTIONED

A sanctioned hero team has some official endorsement from the authorities, allowing them to act as law-enforcers and, to a degree, avoid some legal entanglements. Sanctioned heroes are often considered “special deputies” of some sort. They have the same powers as police officers or other law-enforcement personnel to intervene in situations where they have cause to believe that a crime is being committed, and to arrest the perpetrators of that crime. Sanctioned heroes may be given permission to use some of their Powers to ferret out crime, although it’s unlikely that any case based solely on such evidence would stand up in court. For example, it would be almost impossible to convict a criminal simply because a telepathic hero said that the criminal was planning to commit a crime. After all, thinking about committing a crime is not the same as actually doing it.

Along with police powers, sanctioned heroes may also have certain responsibilities. They’re expected to uphold and follow the law and proper procedure when it comes to making arrests and gathering evidence. It’s not necessary to bog the game down with details (unless you and your players are looking for a “police drama” style of game). The heroes should simply be aware that they are entrusted with enforcing the law and therefore must uphold it.

Sanction also implies a measure of “security clearance” or access to sensitive material, information, locations, and individuals. Sanctioned heroes are more likely to be allowed into top-secret government installations and to meet with high-ranking personnel. They’re also more likely to be entrusted with secret information and things normally kept out of the hands of civilians.

Sanction comes in different levels, depending on just how broad an area it covers. A hero team might be sanctioned by a city or municipality, a province or state, the federal government, or even a worldwide organisation. In some campaigns it may be possible to receive sanction from interplanetary, interstellar, even intergalactic or universal authorities. The GM may want sanctioned heroes to take the appropriate Level of Organisational Ties to reflect their trusted position

with the authorities or may simply waive the point cost, since everyone on the team has the Attribute. The Organisational Ties Attribute may be balanced by a required Red Tape Defect, depending on how much the authorities can tie the heroes’ hands.

In Empire City, for example, the Guard has a limited form of sanction with the United Nations (known as “special status”), giving them access to certain high-ranking people and information, but not full disclosure. Meanwhile the Order is completely sanctioned by the US government, which gives their members powers similar to that of federal agents.

TRUSTED

Trusted heroes are about as close to sanctioned as heroes can get without it being official. The authorities trust in and rely on the heroes but for whatever reason cannot or do not officially sanction them. It may be because the authorities cannot be seen sanctioning costumed vigilantes who are not licensed law-enforcement officers. Perhaps the heroes do not want to be sanctioned, since it may actually tie their hands to a degree. After all, civilians are not subject to all the same rules of probable cause and evidence as law officers, so the heroes may find that being unsanctioned actually allows them to do their jobs more easily.

Of course, trust is a delicate balance. If the authorities ever decide not to trust the heroes, they can stop co-operating with them at any time. This may happen because of something the heroes have done (or someone else has done to frame them), or because of something going on within the organisation. A change in administration, for example, can put someone in charge who will not tolerate his predecessor’s co-operation with civilians, no matter how useful. If the authorities decide not to help a once-trusted team, there’s not much the heroes can do about it except try to win back their trust.

Lady Starbright was probably the world’s most trusted heroine, welcomed and respected by almost everyone. No matter when she travelled in the world, local authorities and people on the street recognised her and wanted to help however they could.

UNSANCTIONED

These teams are not sanctioned or trusted by the authorities. Not that they're untrustworthy; the authorities simply do not trust them enough to include them in investigations or co-operate with them any more than they would with any other uninvolved civilians. If the heroes interfere in official business they'll be told, politely but firmly, to stay out of it. If they continue interfering, they're likely to end up arrested for obstruction of justice or interfering with an official investigation. The authorities don't necessarily go out of their way to persecute people trying to help, but law enforcement is a serious business and it's not for amateurs, whether they're bullet-proof or not. This is particularly true for underage heroes. The authorities may not want to endanger children, even superpowered ones, and may (correctly) believe that they lack the maturity necessary to enforce the law.

How many teams fall on either side of the line between trusted and simply unsanctioned depends on the style of the campaign world. In more four-colour settings, all heroes are trusted until they demonstrate that they should not be. Unsanctioned and hunted heroes are fairly rare. In more realistic settings, the trusted category shrinks. Heroes are either sanctioned or not, and the unsanctioned ones are not given much leeway. In particularly grim settings, there may only be two options: people with Powers are either sanctioned agents of the authorities or hunted by them.

Corbae is an unsanctioned hero who operates primarily in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. He has the grudging respect of many of the local police, but they do not provide him any assistance. Many of the administrators and officials actually want him arrested. Similarly, the Lady of the Lantern makes the Empire City Police uneasy, because they are rumours of her involvement with the Triads.

HUNTED

The authorities do not trust these teams and actively hunt them. Whether justified or not, hunted teams are considered criminals and the authorities will attempt to arrest them if the opportunity arises. The team's chance of co-operating with the authorities is nil outside of a small number of open-minded contacts willing to help the team out

unofficially without anyone else knowing (and those people risk their careers doing so).

The authorities do not call upon hunted teams to aid in investigations or handle problems. The heroes are on their own as far as finding out what's going on and gathering evidence, and must be careful not to get caught doing it. A hunted team may capture villains, but they're not going to wait around for the police to arrive, since they will likely get arrested right along with their opponents.

It's up to the GM what, if anything, a hunted team can do to turn their reputation around or at least get to the point where the authorities are not after them. The GM may require the heroes on the team to take the Wanted Defect so long as they are hunted.

HEROES, SANCTION, AND THE LAW

A hero or team's degree of sanction may also affect their legal status in various ways. As mentioned earlier, some campaign worlds may not allow unsanctioned superheroes to even use their Powers. Just being an unlicensed metahuman could be a crime. In more four-colour settings, unsanctioned heroes could still face legal barriers. One common possibility is restrictions on testifying in court.

US law says that the accused has the right to confront his or her accuser. That's difficult to do if the accuser is allowed to wear a mask and conceal his or her true identity. Superheroes may not be able to testify in court without revealing their secret identities. That means that criminal cases based solely on a hero's testimony may fail.

In some campaign worlds there may be legal precedents or laws that make exceptions for masked heroes testifying, particularly in criminal cases (see *SAS* Chapter 9 for Empire City's treatment of these issues). Of course, that still leaves the issue of civil cases. It may, for example, be difficult for a hero to bring a suit of libel or trademark violation against someone defaming the hero's name or image if the hero is required to unmask. After all, it could be anyone under that mask!

Sanction may allow heroes to avoid or reduce some of these problems.

The Untouchables are a good example of a team that is mistrusted and hunted by the authorities. Primarily made up of former criminals and people with shady pasts, their good deeds are overlooked by the authorities in the desire to question them about various criminal activities (whether or not they were involved).

ENEMIES

If a hero is measured by the quality of his or her enemies, then so is a hero team. Teams often develop their own particular villains and GMs can use team nemeses to encourage teamwork within the group. A team nemesis falls into one of three categories: master villain, villain team, or organisation.

THE MASTER VILLAIN

A master villain is an opponent of considerable power, capable of taking on multiple heroes or even an entire team at once. The team may simply oppose the master villain's goals (which are often world-domination or destruction) or the villain may have a grudge against the heroes, particularly if they have often thwarted his or her plans in the past. Master villains may turn out to be the ultimate force behind villain teams and organisations, and a confrontation with a mysterious master villain can be the climax of a long investigation or mini-series within a campaign.

THE VILLAIN TEAM

The villain team is the hero team's opposite number, a group of villains banded together to further their own goals (or the goals of the master villain that has gathered them). The villain team's overall power level is similar to that of the heroes, although that does not necessarily mean their numbers are the same. The team might be made up of a smaller number of more powerful villains or a larger number of less powerful ones. Sometimes massive villain teams show up to challenge the heroes, forcing them to take the team on a little at a time, or use the villains' excessive numbers against them (since only a limited number of villains can attack a hero at once). Villain teams usually do not have the same foundation of trust and mutual respect as hero teams, which is something the heroes may be able to turn to their advantage.

THE ORGANISATION

An organisation makes a formidable foe for a hero team simply because of its vast reach. The heroes can never be entirely certain that they've defeated the organisation even if they capture or defeat its leaders, since someone else can always take their place and start anew elsewhere. Organisations often have hordes of minions to send against the heroes and many different plots going on behind the scenes. Their influence allows them to strike at the heroes where they're most vulnerable, and to gather information and use it against them.

A team nemesis may be a part of the team's origin, linking the two together. For example, the team might come together to thwart the plans of a master villain, making him a permanent enemy or the team members may have all been created by a secret experiment of the organisation. Now they've broken free and want to take the organisation down.

BRINGING THE TEAM TOGETHER

A team's origin can be just as important as an individual character's origins, since the team is the focus of the campaign. Getting a disparate group of heroes together and making them into a team can be both a challenging and a rewarding task, for both the GM and the players.

Initially, getting the team together requires some effort from both the GM and the players. The GM sets up the situation, but the players have to seize the opportunity and stick together as a team, otherwise the campaign is going to be off to a difficult start. There are a number of different ways of getting a hero team together at the start of a campaign. Some of the more popular ones are described in this section.

PRE-EXISTING TEAM

In this scenario, the characters are already a team at the start of the first adventure; the formation of the team happened some time before the campaign begins. The team may be newly formed or long established, depending on the campaign, but it already exists, so there's no need to get the heroes together.

This is certainly the simplest approach, but it does skip over the fun of the heroes' first meeting and their decision to band together as a team. Still, it's possible to run that story as a "flashback" or "untold tale" of the group later in the campaign. A pre-existing team works best if the players and the GM have carefully discussed and planned out the team beforehand, so it is not necessary to do so during game-time.

THE RECRUITMENT DRIVE

Someone is looking to start a new superhero team and guess who he or she gets in touch with? This organiser might be a player character or an NPC. If it's a player character, the team's potential leader or mentor is a good choice (see page 42). Perhaps the character has decided that he or she needs help protecting the world or waging a war against crime. If the organiser is an NPC, then the GM can exert some influence over how the team gets together.

The reasons why someone is looking to form a team are as diverse as the teams they create. It may simply be a matter of finding allies in the fight for justice, part of a government program, a school for the "gifted," a gathering of like minds, or even a way to check out "the competition." The would-be organiser may even be a villain in disguise, looking to dupe the heroes into committing crimes, or lure them into a trap. Perhaps the heroes will stay together after the deception is exposed, just to spite their new enemy's plans.

An existing hero team looking to fill out its roster or start a junior group or franchise team elsewhere may also hold a recruiting drive. The team members may contact select candidates and feel them out about the possibilities, or the team might hold a "cattle call" where every prospective hero around shows up to be tested and interviewed (which can make for an interesting adventure). The player characters can make up this new junior team with some experienced heroes to learn from, and some ready-made adversaries when some of the established team's old foes show up to see how good the "new kids" are.

THE SUPERMENACE

Hero teams are often assembled to deal with a menace too great for any individual hero to handle, and stay together to deal with such menaces in the future. The threat might be an alien invasion, world-threatening catastrophe, tremendously powerful master villain, or something similar. The key is that the menace requires the Powers and abilities of multiple heroes to overcome it.

In some cases the supermenace happens in reverse: a threat is intended to defeat an individual hero, which forces the heroes to band together. For example, the nemeses of various prominent heroes may join together as a team, allowing them to pick off their individual foes one by one. In order to defeat the new villain team, the heroes have to form their own team (and use some teamwork). If an individual villain suddenly gains more power and becomes too much for one hero to handle, that hero may call in friends to help deal with the villain.

Once the team is together, the potential threat of other supermenaces is often what keeps them together. Perhaps the menace that united them is not entirely defeated in the first adventure (the aliens are driven off, but swear to return; the villain's plot is thwarted, but he escapes, etc.). Or maybe the supermenace is merely a precursor to an even worse threat that awaits the heroes. For example, a group bands together to defeat a powerful alien invader, only to learn that he or she is only the "herald" of a much more powerful foe that is on its way toward Earth. Now the heroes have good reason to stick together and prepare for the arrival of this new enemy.

THE COMMON THREAD

A somewhat more complex, but potentially rewarding, way of getting the heroes together is through a linked series of events, allowing them to meet and giving them a common cause.

For example, the hero who is actually a wealthy businessman in his secret identity visits a foreign country to rescue an employee and friend who has been kidnapped by terrorists. These same terrorists killed the husband of a heroine, who is hunting them for revenge. The terrorists work for a man who wants

to overthrow the government of a small country. A brilliant scientist in that country has created a treatment that will give a volunteer the power to become his homeland's superpowered defender. Another hero seeks out the scientist to help cure his out-of-control Powers, but the scientist is kidnapped by the terrorists shortly after giving the new national hero his Powers, and the two heroes team up to track him down. All four heroes meet while hunting the terrorists and free the superpowered girl that the terrorists are using as an unwilling "secret weapon" by holding her family hostage, and so forth. Maybe the terrorist leader gains superpowers using the scientist's stolen process, becoming a regular nemesis for the team. Perhaps they're offered a headquarters in the national defender's homeland, or he is sent abroad to learn and represent his nation as a member of the team, while training with more experienced heroes. Maybe the girl's family is killed (before or after the other heroes rescue her) and the team has to "adopt" and care for her because she has no one else.

As you can see, this arrangement, while it can be complex, creates a more "natural" feel to the team's origin than "every hero in the area shows up to fight the big monster." Of course, the team still needs a reason to stick together once the sequence of events is resolved, and the style of the get-together should be adjusted to suit the campaign. For some campaigns another approach might work better, and this one does require some forethought and preparation.

THROWN TOGETHER BY FATE

Finally, the heroes might simply be thrown together by circumstance as a team and unable to do much about it. This is a good option for disparate groups that might otherwise not gel as a team immediately and need some time to form connections without being able to just quit and walk away. It's a somewhat brute-force method, but it works because it forces the characters to stay together and does not require a lot of effort on the GM's part.

Examples include heroes "unstuck in time" (perhaps from different realities altogether) meeting in some sort of "dimensional nexus" and forced to work together to get back where they belong. Heroes forced together by a magical curse that transports

them all to crises, or given Powers by the same accident and now on the run from the law (or a common enemy), are other possibilities.

Eventually the characters should become a team that remains together for reasons other than what originally brought them together, since that plot element might get tiresome if it goes on for too long. This approach is best suited to a short-lived campaign, or one that will eventually change after the heroes overcome the forces that first united them (getting rid of the curse, no longer hunted, etc.).

TEAMWORK

One of the main advantages of a team is that a group of heroes is often more effective than merely the sum of its parts. That extra effectiveness comes from teamwork, heroes working together to accomplish tasks they might not be able to handle on their own. In the game, teamwork serves two purposes: it allows the heroes to take on tougher challenges and win and it ensures that all the players get a chance to participate and contribute to the team's success.

TEAMWORK IN COMBAT

One of the most common places for teamwork is in combat. Superhero teams often come up with tactical plans and special code words that they use to co-ordinate their attacks and make them more effective (this is touched upon in *SAS*). Here are some of the ways heroes can use teamwork in combat:

ATTACK/DEFENCE COMBOS

Like a sports team, some of the heroes focus on offence while others focus on defence, helping protect their teammates (and innocent bystanders) from their opponents' attacks. This allows the attacking heroes to go all out, sacrificing their normal defence action to ensure that their attacks hit, while the defending characters only need concentrate on protection. It's particularly effective with defending characters able to easily protect others, either using Powers like Force Field (with the appropriate Area PMV), or interposing themselves in front of attacks (and allowing their Armour to soak them up).

COMBINED ATTACKS

The heroes can use the combined attack rules (see *SAS*, Chapter 3) to overcome opponents with powerful defences or simply to take down opponents more rapidly. It can be far more effective for two heroes to take down a single opponent in one round than for each hero to slowly wear down an individual opponent, tying up those heroes and allowing the villains more opportunities to act. Combined attacks can be an efficient way of whittling down the opposition's numbers quickly, then overpowering the rest.

COMBINED DEFENCES

Conversely, heroes can often combine their defences effectively to give them better protection against opponents. For example, a Force Field generating hero can layer a Force Field over a tough teammate's Armour, giving that hero a chance to go toe-to-toe with a powerful villain without being taken out right away. Heroes can watch each other's backs and use their Powers to help protect each other from attacks. Do not forget about the ability of teammates to spot a surprise attack or ambush and shout out a warning!

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to teamwork, since it's difficult for the heroes to co-ordinate without knowing what to do next. Unfortunately, the heroes do not necessarily want to telegraph their moves to the villains by shouting instructions in the middle of a fight, so it helps if the team has some covert means of communication. This may be a mental link maintained by a telepathic teammate, a closed-circuit radio built into each hero's costume, or the use of code words that allow the heroes to call out tactics to each other without giving away their plans to the other side. A method of communication allows the players to discuss their tactics freely around the gaming table and come up with the best way to handle a situation.

COMPLIMENTARY ATTACKS

Finally, the heroes can use actions that compliment each other and help to set up an opponent for a teammate's action. For example, a character can start with Flare attack to blind the

opposition, allowing the rest of the team to follow up while the villains are still reeling. Or one hero can Nullify the villain's Force Field while the others wait to strike the moment it is down. Other Powers can be used in similar ways, either to weaken the team's adversaries or strengthen the heroes, shifting the odds in their favour.

Of course, the GM should realise that all of these ideas work just as well against the heroes as they do when used by them! Smart villain teams can use teamwork, too, and that can make a group of even low-powered villains a serious threat.

ENCOURAGING TEAMWORK

If you'd like to see your players using more teamwork there are several ways to encourage them to do so.

The first is to simply suggest the idea that teamwork will make the group more efficient and capable. Point out things like combined attacks and other combat options the characters can use.

The second is to demonstrate the value of teamwork by using it against the heroes. Have them fight a team of villains (or other heroes) that uses teamwork to its advantage: making combined attacks, using code words and battle-tactics, and so forth. After getting trounced by their better co-ordinated opponents, the heroes will probably start using teamwork themselves and come back to soundly defeat their original foes.

Finally, you can give the heroes situations that require teamwork in order for them to succeed. This can be a particularly tough villain or group of villains, or a problem that calls for the heroes' different abilities applied with co-ordination and finesse. You can introduce these situations in training scenarios to give the players a chance to try them out before they have to do them for real. A common story element in the comics is to start things out with a training exercise that becomes relevant later in the story. The adventure begins with the heroes practicing their hostage-rescue techniques and later they need to rescue some hostages. This combines foreshadowing with a "warm-up" scenario, helping ensure the heroes will get it right when push comes to shove.

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Death From England!



Yet help also comes Britannia

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

In Chapter 1, the hero's code was defined, determining each hero's unique set of guiding principles. Those principles influence far more than the hero's use of powers — they affect his or her methods.

What is meant by "methods?" Quite simply, methods refer to the way a hero handles him or herself, any tools and equipment, and both standard and unusual situations. Different heroes have different methods, based on their codes, their powers, and their general skills and attitudes. Most heroes are reliable, however; they decide on the best way to handle a type of situation, and follow that pattern consistently thereafter. This does not mean that a hero is completely predictable, but certainly by knowing the hero's methods someone can guess their actions. For example, a hero with wings and enhanced vision probably circles an area once or twice before descending. This lets him get an overview of the situation, so that he can go directly to where he can be most helpful. This circling is part of that hero's method, and is based upon his belief in the most effective use of his time, energy, and abilities.

Ultimately, methods all come down to the same point: how the hero sees him or herself. That self-image influences everything else, and dictates the hero's relationship with others, whether those are inanimate objects, superpowered peers, or local law enforcement.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Heroes always have the best gadgets. Some heroes specialise in tools and equipment, and have devices for everything, from miniaturised electronic surveillance devices to tiny flashlights to lockpick sets to shark repellent. Others simply have high-quality

DESIGNER'S NOTE

The new ideas for Gadgets presented herein are for players and GMs who are more concerned with keeping track of details and running a more realistic game. In many cases, comic heroes are not concerned with money in the least, and as in the *Silver Age Sentinels* rule book, you may wish to ignore such things. These ideas are presented as alternatives.

gear, things anyone could buy but always of excellent make. Some have more personalised equipment: boomerangs in the shape of a bat; knives designed to look like odd scalpels; a shield shaped like a bell. Where do heroes get their wonderful toys?

TOOL CATEGORIES (OR GADGETS)

Before you decide where your hero acquires his equipment, you need to determine what your hero requires. Some tools are more expensive, and more rare, than others. Anything a hero can buy, carry, and use, aside from vehicles and weapons (see *SAS* Chapter 4 for more on Vehicles and Weapons) can be broken into four groups or categories:

STANDARD

These items can be bought at local stores. Hiking boots, flashlights, safety flares, and cell phones are all examples of this category. Standard tools can be customised in terms of colour, size and sometimes shape, but the basic details remain the same. If you can go to a store and purchase an item without an identification check, the item can be considered standard.

SPECIALISED

These items can also be bought without much difficulty, but not at a department store or mall. Specialised items require dedicated stores, which keep track of their clientele. A wearable computer is a specialised tool — a normal person could buy one, but they cost a great deal of money and can only be purchased through a handful of retailers (or directly from manufacturers). Specialised equipment is often assembled to order.

PERSONALISED

A personalised tool is a standard or specialised gadget that has been modified to be more distinctive. These modifications do not alter the actual use of the tool, but change its appearance and may provide added functionality. A grappling hook with four tines modified to resemble the suits on playing cards is no more effective than a normal grappling hook, but it is immediately recognisable. In the same way, a belt with a small camera tripod attached is a personalised item — the belt, the camera, and the tripod-arm can be purchased normally, but modifications are required to link them together.

CUSTOM-MADE

These gadgets are built from scratch, specifically to order. Most custom-made items are designed by the hero, and not available to anyone else without the hero's permission. A collapsible boomerang that doubles as a cloak clasp would qualify as a custom-made item, as would a wristlet that fires a small grappling hook or a ring made to store a collapsible costume.

GADGETS VS. ITEMS OF POWER

Gadgets and Items of Power are not the same thing. A custom-made Gadget is a device manufactured to a specific design and built specially for the hero. These tools can be extremely well crafted, and can be smaller, lighter, more powerful and more versatile than any other tool of their type. An Item of Power, however, is not something that can be built so easily. Most Items of Power are either mystical in nature, or an implementation of extremely advanced science. These devices can only be built by absolute masters in their respective fields; such people rarely accept design help from outsiders, and even more rarely create artefacts for other people.

Here is a basic test: Does the tool have to be custom-made? Is the tool so unique that collectors would covet it beyond all others? Does the device boost the user's Attributes or Stats / [Ability Scores]? Does it provide the benefits of many Character Points? If the answer to most of these questions was yes, the device is an Item of Power and not a Gadget.

Another way to consider the matter is this: what if the tool were lost or destroyed? If the hero can call someone up and say, "Build me another one," the device was a Gadget. If the hero mourns its loss and cannot replace it (at least without tremendous difficulty and effort), the device was an Item of Power.

CHARACTER NEEDS

What does your hero need to be more effective? A line for swinging from building to building? A net for trapping fleeing criminals? Nightvision goggles to get the jump on thieves in the dark? Make a list of everything the hero needs. Keep the hero's powers in mind — someone with a sonar-sense does not need nightvision goggles, and a rope line is unnecessary for

someone who can fly. Think about the hero's code, as well. Someone who felt all life was sacred would never use a razor net — it can cut deeply if the target struggles. Some heroes would even disapprove of nightvision goggles — they would say sneaking in the dark was for villains, not for heroes.

Once an initial list is ready, go back over it. Consider the character's size, build, powers, and mode of travel. Someone who leaps from building to building or swings between them on a rope cannot carry anything too large or heavy, or anything that might get caught on a jagged edge. Heroes need to travel light. Someone with a car can keep extra equipment in the trunk, but most tools are carried on the body in case they are needed right away. Cross off anything the character cannot carry easily (unless they have a base or other safe place to cache such items). Then cross off anything the character would only use on rare occasions (or consider the Adjusting Costs rule, page 82). For example, why would a hero carry a jetpack if he usually rides a motorcycle or skulks through the sewers? Pare the list down to tools the hero may need on a regular basis and can carry easily.

BUDGET

Once the final list is prepared, go back and calculate rough average budget. If you want to be more detailed, the ads from a Sunday paper will have prices for most basic equipment, and a quick glance online or in a department store can fill in any gaps. Specialised items can often be found online — if not, as a rule of thumb a specialised item can be bought for twice as much for each adjustment or advantage. For example, a top of the line laptop is roughly \$3000 USD. A wearable computer is much smaller, less noticeable, and designed for ease of use, or three clear advantages. Thus the price is doubled for being smaller, doubled again for being less noticeable, and doubled a third time for its advanced input devices — a wearable computer can be purchased for approximately \$24,000 USD. (Note that these are three separate advantages. Something can be small but obvious or heavy or awkward. For example, a spiked ball may be small enough to be held one-handed, but it's difficult to carry or use, and will attract attention). The price of a personalised device depends on the degree of modification. If the modification is in appearance only, raise the price by

20%. If the modification actually alters the structure of the Gadget, raise the price by 50%. If the modification involves merging a tool with another, add the cost of both together and then double it. Custom-made tools are the most expensive, of course, because they are built by hand and to order. Find a standard or specialised item of the same basic function — a regular boomerang or grappling hook — and multiply that cost by 20.

Now look at the hero's occupation, and consider his or her financial situation. Does this hero really have \$24,000 USD to spend on a wearable computer? Does the hero really need a wearable computer, when a PDA costs less than \$100 USD? Does he or she even need it to fight crime? Finally, consider the character's background. A hero from a working-class family, who works during the day as a construction worker, will be more likely to use a standard crowbar than a custom tool for breaking locks; a millionaire, however, who was born to money, might not think twice about buying costly specialised devices.

ACQUIRING GADGETS

Once the list has been pared to those items that are both necessary and affordable, the question becomes "How does the hero acquire these items?" Different Gadget types require different measures.

Public businesses can supply most standard tools. People might wonder why a hero is carrying a grappling hook, a pair of rollerblades, and a small hang-glider, but none of those items are illegal or even suspicious by themselves. As long as the character can visit a store, he or she can acquire these items.

Private manufacturers are often the best source for specialised equipment. These may be legitimate businesses, but their products are so unusual and so expensive that the client base is very small. Thus, they rarely require a large shop or a storefront within a mall. Most private manufacturers are contacted by phone, through the Internet, or by mail, and ship catalogues to interested parties. The character will need to find the right manufacturer, probably by making discreet inquiries.

Black market dealers are also a good source for specialised equipment, particularly items of a suspicious nature. Tasers are technically legal (in some US States), as are most forms of pepper spray or mace, but the authorities like to know who is purchasing them and why. The same is true of lockpicks — in many states, only licensed locksmiths are allowed to own these tools. In order to find such items without filling out forms and undergoing security checks, the hero will need to locate a black market and either find the item there or put out word that he or she is looking for such a tool. Traditionally, black markets were open-air bazaars in seedier

EMPIRE CITY BLACK MARKET

What do you need and who do you know?

Sellers of weapons, primarily guns and knives, can be found in any questionable neighbourhood with ease. The Lower East Side, Bowery, Hell's Kitchen, and Harlem are the obvious choices. A simple phone call will get weapons or drugs delivered right to your doorstep. But you have to know the right people.

For other items, where you shop is predicated by what you want to buy. The ports and docks running along both the Manhattan and Brooklyn sides of the East River are home to many transient shopkeepers. Large items are smuggled in off foreign ships, and a handful of regular agents keep cargo coming and going.

Additionally, the Garment District, Chinatown, Flushing (in Queens), Fordham Road (in the Bronx), and Brighton Beach (in Brooklyn) all support thriving grey and black markets. Each is ruled by different factions of the city's underworld, and heroes may or may not feel comfortable shopping there.

Finally, there is the Artificer. Although he claims to sell to anyone for the right price, most heroes consider him mercenary-scum at best and a plunderer of technology and thief of ideas at worst. Still, he can provide special weapons, high-tech costumes, and futuristic vehicles. The trick is finding him, either through an agent or through one of his coveted catalogues.

sections of a city. Now, they tend to appear in warehouses along the docks, where items can arrive (and depart) unnoticed. Legitimate businesses may have black-market sections in a back room or basement, and only admit those who know the proper password. Of course, websites are also a popular way to buy black-market items, or at least to set up a meeting to purchase such things.

“Finders” of rare items can also locate specialised equipment. These are people whose career is locating unusual items, whether books or sculpture or rocket packs. Most finders will not traffic in anything illegal, but they can and will find anything else for the right fee. The hero must first locate such a finder, though some advertise in phonebooks and online (usually as a “purveyor of rare goods” or “equipment specialist” or something similar), and then describe the desired item in exact detail. The finder then searches for the item and reports back; if nothing is found within a set amount of time, the hero can ask the finder to continue looking, though that does involve an additional fee.

Personalised and custom-made items cannot be bought through normal channels, of course. They must be modified or made to order. Some

companies offer personalising as an extra service — a pair of Rollerblades can be painted any colour, and even have custom features added. Smaller companies who sell individual orders may be persuaded to make modifications for the right price. The hero will need to find someone who can do the manufacturing or modifications, and then provide specifications, raw materials (including any tools to be modified), and money.

BUILDING GADGETS

Tools may be purchased by characters in-game, using standard currency, but to make them an integral part of the character the player will have to spend Character Points on Gadgets. From a mechanics standpoint, standard and even some specialised tools are not an issue; they are pre-made, and have the same attributes as any other tool of their type. One pair of Rollerblades might be marginally faster than another, but for game purposes the two give their users the same bonus to movement. Personalised and custom-made tools are trickier, however, because they have added features. These features are usually built into a tool when it is made, but some can be added to existing devices.



CORBAE PUTS SOME FINISHING TOUCHES ON MODIFICATIONS TO HIS ARMOUR

GADGET BUILT FROM SCRATCH

A custom-made tool is most often built from scratch. Even if the device is based upon a standard tool, it is constructed from specific designs rather than cobbled from existing parts. A custom-made tool is fitted with Features, which are each equal to a minor Gadget. Thus, if someone has a wearable computer built from scratch (such as the one described earlier, on page 59), that tool has four Features (Reduced Size, Concealment, and Ease of Use), and will cost one major Gadget and three minor Gadgets.

ADDING FEATURES TO EXISTING GADGETS

The character can buy the standard or specialised tool for a normal price and then adapt the item by purchasing Features for it. Each Feature costs one minor Gadget.

FEATURES

Features are the ways in which a tool is better than others of its type. Standard tools do not have any features, since they are the baseline. The most common advantages for tools are:

COLLAPSIBILITY

Although this type of tool normally cannot be collapsed, this particular tool can (skis, for example, or a laptop).

CONCEALMENT

The tool is easily hidden. This has less to do with size than with flexibility of materials, being built into clothing, camouflaged as a cell phone, etc.

DISASSEMBLES

The tool is capable of being taken apart into multiple pieces. This usually makes a weapon appear to be a collection of harmless pieces, and may make a tool easier to carry. A disassembled tool can easily be fitted together by anyone, even those without the Gadeteer Attribute.

EASE OF USE

The tool is easier to use than normal. Tools that usually require two hands only require one, and tools normally built for one-handed use can be operated with two fingers.

INCREASED DURABILITY

The tool is sturdier than normal, and can withstand a good deal more physical abuse and still function properly. Add +2 to the tool's Armour rating.

INCREASED RANGE

The tool is capable of reaching twice as far as usual, whether this is a cell phone or a line-shooter.

LONG LIFE

The device's battery pack is more efficient, and lasts twice as long as normal.

REDUCED WEIGHT

The tool weighs half the standard, although it may be the standard size.

REDUCED SIZE

The tool is half the standard size. This feature can be bought more than once.

REUSE

Tools of this type are usually only good for one use (like flares or matches) but this tool can be used several times.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

If the hero is part of a team, the team as a group may wish to purchase equipment. This will only apply for items the entire team uses, such as flight rings, a group teleporter, or communication devices. Usually, each hero in the team contributes the same number of minor / major Gadgets, or puts an equal amount of points into Item of Power. On the other hand, if players want to contribute different amounts to the bulk purchase, an equitable formula should be worked out for partial ownership.

When items are purchased by a team, the entire team has access to that item. In the example of the teleporter, that means each team member can use the teleporter freely. For smaller devices, such as communicators, it means each member of the team receives one. If someone loses his or her ring, a replacement will have to be purchased at full dollar value (although the GM should not require the player to spend more Character Points, and can even refund Character Points if the Gadget is not replaced).

TRANSPORTATION

Some heroes can fly, or run at superspeed, or teleport from place to place. Those without such transportation abilities require other methods. The easiest way to travel is to walk, but that is rarely fast enough when lives are at stake, especially if the distance is more than a few city blocks. So how do heroes get around?

Some heroes swing or leap from building to building, using a line to bridge larger gaps. Others use skates or jetpacks, something that can be worn and that allows manoeuvrability, even through city crowds. Others go the larger route and opt for cars, boats, and planes. These need more space, of course, but usually have much higher top speeds. The advantage of a vehicle is that it can also carry passengers and additional equipment. The disadvantage is that the hero will need a place to store the vehicle when not in use, since parking an armoured car in a city parking lot is not a good idea.

CHARACTER NEEDS

As with tools, the first consideration is what the hero actually needs. Look at the hero's territory first. How large an area does the hero regularly patrol? If the area is small, like a single neighbourhood or a handful of city blocks, the hero may not need any form of transportation — climbing a fire escape and then jumping from building to building may be sufficient. If the area is larger, like a small city, the hero will need some way to get around, but in urban settings a smaller device may be preferable. If the hero patrols a large city or a state/province, he or she will need something built for longer distances, such as a car or plane. Anyone whose territory is an entire country or continent almost certainly requires airborne (or aquatic, if the territory is an ocean) travel.

What does the character need from a vehicle or transportation device? Is it simply a matter of getting from Point A to Point B quickly? Does the hero want space to lug prisoners back, or to ferry rescued individuals home? Does he or she need room for a computer monitor, or for surveillance equipment? Will the hero charge into battle while still using the device, or will he or she leave it behind somewhere? All of these affect the type of transport the hero should have.

APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION

Remember to look at the character's powers. Even if he or she has no direct transportation abilities, other powers may help. For example, a heroine with wind powers may not be able to fly herself; her control may not be strong enough to keep herself (or any other person) from being flung about violently. A hot-air balloon would work nicely, however — her wind powers could help propel the balloon, making it faster and more agile. Sailboats would also work, as would parasails or hang-gliders.

Think about the hero's methodology as well. Someone who prefers to lurk in shadows and stay hidden would never use a hot-air balloon, because it's far too visible and clumsy. A small jet plane would be more appropriate. A character who is the reincarnation of the ancient druids and who despises polluting technology would never use a car, but a bicycle might be acceptable, as would a sled or sailboat. The vehicle or device must fit the character's personality, naturally. A beast-man would never use a jet-pack, and a grim hero would never ride an enhanced pogo stick. Thinking outside the box can provide you with creative new options, but ensure they fit both your character and the style of the campaign.

Start out by looking at more conventional forms of transportation, like a car or motorcycle or plane or boat. Do those suit the hero's needs? Do they fit with his or her territory? Is there some way the hero's powers can make the vehicle more effective? The ideal form of transportation is one that can cover the hero's territory quickly, suits all of the hero's needs, and has the fewest disadvantages. For example, a car would work for a hero patrolling a small city, but a motorcycle is more agile and requires less space to park, while a mini-copter is faster but has more specialised requirements to take off and land. Which one is best? That depends on the hero.

STORING VEHICLES

The next question, once you've chosen a vehicle, is where do you store it? Abandoned buildings make excellent hiding places for cars and small jets, especially if the hero sets perimeter alarms that sound

when anyone trespasses. Old airstrips, closed down years ago, can be used to house planes and helicopters. Burnt-out warehouses along the docks are excellent for hiding boats and submarines. Clearly the hero will want some way of reaching the location quickly, and some way of knowing that the vehicle is safe, but this is far cheaper than renting (or building!) a hanger or garage, and far less public.

ACQUIRING TRANSPORTATION

Locating suitable transportation also works the same way as acquiring tools. Standard devices and vehicles can simply be purchased openly, whether from accredited dealers or from private individuals (like little old ladies selling their cars). Standard, specialised, and some personalised devices can be bought directly from manufacturers. Items of questionable legality, such as non-street-safe racing cars or experimental rocket packs, are purchased either directly from the manufacturer or through the black market. Finders can locate some rare items, though they usually refuse to handle anything illegal or even questionable — a particular classic motorcycle or a European car never released in the States would be fine.

MODIFICATIONS

The main *Silver Age Sentinels* book already deals with modifying vehicles (see Chapter 4), from a mechanic standpoint. The real question is, what does the hero need that the vehicle does not already possess? Some things may sound fun (an ejector seat, a grenade launcher, etc.), but consider them from the hero's perspective. Will anyone else ever be in the car? Will the hero ever want to propel him or herself from the car right into a battle? If not, an ejector seat is useless and a waste of money. Does the hero use grenades? If not, why get a grenade launcher?

Try not to weigh the device down with modifications. Changing the look to match that of the hero is important, from a character perspective, and if the device needs more armour or a faster engine that is fine. Only make modifications the hero will actually use on a regular basis, though.



WHITE HAT

HEADQUARTERS, SECRET LAIRS, AND BASES

Many superheroes do not have a base of operations, especially those without the resources or specific need to establish one. Certain campaign styles also make a base awkward or redundant. It doesn't make much sense wasting hours designing your HQ if the bulk of the game will be spent hopping dimensions. Conversely, many heroes do have some sort of operations centre to help facilitate their crime-fighting and adventuring. Some may only have an apartment or safe house, while others may own mansions, subterranean complexes, or orbital satellites! This section provides rules for designing the ideal base for your hero in *Silver Age Sentinels*.

HOME, SWEET HOME

The first and most integral question to answer is: what purpose does this base serve? Is it a hiding place or refuge? A place to train and store secret equipment? A location to meet and plan? A complete operations centre, with laboratory, hangar bays, and battle arena? A place to live? A headquarters may serve as many of these functions, and its purpose can even change over time (though this sometimes requires major renovations). Determining a base's primary objective will help you design it properly.

NOT REALLY A BASE

As mentioned, a lot of heroes don't really have bases. If radioactive-bug-man still lives with his Aunt, his bedroom isn't a base, nor is his basement workshop. Any special gear he has should be purchased with normal Gadgets or Items of Power. A spare bedroom, a trunk, an alcove, any of these things may hide a hero's crime-fighting equipment or weaponry, but they aren't bases. Bases are usually self-contained, from a secret floor in an office tower to the entire sky rise, or from a telephone booth containing a Pocket Dimension to a giant, underground cavern.

DESIGN RULES

Bases are designed using the Gadget Attribute (see *Silver Age Sentinels*). Each Level of the Gadget Attribute provides you with 1 major Gadget and 4

minor Gadgets, which can be spent on base features and enhancements. The following list of options provides an associated cost in "number of major/minor Gadgets" required to purchase them.

LOCATION

Once you've determined the purpose of your base, from safe house to paramilitary base, the next things to decide are size and location. Location is determined by a role-playing decision, rather than by a rule mechanic. If a base is centred in a downtown metropolis, the heroes can more quickly respond to many crises ... but at the same time, when villains attack, many more bystanders are at risk. Likewise, a remote location keeps a team safe from prying paparazzi, yet makes it hard for those in dire need to find them. Therefore, the benefits and costs of location tend to balance out; the GM and players should discuss where they think the base will be best situated.

GMs may or may not allow really exotic locales, such as undersea bases, floating headquarters, air castles, space cruisers, or moon towers. If the GM does allow it, he or she may ask the players to explain how the characters actually built it!

The size of the base is partially determined by the location, for the largest headquarters are usually restricted by their environment. In other words, something the size of a phone booth — even one with extradimensional storage capacity — can be placed almost anywhere, but a lair as large as a skyscraper may not fit beneath Central Park or at the bottom of a small lake. This depends on the level of realism a GM wishes to apply to his campaign. GMs running a more realistic game will insist the construction of a base make sense and be plausible, while GMs running a pulp or fantastic game will have a more flexible set of laws, approving ideas described with enough creativity and flavour.

BASELINES OF A BASE

Each type of base has a default set of characteristics, including Capacity (how many people can live or work there), Awkward Size (how big the structure is), Armour Rating (determined by average construction materials), and Health / $\{ \{ \text{Hit} \} \}$ Points (how much damage the structure can withstand). The following chart lists the baseline characteristics:

Each Level automatically includes the Capacity, Awkward Size, and Armour Rating detailed in Table 3-1. A base is empty at this stage, until the characters furnish it properly.

COST

Each Level of Base costs 1 major Gadget.

How Much Fits Inside?

Base Modifications (described on pages 66 to 77) can really be of any size or shape, depending on the realism of the campaign. High Level modules don't have to be large, enormous structures. A base could have a highly secure prison (Level 3+) for a single individual. Additionally, tiny bases could be fitted with Pocket Dimensions, or miniaturised equipment. Therefore, the guideline for "how much fits in a base" is to use common sense.

A good rule of thumb is that a Base needs to be at least equal to the Level of its most advanced module; on the other hand, many exceptions are feasible, so make sure your GM approves your rationale for a three-bedroom house with a Level 4 Menagerie and a Level 5 Prison.

CUSTOMISING A BASE

There are many ways to improve upon a lair, of course. The following options can be added to enhance a base's features and utility.

Most enhancements cost an amount of minor or major Gadgets. Not only can a character replace one major Gadget with four minor Gadgets, but four minor Gadgets can likewise be traded up for one major Gadget.

BASE ARMOUR

Heroes often want to ensure they feel safe at home, and improving a location's Armour is one way to feel protected. Enhanced Base Armour could simply be a means of reinforcing a structure with bullet-proof glass, concrete walls, and additional support-beams. On the other, it could mean building the structure with superalloys or alien materials.

Armour is available for any type of base, and can be assigned multiple times. The initial value is listed on Table 3-1, and applies to both the outer face and the infrastructure of the base. When purchasing extra Base Armour, the players may decide to enhance the entire external structure, or add to the base's infrastructure.

When adding to the infrastructure of a base, the players much decide which module, (Lab, Training Arena, Prison, Library, etc.) is reinforced. Each type of module must be reinforced separately. Cells, danger rooms, and experimental laboratories tend to be the most heavily armoured areas, while the bedrooms and lounges are left unarmoured.

COST

For 2 minor Gadgets, add 5 / $\lceil \frac{3}{2} \rceil$ points to base's external Armour Rating, or the Armour Rating of one internal area (this also adds 25 additional Health Points / $\lceil \frac{10}{2} \rceil$ Hit Points $\rceil$; see the Base Health formula below).

BASE HEALTH

Bases are considered both Buildings and Operational Objects, as defined in Chapters 3 and 4 of *Silver Age Sentinels*. Thus, if a base every suffers more damage than its Armour Rating it suffers structural damage; there will be holes in walls, floors and ceilings, the power will

TABLE 3-1 BASE TYPES

Type of Building	Capacity	Awkward Size	Armour Rating	Health / $\lceil \frac{\text{Hit}}{2} \rceil$ Points
Phone Booth	1	1	5	35 / $\lceil \frac{20}{2} \rceil$
Wood Shed	2-5	2	10	60 / $\lceil \frac{35}{2} \rceil$
Three-Bedroom House	6-10	3	15	85 / $\lceil \frac{50}{2} \rceil$
Small Office Building (6 Floors)	11-50	4	20	110 / $\lceil \frac{65}{2} \rceil$
Mid-Sized Office Building (12 Floors)	51-500	5	25	135 / $\lceil \frac{80}{2} \rceil$
Large Office Building (24 Floors)	501-5000	6	30	160 / $\lceil \frac{95}{2} \rceil$
Skyscraper (50 Floors)	5,001-10,000	7	35	185 / $\lceil \frac{110}{2} \rceil$

brown and black out, water will be interrupted, etc. If the base every suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack (regardless of remaining Health / [[Hit]] Points) some or all of the building will collapse.

Bases, like Operational Objects, have Health Points. A Base has $[10 + (5 \times \text{Armour Rating})]$ Health Points / $[[5 + (3 \times \text{Armour Rating}) \text{ Hit Points }]]$. If a base suffers more damage than its Armour Rating, the excess damage is deducted from its Health Points. Health Points can be increased, however:

Weapons without the Area Effect or Spreading Abilities are less effective against bases; any damage that penetrates the building's Armour is halved, representing the attack only damaging a small area of the structure. Conversely, weapons with the Penetrating (Armour) Ability are more effective against bases. Each assignment of Penetrating (Armour) reduces the multiplier required to destroy the base by 1.

COST

For 1 minor Gadget, add 20 / $[[10]]$ points to the base's Health / $[[\text{Hit}]]$ Points.

WHAT'S FREE?

Many choices you can make for your base are essentially "free," because they are mundane enough that they are not worth a minor Gadget. Depending on its size restrictions, a base can have any number of entrances, doors, windows, rooms (whether furnished or bare), halls, kitchens, bathrooms, garages, etc. Likewise, most bases are prepared with basic wiring for electricity and telephones, have heating, air conditioning, and proper plumbing, and so forth (although in some cases the players may have to come up with creative explanations for how they installed hot showers in the desert, or wired their mountain top HQ for electricity). Basic furnishings, from linen to dishes, rugs and televisions, also don't normally cost anything, unless they are particularly expensive, rare, or provide some other advantage. Even a basic generator, producing sufficient power to keep the place running, is considered free. Sprucing any of these things up, of course, may cost points.



LADY STARBRIGHT DEFENDS HER NOVA SATELLITE FROM THE TITANS OF MARS

BASE WEAPONS

It is not uncommon for a base to have some sort of weapon defence system to keep the area secure when the heroes are not in residence (or to back the team up, in times of massive invasion).

Base Special Attacks can be assigned Attack Abilities and Disabilities, but Concealable, Muscle-Powered, Hand-Held, and Static are usually not acceptable.

COST

Base Weapons can be purchased like Personal Weapons (see *Silver Age Sentinels*, Chapter 4), or they can be designed as Special Attacks. In the latter case, 1 major Gadget is equal to a Level 1 Special Attack.

ALTERNATE BASE WEAPONS

Although a base will often use its most powerful "primary" weapon, different ones may also be possessed. The point cost of

these additional "secondary" attacks are significantly lower than the cost of the primary attack: 2 minor Gadgets for each Special Attack at the same Level as the primary and 1 minor Gadget for each one that operates at a lower Level (flat cost, not per Level). The primary attack is the only one that costs the standard 1 major Gadget / Level. Secondary attacks may each possess different damages, Abilities, and Disabilities.

BASE WEAPONS AND DIFFERENT GUNNERS

A Base Weapon must be controlled by a character, or by a computer program (see A.I. Attribute, page 69). An operator can only fire one of the weapons each round, unless he or she possesses the Extra Attacks Attribute. However, if the weapons are created with multiple terminals or control points, a different character can be assigned to each weapon, allowing for simultaneous attacks.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Some Bases are overseen by an Artificial Intelligence, which frees the heroes (or their staff) from the day-to-day grind of normal operations. The

SAMPLE BASE WEAPONS

ELECTRIFIED PERIMETER

This simple measure ensures that the exterior perimeter of the base cannot be easily by-passed, and least without incurring some risk to the invader. It automatically delivers a nasty shock to anyone without proper authorisation who tries to gain entry. Costs 1 major Gadget.

Electrified Perimeter Level 1 (20 / [[1d6+2]] Damage, Aura, Trap, Melee, Limited Shots)

ANTI-AIR ROCKET TOWER

This tower is normally hidden, either underground or camouflaged to look like a water-tower, statue, giant tree, etc. When activated, the disguise falls away to reveal a launcher, capable of dealing with most mid-level air-based threats. The launcher does not operate independently, but can be controlled by computer (see Artificial Intelligence, page 69), or by a character. Costs 2 major Gadgets, plus 1 minor Gadget to conceal it.

Anti-Air Rocket Level 2 (60 [[3d6+6]] Damage, Area Effect, Homing, Long Range, Penetrating: Armour, Backblast, Limited Shots, Only-Air Targets, Slow, Stoppable)

LASER-DEFENCE ARRAY

This is a series of guard towers, each armed with a battery of laser-cannons. The Array is normally computer controlled (see below), and protects against air and ground targets. Costs 2 major Gadgets.

Laser-Cannon Level 2 (40 [[2d6+4]] Damage, Accurate, Penetrating: Armour, Spreading, Limited Shots: 1 round to recharge, Unique Disability: Stopped by thick smoke or fog, Unreliable)

WEB-PROJECTOR

If enemies have somehow gained access to the base, there is nothing better to halt them in their tracks than a Web-Projector. This internal security device works anywhere inside a base. It restrains unauthorised individuals by projecting a mass of sticky strands at them, from recessed projectors (normally located in the ceilings or walls). Costs 2 major Gadgets.

Web-Projector Level 2 (60 [[3d6+6]] Damage, Area Effect, Tangle, Trap, Internal, Limited Shots x2, No Damage, Short Range)

A.I. Attribute provides an autonomous entity that can provide tremendous help to the characters. While most often a form of technology, the A.I. Attribute could also represent a powerful spirit, or alien device (such as a bio-organic ship).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (A.I.)

COST:	1 major Gadget per Stat Value
TYPE:	Characteristic
RELEVANT STAT:	None
PMVs:	None
PROGRESSION:	Descriptive
REDUCTION:	None
RESTRICTION:	None

In most cases a computer is simply a tool that is only as good as the person using it. The A.I. Attribute enables computers to achieve a limited form of self-operation and eventually self-awareness.

A basic A.I. computer has processing power and database access. It does not have a Mind in the same sense that a person does, nor does it truly learn in the way in which a person would acquire Skills. Thus, an A.I.'s Mind is more of a representation of its power and access. An A.I.'s Mind has 10 Levels, ranging from 1 (a low-powered and limited access device) to 10 (surpasses even cutting edge technology by leaps and bounds).

Each Level of Mind costs 1 major Gadget.

Beyond knowledge and analytic power, the second component of sentience is self-awareness and free will. An A.I. does not have a Soul in the traditional sense, but here, the Soul Stat represents that consciousness. An A.I.'s Soul has 10 Levels, where Level 1 indicates a coldly logical personality, unable to deal with the unexpected and needing direct orders to take action, and Level 10 means the A.I. has achieved complete self-determination, and developed strong will and emotions.

Each Level of Soul costs 1 major Gadget.

An A.I. can have a Body Stat, but this is only required in cases of robotics, where movement and manipulation are required. A desktop PC, a laptop, or a giant supercomputer do not need a Body, but drones, robots, warbots, and so forth can and should have a Body. Robots have a Body that ranges from Level 1 (limited and clumsy manipulation) to Level 10 (rivals the strength and speed of the best humans).

Each Level of Body costs 1 major Gadget.

A.I.s cannot have Skills (see box, "Level 10 Ceiling?," page 70).

A.I.s can access and monitor everything within a base, including Base Weapons, Labs, etc. (unless restricted by the Base owners). What they can actually "see," however, is dictated by the Security Level of the base, or any base sensors (see Base Item of Power, below).

d20 SYSTEM ABILITY SCORES

The d20 System ability score equivalents for an A.I. base stats are as follows:

Intelligence = Mind x2

Wisdom = Soul x2

Strength and Dexterity = Body x2

Constitution and Charisma = Bases do not possess these ability scores.

MULTI-TASKING

Powerful computers can handle multiple complex processes at once. Even less powerful machines can work on numerous simple jobs, but A.I.s with high Mind or Soul / [[Int or Wis]] Stats can multi-task. To determine how many complex tasks an A.I. can process at once, add its Mind and Soul and divide by 5.

(Mind + Soul) / 5 = number of tasks

or (Int + Wis) / 10 = number of tasks

USING A COMPUTER

If an A.I. is commanded to perform a task (analyse data, access a database, plot a route, etc.) by itself, its Stats are averaged based on the requirements of the task. Thus, if it is a question of analysing data or broadcasting a message, the computer's Mind and Soul / [[Intelligence and Wisdom modifiers]] are averaged. If, however, the task is physical in nature, all Stats must be averaged.

Example: When Caliburn uses the Ascension Institute's supercomputer to analyse a rare strand of DNA, the base check value is the computer's Mind of 8, plus its Soul of 6, divided by 2, or 7 total / [[the modifier to the roll is equal to the average of the Intelligence bonus of +3 and Wisdom bonus of +1 for a bonus of +2]].

When a character is using a computer to enhance his or her abilities, however, the computer adds half of its Mind / [[Intelligence modifier]] (round up) to the character's Stat + Skill roll. The computer's Soul Stat does not factor into the task, since it is effectively "trumped" by the character's intuition and reason.

Example: When Corbae uses the same Ascension Institute machine to perform his own computations, he adds 4 (half of the computer's Mind of 8) to his 12 Mind, plus his 4 Computer Skill, for a check value total of 20 / [[half of the Intelligence modifier of +3 (round up) for a bonus of +2]].

LEVEL 10 CEILING?

Artificial Intelligences certainly could have Stats that go above Level 10, the way most characters do. The Level 10 ceiling is presented as a game balance issue, partially to keep the bonuses a player receives in check, and also to keep the focus of the game on the characters, and not on their supercomputer bases. To design an A.I. Sidekick, character, or major NPC, you should buy their Stats normally and ignore the Level 10 maximum rule.

COMPUTERS AND SKILLS

Skills represent extensive and training in a particular field, and therefore imply knowledge. They do not apply to computers. Computers are programmed to follow certain instructions, and may be able to access data more efficiently than a human, but they do not have knowledge. Even sentient computers, using the A.I. rules, don't "learn" the way a human does. Remember, a computer's Mind / {{ Intelligence }} represents both its computing power and its access to information. Base A.I.s cannot buy Skills; to improve their performance, raise their Mind / {{ Intelligence }} Stat instead.

Alternatively, the GM may use the following as an optional rule: "Skills" for an A.I. are simply an expression of a focused data base. It is neither learning nor training, but a more robust database. Players can assign any appropriate Skills to an A.I., but these A.I. Skills do not include a free Specialisation.

Each Skill Level costs 1 minor Gadget, and provides a +1 bonus per Level (but no Specialisations).

This rule of course does not apply to computer PCs, Sidekicks, or NPCs, who are far beyond these A.I.s, and can acquire Skills normally.

ARMOURY

Many heroes have a secure room where weapons are stored out of harm's way. The Armoury is dedicated to that purpose, and thus automatically is treated as having a Security Level equal to its Level, and +5 / {{ +3 }} Armour Rating per Level. Note: if the base has additional Security, these do not stack; use the higher value.

An Armoury is stocked with a variety of weapons. Each Level of Armoury provides 4 different "weapon slots" describing the variety of weapons it holds. Many weapons take up just 1 slot, such as handguns, grenades, and combat knives, while heavier ordnance may take more than 1 slot. Note that the slots are not the number of distinct weapons stored, but the types of weapons. For example, a Level 1 Armoury has 4 slots, described as: Axe, Longsword, Crossbow, Wooden Stake. Each of these types counts as just 1 slot, and the Armoury may have a half a dozen swords, a dozen crossbows, three axes, etc.

COST

Each Level of Armoury costs 2 major Gadgets, and provides 4 weapon category slots, +5 Armour Rating per Level, and a Security Level equal to its rating.

Level Armoury Description

- | Level | Armoury Description |
|-------|--|
| 1 | Basic armoury. Four weapon slots, stored in secure lockers, cabinets, etc. |
| 2 | Militia's cache. Eight weapon slots, often including 1-2 heavy weapons or explosives. |
| 3 | SWAT armoury. Twelve weapon slots, including numerous heavy weapons, in a restricted area. |
| 4 | Special Forces armoury. Sixteen weapon slots, including top end ordnance, in a high security facility. |
| 5 | Superhero armoury. Twenty weapon slots, including confiscated prototypes and alien weaponry. |

LABORATORIES

A well-stocked laboratory is often crucial for crime-fighting or crisis intervention. Labs come in several different types, depending on their purpose and capabilities. Labs can be focused to a particular field of science, or can be all-purpose facilities. A properly equipped laboratory can add bonuses to Skill checks.

When purchasing a lab, it can either be dedicated or comprehensive. A dedicated lab is geared towards one of the following categories: Biological Sciences, Electronics, Forensic Sciences,

Physical Sciences, or Medical Sciences. It is stocked according to its Level, and contains specialised equipment. Naturally, while some overlap is possible, such as a forensic lab and a chemistry lab both using similar analysis equipment (Mass Spectrometers, Gas Chromatographers, etc.), the purpose of the lab will dictate what is possible to research there. When using the lab to conduct appropriate research, characters receive a +1 Bonus to relevant Skill checks per Level of the lab.

A comprehensive lab, on the other hand, tries to do everything within reason. Very rare equipment may not be available, but the comprehensive lab is stocked with resources across all the above disciplines. When using the lab to conduct research into any of the above fields, characters receive a +1 Bonus to relevant Skill checks per Level of the lab.

COST

Each Level of a dedicated lab costs 1 major Gadget, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research.

Each Level of a comprehensive lab costs 3 major Gadgets, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research.

DESIGNER'S NOTE

COST OF LABORATORIES

Labs are expensive. Rather than spend 3 major Gadgets on a Comprehensive Lab and get a +1 Skill bonus to a handful of Skills, you could spend 2 major Gadgets on an A.I.'s Mind, and get a +1 bonus to many more Skills. However, without the proper facilities that a lab provides, analysis may be impossible for man or machine! Labs are expensive in terms of Gadgets because they are stocked with equipment, such as chemicals, or instruments. This equipment can be taken out of the lab in some cases, but more importantly, it allows characters to take action. An A.I., like a hero, is limited by what tools it has. How can a hero study a toxin without a Mass Spectrometer / Gas Chromatographer to help identify its "chemical fingerprint?"

Level Laboratory Description

- 1 Basic. Equal to a well-supplied high school lab.
- 2 Traditional. Equal to a well-stocked university lab.
- 3 Modern. Equal to a wealthy private corporation.
- 4 World Class. Equal to the leading facilities across the globe.
- 5 Lab of Tomorrow. The best facilities available, complete with bleeding edge prototypes or confiscated future-tech.

LIBRARY

Many heroes want a reference library at hand in order to research obscure facts, cross-reference poetic clues, or even just relax with some light reading (whether Tolstoy or Zelazny). When using the library to conduct appropriate research, characters receive a +1 Bonus to relevant Skill checks per Level of the library.

Libraries do not have all of the equipment that Laboratories do, but they can help with a far broader range of Skills and research.

COST

Each Level of a library costs 1 major Gadget, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research.

Level Library Description

- 1 Basic. Equal to a well-stocked high school library.
- 2 General. Equal to a decent public library.
- 3 Research. Equal to a university library.
- 4 World Class. Equal to the leading facilities across the globe.
- 5 Private Collection. The best libraries available, containing rare or lost manuscripts, unpublished notes, and so forth.

MENAGERIE

Some heroes like to keep pets, whether they are domesticated, or a zoological collection of fierce, or alien creatures. The Menagerie option allows a hero to have proper facilities for his or her pets, along with an adequate supply of food and water. Fancier Menageries not only have room for more, and bigger animals, but also have training equipment, toys for the animals amusement, and more lush habitats.

Note that the animals are not necessarily trained, or compelled to like the hero — that is accomplished through other Attributes or Skills.

COST

Each Level of Menagerie costs 1 minor Gadget.

Level Menagerie Description

- 1 Basic hobby farm. Facilities for the care and feeding of several medium sized animals, or several dozen small critters.
- 2 Dilettante's ranch. Grounds and supplies for several large animals, or up to a score of medium sized animals.
- 3 Professional ranch. Can handle care and check-ups of many large animals, numerous smaller animals, and can include facilities for exotic species.
- 4 World class zoo. Can handle almost any reasonable number of common animals, several dozen exotic species, and even an occasional unique or alien creature.
- 5 Alien menagerie. Often has not only two of every major species, but numerous unique, alien, or even legendary creatures.

MOTOR POOL

If the heroes have specialised vehicles, from armoured cars to stealth bombers, this is where they are maintained, fuelled, and repaired. A fully equipped garage can achieve miracles, while a poorly stocked one will cause hangar queens to gather rust.

A Motor Pool automatically provides an entry/exit point to the base for whatever vehicles it is designed to accommodate. When using an appropriate Skill, such as Mechanics, the Motor Pool will provide a bonus of +1 per Level.

COST

Each Level of Motor Pool costs 1 minor Gadget, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research or activities.

Level Motor Pool Description

- 1 Basic hobby garage. Can handle cars, pick-up trucks, motorcycles, etc.
- 2 Professional garage. Can handle the above, plus specialised vehicles.
- 3 Expert mechanic. Can handle the above, plus planes, helicopters, small water craft, etc.
- 4 Veteran mechanic. Can handle the above, plus specialised planes, etc.
- 5 Master mechanic. If it can fit through the hangar doors, it can be taken apart or rebuilt.

OCCULT STUDIO

This room acts as a sanctuary or study for practitioners of the occult arts. It is stocked according to a specific religion, faith, or practice, and thus may have reference works, incense, candles, crystals, or anything else the GM deems appropriate. This is a place to meditate and prepare oneself, and is sometimes dedicated to one or several gods. When conducting rituals or research appropriate to the focus of the studio, characters receive a +1 bonus to relevant Skills, such as Occult, per Level of the Occult Studio.

COST

Each Level of an Occult Studio costs 1 minor Gadget, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research or activities.

Level Occult Studio Description

- 1 Student's chamber. Equivalent to a small, personal collection of a new, but serious, practitioner.
- 2 Mentor's study. Available supplies equal to those found in a local Santeria or Wiccan shop.
- 3 Teacher's sanctum. A collection owned by someone who has been practicing, and teaching, for many years.
- 4 Renowned sanctuary. Amongst the world's most famous collected works and holiest of places.
- 5 Mythic temple. Contains the most rare and sacred of artefacts and documents, and built at a holy spring, upon a ley line, etc.

PRISONS

Some hero teams need reinforced cells to restrain dangerous prisoners. This may be temporary, until the proper authorities can prepare a secure prison, or permanent, if the heroes act as judges and jailers.

Prisons are reinforced areas of a base, and often equipped with monitoring devices, or other security features (durable locks, motion detectors, etc.). Each Level of Prison indicates how many prisoners can be safely contained. A Prison has +5 / [[+3]] Armour Rating per Level, and automatically has Security equal to its Level. Note: if the base has additional Security, these do not stack; use the higher value.

For Prisoners that have additional enhancements, such as life support, Nullify, etc., see Base Items of Power, page 76.

COST

Each Level of Prison costs 3 minor Gadgets, has +5 Armour Rating per Level, and Security equal to its Level.

Level Prison Description

- 1 Basic holding facility ("the hole"). Can accommodate 1 — 3 prisoners in tiny, but private quarters.
- 2 Brig. A small collection of cells, able to hold 6 — 12 prisoners, normally in two-man units.
- 3 Detention centre. A series of 1 — 4 man cells, often taking up an entire floor, whose capacity is 20 — 50.
- 4 Prison. A small building or wing devoted to incarcerating criminals, with a capacity of 50 — 100 prisoners.
- 5 Supermax. A reinforced, maximum security facility where inmates are normally kept isolated and in solitary confinement, able to contain over 100 prisoners.

RECREATION

Who doesn't want relax once in awhile, whether it's pulling a book off the shelf, swimming laps, or playing pool? Some bases have excellent entertainment theatres, or beautiful gardens, or hobby kitchens. Recreation options provide little



THE UNTOUCHABLES ENJOY SOME DOWN TIME AT A RANCH IN MEXICO

mechanical benefit, but are essential to a hero's stress relief, and provide great role-playing opportunities. Recreation options may include any or all of the options listed per Level.

COST

Each Level of Recreation costs 1 minor Gadget, and may have intangible benefits.

Level	Recreation Description
1	Basic lounge. Television, DVD player, stereo, fish tank, air-hockey table, etc.
2	Business class suite. Wet bar, entertainment centre, gardens, etc.
3	Executive suite. Full bar, hobby kitchen (Year 2002 cost \$20,000+), greenhouse, outdoor pool/hot tub, art collection, etc.
4	Presidential suite. Audio/video theatre, caterer's kitchen (Year 2002 cost \$80,000+), Olympic-sized pool, art gallery, private arboretum, etc.
5	Superstar suite. Rarest liqueurs, Iron Chef kitchen, ice-sculptures of Michelangelo's art, holographic video stations, private forest, etc.

REMOTE ACCESS COMMUNICATOR

Inevitably, if the heroes have a powerful A.I. at their base they will wish to access it while in the field. Remote Access Communicators often take the form of a wristwatch, chest insignia, helmet display, ornamental jewellery, or whatever else is appropriate for the group. Remote Communicators allow the heroes to send, receive, and record data from an A.I., however, most do not have "sensors," and all information must be inputted by the character. Likewise, detailed analysis through specialised equipment is normally only feasible at the base itself — these are not miracle field scanners. Still, the ability to access the HQ A.I. remotely can be immeasurably valuable.

Each Level of Remote Access Communicator determines the range that a base A.I. can send and receive information. Exactly what kind of information can be transmitted should be discussed by the players and GM upon design.

COST

Each Level of Remote Access Communicator costs 1 major Gadget.

Level	Remote Access Communicator Description
1	1 km / [mile] range.
2	10 km / [mile] range.
3	100 km / [mile] range.
4	1,000 km / [mile] range.
5	10,000 km / [mile] range (global).

SECURITY

Security of a base is an important consideration. While Base Weapons (above) provide a strong deterrent to attackers, what about alarms and cameras?

Every window, door, drawer, etc., can be outfitted with a simple lock for no charge. Whether a chain, deadbolt, padlock, or doorknob lock, it's all considered mundane and thus has no cost. Upgrading the base's security features requires Gadget slots, however.

COST

Every Level of Security costs 2 minor Gadgets, and provides a -1 penalty to Burglary and Stealth checks for all intruders.

Level	Security Description
1	Basic. Includes standard alarm system, fire detectors, etc.
2	Upgraded package. Includes motion detectors, bars on windows or Plexiglas, etc.
3	Comprehensive package. Includes hidden or dome mounted video cameras, keycard access, etc.
4	Superior package. Includes biometric readers, pressure sensors, etc.
5	Top-Secret package. Includes feature recognition, active biometric scanning, personnel locators, etc.

TRAINING ARENA

The Training Arena often functions as a physical fitness centre, sparring ring, and simulated danger room. At low Levels the equipment is basic and commonplace, while advanced Training Arenas may have holographic projectors, robot drones, and Force Field cages.

Training Arenas give characters a chance to experiment with their powers, to practice teamwork, and to run mock combats against known threats. Practicing a particular manoeuvre may provide a bonus in the field, as the GM warrants.

In practical terms, a Training Arena is reinforced, and thus has +5 Armour Rating per Level. Additionally, Arenas can be designed with a variety of weapons to enhance training exercises. Each Level of Training Arena can have multiple weapons, the most powerful of which is a Special Attack equal to the Level of the Training Arena. These weapons are designed as part of the Training Arena, and cannot be removed. These are free, and do not affect the cost of any other Base Weapons. To build more powerful Training Arena simulators, consider secondary Base Weapons (see page 68).

COST

Each Level of Training Room costs 2 minor Gadgets, and has +5 / [[+ 3]] Armour Rating and includes an internal Special Attack of the same Level.

Level	Training Area Description
1	Basic. Weight-machines, free weights, boxing ring, etc.
2	Professional gym. Shooting range, gymnastics area, etc.
3	Scenario room. Modular simulation stages, jogging track, etc.
4	Combat gym. Drone warriors, dynamic simulations, Olympic-sized pool, etc.
5	Arena. Full-environmental simulation, holographic/stereo projectors, variable opponents, etc.

WAR ROOM

This room functions as a command centre or briefing room. It facilitates the planning of strategy and tactics, and is often equipped with large maps, audio/video monitors, etc. Some War Rooms have giant maps with oversized pieces built into the floor, while others have individual monitors embedded in boardroom tables. A War Room can provide characters with a +1 bonus to Skill checks when conducting appropriate activities, such as using the Military Sciences Skill.

COST

Each Level of War Room costs 1 minor Gadget, and provides a +1 Skill bonus / Level to appropriate research or activities.

Level	War Room Description
1	Basic tactical room. Dedicated to a specific operation or task force, with reference materials, notes, maps, etc.
2	Command office. Directs several operations, or co-ordinates forces on a major investigation.
3	Regional command. Directs several major investigations simultaneously, with detailed modelling tools and analysis.
4	Simulation room. National command centre, able to direct large scale armies in co-ordinated effort, with extensive scenario mapping.
5	War room. A global command centre, with facilities to study any region in depth, strategise virtually any course of action, and command distinct units with unparalleled accuracy.

STAFF

Depending on the size and facilities in question, heroes may need a support staff to help them keep things running. Staff can consist of butlers, maids, chefs, janitorial staff, physical trainers, telephone operators, fan club administrators, or even guards!

Staff are normally acquired by purchasing the Henchmen or Sidekick Attributes, although in some cases the GM may allow staff to simply be hired with in-game resources. If the staff will rarely leave the base, the GM might consider lessening their cost through the Adjusting Costs optional rule (see page 82).

BASE ITEMS OF POWER

For some bases, the options presented above are simply not enough. Heroes may have access to Force Field projectors, bases with internal Pocket Dimensions, battleships with Hyperflight drives, or any number of other options. The best way to design these future-tech or arcane devices is to build them using the Item of Power Attribute.

Normally, every Level of Item of Power provides 5 Character Points that can be spent on other Attributes (see Item of Power in *SAS*). The players should decide what these devices are, and where they are kept in the base. These Items are usually of the 4 Point / Level ("Hard to Steal") variety.

If the items are rarely used, consider the Adjusting Costs optional rule (page 82).

SAMPLE BASE ITEMS OF POWER FORCE FIELD GENERATOR

This device creates a powerful Force Field around the entire base. The generator is cumbersome, but contains an internal power source, so that the Force Field remains active even if the lights go out.

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 3 | 12 | Item of Power (Force Field Generator) |
| -3 | | • Activation Time (5 rounds) |
| -3 | | • Restriction (Force Field Generator; Static) |

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 4 | 16 | Force Field (Area 4, Stops 100 / [50]), Both Directions) |
| -1 | | • Detectable (Force Field; Visible, electrical signal) |

FINAL COST: 6 Points

TELEPORT PAD

This device is the size of a large platform, or about 10 metres radius. It can send people and objects almost anywhere in the world, and bring them back to the base.

- | | | |
|----|----|--------------------------------------|
| 10 | 40 | Item of Power (Teleport Pad) |
| -3 | | • Restriction (Teleport Pad; Static) |

- | | | |
|---|----|---------------------------------------|
| 7 | 50 | Teleport (Area 3, Range 7, Targets 5) |
|---|----|---------------------------------------|

FINAL COST: 37 Points

GLOBAL EYE SENSORS

The base is equipped with a powerful sensor array. While it can scan a perimeter of about 10 km, this range can be extended to the field through the use of Remote Access Communicators (page 74).

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 3 | 12 | Item of Power (Global Eye Sensors) |
| -3 | | • Restriction (Global Eye Sensors; Static) |
| -1 | | • Vulnerability (High levels of radiation) |

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 15 | 15 | Heightened Senses (Sight x3, Electric Current Detection x3, Radar Sense x3, Radio Reception x3, Vibration Detection x3) |
|----|----|---|

FINAL COST: 8 Points

LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The base is a self-sustained environment, with oxygen and water recycling/reclamation units, several months' supply of food supplements. It also shields the base against high pressure, low grade radiation, and intense heat and cold.

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 2 | 6 | Item of Power (Life Support System) |
| -3 | | • Restriction (Life Support System; Static) |
| | | • Reduction (-1; Life Support System; Internal, only protects people within the base) |
| -1 | | • Special Requirement (Life Support Systems; After 3 months, system has to be flushed, cleaned, and restocked) |

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 5 | 5 | Adaptation (Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum) |
| 5 | 5 | Special Defence (Oxygen x2, Disease, Hunger, Poison) |

FINAL COST: 2 Points

ZAPPER

This Power nullifier has been added to the base's prison cells. It helps secure and defang dangerous offenders.

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 16 | 28 | Item of Power (Zapper) |
| 5 | 82 | Nullify (Drain; All Powers; Area 4; Duration 0 — Special: As long as target is in cell; Targets 3) |
| -2 | | • Detectable (Nullify; Green glow, electrical charge, radiation signature) |
| -0 | | • Permanent (Affects everyone possible within Area — cannot be selectively turned off) |
| -1 | | • Restriction (Zapper; Requires regular maintenance or breaks down) |
| -3 | | • Restriction (Zapper; Static) |
| | | • Reduction (-2; Zapper; Internal, only nullifies targets in cell block) |

FINAL COST: 28 Points x.75 for Occasional Use = 21 Points

BASE ENGINES

Some bases are mobile, able to move over land, sea, air, or through the depths of space and beyond. This example depicts engines for a floating/hovering base that moves only occasionally, but it is easy to switch the Power Attributes, as appropriate.

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 3 | 12 | Item of Power (Base Engines) |
| -5 | | • Activation Time (Flight; 10 minutes) |
| -2 | | • Restriction (Base Engines; Static — attached to base) |

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 6 | 12 | Flight (Skimmer) |
| -1 | | • Detectable (Flight; Engine noise, heat trail) |
| 2 | 4 | Waterspeed |
| -1 | | • Detectable (Waterspeed; Engine noise, wake) |

FINAL COST: 5 Points x .75 for Occasional Use = 4 Points

REDUCING THE COST OF ITEM OF POWER BASE ENHANCEMENTS

Characters certainly pay something for the amazing abilities Items of Power can add to their bases. Yet if these devices only affect the locale of the base, there should be some way to reduce the Character Point cost. The easiest way is to apply appropriate Restrictions and Reductions, such as:

3 BP Restriction: Static. Item is large, heavy and/or extremely bulky. It cannot be moved without extensive effort.

2 Point/Level Reduction: Internal. Item only affects the environment within the walls of the base.

On the other hand, for certain, awesome artefacts, the GM may use the Adjusting Costs optional rule (see page 82). GMs should be wary of reducing the cost for devices such as Teleport chambers or Telepathy machines, however. The point break should only be allowed when the Item is truly limited in some way. This is not intended to be a way to build world-wide transporters or doomsday machines on the cheap!

SHARING BASES

Under Tools (see page 58) the notion of team equipment is discussed, and how a group of heroes could pool their Points to get better equipment for everyone. The same is true with Bases. Each hero should contribute the same number of Gadget Points, and the total determines the base's Level and improvement points. If the players agree to contribute different numbers of Points, a system of ownership should be mutually agreed upon. One character could even act as "patron" at the outset, spending more points on the base than anyone else, while the other players promise to pay the patron back with Advancement Points.

The best way for a team to build a base is to decide beforehand exactly what everyone wants. One character likes the abandoned building approach, but another refuses to use a base that has not been legally rented or purchased. Meanwhile, Slipstream wants a hangar for the Mercury jet, while Caliburn is more concerned about the War Room. Every character will have to agree on the details before the final cost can be determined.

SAMPLE BASE**MARVELS TACTICAL UNIT (MTU)
HEADQUARTERS**

The MTU is based out of 1 Police Plaza in Empire City. Their elite training and specialised focus, however, means that their wing of Police Plaza goes beyond the regular EPD precinct house.

MTU Headquarters houses 30 officers, a support staff of 10, and offices for the Captain and Vice-Captain.

MTU Base, Gadgets Level 11 (13 major Gadgets and 30 minor Gadgets required; 6 minor Gadgets remain unaccounted for, which the GM can assign as needed), plus an Item of Power (Zapper) Level 16. Additionally, their ERV Transports and Portable Zappers must also be purchased separately, as Items of Power.

BASE LEVEL 4, FOUR STORY OFFICE BUILDING
ARMOUR RATING 40 / [[32]]
HEALTH POINTS 210 / [[105]]

BASE ARMOUR, EXTERNAL X4 (8 MINOR GADGETS)

The four story building is made of reinforced concrete and steel. Concrete bollards are set around the perimeter, to deter vehicular attacks, while still allowing pedestrian's access to the building. The motor pool is protected by a remote controlled wedge barricade, while visitor parking, at the rear, is monitored by a guard booth.

FORENSIC SCIENCES LABORATORY LEVEL 3 (3 MAJOR GADGETS)

The Forensics Lab of the MTU is one of the few, specialised facilities for studying metahumans. While it does not command the resources of the Ascension Institute, is it renowned amongst the law enforcement community. The science of metahuman criminology is still very new, thus the men and women of the Metahuman Crime Scene Investigators (MCSI) unit are pioneers in their field. Attached to the Forensics Lab is a medical examiner who specialises in metahuman autopsies.

SECURITY LEVEL 3 (6 MINOR GADGETS)

MTU Headquarters has video surveillance throughout the building. Additionally, all exterior access points are carefully monitored. The building's windows are barred, and even the roof door is heavily reinforced and kept locked.

MOTOR POOL LEVEL 3 (3 MINOR GADGETS)

The Motor Pool has restricted access (see above). There are four large garage bays, and parking for 25 standard vehicles. The MTU has two armoured transports, Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs), at this location.

ARMOURY LEVEL 3 (ARMOUR RATING 35 / [[29]]; 6 MAJOR GADGETS)

The Armoury, which is contained within a secure vault, stores the MTU's arsenal. The Armoury holds armour and munitions for approximately 40 officers. Standard weapons include: Heckler & Koch USP Tactical .45 calibre pistol (1 slot); H&K MP-5 9mm submachine gun (1 slot); Colt M-16 rifles (2 slots); Remington 700 sniper rifle (2 slots); tear gas (CS gas) grenades and launcher (2 slots); flash bang grenades (1 slot); Benelli 121-M-1 semiautomatic shotgun (2 slots); expandable batons with attached mirror (1 slot).

Standard issue armour is a 2-piece Nomex flame-retardant combat suit, Point-Black Tac vests with insertable ceramic plates, dark blue balaclavas, and blue Fritz helmets with built in personal radio/microphone combinations. (Armour is bought by individual members with personal Gadgets and the Conditional Ownership Defect.)

WAR ROOM LEVEL 2 (2 MINOR GADGETS)

The MTU has a large briefing room that can host over 30 attendants, although the normal daily briefs are for much smaller shifts. Video projectors and computerised maps allow for detailed strategy-making.

TRAINING ARENA LEVEL 2 (ARMOUR RATING 30 / [[26]]; 4 MINOR GADGETS)

The MTU has both a physical training centre and a shooting range. Officers tend to spend a minimum of one hour here every day.

PRISON LEVEL 2 (ARMOUR RATING 30 / [[26]]; 6 MINOR GADGETS)

The brig has five two-man cells, although inmates are kept isolated as long as possible. All five cells are connected to an internal Zapper.

BASE ITEM OF POWER

Zapper, Nullify (Drain) Level 5 (Internal, only affects prison; see page 76), 21 Character Points

RECREATION LEVEL 1 (1 MINOR GADGET)

The station house is equipped with a small lounge and kitchen. Many officers also go for smoke breaks on the roof (although it is technically off-limits).



THE MARVELS TACTICAL UNIT GEARS UP FOR TROUBLE

CALIBURN'S SAFEHOUSE

Although Caliburn does much of his work with the Guard, sometimes he prefers to operate on his own. Additionally, while the Olympian Tower is excellently equipped, sometimes a subtle and unassuming lair has its benefits — privacy being the foremost.

Caliburn's safehouse is hidden in the basement of an abandoned hotel in the Bowery, Empire City's skid row. He uses it rarely, and keeps it securely locked up and well stocked for emergencies.

Caliburn's Base, Gadgets Level 11 (16 major Gadgets and 19 minor Gadgets required; 5 minor Gadgets remain unaccounted for, which the GM can assign as modifications to Caliburn's motorcycle, additional equipment, or armour.)

BASE LEVEL 3, REINFORCED BASEMENT OF AN ABANDONED HOTEL
ARMOUR RATING 30 / [[24]]
HEALTH POINTS 160 / [[80]]

BASE ARMOUR, EXTERNAL X3 (6 MINOR GADGETS)

The basement is constructed with reinforced concrete, and is set below street level. The main entrance is a metal door, reached by descending a flight of stairs from the sidewalk. There is also a sewer access, equally locked and reinforced. Both access points are additionally protected by web-mines.

BASE WEAPON

Web-Mine (1 major Gadget for primary, and 2 minor Gadgets for an additional mine)

These mines are single shot devices. Once armed, they will be set off by anyone who passes near them, releasing a viscous cloud of quick-drying goop, which will freeze intruders in their tracks. One is set up just inside the main entrance, while another is armed by the sewer access.

Web-Mine Level 1 (100 / [[5d6+10]] Damage, Area Effect, Tangle, Trap, Internal, Melee, No Damage, Self-Destruct)

FORENSIC SCIENCES LABORATORY LEVEL 2 (2 MAJOR GADGETS)

Caliburn has outfitted the safehouse with enough equipment to replicate an average crime-lab. While it does not contain the high performance equipment

he keeps at the Olympian Tower, it still allows him to process evidence, including ballistic comparisons, chemical analysis, and fingerprint identification.

LIBRARY LEVEL 2 (2 MAJOR GADGETS)

Although lacking many of the prized collection safely held in the Olympian Tower, Caliburn's library contains a number of all-purpose reference works, such as almanacs, atlases, and compendiums on weapons, poisons, and body trauma. He also keeps a small collection of classic literature and favourite archaeological texts.

SECURITY LEVEL 4 (8 MINOR GADGETS)

Caliburn wouldn't feel comfortable if his safehouse could be penetrated easily, thus he installed an extremely sophisticated security system. It has perimeter alarms; hidden infrared capable cameras; reinforced steel doors with double-bitted, electronic, key lock; motion sensors; and a silent alarm that alerts him wherever he may be.

ARMOURY LEVEL 4 (ARMOUR RATING 35 / [[27]]); 8 MAJOR GADGETS)

The Armoury contains all of Caliburn's special weapons and ammunition, and is securely stored in a vault hidden in the foundation. The Armoury is generally stocked with: grenades — CS, CN, concussion, flash bang, glue, smoke (6 slots); grenade launcher (1 slot); expandable batons (1 slot); taser baton (1 slot); bolos (1 slot); pepper spray charge (1 slot); bo staves (1 slot); nunchuku (1 slot); sabres (1 slot); combat knives (1 slot); Remington 870 12-gauge pump-action shotgun with chemical rounds, containing Mace shells with strong dye (1 slot).

PRISON LEVEL 1 (ARMOUR RATING 20 / [[18]]); 3 MINOR GADGETS)

Caliburn has planned for most contingencies, including the need to detain a prisoner in the safehouse. As such, he has a small prison, known as "the hole," which can hold one person in modest discomfort.

STARBRIGHT'S NIMBUS SOLAR SATELLITE

For a short time, Lady Starbright had access to an advanced technological base, which orbited the sun rapidly. This base was constructed by the Nimbus, and served her well as an operations centre between galaxy-spanning missions. Its current status is unknown.

Solar Satellite, Gadgets Level 23 (36 major Gadgets and 38 minor Gadgets required; 2 minor Gadgets remain unaccounted for, which the GM can assign as needed.) Additionally, the Base Items of Power require 29 Character Points, and the escape pod must be purchased as an additional Gadget.

BASE LEVEL 6, SOLAR SATELLITE (APPROX. 20 STORIES TALL)

ARMOUR RATING 55 / [[45]]

HEALTH POINTS 285 / [[145]]

BASE ARMOUR, EXTERNAL x5 (10 MINOR GADGETS)

The Solar Satellite was crafted from meteoric ore. Its solar engines took up nearly half the ship, but also provided it with tremendous power reserves. Starbright could, and did, have visitors, and could support several hundred people at a time.

BASE WEAPON SOLAR PLASMA LAUNCHER (4 MAJOR GADGETS)

The Satellite is armed with Solar Plasma Launchers, which project enormous balls of superheated gas; these fireballs have devastating potential. Unfortunately, they are a slow and unwieldy weapon, and cannot be used at short range.

Solar Plasma Level 4 (80 / [[4d6+8]] Damage, Area Effect, Burning, Flare, Long Range x2, Penetrating: Force Field x2, Backblast, Drop Shields, Inaccurate, Limited Shots, Slow, Stoppable, Unique Disability: No Short Range)

LASER-DEFENCE GRID (2 MINOR GADGETS)

This is a series of laser turrets, each armed with a battery of laser-cannons. The Grid aggressively attacks anything that comes within range that is unexpected or unwanted, however it cannot be used when the satellite engages its engines.

Laser-Defence Grid Level 4 (60 / [[3d6+6]] Damage, Accurate x2, Auto-Fire, Limited Shots x2: 1 round to recharge, Short Range, Static)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (14 MAJOR GADGETS)

Mind 7, Soul 7 / [[Intelligence 14, Wisdom 14]]

A powerful Artificial Intelligence runs the Solar Satellite. The A.I.'s databases are extremely robust, containing information on many facets of Earth, as well as alien cultures. The A.I.'s Soul / [[Wisdom]] represents a high degree of autonomy and loyalty to both Lady Starbright and the Nimbus.

COMPREHENSIVE LABORATORY LEVEL 3 (12 MAJOR GADGETS)

Along with a powerful computer, the Solar Satellite is outfitted with a highly complex science facility. From here, star radiation can be examined, trace elements can be analysed, and alien languages can be deciphered.

SECURITY LEVEL 4 (8 MINOR GADGETS)

Obviously, the Solar Satellite's geographic position is its primary defence, but since many of Starbright's foes are capable of space-travel, additional security measures are required. The Solar Satellite has sensors that detect any breaches in the hull, and track the movement of all beings inside it. Areas can be locked off with a simple command, and different subjects can be given varied levels of access.

MOTOR POOL LEVEL 4 (4 MINOR GADGETS)

Starbright uses the Motor Pool very rarely but the Solar Satellite is equipped to repair and maintain small starships. The hangar bay is empty, except for an escape pod (which must be bought separately).

WAR ROOM LEVEL 3 (3 MINOR GADGETS)

From the command deck, Starbright planned and strategised both Earth-bound missions and star-spanning adventures. She could co-ordinate up to a dozen small units or starships, recording visuals in a 3-D holographic representation.

TRAINING ARENA LEVEL 4 (ARMOUR RATING 50 / [[42]]; SPECIAL ATTACK LEVEL 4; 8 MINOR GADGETS)

Because Starbright's travels through space could be long and time consuming, the Nimbus felt it prudent that she have a facility where she could practice and hone her fighting skills. A large portion of the Solar Satellite is devoted to a rigorous, physical training environment, complete with low level gravity-modulators, hostile environmental theatres, and customisable drone warriors.

RECREATION LEVEL 3 (3 MINOR GADGETS)

From the observation deck to the immersive theatre, the Nimbus believe a warrior must know peace as well as war. While not overly indulgent, the Solar Satellite is equipped with numerous distractions and entertainments, such as: a holographic sculpture garden of the galaxy's masterpieces; a solar arboretum; the darkside Jacuzzi (under a skylight that does not face the sun); etc.

BASE ITEM OF POWER FORCE FIELD GENERATOR

Force Field (Stops 100 / [[50]] ; Both Directions; Area 4), Detectable (Reddish haze), Activation Time (5 rounds) (see page 76), 6 Character Points

BASE ITEM OF POWER GLOBAL EYE SENSORS

Heightened Senses (Sight x3, Electric Current Detection x3, Radar Sense x3, Radio Reception x3, Vibration Detection x3), Vulnerability (Major solar flares), 8 Character Points

BASE ITEM OF POWER LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Special Defence (Oxygen x2, Disease, Hunger, Poison) Adaptation (Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum), Internal (Only protects those inside the satellite) (see page 76), 2 Character Points

BASE ITEM OF POWER SOLAR-DRIVE ENGINES

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 6 | 24 | Item of Power (Solar-drive Engines) |
| -5 | | • Activation Time (Base Engines; 10 minutes) |
| -2 | | • Restriction (Base Engines; Static — attached to base) |
| <hr/> | | |
| 6 | 24 | Flight |
| -1 | | • Detectable (Flight; Engine flare, noise) |
| 4 | 8 | Hyperflight |
| -1 | | • Detectable (Hyperflight; Radiation wake) |

FINAL COST: 17 Points x .75 for Occasional Use = 13 Points

HANDLING TOYS

As a GM, watch the players closely when they create their equipment, transportation, and bases. The players will work out whether the hero can afford a particular device or location, and whether that fits with the hero's attitudes, powers, and personality. What you as GM need to consider is how the toy fits in the story.

This is a concern for several reasons. First, you are creating the story for these characters, and that means you have certain situations, crises, and villains in mind. If the hero has selected something that will negate part or the entire story, you either need to veto that device from the character's list or alter the story to accommodate it. For example, you might be

planning an adventure where the villain uses an enormous armoured airship to terrorise various cities and extort money from them. A problem arises if the heroes have a flying headquarters the size of a small moon. All the heroes need to do is wait until the villain appears next, fly their headquarters to the same location, and swallow his ship into their city-sized docking bay. There isn't any challenge involved, and so the story isn't very interesting for the players. Similarly, if you are planning an adventure where the heroes are fighting an aquatic-based villain whom you intend to have escape via Waterspeed, you may not want any of the heroes to own a speedboat.

Another concern is the "tool vs. ally" problem, which occurs when a hero becomes so reliant on a particular tool or vehicle that he or she turns to that device before turning to a colleague (in this case, another player character). A hero might own a specialised car, for example, with armour plating, gas grenades, rocket engines, and an artificial intelligence. He battles a pair of new villains, but fails to capture them, and so he dives into his car and gives chase, feeding data into the car's A.I. and asking it for advice. Meanwhile, the other players have nothing to do. The hero should have called on them, but he went to his car instead.

How can this be prevented? One way is to limit such devices during character creation. If the hero's car has an onboard computer but no A.I., he will be more likely to call on someone else for help instead. Where would this hero be without his car? No superhero should be that dependent on a single item, unless it is an Item of Power and part of the original character concept. By contrast, if the hero uses a motorcycle but can buy a new one if that one breaks, he or she isn't too dependent on the bike. It's a tool, rather than a focus.

If a player spends a great deal of time developing something for the character, though, and you approve the device, you should let the character use it enough to make it worthwhile. No one wants to spend days designing a hidden lair, and then never get to describe how the character uses the lair or show it off to allies. This does not mean a toy has to be the central focus of a game, but if the player spent that much time on it you should allow some time in-game to spotlight the device.

ADJUSTING COSTS (OPTIONAL)

Consider adjusting the cost on an item, based upon how often the character uses it. For example, a hero might want a jetpack, and plans to use it every night on patrol to cruise the city. Another hero might also want a jetpack, but only for emergencies — he or she will only use it once every few months. Should the two characters pay the same price for their jetpacks, in terms of cash? Of course; the seller does not care how often the customer plans to use it. Should they pay the same amount in terms of Character Points? Not necessarily.

Consider this option: if the player agrees to have his or her character use a device less frequently, you will reduce the Point cost of the item. They have to hold to the agreement, however. If a player indicates his character will only drive the motorcycle once a month, and then uses it every night instead, you should immediately raise the cost back to the original level. Then you should either assign the character's Advancement Points to pay for the item until the difference is paid, or reduce the character's Powers and Skills to make up the difference. This may seem harsh, but as long as the player sticks to the agreement it will not be a problem. This way, the players can get the devices they think are interesting but not constantly useful, and you can make sure that certain objects are not used too often.

If you decide to use this method, you can categorise items into the following usage patterns:

EVERYDAY USE

These items are used constantly by the hero. They may be trademark items, like an archer's bow or a flyer's wings, or they may simply be very useful tools, like a miniature flashlight or a netgun. Items for everyday use should cost full-price.

OCCASIONAL USE

These items are used only when the situation demands. The hero does not carry these items around. When he or she needs such a tool, the device is retrieved from the hero's base (miniaturised items are an exception — the hero might carry a tiny blowtorch in his utility belt, even though he rarely

uses it). For example, the hero might own a jetski, but only use it on cases involving water; he or she may only use the jetski perhaps once a month. Usually an item cannot be used more than once a week and still qualify as occasional use, and it should only be once every two weeks or once a month. Occasional-use items should cost three-quarters their normal character cost.

RARE USE

These items are only used when the hero has few options. A rare-use item is usually kept locked away; heroes never carry these, even if the device is small. For example, a hero might hate guns because they're specifically designed to kill. He does have a special rifle, however, as an emergency measure. If no other tool is sufficient for hitting a long-distance target, the hero will go back to his base, unlock the cabinet, and take out the rifle. Rare-use items should not be used more than once every two months, and they should never be a first choice. Rare-use items cost half the normal cost.

UNIQUE USE

These items are kept locked safely away, and often have extra security systems on them. They are doomsday devices, tools that the hero hoped never to have to use. If he or she is breaking out the item, it is only because there is no other choice — every other option has been exhausted. An example of this would be a sentient surveillance robot. The hero has never trusted this device, because it can think for itself, but now he has no other way to determine the villain's plans and so he has to use it. These items should only be used once. After that use, they either become useless, have to be destroyed, or might even become dangers themselves (for example, that robot might decide it is better than humans, and that it should create a race of robots to overthrow the humans and take over the world). Unique-use items are also next-to-impossible to recreate; the hero cannot simply use the robot and then claim that he gets the replacement out of the closet for next time. Unique-use items cost one-quarter the normal cost. Once used, the Points are reallocated to Advancement Points for future use.

ROLE-PLAYING PURCHASES

Characters can also purchase Gadgets during play. If a hero arranges to buy a new tool or vehicle or headquarters, how can you handle that? Consider these three options, below.

First, you can simply let them role-play the encounter. The character will spend whatever currency (money, favours, actions, etc.) is necessary for the device, but no Character Points are spent. That means the player is getting the tool for free, in terms of Character Points. At the same time, he or she did just role-play the experience, and added more depth and personality to the character by handling the encounter.

The second option is to make the player spend Advancement Points on the item. If the character has unused Points, he or she can spend it right away. If not, you can immediately allocate Advancement Points as they are earned until the Gadget is paid for. This way, the player is not getting the device for free, but he or she does not have to wait before beginning the process. Advancement Points should revolve around game play, not the other way around.

The third option is to let the player have the Gadget without any Advancement Point cost, but make the tool costly in other ways. For example, a hero might decide he wants a rocket-pack. He asks around and finally locates a man who makes and sells such devices. Now the hero can zoom around the city! What he does not know is that the manufacturer added a few other controls to the pack, and can remotely control the hero (as can anyone who buys the remote from the manufacturer ... for the right price). The device is not free, but it does not consume Advancement Points either.

FINDING TOYS

Finding an item during play can also cause Point-balancing problems. A hero may be digging through a ruined temple to rescue a trio of trapped archaeologists, when he notices a strange helmet with runes carved around the edges. He puts it on, and suddenly he has an Item of Power. Or a heroine is searching a villain's lair for clues to his whereabouts, and finds an anti-gravity belt he was constructing and accidentally left behind. She puts it

on and suddenly she can fly. These characters did not even search for such artefacts; they simply found them by chance.

Or did they? After all, as the GM you have control of what the heroes find during the game. If you did not want the hero to find that helmet, you never would have mentioned it was there. If the heroine should have steered clear of the anti-gravity belt, you could have decided the villain did not leave it behind, or that it's a non-functioning prototype. By letting the heroes find these items, you are allowing them to get Gadgets and Items of Power for free. The only reason to do that, of course, is if you have an ulterior motive. This offers many story possibilities, but be careful — do not give such powerful gifts often. Otherwise, your players will start to watch for them, either to build a collection or to avoid them and the attached plot complications. You might let one character find an item for free, and have no side story connected to that item — it really was a chance encounter. That will lull the others into a false sense of security, so that you can spring the helmet or belt on one of them later. You can also let someone find an object, only to learn that it never really worked, or that it was broken years ago, or that it works but has strange side effects. The hero might choose to have the item repaired and restored, but that brings you back to buying items, and to charging Advancement Points for them.

SOUVENIRS

Heroes like to take souvenirs from their fallen foes, especially Gadgets and Items of Power. This serves a dual purpose. It acts as a nice reminder that the hero did a good job, but it also keeps that item from other evildoers who might use it. Of course, now the hero has a powerful object hanging on his or her wall, and if it could do so much harm perhaps it can also do tremendous good?

Souvenirs should be handled the same way as found Items of Power. The device may no longer work, or it may work but poorly, and repairing it will require Advancement Points. If you decide to let the artefact work properly when recovered, the hero should pay some price for using it, preferably in story terms: the device is cursed and corrupts the hero (or to be even more sinister, it isn't cursed, but still morally corrupts the hero); it is linked to the villain,

who breaks out of prison to retrieve it; a new gang of supervillains wants the device and targets the hero to get it; etc. The big difference between a souvenir and a found device is that the hero knows exactly where the souvenir came from, and who had it last. For some heroes, that is enough — anything touched by evil is tainted, and can never be used, no matter how much good it could do. For others, however, the object will be a powerful lure, and its former usage may only fuel the desire to use the item for good, to make up for its prior sins. This can create an excellent storyline, especially if the device brings additional trouble to the hero so that he or she begins to doubt the wisdom of picking it up in the first place.

Remember that good things are never free. This is true of tools as much as anything else in life. The more powerful a device is, the higher the final price, especially when the initial cost seems low.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Heroes are dedicated to stopping crimes, saving lives, and doing good deeds. But how can a hero stop a crime unless he or she knows where it is, and when it is taking place? Information gathering can be a crucial aspect of heroism, and every hero handles the task differently, based on powers but also on personality.

RECONNAISSANCE

Heroes with flight, speed, agility, or stealth often prefer this method for locating crimes and crises. The simplest method is to travel back and forth along the high roads, whether flying above the city, swinging between skyscrapers, or leaping across rooftops, looking for anything amiss. Some heroes fly grid patterns, while others may circle a hot spot, travel in a zigzag pattern, or even patrol based on instinct or Zen sense.

The drawback to flying reconnaissance is that the hero is far above the ground, and usually moving at high speeds. He or she must keep both eyes open, or a crime could pass below while the hero is blinking or turning to look at something else. The advantage is that the hero is well above everything, with a bird's eye view, plus he or she can swoop down quickly if help is needed.

Rooftops provide a similar vantage and the added

benefit of cover. The problem with them is that the hero may not be able to reach every portion of the city or neighbourhood, if the roofs are too far apart or too low to offer a good vantage point.

Other heroes may work from the ground, either with a vehicle or on foot. They see events at eye-level, and are more likely to notice situations nearby, but of course they cannot see as far or travel over obstacles.

Heroes also should decide whether to follow a preset pattern or take a more random course. With an established routine, people know roughly where the hero will be at any given time, which is both good and bad. Those in danger can locate the hero for help, but those with a grudge can set up ambushes as well. Random courses are less predictable, but the hero needs to be more careful because it's easier to miss a particular street or park if one is zigzagging around.

INFORMANTS

Heroes who know the streets like to use informants. Some are small-time crooks who will sell anyone out for a few bucks. Others are cops who tip the hero off to fresh crimes or mysterious incidents. Reporters make excellent informants, since they nose around anyway. Who the informants are depends on the hero. Who would he or she contact for help? Who would be familiar enough to call or visit, but distant enough that the hero's secret identity would still remain safe? The other question with informants is how the hero handles such encounters. Does the reporter call out of gratitude, since the hero saved her life? Does the stoolie give up information readily, or does the hero beat it out of him every time? Some heroes bully their informants, while others treat them as business contacts and pay them. Payment is not always in money, either. For example, reporters are often paid with tips or interviews or exclusive footage. Other heroes work the gratitude angle, and encourage an emotional connection.

MYSTIC SENSES

Some heroes have mystic powers, and can see or sense crimes in their area. For some, that means looking into a crystal ball. For others, it means astral projection or a tingle at the back of the neck, while some have visions of past or future events. If the character has a mystic sense, how does it work? What

is it drawn to? Does the hero only see murders, or any crimes, or only crimes by superhumans? What range does the sense have? How accurate is it? How much advance warning does it provide? Note that some heroes have no mystical ability themselves, but associate with mystics in order to get these warnings and premonitions.

TAPS

Why gather information yourself when you can have someone else do it for you? Crafty heroes, particularly those who favour stealth and subterfuge, might tap into police scanners or FBI radios. That way, the hero knows everything the law is up to, and can not only help solve crimes but also avoid detection and capture. Police scanners are easily monitored — all that's required is a scanner and the right frequency. The other option is to tap a particular object, such as a crimelord's cell phone or an assassin's laptop. This provides information about that individual's plans and activities, instead of the more general information from a widely used radio frequency. Of course, tapping into these devices requires getting close to one long enough to plant a bug, but a clever hero can find ways to make contact. It is illegal in North America and other parts of the world, however, to invade someone's privacy like this without a specific court order, and evidence obtained illegally is inadmissible in court. If the hero is interested in prosecuting the criminal in question, he or she may not be able to use these techniques. Foiling a villain's plans doesn't require a courtroom, though, and the illegal tap may create opportunities to find more legally acceptable evidence

SURVEILLANCE

If a hero knows the identity and address of the local crime lord, or the favourite hangout of the local gang, he or she may simply stake out the location. That way the hero can see what crimes are being planned, and still have plenty of time to prepare countermeasures. Of course, this method only works on known criminals, but the hero can also set monitors on likely targets (for example, the city vault; anyone who breaks in will set off his or her alarms).



LEGACY

REACTIONS

One major question for every hero is how he or she reacts to situations. What does the hero do when a crime occurs nearby? The three most likely options are assessment, calls for help, and diving in.

ASSESSMENT

The hero sits back and studies the situation before acting. This may only take a matter of seconds, or it could mean hours. Either way, the hero will not make a move before considering everything taking place, and planning a course of action. Heroes who assess first are often older and more experienced, and also tend to be more cerebral — they prefer to think their way through a situation. Of course, sometimes a hero waits too long to act, and regrets the delay later.

CALLS FOR HELP

Some heroes will take a quick glance and realise they are outmatched, in numbers or strength or both. Then they call for help. No shame there — it takes a smart person to know when the situation is hopeless, and a strong person to admit needing help. Who can the hero call?

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The hero could call the local law. This will not help against most supervillains, but if the problem is a large gang of punks, or an unruly mob, the police should be able to handle the situation. Even if it is a more serious threat, calling local law enforcement helps to alert emergency services (police, fire, EMS or ambulances).

OTHER HEROES

The hero could also contact other superheroes. This makes the most sense if the villain clearly possesses superpowers, or if the problem is a natural disaster of some sort.

If a hero is level-headed enough to call for help, he or she will probably take time to assess the situation more carefully afterward. Then, when help does arrive, the hero can tell his or her backup exactly what is happening and suggest how to deal with the situation.

DIVING IN

Some heroes are just hotheaded. People are in danger and the risk increases every second; there's no time to waste! Thus, the hero simply dives right into things. These are usually younger heroes, but it could also be a hero with fast reflexes, improved senses, or superspeed — someone who can react quickly to whatever is going on. The advantage to diving in is that the hero may save more lives by responding quickly and not letting any more trouble occur. The problem is that the hero does not fully comprehend the situation, and could be taken by surprise. He or she might even make matters worse by doing exactly the wrong thing by accident.

FIGHTS

Superhero games and stories usually lead to battle between the hero and the villain, or between a group of each, or even between the hero and some nonhuman force (either a magical creature, an element, or a natural disaster). Not every story is about combat, but superheroes are active individuals, and ultimately they will wind up battling something. The question is, when that happens, how does the hero handle it?

Everyone fights a different way. Does the hero approve of killing? If not, lethal force is not an option — that may mean not using guns, or only shooting for limbs, or pulling punches, or using knockout gas instead of poison. Think about the hero's powers as well. What can he or she do? A hero with flight may strafe opponents, swooping down to strike and then flying back out of reach. Would the hero think that was dishonourable, to strike and then flee each time? Some heroes will challenge villains to one-on-one combat. Others are only too willing to gang up on opponents and to use dirty tricks against them. Consider the following questions for your character:

- Does the hero prefer to fight from a distance, or close up?
- Does the hero consider personal combat the only honourable method, or a foolish and outdated notion?
- Does the hero believe in standing still for an attack, or in avoiding it?

- Would the hero rather attack from the front or from the rear?
- Does the hero fight until the villain gives up, until he or she is unconscious, or until he or she flees?
- Will the hero break bones? Draw blood? Kill?
- What is the hero's favourite weapon? This can be the hero's fist, or even a power like an energy blast.
- What is the hero's second favourite weapon?
- Does the hero prefer to attack quickly to end the fight, or draw the combat out and enjoy the challenge?
- Will the hero take any advantages possible, or ignore them and fight fairly?

After you have answered all of these questions, construct the hero's basic attack plan. Just make sure it fits the hero's personality, convictions, and powers.

AFTER THE BATTLE

Once the combat is over, assuming the hero won, another question arises. What does the hero do with his vanquished foe? That is not often discussed in comic books, but it should be since the answer reveals a great deal about a hero's methods and personality. Here are a few of the more common options:

CAPTURE

The hero might not believe in killing. Life is sacred, even the life of a villain. Instead, the foe is bound and carried off somewhere. But where?

DELIVERY

The hero might drop the bound villain off at the local police station. Now the villain is in proper custody, and the legal system can do its job. The hero has done his or her part, and can go home well satisfied.

INCARCERATION

The police might take too long, or be ill equipped to deal with a supervillain. Instead, the hero takes the villain directly to prison, probably the same place the villain escaped from earlier. The prison officials know how to deal with supervillains, and have the proper restraints ready and waiting.

PUNISHMENT

The legal system might not be enough to hold or properly punish this villain for his or her crimes and so the hero creates a personal punishment for the defeated villain. Whatever the punishment is, the hero chooses it to fit the villain's crimes. This way, he or she knows the villain is getting a proper sentence — no danger of a slimy lawyer getting the case thrown out because of a loophole.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

If the hero has no compunctions against killing known criminals, he or she may decide to do everyone a favour and eliminate the villain upon defeat. That may seem cold-blooded (and inappropriate for many campaigns, such as the Empire City setting), but it is practical. The villain will never cause trouble or endanger anyone again, and the city is saved from having to arrest the villain, bring him or her to trial, and then carry out punishment. The hero faces two options afterwards:

DISPOSAL

The hero can get rid of the body, by incinerating it or burying it or sinking it in the river. The villain vanishes, and no one ever knows for certain whether he or she is dead or simply in hiding. The hero, however, knows that villain will never cause problems again.

WARNINGS

The hero might leave the body where people will find it, or even deliver it someplace — the local police headquarters, the crime lord's driveway, or the crime desk at the nightly news station. Now everyone knows the villain is dead, and that the hero killed him or her. Criminals will be even more frightened by the hero in future, which will make them less of a threat. Of course, such drastic actions will have significant repercussions with law enforcement, which will consider the "hero" as dangerous as the bad guys in many cases, and society will rightly regard such an individual as a "masked menace." Only in the most broken-down of cities or fear-gripped neighbourhoods will people welcome the hero's form of justice.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Comic books often leave out this aspect of the battle between hero and villain — when the battle is over, the issue ends and you never see what happens next. A standard comic book only has twenty to twenty-five pages for the entire story. It can't afford to waste any space, and readers want the exciting parts (the battle) rather than the boring ones (the villain being led into court, for example). RPGs work differently. For one thing, you aren't constrained by pages — most game sessions last several hours or more, and an issue can always continue into next week's session if necessary. Games are also experienced rather than read, and thus the players get more directly involved, and may want to know more of the fine details. Role-playing games have their own rhythms, and a scene where the villain is carted off to prison or found guilty in court may be exactly the right ending for a long session, and the perfect way to wind down after the battle that put him in custody.

Such scenes should only be included if they fit the feel of the game, however, and if the players want to see what happens next. It's entirely feasible and appropriate for the GM to announce that "the dreaded Doc Cimitière is found guilty of three

counts of first-degree murder, in large part thanks to the evidence provided by our heroes, and is sentenced to life in prison without parole." This is quick and easy, and takes care of the question without wasting any time. The heroes (and the people playing them) know that justice was served, and they can move on to their next concern.

Conversely, the GM could do a full-fledged courtroom drama, with the villain pleading his or her case before a jury. This allows the GM to focus on how heroes relate to the law, and on how these particular heroes operate. It also gives the players a chance to show their characters in a non-combative setting, or at least a non-violent one. Courtroom dramas can take days, with evidence being examined and possibly thrown out, witnesses being called in and questioned, long speeches from everyone involved, and finally a lengthy deliberation by the jury, and then the judge's actual sentence. At one extreme is the short narration, and at the other is an entire subplot, with everything in-between. How the GM handles the question should depend on the players' interest in that aspect of their activities, on what else is planned in the storyline, and on what would best continue the feel of the existing game.

FOLLOWING THE CODE

Always remember the hero's code. Deciding how the hero deals with fallen foes is an excellent way to develop the code further. Does the hero believe criminals should be punished but only by the law, or does he or she feel villains can be punished by anyone, as long as the punishment fits the crime? Is it acceptable to perform radical surgery on the villain, in the hopes of reforming him or her? Is killing a criminal an act of cold calculation, or a violent and passionate reflex? Think about the hero and how he or she relates to the legal system, from the beat cop to the Supreme Court judge.

TROUBLE WITH THE LAW

Not every hero is friendly with the police, but most deal with the law on some level. The question is how your hero handles such situations. Again, it

comes back to the hero's methods. Some heroes love the law and everyone who represents it, while others think the laws are flawed and ineffective.

HEROIC INTERACTIONS

Most often heroes deal with law enforcement officials — police, sheriffs, marshals, and agents. Lawyers and judges only appear after the criminals are caught, and heroes have usually disappeared by that point. How do heroes handle encounters with the police? The four most common methods are:

OPEN CO-OPERATION

The hero admires police officers for their dedication and their desire to help others, especially without superpowers. He or she works openly with the police, trading information, co-ordinating busts and raids, and assisting in rescues. The hero may even fill out police reports, or appear as a witness in court

cases (provided he or she can be guaranteed no questions about secret identity). For their part, the police admire such heroes, who do good but also respect and obey the law. They give the hero space and privacy, but also offer support and assistance.

COVERT CO-OPERATION

Some heroes are more private, and less inclined towards paperwork and co-operating formally. They prefer to work alone, or in private teams. That does not automatically mean a dislike for police, however; the hero can still admire police without working openly with them. Instead, the hero slips tips to the police, on where to locate bound villains, or where to find a gang of unconscious drug dealers. The police cannot officially condone such heroes, who take the law into their own hands, but secretly the cops admire these heroes and respect their reasons for operating alone. The cops do their best not to hassle the heroes, and even smooth things over whenever possible.

GRUDGING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Not every hero likes cops. Some admit they can be helpful, but feel the legal system is too corrupt, political, and outdated to be truly effective. These heroes avoid police whenever possible — not out of dislike, but because it is easier to not cross paths. The police feel the same way; they know the heroes are doing good deeds, but their methods are almost as bad as those of the criminals. Therefore, the cops do not support these heroes, or try to help them, but out of respect they avoid one another if they can. What the police do not see they do not have to report.

OPEN ANTAGONISM

These heroes actively dislike police, and vice-versa. The heroes feel the cops are too soft and corrupt to do any real good, and allow crime to flourish (making them partially responsible). The police dislike the heroes as well — the heroes' methods are violent, and show no regard for law or life. The police do their best to hunt these vigilantes down to question or arrest them. At best, the cops simply hassle and make life difficult for the heroes. The heroes, in turn, delight in making the cops look stupid and clumsy, and rub their faces in every failure.

LEVELS OF THE LAW

It is important to know what type of law enforcement with which the heroes are dealing, since different levels have different degrees of responsibility and influence. Heroes who dislike the law have to decide how high their aversion extends. Do they despise the local police because those cops are blatantly corrupt, but admire marshals and intelligence agents? Do they hate the law as a faceless entity, and dislike officials who are higher on the food chain, but admire those low-level cops who have no influence and few perks but really want to make a difference?

The basic levels of US law enforcement are:

LOCAL COPS

These are the standard police. They can only operate within their jurisdiction, usually a small town or city, or part of a larger city. Police can make arrests, search property, impound vehicles, confiscate materials, and call for backup. They can shoot someone in self-defence, or to prevent an innocent from being killed. Police usually work in pairs, and uniformed cops either ride motorcycles or horses, or drive in squad cars, while plainclothes detectives have unmarked cars. In Empire City, the local police is the Empire City Police Department (EPD).

SWAT

This is a division of the local police, trained to handle extreme situations. SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) officers are heavily armed and wear body armour. They are only called in to deal with bomb threats or with armed criminals who have already shot at least one person. SWAT officers do not make arrests or perform any of the other standard police activities. They arrive on the scene, surround an area, and eliminate any threats, either with gas weapons, by physical force, or with firearms.

STATE POLICE

These police handle highways and areas between cities. They have the same authority as local cops, and usually drive patrol cars or ride motorcycles. State police sometimes work in conjunction with local cops, when a criminal is spotted on the highway or in a city and then enters another city.

SUPERPOWER CRISIS RESPONSE UNITS

As metahuman threats arise, police intervention must escalate accordingly. Empire City's Marvels Tactical Unit (MTU) has set the standard for dealing with metahuman / masked adventurer incidents, and is the model many national and international law enforcement agencies follow. Like a SWAT division, MTU is only called in for extreme situations that involve metahumans or masked adventurers.

EPD MARVELS TACTICAL UNIT (MTU)

MTU covers all five boroughs of Empire City, although they are based in Brooklyn, Manhattan (at 1 Police Plaza), and the Bronx. Each MTU station house has four cells specially outfitted with Zappers (power nullifiers), in order to safely contain suspects before court appearances, or before prison transfers. Since its inception in 1995, the MTU has achieved a stellar performance record.

MTU is lucky to have the Ascension Institute in Empire City, for the two have developed a close working relationship. Confiscated technologies (that aren't quickly snatched up by government agencies) are often loaned to the Ascension Institute for study, and in return AI does its best to aid officers on cases, from assisting forensic scientists in analysing future-tech devices, to providing on-site consulting when the MTU encounters an unsolvable situation.

CRISIS ASSIST FOR PARAHUMAN ENTITIES (CAPE)

During the 1994 L.A. earthquake, the LAPD faced their worst disaster, being overwhelmed by various genetic horrors, including link-men, the beheaded, the Untouchables, and the godbeast, Alligatron. Luckily, as the Untouchables fought the other monsters, the police were able to keep casualties to a minimum. At that point police officials realised their tactics needed to evolve.

In 1998, the LAPD fielded the first CAPE Units. CAPE members are selected from SWAT, after proving themselves for at least two-years in the field. Nominally, there are only twenty CAPE officers active at any time, severing for an 18 month period, after which they are cycled out for at least 6 months. Many SWAT members act as reservists, however, ready to be called on at a moment's notice.

A lieutenant commands CAPE, assisted by two squad-leading sergeants. The twenty officers are divided into two squads, each consisting of two five-man elements. Each element is commanded by a senior lead

officer. All officers are expert assault specialists, as well trained snipers. Like the MTU, CAPE officers have the best gear, although they prefer the Colt .45 automatic as their side arm, and .308 and .223 Robar Special Marksman sniper rifles, all custom modified by the platoon's armourer.

SUPERBLUE

Miami's Metro-Dade SWAT team recently initiated their own metahuman response platoon known as SuperBlue. Unlike the MTU or CAPE, SuperBlue is a subdivision of SWAT, although it has its own budget. Commanding officers of SWAT were concerned about territorial and resource skirmishes that might develop by introducing a distinct organisation, and thus S-Platoon was rolled into the SWAT hierarchy.

The SuperBlue platoon has invested more of its resources than any other metahuman crisis unit in cutting edge technology. When a dangerous device is recovered, they do their best to study it and replicate the technology for field use. While this methodology keeps their men fresh and constantly trying new things, it carries the risk of reckless field performance. So far no lives have been lost by this practice, but statistically SuperBlue deals with far fewer metahuman crises than either MTU or CAPE. Likewise, property damage has gone up tremendously whenever SuperBlue is called in.

Currently, the most widely applied new technologies used by SuperBlue include:

Micro Air Vehicles (MAVs) — tiny, remote piloted spy planes that provide real-time scouting, audio/video signal, and chemical sniffing. The current field units are 2' (60 cm) long with 3.5' (1 m) wingspans, weigh 4 lbs. (2 kg.), and can fly up to 10 kph for 1 hour. These were developed from confiscated prototype presumably designed by the Artificer.

Laser Dazzler Flashlight — handheld device that projects random, flashing, green laser light to disorient and distract a subject. Prototypes were designed after studying case files involving Lady of the Lantern.

Imaging Radar/Ultrasonic Scanner — developed from the imaging system built into the Iron Walkers (presumably designed by the Artificer). This scanner is a portable unit (the size of a briefcase, but 40 lbs. or 17 kg), which employs low powered radar to locate and track individuals through concrete or brick buildings. The ultrasonic version is used where metal structures interfere with radar.

MARSHALS

Marshals are responsible for an entire section of the country. They co-ordinate local police and state police, and only get involved when criminals cross state lines or become a major threat. Marshals have the powers of a local cop, but can perform searches and seizures without a warrant and can get away with handling suspects more roughly.

INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Each intelligence agency is different, but they all have the same function: gather as much information as possible on certain matters, and then use that knowledge to act in the country's best interests. For Empire City agencies, see page 90.

FBI

The Federal Bureau of Investigation handles domestic terrorism, and any major crimes that cross state lines. Federal agents are dispatched to work with local law enforcement, often taking command of the situation. Feds usually work in pairs or teams, and dress in business attire. They have the same authority as marshals, and ultimately work for the same people.

NSA

The National Security Agency is responsible for handling government communications and ensuring the security of such transmissions. The NSA has mostly analysts, who track such communications and report any potential leaks. They also study foreign communications, and attempt to break coded messages.

SECRET SERVICE

The Secret Service is responsible for protecting the President and other key officials, but also for handling cases of fraud (whether computer, ID, or currency). Most Secret Service agents are assigned as bodyguards. They have the authority to investigate any possible threats, including searching people and homes without a warrant, and can shoot to stop attempted assassins.

CDC

The Center for Disease Control is based in Atlanta, Georgia. It is acknowledged as the finest disease and poison research facility in the world, and

specialises in biological threats. CDC members are all trained medical doctors, and many also hold Ph.D.s in such fields as biology, biochemistry, chemistry, and genetics. They take charge of any situation involving a biological or biochemical threat, and usually quarantine the area until they can ascertain the situation and deal with it properly. The main CDC building contains many deadly viruses and their antidotes, and has security as strong as any nuclear facility.

ATF

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is a division of the Department of the Treasury, and works to reduce violent crime through enforcement of the Federal firearms laws. The ATF also investigates arson, explosives, interstate arms trafficking, contraband tobacco, and use of firearms in narcotics-related crimes. The ATF is continually working to gather more information on these five areas.

CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency is the United States' foreign intelligence branch, and is not licensed to undertake missions on domestic soil. The CIA handles all foreign intelligence missions for the US, including counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and covert ops. CIA agents are usually licensed to do whatever is necessary to ensure the success of a mission, but encouraged to obey local laws whenever possible.

CASE STUDIES: HEROES AND THE LAW

The three case studies herein, show specific encounters between a hero and the law, and the result of those encounters. These are actual case studies, referring to real incidents and drawing upon reports from actual witnesses and participants.

CASE STUDY ONE: LEGAL SANCTION SLIPSTREAM AND GREEN RONIN

When the superpowered relic-thief known as Green Ronin crashed an exclusive party at the Empire City Museum, the police stationed outside knew they would need additional help to contain her. They called Guard, and the superhero Slipstream responded immediately. Within seconds he was standing outside the museum and conferring with the police officers. The police were mainly concerned

INTERNATIONAL SUPERHUMAN RESPONSE AGENCIES

AEGIS

This branch of the United Nations was created in 1985 under the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Aegis is charged protecting metahumans from attack and abuse, and maintains a confidential database of all incidents of metahuman abuse. It also tracks any incidents involving the display of metahuman powers, and keeps a database of all known metahumans around the world. Aegis is strictly an intelligence-gathering division, and as such its analysts are not trained for fieldwork or authorised to carry out missions. Aegis employees do not carry guns or other weapons.

AEGIS JTF

In 1998, the Aegis Joint Task Force (Aegis JTF) was initiated. This small unit is comprised of metahumans, and answers directly to the Special Committee. The Aegis JTF is responsible for any peacekeeping operations involving metahumans, regardless of whether the metahumans are the victims, the oppressors, or both. Aegis JTF members are expected to obey local laws at all times, but are authorised to use lethal force for self-defence or to protect assigned individuals.

NORTH AMERICAN PROTECTION LEAGUE (NAPL)

Immediately after Vincente Fox was elected to the presidency in Mexico in 2000, he approached US President Bill Clinton with a proposition. Enhanced technology, improved communications and transportation, and increased metahuman activity, was creating a sharp rise in the number of people and organisations who posed a national or even international threat. Mexico was concerned about facing such threats alone, and suggested that the US join forces with it in order to protect the stability of the North American continent.

The proposal was brought to the third North American partner, Canada, and within six months the North American Protection League (NAPL) was initiated.

NAPL was specifically created to handle rogue militaries, military dictators, terrorist organisations, and supervillains who threatened the North American continent in ways that local and federal authorities could not contain. NAPL monitors activity across the continent, noting every instance of reported violence, military action, civil unrest, crime, and metahuman power.

If local or regional authorities have matters well in hand, NAPL does not interfere. If the threat spills over into a new area, however, or if the locals cannot handle it, NAPL will take action. Its express purpose is two-fold. First, it contains threats which could affect large portions of the continent, and which could potentially affect the world as a whole. Second, NAPL protects the continent from attack by outside forces.

NAPL agents, while ordinary men and women, come from the highest ranks of the military, private research sector, and law enforcement. They are supplied with the best equipment the three nations' militaries can devise, and wield an immense discretionary budget. "The League," as it is known internally, is run by a Field Director who takes orders from a consortium of military commanders from the three countries.

NAPL has regional headquarters spread throughout the three nations, although its command centre is a sprawling facility located in Death Valley, California. Each office maintains constant communication with the other locations. Agents monitor local activity, and when a situation has been decried "out of control," field agents are dispatched.

NAPL can draft aid from any military or law enforcement agency within any of the three nations, and has enough authority to issue orders to those agencies. Its agents can also ignore normal laws in the pursuit of their duties. It has some links with agencies in other countries, but NAPL has no official authority outside of North America, and must usually content itself in trading favours with outside forces.

for the welfare of the people attending the party, including the Mayor, the Police Commissioner, and Senator Andrews. They wanted to see Green Ronin caught, but were more worried about her potential captives. Slipstream agreed that the hostages had to come first, and rushed into the building. He proceeded to rescue the party attendees with such speed that everyone was safely outside in less than two minutes. Then he returned to face Green Ronin. The wily thief, realising she had lost the advantage, distracted Slipstream by shattering a support beam and fleeing while he raced to save the art treasures Green Ronin had endangered. The Mayor and the other party attendees thanked Slipstream afterward for rescuing them, and the Commissioner added a special thank you for the hero's willingness to work with the police and base his actions on their concerns.

CASE STUDY TWO: LOOPHOLES ARCHER GOLD VS. THE ST. XAVIER GANG

Archer Gold, the costumed crimefighter, was holding an exhibition one afternoon in a public park in his native Chicago. While retrieving an arrow from the target, he heard the sounds of a scuffle. Investigating, Archer Gold observed five young men beating up a sixth. The five youths all wore the same clothes: a dark blue blazer, black slacks, white shirt, and navy tie. Returning to his audience, Archer Gold loosed several arrows in rapid succession, only to have them fly off into the trees before looping back around to strike the target from behind. He then encouraged the police (who were also watching the exhibition) to investigate behind the trees, where they found the five assailants, all unconscious. A few days later, however, Archer Gold received a court summons. The boys, all students at St. Xavier High School for Young Men, were suing him for assault. Police verified that the boys, known in the area as the St. Xavier Gang, had been found in the park along with a boy from a rival school, and that the evidence suggested they had been assaulting the victim. The judge ruled that preventing a crime did not authorise someone to commit another one. Fortunately, Archer Gold, who had chosen to defend himself, had an answer. He pointed out that he had been in the park for the shooting exhibition, and that his arrows had struck the target as intended. The fact that his arrows might have hit the youths in the process was purely

coincidental, and not intentional. He also pointed out that all of his arrows that day had been blunt-tipped, and thus would not qualify as deadly weapons. Upon cross-examination, the boys admitted that they had not seen Archer Gold, and none of them had even seen the arrows directly — they didn't actually know what knocked them out. The boy they had been assaulting was also questioned, but stated that he had been in no shape to notice anything other than his attackers. The jury ruled that Archer Gold could not be proven to have assaulted the boys, and acquitted the hero. They did, however, find the St. Xavier Gang guilty of assault.

CASE STUDY THREE: UNLICENSED ACTIVITY CORBAE AND THE PORT AUTHORITY

A recent incident involved the winged crimefighter known as Corbae, and the Empire City Port Authority. Although Corbae is normally known to operate in Washington D.C., he apparently felt that Justin Berenson, the head of the Empire City Port Authority, was taking bribes to allow certain shipments to dock unrecorded. He prowled the docks for several days but could find no direct evidence, only suggestions and possibilities. The vigilante finally tired of the search, and went to the source. He flew into Mr. Berenson's office, on the top floor of the PA building, and dragged him from his chair in front of several subordinates. Corbae then carried Mr. Berenson outside the building and threatened to drop him if the man did not confess to his crimes. Naturally, Mr. Berenson said whatever he thought would make this agitated individual put him down safely — he "confessed" to taking bribes, and even implicated several influential local businessmen as cohorts. Corbae flew to the local police house and insisted that Mr. Berenson be arrested. The police, however, were more inclined to listen to a well-respected city official than to some costumed crusader, and Corbae narrowly escaped custody himself. At this time, an all-points bulletin has been issued by the Empire City PD — the crimefighter known as Corbae is wanted for assault, breaking and entering, and harassment of a city official. Mr. Berenson insisted that he did not want to press charges personally, but that such characters could not be allowed to run roughshod through the city, and that they must learn to respect and obey the law, and to leave law-abiding citizens alone.

THREATS & DANGERS



THREATS AND DANGERS

What is a hero without a crisis? Heroism is taking action, getting involved in desperate situations, and trying to help others. Without the situation the hero cannot function. A man with the power to quell forest fires and tame ravaging beasts is useless on a clear spring day with no flames or animals in sight. This chapter discusses some of the situations heroes might face, and how to create an interesting and engaging story and then maintain that interest until the story reaches an appropriate conclusion.

A Word to GMs

This chapter is for you. It discusses how to create superhero storylines, how to tailor them to the characters, and how to keep the storyline moving while keeping the characters (and the players) engaged. The information in this chapter is not a secret, but it is geared more towards Game Masters. Players may also find that reading it gives them ideas on how to approach Threats and Dangers in new and interesting ways.

SUPERHERO GOALS

People are goal-oriented, and stories ultimately show whether or not those people have reached their goals. By the end of the story, either the superhero achieved a goal or failed to do so, and that is how he or she will measure the success of the mission. Your job as GM is to think about the heroes' objectives, and to build stories that will relate to them.

Goals can be divided into three categories: GM goals, character goals, and player goals.

GM GOALS

These are the goals you have set for the characters, the things you would like them to accomplish in the course of the adventure or campaign. These goals may not be conscious ones for the characters; very few people walk around thinking "I would like to develop more, to have more depth and personality." GM goals should be broad, and many have no clear end in sight. A character can hardly say "There, now I've got a fully developed personality!" or "I have now learned everything there

is to know about myself." Here are the most common GM goals for superheroes:

DEVELOPMENT

This is a standard goal for any character. You want to see the character developed more fully, transforming from a collection of numbers and words into a real individual, with personality traits, hobbies, and a unique way of looking at the world. For superheroes, this also means developing superpowers, honing them and using them not only effectively but in an individual way, so that the two superstrong, superfast members of the team are clearly two different people with their own focus. Stories need to offer opportunities for the characters to make personal choices in order to reach this goal.

FAMILIARITY

The character adjusts to a situation, and learns to handle it. In superhero games, this usually involves having superpowers and being a hero. The character may have started the game by discovering or gaining powers, and spends the rest of the adventure adapting to this notion of being a superhero. Familiarity can also mean learning the ins and outs of one's territory, learning to work with (or around) the local law, or learning to work in a team rather than alone.

SELF-DISCOVERY

The character learns more things about him or herself that were not apparent. Some of them may be pleasant, others less so. In a superhero game, this often refers to the source of a hero's powers — the hero learns that he was a genetic experiment, or that her powers were stolen from another heroine and cost that other woman her sanity. Self-discovery leads to increased character development, as the character has to react to this new information, and those reactions reveal much about the individual's personality.

REVELATION

The character learns something shocking and unexpected. This is usually not about the character, since that would fall under self-discovery. Rather, the hero discovers that the world is about to be attacked by an alien race, or that a criminal mastermind did not in fact die years ago and is planning a comeback. Revelation stories often lead to new adventures or

campaigns, as the heroes respond to the new information and prepare to deal with it. A revelation could also be something no one can do anything about, like discovering that magic is fading from the world. For these situations the heroes cannot do anything but cope personally.

CHARACTER GOALS

The hero's goals are either clearly stated ("I want to help people!") or determined within the character's own mind. For superheroes, character goals are usually ongoing, rather than finite. "I will save that cat!" is just a short-term version of the longer goal, "I will protect the innocent!" The most common character goals are:

CONQUEST

The hero lives to combat evil, and measures his or her success by how many villains have been defeated. A hero with this as a primary goal cares far less about protecting people than about finding and beating the villain. Given a choice between rescuing a drowning man and attacking the crook responsible, the hero will choose to attack first, and try to save the man later. This can be justified by saying that the crook, if he escaped, would drown countless more people. The hero just loves the thrill of battle, and the elation of knowing another villain has been taken out.

PROTECTION

The hero wants to protect people from harm. That harm can be physical, like being shot or mugged or drowned, or it can be more ephemeral, like being blackmailed or being pressured into doing something wrong. Some heroes choose particular people to protect, either specific individuals or a single type; a hero could be the sworn protector of firemen, for example, or the patron of the coast guard. Protection is a constant, long-term goal which can be broken down into more immediate tasks. Saving the governor from an assassin is a clear act of protection, but keeping leaders of civil society safe is an ongoing responsibility.

RESTORATION

Things change with time, and not always for the better. A hero might decide that something has

changed for the worse, and vow to correct that. This often covers an entire territory — the hero wants to restore the city to its glory days, when the streets were clean and safe and the officials were honest and trustworthy. Restoration can focus on physical aspects, like crime rates and cleanliness, but it can also focus on more internal elements. For example, a hero might have lost his faith in justice and honour, and needs to regain that faith before he can help others again. Alternatively, a hero might worry that someone else has lost his or her way, and decides to help this person regain focus and dedication. Restoration usually has a clear-cut ending — either the target is restored or it is finally judged to be beyond repair.

VENGEANCE

Heroes often suffer horrible tragedies, losing limbs or even loved ones during the fight against evil. A hero might decide that the legal system cannot punish an evildoer properly, and so vows personal vengeance. This can be against a particular individual (the villain who killed her son or took his hand), or it can be against a type of people, like the muggers who make the city unsafe (and one of whom killed the character's uncle). Vengeance is usually a stated goal, with the hero actually swearing to go after certain people or types until justice is served or his or her conscience is at rest. It can have a clear-cut ending, if the target is one person. With more general vengeance, however, the goal is never-ending, and the hero may eventually realise that muggers will never entirely disappear, or that corruption in politics is inevitable.

PLAYER GOALS

Characters are brought to life by their players, and thus a character's goals ultimately come from the player. Just as the GM can have other goals for the heroes, the players can have separate goals as well. These are things the player would like to happen to the character as the game continues. The hero may not even think of these things directly, but the player does. That means that the hero has, at least in part, been created with some of these goals in mind, and that the hero's actions will be influenced by the player's long-range plans for the character. A few examples are:

FAME

The player wants his or her hero to become famous in the game world. That can mean the hero is widely admired and respected, or feared and avoided, depending on the character type. Some heroes strive to increase their reputation, but others are oblivious. As long as evil is vanquished and good people are made safe, what does it matter if anyone knows the hero's name?

FORTUNE

The player wants the hero to become rich. Some heroes do accept payment to protect or rescue people, and so perhaps the player wants the hero in this profession. The player may also want the hero to receive money from grateful individuals, or be offered a sum of money from a thankful government, or discover a lost treasure deep beneath the sea. Players want their characters to become wealthy for two reasons. First, to enjoy that wealth vicariously, by playing someone rich who can buy any luxury. Second, to contrast this sudden luxury with the hero's desire to do good. Does it become harder or easier to risk your life for others when you have a mansion and ten sports cars?

ENTERTAINMENT

The player wants the hero to be entertained. Some heroes lead boring lives; suddenly gaining superpowers is a dream come true, not because the hero can now help people but because he or she can now lead a more exciting life. Acrobats are particularly suited for this goal — they make jokes and take risks because secretly their life is thrilling and a break from the ordinary. A hero who seeks entertainment can become careless, though, and gets restless if crises are too far apart.

GROWTH

This is the player side of the GM goal of development. The player wants the character to grow and change, becoming something greater than his or her origins. The player may have fully developed the hero, but real people are never done growing and good characters are the same way. How will the hero adapt to the changes in the city's legal system? What will the hero do when his or her powers change or

fluctuate? How does the hero handle another superhero claiming the same territory? Growth should be encouraged as a player goal, because it will add to the depth and interest of a game.

TRAGEDY

Some players do not want their heroes to be happy and successful. Failure is more interesting, because it pushes the person harder. Superhero stories are filled with tragedy, from loved ones dying, to characters losing their jobs and homes, to fighting against disease or even a drug problem. The hero might triumph against such adversity, overcoming all odds and maintaining his or her idealism and faith. Or the hero might fail, and become darkened and twisted by the force of such events. Either end makes for a fascinating character study, and can add tremendously to the game.

CRISIS

What happens when a crisis occurs? When a house catches on fire or a man starts shooting people in a mall, who besides superheroes shows up? How do they deal with these costumed individuals flying around claiming they want to help?

WHO GETS THE CALL?

When a crisis occurs the first question is who gets called. For crimes, the local police are the often first people contacted or dispatched, though a 911 distress call will also bring an ambulance and a fire truck, just in case. The fire department is called for fires, of course, but also for people trapped in buildings. Bombs are referred to the police, who send a bomb squad to investigate. The fire department will respond first to potential gas leaks or chemical attacks, though they'll call in experts if they encounter something beyond their scope.

If a disturbance occurs, and the individual involved is a known felon, the proper authorities are notified. Which "authorities" depends on the culprit's notoriety and range. An escaped con responsible for twenty deaths across three states is a federal problem, while a drunk who was already arrested once for assault is a matter for the police.

Supervillains are another matter. Police are only called to handle supervillains when the villain's powers seem manageable, or if crowd control is involved. A villain who is flying above a mall and hurling lightning bolts is too much for police to handle, but they can calm bystanders and guide them to safety. The police may respond first to a metahuman threat, simply because the exact nature of threat is initially unknown. For example, if hostages have been taken, the police are the first on the scene. When they discover the hostage-taker is a metahuman beyond their capabilities, back-up is requested. In Empire City, that means the Marvels Tactical Unit (MTU). If a superhero team is in the region and on good terms with the authorities, there may be a way to contact them directly as well. If the matter is federal, the call is forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other agencies. The North American Protection League (NAPL) may respond, if it deems the threat severe enough for direct intercession. Internationally, Aegis Joint Task Force (JTF) may also get involved.

For natural disasters, local officers are sent, not to stop the disaster but to help calm people and to organise rescue attempts and evacuations. Rescue workers usually take charge in these situations, sometimes with firefighters or the coast guard. The police answer to them, and serve as assistance and added authority.

RESPONSE TIME

How quickly can people respond to a crisis? That depends on how many people are mobilised and their distance from the incident. Police cars nearest the scene are dispatched first, but it may take another twenty minutes for them to arrive if the incident is on the other side of town. Firefighters respond more quickly, since time is often crucial when fighting a fire. Firefighters wait at the station instead of patrolling the city and can mobilise a pair of fire trucks from the nearest station in a few minutes. Federal agencies may be further away, but they have access to jet planes and helicopters, and can usually have at least an advance team on-site within an hour, no matter where. The key questions are how far the nearest base is from the incident, where individual agents or officers are when the call comes in, how they travel, and whether there are obstacles such as rush hour traffic or booking a flight.

TIME: CINEMA VS. REALITY

In role-playing games, elements and aspects can be modified from reality to create a better story. Time can be manipulated by the GM to increase tension and drama. Events can occur more quickly than would be possible in the real world. For example, in real life the police would not be able to cordon off a neighbourhood in less than an hour. First the disturbance has to be reported, then dispatch sends the nearest patrol car, then they call for back-up, the other cars arrive, and everyone co-ordinates their efforts. That's boring to watch, however. In the game, the police can lock down the street in twenty minutes. Perhaps the police force is better prepared than most, or more organised. Perhaps they have contingency plans for just such occasions. Or maybe you, as the GM, simply sped things up to make it more interesting. Events can also happen more slowly. The thief exits the bank at a dead run. Assuming he's a decent runner, he should be long gone by the time the hero finishes rescuing the tellers from the bank vault. Unfortunately the hero won't be able to follow the thief back to his lair for the final confrontation. You announce that as the hero leaps out the front door, he catches a glimpse of the thief several blocks ahead — just enough to see where he's going. Maybe the thief sprained his ankle diving through the teller window, or bruised a rib shoving past the heavy vault door. Maybe he's tired from all his previous exertion. Or perhaps you've simply slowed him down just enough to keep the tension going.

Don't get carried away, of course. If the thief is in good shape and has a clear lead, the hero probably shouldn't be able to catch him (assuming the hero is not a speedster). Likewise, no police force, no matter how well-trained, can quarantine an entire city in twenty minutes. It's one thing to stretch time a little, but another to break it; keep the manipulations to a minimum, just enough to keep things exciting. Don't want the police to show up during the big battle? Perhaps they got delayed by a traffic jam. Don't want the gunshot victim to die before naming his killer? Perhaps the bullet missed the artery by the tiniest bit. As long as it can be explained, the players won't look too closely, especially if they're having too much fun to ask.

PROTOCOLS

What happens when people arrive on the scene? Different agencies and departments have their own protocols for handling situations. The police work in pairs usually, as partners, though additional uniformed officers may be called in for extra help. The uniformed police answer to the plainclothes detectives, who answer to their sergeant or lieutenant. Upon reaching a scene, the police will move to arrest anyone posing a clear danger, and will separate anyone who is fighting and apprehend anyone fleeing the scene. If no one presents an immediate threat, they'll investigate more carefully, studying the situation and everyone present. They will also question any bystanders to find out what happened.

Firefighters are assigned to specific trucks (or "engines"), and each truck has a senior firefighter who issues the orders. They answer to the fire chief for their house. Firefighters deal with property more than with lives, and are usually called only after a building is on fire. They will pull up and immediately go for hoses, to spray the building. Meanwhile, one or more firefighters will ask bystanders if anyone is left inside. If people are trapped, a handful of firefighters will ready ladders or axes or both, and attempt to enter the building while the rest continue to man the hoses.

Rescue workers and ambulance personnel are organised around their ambulances, with two or three people per vehicle. They're more autonomous than firefighters, and only major problems will require more than a single ambulance. Rescue workers go immediately to anyone clearly injured or trapped, and ask bystanders if such people are not clearly visible. Ambulances are usually sent in response to a call, either from an individual or from dispatch, and so they know someone needs their help at the given location.

Agencies generally investigate before taking action, and set up perimeters and surveillance, unless anyone poses a clear and present danger. A man waving a machine gun will be targeted as soon as possible, but the agents will also call for plans to a building while simultaneously deploying men to cover and cordon exits.

Consider the primary goal of whoever answered the call. Rescue workers are there to help people, and

will ignore a fleeing criminal if that means saving someone's life. Firefighters have to worry about the fire itself, and keep that from spreading to nearby buildings; they will try to rescue anyone trapped within, but after a certain point that person is considered lost and rescue attempts are stopped. Police are trained to protect the innocent, and will concentrate on taking down threats if that can be done quickly. If that is not possible, they will work on getting people to safety, while trying to minimise the threat to others. Agents are less concerned about bystanders and more interested in preventing any further incidents.

If a situation brings more than one of the above groups, they generally work around one another. Firefighters take command in any situation involving a fire or a collapsing building. Rescue workers take control in any other situation involving injured civilians. Police take the lead if a person or persons is threatening others with physical violence. Police know to get out of the firefighters' way if the building is already on fire, though, and to stand aside for rescue workers if someone has already been shot and can be treated immediately. The same is true with the other two groups. They don't co-ordinate their efforts often, because their areas of interest are different, but they each trust the other groups to get their particular job done. That way, the firefighters don't have to worry about getting shot from behind, and the police know the building won't come down around them while they're pursuing the suspect, and both know the rescue workers will tend to them if they are injured. Agencies are the exception. They often try to commandeer the other groups, and perhaps because of this the other authorities don't trust them to handle anything in particular.

HEROIC INTERACTION

How do heroes relate to these people during a crisis? More importantly, how do these people relate to superheroes? This depends on the hero in question, and on the theme of the campaign. In a standard, four-colour game, police will welcome help from heroes they trust, but will turn away anyone they dislike or think is dangerous. Firefighters will accept help if the hero seems competent and useful, but an inexperienced hero is a danger to them and to the buildings and people they fight to save. Rescue

workers will only accept help from heroes they know and trust and who have applicable abilities. A hero known to be noble and honest, but who has no idea how to stop arterial bleeding isn't much good to a patient. Agents only trust heroes they have worked with before ("they" meaning the agency in general, not those specific agents), though superheroes can make a useful diversion. The more realistic the game, the less likely superheroes will be respected by the authorities and the more likely they'll be treated as potentially dangerous, mentally imbalanced men and women in silly costumes.

Some heroes automatically assume command during a crisis. That works with certain people but not with others, and obviously depends on the situation. If a supervillain is destroying the bank, and only the police are on the scene, they may welcome the hero and happily let him or her handle the situation. In more mundane situations, however, where the perpetrator is a mugger or a drunk or a trio of bank robbers, the police will assert control and insist that the hero answer to them, not the other way around — letting a superhero charge in could endanger more lives. Firefighters will insist the hero follow their lead, unless they know the hero has extensive experience with fires or rescues. Rescue workers will only yield control to heroes with formidable medical expertise or major healing abilities, since the patients could die otherwise. Federal agents will not yield control of the situation unless the hero in question has been granted honorary rank by their agency, and outranks them. NAPL will not yield control to a hero under any circumstances. They will listen to any input, and are happy to use the hero's knowledge and abilities, but will insist on running the operation from start to finish.

Of course, these are generalisations. A NAPL agent whose had his life saved several times by Magistrate may be more than happy to let him take command and issue orders. The police may respect Sentinel enough that they'd never pull rank on him. Every encounter depends largely on the personality of the people involved, but it's a good idea to figure out how the various organisations and agencies see heroes, at least officially. That gives you a base from which to work, and you can always modify the official stance on a case-by-case basis.

PRIORITIES

In Chapter 3, heroes' reactions to situations was discussed. What happens, though, if more than one crisis demands attention? The hero must prioritise, deciding which situation takes precedence. How can that be determined? If the two incidents are similar, they can be compared in scope. If a small isolated house is burning and a large office building is also on fire, the office building contains more people and also threatens more property because its fire could spread to the many other buildings nearby. But what if an office building is on fire and someone has also poisoned the city's water supply? Both are major threats, both could cost many lives — which one is more important?

RANKING

The real question is: what does the hero consider most important? Are lives worth more than property? Is a clear risk to a single life more important than a potential risk to a dozen? Are natural disasters more acceptable than manmade ones because they can be seen as the will of Mother Nature? The player needs to decide how his or her hero feels about such things, in order to learn how the hero would prioritise situations. The hero needs to rank the following, in order of importance:

- Property (buildings and houses)
- Art (paintings and sculptures)
- Knowledge (books and computer files)
- Non-human life (animals and plants)
- Human life

Naturally, each situation is different, but at least knowing how the hero ranks those areas provides a framework. What will the heroine do if her nemesis has her loved one in one clawed hand and the tether to a busload of children in the other? Or what if it's a brilliant scientist and the busload? Which is more important, one person of acknowledged genius or twenty-five people who have yet to accomplish anything significant? There is no right answer. As the GM, you need to be prepared for either answer. Of course, most heroes will try to save everyone, grabbing the scientist and tossing him to safety before going after the bus or some similar notion. Will it work? That depends on the cleverness and

competence of the hero is, as well as the villain's skill and cunning. It can also be an indication of how cold the world can be, if it was an accident rather than a deliberate act. This will also be affected by the type of game you're running. In a four-colour game, innocents rarely die; the hero will probably manage to save both the scientist and the bus of children. In a more realistic game, at least one side may be doomed, or even both. The important thing, for the game, is how the hero organises his or her priorities, whether or not he or she can hold to that, and what occurs as a result.

DISCUSSION

The player is responsible for pondering the questions above. How does any of this help you as the GM, though? You need to speak to each player in turn, to discuss the hero's priorities. Talk to the player about priorities, and ask how the hero feels about art vs. property or people vs. knowledge.

The trick here is to be subtle. If you come right out and say "So tell me, what would your hero do if he had to choose between a burning building and a drowning man?" the player knows you are preparing to spring that situation upon him or her. Ask the players early on, or even build the questions into your Character Quizzes, then leave it for several sessions.

SURPRISES

One of the goals in a good adventure involves surprising the players and the characters, making them react suddenly to something unexpected. That can show what a character really thinks, and also how much thought the player has put into the character. Multiple crises are excellent for this. If the heroes have only had to deal with one crisis at a time, or with two clearly unequal crises (like saving a cat or rescuing a bus full of kids), and suddenly they have two major situations, the scene will become very tense very quickly. Each character will have to make a clear choice and accept any consequences.

When you provide multiple crises, you have to be prepared. What if the players choose to save the painting first and then rescue the kidnapped heiress? You must have both situations ready, so that you can deal with either right away. You cannot force the

heroes to pick one path over another; you can set the scene, but the choice must be theirs or else they have no influence on the story and the game.

Be prepared for surprises yourself. What if the heroes decide that both the painting's destruction and the heiress' kidnapping are the work of the same villain, and opt to hunt him or her down instead of directly rescuing either? What if the hero decides to let the villain think he has succeeded, and then wait for the villain to get careless and make a mistake? You presented two or more crises, and the hero went for ... neither.

The key here is to know what else is going on, and what can happen if the hero does not intervene. The painting gets destroyed, and its owner blames the hero — now the hero has made a powerful enemy who wants him disgraced. The heiress is kidnapped and taken back to the villain's lair, where the villain sets the next phase of his plan in motion. When the hero does decide to step in, events have moved forward on their own, and he or she may be unprepared for what has happened. Would the villain get away with it, if the hero was not there? What if the heiress was able to escape on her own? The hero may wait too long, and find out that the hostage is free already; now the hero has two powerful enemies — the owner of the destroyed painting, and his daughter who the hero failed to save.

This does not mean you have to trick the hero every time, or that events will always work out for the best (or worst) without the hero's involvement. Just think through the plans and situations as if the hero was not present, so that you know where it could lead. Then, no matter where the hero chooses to step in or how, you have a baseline from which you can adapt events.

SCALE

A good game is one that fits the characters — neither too big nor too small but just right. This is a question of scale. The game and story have to be made to the right size and shape, or else they and the characters will not mesh correctly. The first step in determining scale is knowing the characters, and abilities, and methods.



SKYBREAKER

GAUGING CHARACTERS

To scale a game correctly, you need a unit of measurement, and that comes from the hero. Consider the character carefully, and then check the story to make sure it fits. The three axes for character measurement are:

POWERS

How strong are the heroes? Chapter One described various power levels, from nonpowered to deific, but powers are more than that. What type of powers does the hero have? Is he or she combat-oriented or cerebral? Defensive or offensive? Protective? Restorative? Travel-oriented? Information-based? Every character's powers fit at least one general type, and possibly several. For example, a hero who is superstrong and can fire energy bolts is combat-oriented, and more offensive than defensive — he can deal out tremendous damage but has no special defences. A heroine with healing powers and force fields is mainly defensive, both protective and restorative — her powers can shield people from harm, and heal damage, but she is not as much use in a direct fight.

METHODOLOGIES

How does the hero handle situations? Methodology was discussed in Chapter Three. Is the hero noble and pure or dark and ruthless? Does he use tools for every occasion, or rely on his own powers alone?

INTERACTIONS

How does the hero relate to others? Is he or she a team player or a lone wolf? Does the hero co-operate with police or wage constant battle with them? Would the hero ever call anyone for help? Can the hero accept orders, or must he or she always be in charge?

ADJUSTING THE SCALE

Once you have studied the characters from those three angles, you should consider the story you have planned. Look at it from every perspective, and decide where it falls along the scale. The three major positions are:

ROUTINE

The story is easy for the hero (and possibly too simple). It does not push the character or force the

character to do anything new or difficult. A lone wolf hero is allowed to operate alone, a fighter is placed in a cosmic arena to fight others, a tool-user has a case where he or she needs multiple tools, and a healer has to help the victims of an attack. All of this fits easily with the character's own levels and methods, but too easily — the outcome of each situation is guaranteed. Stories where the hero obviously wins are not exciting, because they contain no suspense.

CHALLENGING

The story makes the hero go beyond his or her normal levels, or outside normal methods. The team player has to work alone, while the tool-user has to rely on his own wits and innate abilities. The fighter has to think her way out of a situation, and the defensive character has to lead an all-out attack. A good story should challenge the characters on at least one front. The power level might be matched but a different method is required or a new interaction, or the hero's standard methods and interactions fit but the power level is a bit higher than normal.

HIGH-IMPOSSIBLE

The story is hard (and possibly too overwhelming). Either all three areas are challenging — higher power levels, a new methodology, and new interactions — or at least one area is so different the hero is unlikely to succeed. A good story allows for the possibility that the hero will triumph, but requires extra effort; the hero has to go beyond the norm to manage. Surpassing limits is one of the marks of a true hero, but that only goes so far. If the situation looks hopeless, not only does the hero lose faith but so does the player. Always allow some chance for success. It is fine if the hero has to work for it, and work hard, but never set up an adventure where the hero has no chance of winning. The moral code is particularly dangerous here. If the hero believes that all life is sacred, and "winning" requires killing an innocent child, the hero cannot succeed; deviating so wildly from the code would destroy the hero utterly. Small deviations are certainly acceptable. Of course, larger steps in the opposite direction are fine. The hero may be willing and able to kill the villain, but stops herself because that will not solve the immediate problem. Remember that a major descent should not be required for victory!

PACING

A good story requires a good pace, with events unfolding at a deliberate speed. Move things along too slowly and the players lose interest, or cannot see connections. Move events too quickly and the players cannot absorb everything, and lose the details.

The pace of a game needs to match the game's genre. Horror games cannot be run at a drama's pace, and vice-versa — horror requires more build-up, more suspense, and more small surprises, while classic theatrical drama is slower but steady until the end, when everything falls into place in rapid order. Small climaxes can occur, spaced throughout the work, but each one actually results in an increase in overall tension, and usually generates more problems solutions. Superhero games are no exception to the need for genre emulation — they need the same pacing as a superhero comic. What type of pacing do comics have, and how can you mimic that in your game?

HEROIC PACING

A standard superhero comic has only three scene types: conflict, conversation, and introspection. Conflict is any scene where the hero is at odds with someone else. This can be the fight with the villain, an argument with teammates, or a debate with the character's boss. Conversation involves the hero and at least one other character, but those present are not directly at odds, and are exchanging information (whether emotional or logical). Hanging out with friends, chatting with co-workers, or attending a business meeting all count as conversation. Introspection is any scene where the character is alone, and thinking instead of talking. The character can be doing something at the same time, like washing dishes or flying above the city or exercising, but the importance is on the character's thoughts. Most issues of a comic have at least one conflict, one conversation, and one moment of introspection. The exact proportions depend on the character. If the hero is a dark, brooding figure who thinks about every action beforehand, the book will have more introspection than conflict. If the hero is a young hothead guided by instincts instead of knowledge and eager to prove his or her worth, the book will have more conflict. Conflict scenes move more quickly than introspective scenes, and have more energy. Conversation has more potential for humour.

Scenes can also be described as “hero” or “mundane.” Hero refers to scenes where the character is in costume, while mundane is any scene where the character is wearing normal clothes and passing as a “civilian.” A mundane conflict is an argument with the character’s boss, while a hero conflict is a death match with the villain. Mundane conversation is chatting with one’s friends, while hero conversation is co-ordinating rescue efforts with the police and the firefighters. Mundane introspection is the hero thinking while doing laundry, but a hero introspection is the character brooding while leaping from rooftop to rooftop. Mundane scenes are usually not life-or-death; they can be important to the character, but usually the stakes are lower, such as the status of one’s job or promotion, or what movie to see. Hero scenes tend to be high-stake, to save a country, or fight a villain to stop him or her from blowing up a school. Consider the character again — is his or her secret identity just a prop, to be used only when necessary, or does the hero retreat to mundanity whenever possible? Heroes who rarely dress down should have very few mundane scenes, but those who enjoy an active civilian life should have several. Reluctant heroes may have fewer hero scenes as well, since they only put on the costume when absolutely necessary.

The key to pacing is variety. Never run an entire adventure as hero conflict, since some players may lose interest. Drop in a few mundane scenes, and give the characters time to have introspection as well. The contrast makes the scenes of conflict more interesting, and the heroes (both characters and players) are rested and ready to get back into conflict again. The same is true in reverse — an entire adventure in introspection can be seen as boring because “nothing happens.” A story where the hero is wrestling with an important issue, interrupted occasionally by the need to go and save people again, is interesting. Those scenes with conflict allow some breathing space, so the character and the player can stretch a bit and then come back to the introspection refreshed and recharged. Add in a few scenes where the hero communicates with others, and possibly even has a few laughs, and the tension becomes even more overpowering when it returns, by contrast.

DRAMATIC PACING

Putting aside the genre, pacing can also be used to control the dramatic tension. If a scene moves slowly, it feels important, because all time is too valuable to waste on a trivial event. Faster scenes seem less important because they come and go so quickly no one has a chance to absorb their full impact. Powerful scenes, however, start at one speed and then shift gears. For example, a scene in a bank might start quickly, with a basic description of the interior and the people waiting on line. Then three men burst in with guns, and suddenly everything slows to a halt. Now the rest of the scene is described almost in slow motion, every detail of the guns and the men, every expression on the faces of the people held hostage. The scene has power now, and weight, because it is moving at a slower speed. Note that this is not the same as the earlier mention of cinematic and realistic time. That was about having events happen more quickly or more slowly — someone running at less than their top speed, or a police force mobilising more quickly than they really could — than they might otherwise. This is about events being described more quickly or more slowly — the man doesn’t run any faster or slower, but the scene is described as if he were moving in slow motion, or blurring past in an instant.

In comic books, speed is controlled by the number and size of panels. Small panels denote rapid motions, while longer and larger panels show slower events. If an event is only given a single panel, it happens quickly, but if it is shown over a series of panels the event takes some time to unfold. Fights usually take several pages, and each move is shown in its own panel, to linger on the conflict and to provide careful detail.

Imagine your story as a comic book. How many panels does each scene take? How large? If the scene has only one or two panels, it is short — describe it but do not dwell on every small detail. If the scene takes several pages, it is long — go over the details carefully. You may need to practice this to get a feel for how much description is required per “panel.”

MAINTAINING A PACE

No pace can be maintained indefinitely. A slow, steady story has to reach an ending, and if the ending is also slow the story will not feel like it has closed at all. A fast-paced story has to slow down at some

point, or it will feel like a fever dream, too quick and frantic to be important or memorable. Remember to vary the pace of individual scenes. If most of the scenes are slow but a handful are quicker, the overall feel will still be a slow pace, but those faster scenes will help break the monotony. Crisis points should take more time, since they are more important, but resolutions can happen quickly afterward as pieces fall into place. Generally, if a scene adds nothing to the story it should be quick. Watching the character patrol the city is boring unless the character is thinking about important questions at the same time, and so a basic patrol can be handled quickly but an introspective patrol gets more time.

Always keep an eye on your players. If they look bored, you need to pick up the pace. If they look frantic, you should slow the pace down, unless the story is at a crisis point — in that case they may be frantic because the situation is tense, not because they cannot keep up with the pacing. Remember that some characters are more suited to fast-paced stories full of action and others fit better with slower stories about thoughts and decisions. The overall feel of the story should fit the general pace of the characters; if you have both types in the group, keep varying the pace so everyone gets story portions where they feel comfortable.

CLOSURE VS. SPRINGBOARD

One issue when considering pace is whether the story is self-contained. Is this adventure meant to stand alone, or does it lead to a larger story? If the adventure was built as a separate piece, it needs a sense of closure at the end, and that means taking enough time after the climax to tie pieces together in the denouement. Not every detail has to be wrapped up, but enough must be resolved for the story to feel finished. This can be done in one slow scene, but not a fast one; tying things together quickly feels rushed and temporary. That is perfect for a springboard story, however. A quick scene can handle the resolution, and leaves the players feeling as if the story has not ended, as if something more is still coming. Then you can lead right into the next story, and the players will be happy to realise they were right — that adventure may have finished but the larger story continues.

Even a springboard story does require some closure, though. If nothing was resolved at the end,

the adventure will feel like a prelude instead. That may be fine for a single-session story, but if the players have adventured for several sessions they need to know that their actions did have results. Tie a few pieces together, so the players can feel they have accomplished something (or failed at something, but either way they have made a clear difference). Only leave loose threads you want to deal with later. This also gives the players a few hints about what to expect next, and they will have fun guessing and then seeing if they were right.

DISASTERS

When a crisis occurs, heroes react according to their powers and attitude. How should the player decide what his or her hero will do? Ultimately, it comes down to how comfortable the hero is with his or her powers. This is not really about their power levels, though. Far more important is how long the hero has had a power, and what he or she has done with it.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Every hero (like every character) is unique. Take two heroes, give them similar or even identical powers, and let them loose upon a crisis. Both will react differently, based on their experience, morality, and methodology. In some cases, the results can vary dramatically.

As an example, compare Sentinel and Red Phoenix. Both have high Levels of Superstrength and Armour; both can fly; both have devastating attacks. How would they react to an emergency?

The year is 1973, and a novice Red Phoenix is visiting Empire City for her first time. The stage is set when black plumes rise up from across the East River. The anti-industrialist Kaleidoscope set fire to a chemical manufacturing plant in the Bronx, whom she claimed was poisoning the East River. Not only are some of the managers trapped in the building, but the reserve tanks threaten to explode and shower the neighbouring districts with chemical fallout — perhaps not what Kaleidoscope intended, but she doesn't stick around long enough to see what happens.

How would each hero handle the situation? Would they consult with the fire department on

scene, search for the cause, or rush in? Sentinel has 30 years of experience while Phoenix has barely two, yet her need to help is as great. What happens next?

Sentinel, after catching sight of the smoke, soars by. He does one pass to see how far the fire has spread, and who is on-site. His Heightened Senses detect a blur of multi-coloured light leaving the scene: Kaleidoscope's trail. He knows she's already long gone, though, and there are more immediate concerns. He then takes several precious moments to fly by the fire chief, who yells out that people are trapped at the top of the main building. Without wasting another moment, Sentinel flies through the clouds of chemical smoke straight for the burning building.

How would Red Phoenix have handled things? After seeing the smoke, she also flies across the East River to help. As she gets closer, she sees the raging fire, the scrambling fire men, and the burst of rainbow light. She contemplates chasing the speedster, but hears screams from the building and grimly realises other concerns have higher priority. Cursing under her breath, she bypasses the fire fighters and plunges straight for the building.

Based on what the fire chief said, Sentinel knows that most people are on the upper floors. As he zooms past the lower floors, he uses his Heightened Senses to search for anyone that was missed. Reaching the top stories, he sees several people have made it to the roof, while others are trapped a few floors down. He motions for those on the roof to remain calm, and flies to help those inside first.

Red Phoenix saw the people on the roof, but knows there might be people she can't see down below, and the fire hasn't reached the top yet. Believing her Armour sufficient to protect her from harm, she swoops by the firemen and smashes through the blazing lobby, calling out to see if anyone needs help. She slowly swings her Phoenix Blade through the surrounding fire, and uses her Dynamic Powers to "listen" through the flames. Hearing no one down here, she uses the Phoenix Blade to cut her way up through each story, stopping to listen at each.

Sentinel reaches the people trapped below the roof, and gestures for them to step back. Then he carefully pulls out the window frame, being careful to toss it well beyond the firemen below. With the path cleared, he tells everyone to hop onto a boardroom

table, and flies all four of them down at once, before heading back up. Suddenly, Sentinel pauses, as he sees the chemical tanks shaking under pressure! While those trapped on the roof are still in danger, this is a more dire threat. Sentinel reaches the red hot pressure valves before it explodes, and gently releases the stress. He then rescues the last victims.

Red Phoenix finally reaches the upper levels where people are trapped. She then cuts away at the windows, creating a clear path but showering tiny fragments on the men below. She tells everyone to grab on, and flies them somewhat clumsily to safety. Suddenly, Red Phoenix hears the whine of pressure, as the valves are about to explode. She leaps to the far side of the tank and strikes it with her Phoenix Blade — it explodes, but the blast is directly away from the people; in fact, it envelops her. Luckily, her Armour and Force Field keep her alive, and the energy of the Phoenix Blade destroys most of the harmful chemicals.

Both heroes succeeded at their tasks, but Sentinel's experience led him to assess the situation more fully, while Red Phoenix's impetuosity caused harm to herself, and put the people at greater risk than she wanted.

INSTINCTS VS. TRAINING

One thing to consider is how much training, if any, the hero has for these situations. In the example above, what if a man was trapped on a lower floor, and the hero tore through the debris to find him. The whole structure could collapse, putting everyone else at serious risk. Luckily, this building was stable, but in another, Red Phoenix's actions could have made things worse. On the other hand, by essentially ignoring the lower floors, Sentinel might have missed someone the firefighters did not know about it. By following her instincts, Red Phoenix reassured herself that no one would be left behind.

LIABILITIES

Many experienced heroes fall into a trap of predictability. They have mastered their powers, and their techniques, and use the tried and true method for every emergency. These routines may cause someone to fail to consider other avenues. For normal people, this may simply mean missed opportunities; for a superhero, it can mean being blindsided by a

villain, or caught flatfooted when events turn unexpectedly.

Those with flight may forget that other people can also fly and can drop on them from above. Powerhouses, meanwhile, tend to charge into a situation after only a cursory glance, secure in their own strength. A mental attack, however, could drive the hero to his or her knees in an instant, and a simple blackout bomb would leave the hero stumbling around, causing more destruction in minutes than a team of wreckers could do in an hour.

Every power builds overconfidence — after all, these are superheroes. A wise hero learns not only his or her abilities but also any limitations, and remembers to watch for the unexpected.

DISASTER RELIEF

Three different completely different disasters are presented herein, and examples of how four different kinds of heroes might respond. For these examples, the Powerhouse has superstrength, superspeed, invulnerability, and flight — Lady Starbright is a good example, although she has more varied powers than most. The Acrobat has excellent strength, speed, and endurance, and senses — Archer Gold is a classic low-powered Acrobat. The Psychic has powerful psychic abilities, including Telepathy and Telekinesis — Britannia, is a model Psychic. The Technosmith has no innate physical abilities, but can create high-tech tools, and is carrying several — White Hat is the consummate Technosmith. These are only a few of the heroic types available, of course, but they should demonstrate how much heroic approaches can vary. If a player's character does not match any of these types, just consider that type instead. How would a speedster react, or an elemental? Remember, also, that these are only rough guidelines. Each hero will behave differently, and players should always decide for themselves how their heroes will react.

EARTHQUAKE

This is a natural disaster, so no one is to blame. The localised tremors will not spread to a different region, but they can cover several kilometres; the heroes have a lot of ground to cover. Earthquakes weaken buildings, collapse houses, and create rifts in the ground that can swallow people, vehicles, and

even buildings. Each individual quake is over quickly, but earthquakes often occur in clusters, as each one in turn makes the tectonic plates even more unstable.

POWERHOUSE: Lady Starbright flies over the area, studying the quake and locating its epicentre. Then she flies down, slicing into the ground with a starlight laser, right at that spot. Earthquakes are caused by the shifting of tectonic plates, and so Starbright creates a strong energy lattice to steady the plates, stilling the earthquake and preventing additional tremors. She slowly removes it, causing the ground to settle more gradually. Then she flies back to the surface, rescuing people who have fallen into rifts and reinforcing weakened buildings before they can collapse.

ACROBAT: Archer Gold heads straight for the epicentre, where the damage will be most severe. Once there, he leaps into a collapsing building, searching quickly for anyone trapped there — his Heightened Awareness will help locate even hidden victims. Doors are kicked in and thin walls smashed through, but heavier rubble has to be cleared with specialised tools, like exploding arrows. Any survivors are carried quickly back outside before Archer Gold rushes back in. His high Body / [[Dexterity]] and Acrobatics help him slip through the tottering ruins, twisting and dodging past buckling walls and floors until everyone is outside safely.

PSYCHIC: Britannia uses her Telepathy to glean from emergency rescue officials that it seemed natural, not artificial. She floats above the ruins with her Telekinesis, scanning for minds trapped in the disaster. Locating a family caught in a blocked basement, she slowly pulls the debris away with her mind, while simultaneously reassuring them by telepathically calming their panic.

TECHNOSMITH: White Hat scans the area by patching into a spy satellite far above. She locates the earthquake's epicenter and notes the position of anyone trapped in nearby buildings. She races to the centre of the disaster on her hover-bike, and then zips amongst the buildings, looking for survivors. She forces security systems to act as her eyes, and convinces computer systems to provide power to automatic doors and frozen elevators, creating a way out.

BOMB SCARE

A maniac has planted a bomb in a building, and claims that it will explode shortly, killing everyone in the area. This can be prevented if the hero can locate the bomb before it detonates and remove it to someplace safe.

POWERHOUSE: Lady Starbright flies through the building, urging everyone to evacuate. She does a quick search for anything suspicious and finds nothing. With the building cleared, she does a more detailed search, and locates the bomb just as its counter hits two seconds. Starbright immediately grabs the bomb, flies straight through the roof at top speed, and then hurls the bomb skyward with an energy push. The bomb explodes, its shock waves knocking Starbright backwards but not causing any other damage.

ACROBAT: Archer Gold arrives at the scene and immediately scans the crowd and the nearby buildings. Surely a maniac would stay close enough to watch the explosion! Archer Gold suddenly fires at a nearby rooftop, and pins a man to a chimney, trapping him there. Why that particular man? He had a camera on a tripod-mount, suggesting he knew about the bomb early enough to set up his gear for a good view. After a few seconds of intimidation, the man cracks and confesses that he planted the bomb. He then stuck around to watch. Archer Gold goes straight to the bomb's location, but the man lied about how much time was left: only two seconds! Gold shoots an arrow to slice all the wires at once, and the timer stops! Then the hero binds the maniac and leaves him there with the remains of his device for the police to find.

PSYCHIC: Britannia scans the crowd, picking up the bombers thoughts. She then grabs him in a Telekinetic grip, and drags him into the building. She tells him if he doesn't confess he'll blow up too. He still refuses to talk, but it was just a ruse to cause him to think about the answer. Britannia plucks it from him mind, and races to find the bomb. She encloses it in a powerful force field, keeping it from doing any damage when it explodes.

TECHNOSMITH: White Hat uses her minicomputer to scan the building for explosive traces. She quickly locates the bomb, and uses her skills to dismantle the device. White Hat then analyses the remains of the device, isolates a fingerprint, runs that through her portable computer, and identifies the maniac. The

police are informed, and the man is apprehended soon thereafter.

HOSTILE TAKEOVER

This is also a manmade disaster, but very different from the bomb scare. A hostile takeover is a military and/or political action, and involves a large number of men and women all working together. In this example, the takeover involves a military force surrounding the capital, while an elite squad sneaks into the capital building and assassinates the current ruler. Bombs and earthquakes have specific starting points, but hostile takeovers cover a larger area, and locating the mastermind(s) may be difficult. Even if located, the takeover may continue as planned, since each person involved has specific orders to follow.

POWERHOUSE: Lady Starbright flies down in front of the military force. She uses her Dynamic Powers to flip over their tanks and jeeps, and then knocks out the soldiers with wide-angled powerblasts. Meanwhile, the elite squad sneaks into the capital building. Starbright interrogates a hostage and learns of the second part of the plan. She flies at top speed into the capital building, and arrives just in time to deflect a bullet aimed at the ruler. The elite squad is then blinded by star flares and captured in energy rings, and the takeover is officially defeated.

ACROBAT: Archer Gold realises he is no match for the entire military force, and decides to protect the ruler instead. He arrives at the capital building in time to see the elite squad sneaking in. Leaping up a tree and into the second floor, the hero surprises the squad and quickly disarms them with a flurry of well placed arrows. As they turn to run, a second flight of gas-grenade arrows knocks them out. Then Archer Gold informs the ruler, who sends his own military to deal with the opposing force.

PSYCHIC: When Britannia learns of the takeover, she rushes to the ruler's side. Britannia warns the ruler of what is happening, and swears to stand by him. When the elite squad arrives, she telekinetically blocks their bullets, reflecting them back! They men surrender, and when she probes one mentally, Britannia learns that the ruler's vice-president is behind the *coup d'état*. Britannia hunts down the vice-president, while simultaneously helping the army defeat the other soldiers.

TECHNOSMITH: White Hat picks up a transmission

from the elite squad and immediately speeds to the ruler's aid. Using a cloaking device, she avoids the military force. White Hat jams their communications, and convinces their targeting systems to only aim at each other, effectively paralysing the heavy weapons. Leaving the ruler's army to deal with them, she zooms to the capital building. The elite squad is dragging the ruler outside to execute him, but a taser-net entangles them! White Hat disarms them before binding the squad members with magnetic shackles.

SUPERHERO TEMPLATES

Those who dislike superhero comics claim that they all read the same way: the villain does something bad and taunts the hero, the hero rises to the challenge, the two battle, and the hero wins. This is partially true — the superhero genre does have certain established story templates — but every other genre does as well. This can be a distinct advantage to GMs, though. When creating a superhero story, you can use a template as the basic framework, and then customise it to fit your particular needs and the players' characters.

WORKING WITH TEMPLATES

Templates are an excellent tool, provided they are not overused. A template should give you a basic structure, but only that — do not take specifics from them. After all, the players are also superhero fans, and know the same basic stories you do. If they start an adventure where a hero dies and returns to life as a powerful cosmic force engulfed in flame, they may recognise the story and know exactly how it ends. Strip away everything but the basics — hero dies and returns to life changed. Then take a close look at your goals, your players' goals, and their characters' goals for the adventure. Is this a game about revelation? Perhaps the hero's return signals the start of an ancient prophecy, or hints that Death has been usurped by a new entity. Is the game about self-discovery? Perhaps one of the heroes brought this person back from the dead. Suit the story to the characters, and to what you want from an adventure.

The other thing to remember when dealing with templates is that they only describe the beginning of a story. What happens after the hero and the villain meet will depend on the hero's actions. Never dictate

the outcome of an encounter with the PCs, even if the original story's outcome is one you like. The adventure belongs to the players as much as it does to any GM, and they will alter the story in new and interesting ways. You may wind up with an ending that is even more exciting than the one from the original story, since everyone pitched in and created the ultimate storyline.

BASIC TEMPLATES

Most superhero story templates start the same way, with something bad happening. From there they expand, based on the villain's actions and how the hero learns of the situation. Some templates begin with a good event, or a neutral one, and unfold to reveal either a negative side effect or that the event was not as pleasant as it appeared.

Here are a few basic story templates for superhero stories. These are only a handful, and many more exist. If you pick up a superhero comic book and read it, then stop to study the basic storyline, you will probably find one of the templates, though it may be well concealed. A good writer can use a familiar template and yet build a completely original story on top of it, by not letting the template dictate anything beyond the bare essentials.

1. The villain kidnaps one of the hero's friends, and uses him or her as bait in a bizarre death-trap intended for the hero.
2. A dead hero returns, alive again and changed somehow.
3. An old foe escapes from prison after vowing revenge on the hero.
4. The hero is invited to join a superhero team, and decides to check out the team and consider the offer.
5. The hero's mentor disappears under mysterious circumstances.
6. Crimes are occurring, and they have the same pattern as crimes committed by a long-dead criminal.
7. The hero is framed for a crime.
8. The hero loses his memory and/or powers.
9. Someone masquerades as the hero.

10. A villain holds a political leader hostage and demands that the hero face him or her.
11. A building or street or city disappears, and a villain claims responsibility.
12. A new hero enters the scene with remarkable powers.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The next step up from a template is the adventure seed. These are the germs of an adventure, just a few sentences about a story. The advantage of adventure seeds is that they can form the start of an adventure, but the GM must flesh out all the details. Consequently, two GMs could use the same adventure seed and end up with completely different stories. The other advantage is that an adventure seed can be dropped into an existing story as a subplot. If the heroes ignore it, the GM has not made any significant effort to develop the seed and so is not upset. If the heroes develop an interest in the subplot, however, the GM has the start of a secondary story or even a follow-up adventure.

A few adventure seed ideas are presented below.

ESCAPE OF THE OVERLORD!

The evil mastermind known only as the Overlord has escaped! That should be impossible — the cell was the most secure form of confinement ever built, at the centre of the nation's strongest, most advanced prison. And yet this morning the villain was gone without a trace. No one knows where or how, but one thing is certain — the Overlord will not lay silent for long. The real problem is that no one knows what this villain looks like! Even the doctors and psychologists who examined the Overlord cannot remember the villain's appearance, age, or even gender. It could be anyone!

NATURE'S CRY

The world has gone berserk! Animals are attacking people for no reason, trees are toppling on cars and busses, vines are strangling hikers, rivers are suddenly swamping boats. It is as if Mother Nature is angry at her human children, and wants them all dead! But why? Humanity has certainly not been kind to the environment, but why would the planet launch an attack now? Has something new happened, some significant threat to the world? Or is

this just Earth's way of telling humanity to behave? Either way, the heroes will have to do something before the only safe place to live is outer space!

WIELDER OF THE ARC

The Arc is a mystical energy-blade that puts Excalibur to shame. No one knows where the Arc came from, or who created it, but it has appeared throughout recent history (and possibly longer), each time wielded by a different individual. Some of these wielders have been great heroes, others terrible villains, but the Arc's wielder always leave a mark on history. Now, after more than a decade, the Arc has returned! But the new wielder is a complete mystery. The heroes need to know — is this a powerful new ally, or a deadly new foe?

A LEGEND RESTORED

For 20 years, the hero known as Fearless was one of the most famous and most respected of all superheroes. His exploits are legendary, and children still pretend to be him when playing games of make-believe. A decade ago, Fearless hung up his cape and mask and retired, saying that he was growing old and his time had passed. He disappeared from sight, and the world mourned its loss.

But now Fearless is back! And he seems more powerful than ever! How is that possible? Has the great veteran really returned? If so, how did he regain his youth and vigour? If not, who is this pretending to be the great Fearless? The heroes are drawn to the story, of course. After all, most of them idolised Fearless, and many still do. If someone is trying to steal his name, he or she will face a reckoning!

WAR CRIMES

Impossible! Captain Jack arrested? The dashing superhero has been captured by NATO forces, and rumours say that he will stand trial before the UN — for war crimes! How could the charismatic hero, the epitome of style and class and honour, be guilty of such a thing? Sources say the charges are serious, and surely the UN would not try such a respected figure without impressive evidence. Can it be true? Or is Captain Jack being framed? If so, who could be behind this?

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#101



#ERIC PERSONA

HEROIC PERSONAE

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Eleven new characters are presented in this chapter for GMs to drop into their campaigns, or for players to use as models, inspiration, or plot hooks. They range from the outlaw group of metahuman heroes, the Untouchables, to new torch bearers like Corbae (II) and Archer Gold (III), to powerful icons like Lady Starbright.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The name of Archer Gold bears a heavy mantle of honour, and tragedy. Owen Robertson has seen both his parents, and his mentor murdered by supervillains. Would it take much more to push him to the line, where heroism and villainy blur? What if his love were killed? Or a young ward? Archer Gold might decide that incarcerating masked criminals at the Carousel only prolongs the horrors these monsters propagate. It would be better to end them. Can the heroes stop Archer Gold before he crosses the line and kills, and can they remind him of what Archer Gold stands for?

As the other side of this coin, Archer Gold could make an excellent advisor to another hero going through this same dilemma. Because Robertson has suffered so much, he has worked out his answers to why they must never kill; while every man and woman must decide these things for him or herself, Archer Gold may be able to console the grief stricken.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

When Iron Duke and the Haud steal the Olympus Diamond, the heroes know there is trouble. Things become more frantic when the trail leads towards London, to old haunts and secret vaults. Is he searching for a piece of his past? What will the Diamond allow him — and the Haud — to accomplish?

It's little surprise when Britannia appears, wondering what exactly is occurring. But things get more complicated when the Magistrate appears, hot on the Haud's trail. How will the heroes, who are probably American, handle the British attitude and Commonwealth rivalry? And will the British Empire's information on the Ghost Lions or Project Lotus be revealed?

ETERNAL FLAME

With Lady Starbright's death, the world mourned. But there is a place — a need — for her replacement. The Nimbus search for an upstanding and noble individual, to bequeath upon him or her their power. This person could be a blood relative of Angela Douglas, or even her child. Perhaps he or she was raised in secrecy, arranged for by Sentinel, and is only now ready to receive Starbright's legacy. This would be a good origin for a character with the Unknown Superhuman Power Attribute.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

This West Coast group is the ideal example of heroes who fight against public opinion as much as actual villainy. The Untouchables have no corporate backing and no official sanction. In truth, the authorities consider all of them fugitives for past crimes. The media often portrays them as dangerous menaces, or at least questionable protectors. Police and other law enforcement officials are as likely to target the Untouchables as dangerous felons on the scene, and will only hesitatingly work with the group if another clear and present danger puts people at risk.

Despite this, the Untouchables continue to aid other people. They wander up and down the West Coast, with no fixed residence, helping anyone in need. Their purpose is manifold: in addition to simply helping people, they attempt to demonstrate metahumans can be noble and selfless, and are not to be feared or hated. Some people are slowly getting that message — though the media and the law still dislike them, small portions of the public now appreciate the Untouchables, and even admire them. After all, this group of individuals helps people with no thought of reward and no desire for fame, and they have no one subsidising their missions.

Membership in the Untouchables is determined entirely by the group's leader, Anasazi. He specifically seeks metahumans who need guidance and support, and invites them to join. In many ways the Untouchables are more a family than a standard hero team, with Anasazi acting as older brother and mentor, with the others as his once-lost siblings. His goal is to teach his family to use their powers more responsibly, and to provide a good example to humans and metahumans alike.

ANASAZI (200 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

SKULKER LEVEL 10; 240 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Unknown**OCCUPATION:** Traveller, teacher, mentor**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Amazing Presentations, Vol. III #126**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Canyon de Chelly, Arizona**AFFILIATION:** The Untouchables**TERRITORY:** West Coast**HEIGHT:** 6'2" (188 cm) **EYES:** Dark Blue**WEIGHT:** 200 lbs. (91 kg) **HAIR:** White

The man known as Anasazi of the Navajo tribe (or "Dineh") was born circa 1850. Few know of his past, for he guards it closely and does not truly understand it himself. As a young man, he was caught up in his people's war for survival — against other tribes, the New Mexicans, and the greatest threat of all, the Americans. He was among the last holdouts in Canyon de Chelly when Colonel "Kit" Carson forced the Navajo to surrender. He was wounded and left for dead at the base of Spider Rock, a holy red sandstone monolith. There, he had a vision of Spider Woman saving him; she taught him the Power of stone, and responsibility for his people. Did the Holy One really exist, or was the near-death experience enough to trigger latent metahuman powers in him? It matters little, for he believed he had been chosen. He arose, renamed "Anasazi," after the lost elders, and followed his people.

Anasazi made the Long Walk to Fort Sumner with his tribe, and wept as many starved and died along the trail. While he could not change their fate, Anasazi helped those he could. He lived with them at Sumner, although he would often leave the reservation to help those who continued to resist. When the Navajo finally were allowed to return to their sacred lands, he returned with them as a leader and hero.

As the years passed, and Anasazi did not age like most men, he knew he could not stay on the reservation forever. He had to do more in life to effect true change. He travelled the Americas and the world, learning of other metahumans. Anasazi kept a low profile while searching for answers and did not reveal himself for many decades.

Finally, in 1959, Anasazi met the American Sentinel in Death Valley, where they discovered and destroyed a nest of Haud soldiers. Each man learned respect for the other, but they would not meet again for years. They spoke again shortly after Lady Starbright's funeral, and Sentinel asked him to join the Guard. Anasazi did not believe that was his destiny, however, for he knew an ill wind was building. The disenfranchised and forgotten needed help, so they would not simply become the tragedy of a new generation. They parted amiably, with the Guard acting as the role of public legends, while Anasazi reached out to the outcasts and downtrodden.

Drifter was his first student, a lost boy desperately trying to be a dashing rogue. They travelled for many years, and became fast friends. Drifter has to learn to face his fears, which is difficult because his power is escape.

Legacy, the second of the Untouchables, was a lone wolf that US agents were hunting. Anasazi knows Legacy still isn't sure this is his place, but a second chance is no damn good if people won't let go of the past.

White Hat, Skybreaker, and Raze are three of a kind, though Raze is wilder and angrier than the other two ever were. White Hat is a favoured "little sister," although Raze demands more attention. Skybreaker, meanwhile, has made Anasazi proud for turning towards the public good. All are lost children who need a family, even if it's as strange and peculiar as this one.

BODY 14
MIND 10
SOUL 12

ATTACK COMBAT VALUE 13
DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE 11
HEALTH POINTS 150

STR 28 **DEX** 28 **CON** 32 **INT** 20 **WIS** 24 **CHA** 24
REF +16 **FORT** +16 **WILL** +14 **BASE TO HIT MODIFIER** +8
BASE AC MODIFIER +10 **HIT POINTS** 190

TRI-STAT			d20 SYSTEM		
LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS	
1	3	Attack Combat Mastery	1	(0)	
5	5	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Blind Fighting, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes x2)	5	(4)	
1	2	Defence Combat Mastery	1	(0)	
2	2	Divine Relationship	2	2	
1	8	Extra Attacks	1	(0)	
1	3	Extra Defences	1	(0)	
2	2	Heightened Awareness	2	(1)	
13	13	Highly Skilled	2	(1)	
1	2	Tough	1	2	

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
2	2	Adaptation (Cold, Heat)	3	2
5	40	Damage Conversion (Armour works with Conversion)	5	(35)
-4		• Restriction (Damage Conversion; Only against Physical Attacks)		-4
-6		• Restriction (Damage Conversion; Apply Character Points to Immovable and Mass Increase only)		-6
6	12	Enhanced Body	-	-
-	-	Enhanced Strength/Dexterity/Constitution	2/2/2	(10)
2	2	Immovable	2	2
-1		• Restriction (Immovable; Only when touching the Earth)		-1
3	6	Invisibility (Partial; Sight, Hearing, Smell)	3	6
-2		• Restriction (Invisibility; Only in non-urban areas)		-2
6	18	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)	6	(13)
1	8	Mass Increase	1	8
2	2	Mind Shield	2	2
3	12	Special Attack "Meld into Earth" (80 / [4d6+8] Damage, Incapacitating vs. Soul / [Wisdom], Melee, No Damage, Slow)	3	12
2	2	Special Defence (Ageing, Disease)	2	2
3	3	Special Movement (Cat-Like, Light-Footed, Untrackable)	3	(1)

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
3	6	Artisan (Woodworking)	2
4	8	Cultural Arts (History)	3
4	8	Foreign Culture (American, other Native bands)	3
2	6	Intimidation (Political)	4
3	3	Languages (Navajo, English, Hopi, Spanish)	3
2	6	Medical (Emergency Response)	2
4	16	Military Sciences (Strategy)	6
3	6	Navigation (Wilderness)	2
2	8	Police Sciences (Criminology)	3
3	3	Riding (Horse)	2
2	4	Occult (Navajo shamanism)	2
3	9	Stealth (Concealment)	6
3	9	Urban Tracking (Residential)	6
4	4	Wilderness Survival (Desert)	2
4	8	Wilderness Tracking (Desert)	7
2	16	Thrown Weapons (Blades)	2
2	16	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)	4
3	24	Unarmed Defence (Throws)	6

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Is'm (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal)	-1
-1	Recurring Nightmares (Visions of the past)	-1
-1	Significant Other (Untouchables)	-1
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-1
-2	Wanted (By various government agencies)	-2

ARCHER GOLD III (125 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

COSTUMED FIGHTER LEVEL 4; 150 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Owen Robertson**OCCUPATION:** Student, Olympic athlete, adventurer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Caliburn & Archer Gold #1 (Owen Robertson, as a boy),
Archer Gold Limited Series #6 (as Archer Gold III)**FORMER ALIASES:** Black Shaft**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Arlington, VA**AFFILIATION:** Archer Gold (II)**TERRITORY:** Washington, D.C.**HEIGHT:** 6' (183 cm)**EYES:** Brown**WEIGHT:** 210 lbs. (95 kg)**HAIR:** Black

Archer Gold is an American icon, like the flag, or apple pie. There have been several Archer Golds, from as early as the First World War. His image is perhaps the most patriotic of American heroes, making him more of a US symbol than even Sentinel. Archer Gold is a representative of mythic America — the dreams and promise of what America should be.

The first Archer Gold was a man named Phil G. Bryant. He was an Olympic athlete with two gold medals for archery. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Bryant put on a mask to do his part, even if his country was reluctant to enter WWI. Gold caused a groundswell of support for masks when he enlisted in full costume. He maintained a respected status and high profile after WWI, and always pushed for Americans to do their best. In WWII, although dwarfed by the American Sentinel and Muzhik, he was always loved by the folks back home. Many Americans were devastated and wept when (the elderly) Archer Gold retired after being humiliated by Senator McCarthy.

The mantle was taken up by Bryant's son, Charles Sandy Bryant. Charles used the mask to voice his political views, which were often critical of the administration. He maintained a great deal of anger for the way his father had been treated, and acted as a spokesman for the forgotten and underrepresented. He made many friends among the Vietnam veterans, political activists, and union leaders. Charles also used less deadly force than his father did, and pioneered many "trick arrows." He forged a strong friendship with Ema'Ge (Slipstream) during the '70s, and the speedster helped him perfect his inventions.

By the late '80s, Charles had made enough from several patents to "retire," devoting his time to crime-fighting. He also took in a young ward, Owen Robertson, the son of a family friend. Owen was a natural shot, and within a few years became Archer Gold's sidekick. Charles also involved himself with a femme fatale, the sultry Alice, Queen of Hearts. Their stormy relationship ended with a gunshot, when Archer Gold tried to stop one of Alice's missions.

Owen Robertson has lost a great deal to the world's supervillains. His parents were killed by Torque in the crossfire of a gang war, and his mentor was murdered by his own lover. Yet, as tough as the world ever got, Owen knew that symbols like Archer Gold were important. He took up Charles's bow and "graduated" from sidekick to superhero, becoming the third Archer Gold.

Owen knew all of Charles's tricks and secrets, and has put them to good use. It has taken him years to get past his sidekick image, although the hero community has embraced him for longer than he knows. Archer Gold still maintains a home in the nation's capital, primarily concerning himself with gang activities and mafia investments. He has partnered successfully with

BODY 8
MIND 8
SOUL 11

ATTACK COMBAT VALUE 10
DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE 10
HEALTH POINTS 95

STR 15 **DEX** 22 **CON** 17 **INT** 16 **WIS** 20 **CHA** 24
REF +9 **FORT** +6 **WILL** +6 **BASE TO HIT MODIFIER** +5
BASE AC MODIFIER +9 **HIT POINTS** 42

TRI-STAT		CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES		d20 SYSTEM	
LVL	PTS			RANK	PTS
1	3	Attack Combat Mastery		1	(0)
10	10	Combat Technique (Accuracy x4, Blind Shooting, Block Ranged Attack, Lightning Reflexes, One Shot Left, Steady Hand x2)		10	(8)
3	6	Defence Combat Mastery		3	6
2	8	Extra Attacks		2	8
		• Reduction (-4; Extra Attacks; Only for bow / arrow attacks)			
1	1	Extra Defences		1	(0)
		• Reduction (-2; Extra Defences; Only when using Block Defence with arrows)			
4	8	Gadgeteer		4	8
	-2	• Restriction (Gadgeteer; Only for trick arrows)			-2
4	4	Heightened Awareness		4	4
10	10	Highly Skilled		8	8
7	21	Item of Power (Trick Arrows; Easy to Steal; see below)		7	21
	-2	• Restriction (Consumable; Arrows must be recovered or rebuilt)			-2
2	4	Massive Damage (Arrows)		2	4
2	4	Organisational Ties (DC Police)		2	4

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
3	3	Divine Relationship	3	3

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
3	18	Acrobatics (Balance)	7
4	8	Artisan (Fletching)	3
4	12	City Knowledge (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown)	3
3	9	Intimidation (Street)	7
3	9	Stealth (Camouflage)	7
3	6	Street Sense (Gang Activity)	3
3	9	Urban Tracking (Underworld)	3
5	35	Archery (Bow)	3
2	24	Ranged Defence (Personal)	3

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-2	Famous (Archer Gold; Internationally)	-2
-2	Nemesis (Alice, Queen of Hearts)	-2
-1	Sensory Impairment (Injured by Torque as a child — No sense of smell)	-1
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-2

the new Corbae, and, like his predecessor, calls Slipstream a friend. Currently, Archer Gold has been working closely with Detective Monica King of the D.C. police, and hopes to earn a sanctioned status.

ARCHER GOLD'S TRICK ARROWS

Arrows that have the Disability Self-Destruct break during combat, and must be rebuilt; the other arrows have the Limited Shots Disability, and can often be recovered from the field and reused. His quiver holds up to 24 arrows.

LVL	PTS	ITEM OF POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS	LVL	PTS	ITEM OF POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
4	16	Special Attack "Diamond Tip" (40 / [2d6+4] Damage, Accurate, Penetrating; Armour x3, Hand-Held, Limited Shots)	4	16	2	2 (4)	Special Attack "Web-Arrow" x2 (80 / [4d6+8] Damage, Area Effect x2, Tangle, Hand-Held, No Damage, Self-Destruct)	2	2 (4)
4	4	Special Attack "Sonic Boomer" (100 / [5d6+10] Damage, Area Effect, Enduring, Flare: Audible, Homing, Incapacitating, Hand-Held, Inaccurate, Limited Shots x2, No Damage, Stoppable, Toxic, Unreliable)	4	4	1	1 (2)	Special Attack "Incendiary Flare" x2 (20 / [1d6+2] Damage, Burning, Enduring, Flare x4, Indirect, Long Range, Hand-Held, Inaccurate, Self-Destruct, Stoppable x2)	1	1 (2)
3	3 (6)	Special Attack "Door-Knocker Shaped Charge" x2 (40 / [2d6+4] Damage, Burning, Flare, Knockback x2, Spreading x2, Hand-Held, Self-Destruct)	3	3 (6)	1	1 (2)	Special Attack "Mine Arrow" x2 (60 / [3d6+6] Damage, Area Effect, Knockback, Trap, Hand-Held, Self-Destruct)	1	1 (2)
					1	1	Special Attack "Bolo Arrow" (40 / [2d6+4] Damage, Tangle, Hand-Held, No Damage, Limited Shots)	1	1

BRITANNIA (250 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

PSYCHIC LEVEL 7; 275 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Christine "Kit" Grayle (Secret)**OCCUPATION:** Adventurer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Caliburn #12 (as Kit Grayle), Slipstream #77 (as Britannia; flashback)**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** London, England**AFFILIATION:** Friendly with MI5 and Scotland Yard**TERRITORY:** Great Britain**HEIGHT:** 5'7" (170 cm) **EYES:** Blue**WEIGHT:** 120 lbs. (55 kg) **HAIR:** Silver

Christine "Kit" Grayle was born in London to a powerful family of old money. Kit was a vivacious reader, but quite reserved. Her father was Raymond Grayle, a Director of Counter Terrorism in MI5 (Britain's Security Service), but her mother died when Kit was very young. Perhaps because of her father's grandiose life, Kit was shy and introverted, always downplaying her abilities and appearance. Unfortunately, her lineage made her a valuable commodity.

Years before Kit was born, Raymond conflicted with the murderous Janus. By the end, Raymond teamed up with Caliburn to defeat Janus. In the process, Raymond and the Welsh knight became fast friends — a fact Janus never forgot. Janus escaped from prison in 1981, and laid the foundation of a plan to use the Grayles to get back at Caliburn. What better way to summon a knight back to England than a "Grayle" quest?

Kit had turned 16 the night Janus kidnapped her. Raymond was terrified for Kit, and placed a desperate call for help. Caliburn told Raymond he'd come immediately, and urged him to wait, but Raymond refused. Raymond deciphered Janus's taunting clues and rushed after them to Leeds Castle.

Leeds Castle was rumoured to be haunted by a black hound, an omen of death. As a child, Kit loved the story, but now it made her ill with fear. Kit was locked in a tower room and left isolated ... until the black dog visited her. Was it real, or just a shock-induced hallucination? It stared at Kit with baleful eyes, but vanished at a distant boom.

Raymond stormed the Castle single-handedly. The dog watched him, unseen — somehow, Kit saw him through the dog's eyes. She saw the trap Janus laid, and desperately tried to warn her father. The hound's appearance startled Raymond, however, and Janus took the fortuitous opportunity to kill him. Kit screamed in horror and anguish, and retreated inside her head.

Caliburn arrived a few hours later. He appeared to sense the dog's gaze, but did not allow it ... her ... to distract him. Kit saw his outrage and fury at discovering Raymond's corpse, and watched him avoid Janus's deathtraps. When Janus escaped onto the castle's roof, Kit made the dog appear and lunge. Janus fell into the mists, and was presumed dead.

Kit was near catatonic when Caliburn found her. Legally, she was now a ward of the state, but colleagues of Raymond promised to take care of her. Unfortunately, Caliburn did not know Sir Robert Freeman, or his secret metahuman group, the Ghost Lions. Freeman's doctors not only brought Kit out of shock, but also determined the extent of her psychic abilities. Confused and alone, Kit fell into her studies, learning to master her tremendous potential. Freeman was amazed to discover she was one of Britain's most powerful mentalists.

Freeman's training could not shake Kit's moral convictions, however. She proved to be an excellent teacher, but useless in the field. She did not have the killer instinct Freeman required. Freeman was forced to keep her as a trainer, where she even taught young Alice Kitterling (who became the fabled assassin, Queen of Hearts). As the Ghost Lions operations became more unsavoury, Kit found herself tormented. Eventually, she fled and went to MI5 for help.

Kit found true friends of her father, and they listened to what she had to say. The Ghost Lions were brought down in part because of Kit's testimony. Kit, finally 18, was independent but directionless. MI5 offered her a place. Although initially uncertain, she has found friends within the organisation. They helped complete her training, and established her identity as Britannia, the United Kingdom's most prominent defender.

BODY	7	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	11
MIND	14	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	8/13
SOUL	10	HEALTH POINTS	85

STR	14	DEX	14	CON	16	INT	30	WIS	28	CHA	20
REF	+4	FORT	+5	WILL	+17	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER			+4		
BASE AC MODIFIER						+7			HIT POINTS 53		

TRI-STAT		d20 SYSTEM	
LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	RANK PTS
1	3	Attack Combat Mastery	1 3
4	4	Combat Technique (Telepathic Fighting Style — Blind Fighting, Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes)	4 4
-1		• Restriction (Combat Technique works only against organic subjects with a Mind Stat of 2 / [Int of 4] or greater)	-1
5	10	Defence Combat Mastery	5 (8)
-1		• Restriction (Defence Combat Mastery works only against organic subjects with a Mind Stat of 2 / [Int of 4] or greater)	-1
1	8	Extra Attacks	1 8
1	3	Extra Defences	1 3
2	2	Features (Attractive x2)	2 2
8	8	Highly Skilled	1 (0)
1	2	Massive Damage (Telekinetic attacks)	1 2
4	8	Organisational Ties (MI5)	4 8
1	3	Wealth (Inheritance)	1 3

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK PTS
5	5	Block Power (Psychic Screen — Illusion, Metamorphosis, Mind Control, Nullify, Sensory Block)	5 5
3	12	Flight (Telekinetic)	3 12
-1		• Detectable (Flight; Psychic energy, blue glow)	-1
4	29	Force Field (Telekinetic — Stops 100 / [50]; Area 4; Duration 6; Range 3; Both Directions)	4 (24)
-1		• Detectable (Force Field; Psychic energy, blue glow)	-1
3	15	Illusion (Two senses, Sight and Hearing; Area 4; Duration 2; Targets 3)	3 (13)
-1		• Restriction (Illusion works only against organic subjects with a Mind Stat of 2 / [Int of 4] or greater)	-1
4	27	Mind Control (Area 3; Range 2; Targets 2)	4 (22)
-1		• Restriction (Mind Control works only against organic subjects with a Mind Stat of 2 / [Int of 4] or greater)	-1
3	3	Mind Shield	3 (2)
5	27	Telekinesis (Area 4; Range 3)	5 27
-1		• Detectable (Telekinesis; Psychic energy, blue glow)	-1
8	38	Telepathy (Area 5; Range 5; Targets 4)	8 (32)
-1		• Restriction (Telepathy works only against organic subjects with a Mind Stat of 2 / [Int of 4] or greater)	-1

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
2	6	City Knowledge (London: Downtown)	5
3	6	Cultural Arts (Literature)	5
1	1	Etiquette (Upper Class)	3
3	6	Foreign Culture (American, French, German)	9
3	3	Languages (English, French, German, Russian)	4
3	12	Police Sciences (Criminology)	5
2	16	Power Usage: Telekinesis	10
2	14	Melee Defence (Telekinesis)	5
1	12	Ranged Defence (Telekinesis)	5
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Telekinesis)	3
3	24	Thrown Weapons (Telekinesis)	5

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-2	Famous (Britannia, internationally)	-2
-	Incomplete Training (No Special Attack at Level 3 nor Sixth Sense at Level 4)	-5
-2	Nemesis (Alice, Queen of Hearts, Janus, Kreuzritter)	-2
-1	Owned (MI5)	-1
-2	Phobia (Janus)	-2
-1	Recurring Nightmares (Father's death)	-1
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-2
-1	Unique Defect (Uncontrollable Power; When in the throes of nightmares, she will subconsciously manifest the Illusion of the black hound)	-1

CORBAE II (150 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

GADGETEER LEVEL 4, SKULKER LEVEL 1; 175 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Rustam Alexandrovitch Konanykhine**OCCUPATION:** Crime-fighter, IT solutions consultant, military-grade robotics designer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Tales from the Street #35**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Moscow, Russia**AFFILIATION:** None**TERRITORY:** Washington, D.C. / World (Europe)**HEIGHT:** 6'1" (185 cm) **EYES:** Pale blue**WEIGHT:** 220 lbs. (100 kg) **HAIR:** Black

Rustam Alexandrovitch Konanykhine was born into Communist Russia. His father, Alexandre, was a respected member of the vor v zakonye (mafiya, or thieves-in-law), of the old tradition. Rustam and his younger sister, Tatiyana, toured the Soviet Union from Riga to Siberia with their father, but were kept at arm's length from the family's criminal ties. Rustam wanted nothing to do with Alexandre's life and worked hard for other options. He was an amazingly gifted child with a bright future ahead of him.

Rustam excelled at physics and mathematics, enrolling in the Moscow Institute for Physics. He preferred chess to hockey, but excelled at both. The only family member he cared about was "Tanya."

Rustam started a small computer solutions company one summer that quickly blossomed under his smart administration. It was the Communist era, though, and he was expelled from the University for engaging in capitalist activities. Shortly thereafter, Gorbachev's reforms opened Russia and he was once again free to operate

LVL	PTS	ITEM OF POWER "CORBAE ARMOUR" ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
3	8	Armour (Thin area, wings; If wings are targeted successfully, Corbae loses Flight until they are repaired)	3	8
4	16	Flight	4	16
-1		• Detectable (Flight; Wings are visible, audible)	-1	
6	6	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight x2, Infravision, Radar, Ultravision)	6	6
3	3	Immovable (Retractable pitons)	3	3
-1		• Restriction (Immovable; Only when securely "perched")	-1	
2	6	Invisibility (Infrared, Radar)	2	6
1	1	Natural Weapons (Retractable Raven's Claws on hands and feet)	1	1
2	13	Power Flux (Analytic Supercomputer, minor; Duration Reversed 7)	2	13
		• Reduction (-7; only for Highly Skilled, and only for Mind-based Skills)		
4	16	Special Attack "Talon Strike Needle Gun" (20 / [1d6+2] Damage, Accurate, Auto-Fire, Spreading x2, Limited Shots: 1 action to reload, Low Penetration, Short Range)	4	16
4	4	Special Attack "Talon Grapple" (80/20 / [4d6+8/1d6+2] Damage, Accurate x2, Flexible x2, Tangle, Limited Shots x3: 1 action to reload, Low Penetration, Short Range, Unique Disability: Grapple only inflicts 20 / [1d6+2] Damage, 80 / [4d6+8] is for Tangle)	4	4
4	4	Special Attack "Electrify Grapple" (80 / [4d6+8] Damage, Linked to Talon Grapple, Stun, Limited Shots x2, Unique Disability: Can only use on round following successful Grapple/Tangle)	4	4
3	3	Special Defence (Breather — Disease, Oxygen, Inhaled Poison)	3	3
-2		• Activation Time (Special Defence; 10 Initiative; +1 BP Can pause)	-2	
1	4	Superstrength	1	4

BODY	9	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	11
MIND	12	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	10
SOUL	7	HEALTH POINTS	100

STR	16	DEX	18	CON	20	INT	24	WIS	18	CHA	16
REF	+7	FORT	+8	WILL	+10	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER	+4				
BASE AC MODIFIER	+7					HIT POINTS	60				

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
	2	6	Attack Combat Mastery		2	6
	2	2	Combat Technique (Leap Attack: Dives only, Steady Hand)		2	2
	3	6	Defence Combat Mastery		3	6
	1	1	Features (Attractive)		1	1
	2	4	Gadgets (Miniaturised tool kit, B&E tools)		2	(2)
	1	1	Heightened Awareness		1	1
	9	9	Highly Skilled		7	(5)
	16	64	Item of Power (Corbae Armour)		16	(60)
	-5		• Activation Time (1 minute, +1 BP can pause; Must put armour on)		-5	
	6	6	Organisational Ties (Konanykhine Family)		6	(5)
	-2		• Restriction (Organisational Ties; Goes to family as last resort)		-2	
	1	2	Tough		1	2
	2	6	Wealth		2	6

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
-	-	Enhanced Intelligence	1	(0)
2	4	Gadgeteer	2	(2)
2	2	Special Movement (Balance, Cat-Like)	2	2

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
1	6	Acrobatics (Flight)	3
1	3	Burglary (Hot-Wiring)	2
1	3	City Knowledge (Washington, D.C.: The Mall)	2
1	3	City Knowledge (Moscow: Pushkin Square)	2
4	16	Computers (Networks)	7
1	2	Cultural Arts (Art Appraisal)	2
2	4	Driving (Car)	3
3	12	Electronics (Computers)	7
1	1	Etiquette (Upper Class)	2
1	2	Foreign Culture (US)	2
3	12	Forgery (Electronic Documents)	4
3	3	Languages (Russian, English, German, Japanese)	3
2	6	Law (Business)	3
4	4	Management and Administration (Banking)	3
3	12	Mechanics (Armourer)	7
2	4	Piloting (Light Airplane)	3
1	2	Social Sciences (Politics)	2
1	2	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)	2
1	3	Urban Tracking (Corporate)	2
1	7	Melee Attack (Raven's Claws)	2
1	12	Ranged Defence (Personal)	3

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Famous (Corbae in D.C., Konanykhine in Russian military circles)	-1
-2	Nemesis (Ivankov "Yaponchik" Vyacheslav, top vor)	-2
-2	Recurring Nightmares (Attacks on parents / Tanya)	-2
-1	Significant Other (Tanya; Sister)	-1
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity; Konanykhine Mafiya ties)	-3
-3	Wanted (Red Mafiya)	-3

his business. He used profits to expand into robotics and programming. His ingenuity and innovative designs landed him several lucrative military contracts, including one to develop a tactical combat suit.

Rustam's success did not go unnoticed. Alexandre brought warning of an enemy gang, led by "Yaponchik." These suki, or new vor did not believe in tradition, and brutally broke the old rules. They were hunting for people like Rustam to exploit. Rustam's parents were killed in an attempt to pressure him, forcing Rustam to flee to Prague with Tanya and run the business from a distance.

But they were still not safe. Late one night, the two were "arrested" by ex-KGB posing as Czech police. Rustam was told to give them a prototype of the armour ... or else! Knowing they'd be killed either way, Rustam bought time by insisting he did not have it with him. It was bulky armour and could not simply be stashed in a briefcase, he lied. Rustam and Tanya managed to escape with the prototype, but Tanya was shot in the mouth and horrifically injured. They fled to Germany, where friends of the Konanykhine family saved Tanya's life. Afterwards, they flew to Washington, D.C., where they hid the armour.

The vors gave chase, and bribed corrupt members of the US

government to arrest Rustam on false immigration charges. Russian mafiya wanted him deported, and claimed he'd stolen the armour. Powerless and moneyless, Rustam was stunned when an elderly stranger visited him in jail; his name was Anthony De Luca, and he knew Rustam's case intimately. De Luca arranged for legal counsel, which proved the conspiracy against Rustam.

De Luca explained his family was once involved with the Italian mafia, and he became the vigilante Corbae as a result. De Luca hoped Rustam would follow that path. Rustam long pondered De Luca's words. He hated the power of the vors and Tanya's forced silence enraged him. Eventually, he agreed, and De Luca helped train and prepare him.

They upgraded and restyled the armour, installing flight capability and a supercomputer. Rustam knows he is not an expert in all fields, and thus linked the computer to numerous databases, such as Interpol's and the FBI's, allowing him access to their forensic expertise. When he is stumped, he often reprograms the computer to access different databases, from the KGB files of spies to Las Vegas's database of hustlers, in order to make valuable deductions. Currently, Rustam runs a computer company by day and wars against the Russian mafiya at night.



ARCHER GOLD AND CORBAE ATTEMPT TO RESCUE BRITANIA FROM THE THUGS' CLUTCHES

DRIFTER (175 CHARACTER POINTS – TRI-STAT)

ADVENTURER LEVEL 5, SKULKER LEVEL 2; 200 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Davis Since Malloy**OCCUPATION:** Adventurer, wanderer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Amazing Presentations, Vol. III #126**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Seattle, WA**AFFILIATION:** The Untouchables**TERRITORY:** West Coast**HEIGHT:** 6'3" (190 cm)**EYES:** Dark Blue**WEIGHT:** 200 lbs. (75 kg)**HAIR:** Black (Tinged
with white)

Davis Malloy was born to a mixed background: Chris Malloy was a small town mechanic who fell in love with Chandra Since, a Thai graduate student of atmospheric science. Davis was a happy, healthy boy when born, although his right arm ended at the elbow. He was normal in every other way ... until, at the age of three, he vanished before his babysitter's eyes. The police conducted an exhaustive search, but there was no trace. Two days later, he reappeared in the kitchen, unharmed but clutching a strange piece of silken fabric. No one knew where he had been, but everyone was relieved and consciously decided not to ask many questions. The cloth, a long scarf, stretched and stretched but wouldn't tear. Although peculiar, Chandra kept it as a security blanket for Davis.

For the next 15 years, whenever Davis vanished, his parents would carry on like nothing had happened. He never spoke of what occurred, and they never asked. The disappearances were usually infrequent, but could last for hours or days.

Davis didn't know what to say. He had few friends, and his parents were caring but distant. By age 18, he had learned he could travel almost anywhere by stepping through another world. This other world was a dimension called Prtzm — a delight of colour and imagination, where crystal-clockworks were driven by ether-

LVL PTS ITEM OF POWER "CRYSTAL-CLOCKWORK ARM" ATTRIBUTES RANK PTS

2	2	Heightened Senses (Touch x2)	2	2
2	4	Gadgets (Tools, widgets, gawgaws)	2	4
1	6	Regeneration	1	6
-2		• Restriction (Regeneration; Only in Pocket Dimension)		-2
4	16	Special Attack "Gauss Gun" (80 / [4d6+8]) Damage, Accurate, Knockback x2, Penetrating: Armour, Hand-Held, Limited Shots, Unique Disability: Kickback — see page 126, Unreliable	4	16
-3		• Maximum Force (Special Attack "Gauss Gun")		-3
1	4	Superstrength	1	4
-2		• Part of Body (Superstrength; Mechanical Arm only)		-2

LVL PTS ITEM OF POWER "DIMENSION SUIT" ATTRIBUTES RANK PTS

1	3	Armour	1	3
1	2	Armour (Shield Only; Indestructible scarves)	1	2
1	2	Extra Arms (Scarves)	1	2
-1		• Restriction (Extra Arms have no fine manipulation)		-1
1	2	Invisibility (Partial; Mental)	1	2
2	2	Natural Weapons (Tail Striker; Tentacles)	2	2

LVL PTS ITEM OF POWER "DIMENSION MASK" ATTRIBUTES RANK PTS

6	6	Heightened Senses (Sight, Electric Current Detection, Radio Reception, Magnetic Field Detection, Ultrasonic Hearing, Ultravision)	6	6
4	4	Mind Shield (Cross Dimensional Static)	4	4
2	6	Sixth Sense (Astral/Ethereal Beings; Pocket Dimensions; Area 4)	2	6
4	4	Special Defence (Flare x2, Oxygen, Inhaled Poison)	4	4

BODY 7
MIND 9
SOUL 8**ATTACK COMBAT VALUE** 10
DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE 6/13
HEALTH POINTS 75**STR** 15 **DEX** 14 **CON** 14 **INT** 19 **WIS** 18 **CHA** 18
REF +6 **FORT** +5 **WILL** +7 **BASE TO HIT MODIFIER** +5
BASE AC MODIFIER +2/+9 **HIT POINTS** 56

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
2	6		Attack Combat Mastery	2	(3)	
4	4		Combat Technique (Blind Shooting, Block Ranged Attacks, Concealment, Portable Armour)	4		4
7	14		Defence Combat Mastery	7	(10)	
-2			• Restriction (Defence Combat Mastery; Only when using Teleport)			-2
1	4		Extra Attacks	1		4
			• Reduction (-4; Extra Attacks, only for Teleport or Pocket Dimension; Actions are simultaneous)			
1	1		Features (Attractive)	1		1
4	8		Gadgets	4	(6)	
-2			• Restriction (Gadgets; Effective Level is halved when working on devices from Earth)			-2
9	9		Highly Skilled	5	(4)	
5	20		Item of Power (Hard to Lose; Crystal-clockwork Arm)	5	(16)	
4	12		Item of Power (Easy to Lose; Dimension Mask)	4		12
-2			• Activation Time (Dimension Mask; 10 Initiative; +1 BP Can pause)			-2
2	8		Item of Power (Hard to Lose; Dimension Suit)	2		8
-5			• Activation Time (Dimension Suit; 1 minute, +1 BP can pause; Must put armour on)			-5

LVL PTS POWER ATTRIBUTES RANK PTS

1	1	Adaptation (Extra Dimensional)	1	1
9	46	Pocket Dimension (Mind Based; Through any piece of processed metal; Area 8; Targets 2)	9	(26)
-1		• Detectable (Bright colours, electrical signal)		-1
-3		• Restriction (Pocket Dimension; Unexplored and dangerous regions)		-3
4	24	Teleport (Area 2; Targets 2)	4	24
-2		• Dependent (Teleport, on Pocket Dimension)		-2
-1		• Detectable (Smell of copper)		-1

LVL PTS SKILLS RANK

1	6	Acrobatics (Tumbling)	4
3	6	Artisan (Glass sculpting)	4
3	9	Burglary (Hot-wiring)	6
2	6	City Knowledge (Seattle: Underground)	4
2	8	Electronics (Robotics)	6
2	4	Foreign Culture (Prtzm, Thai)	3
4	16	Mechanics (Gunsmith)	9
1	4	Military Sciences (Hardware Recognition)	3
3	6	Navigation (Multi-Dimensional Teleporting)	4
1	4	Poisons (Alien)	3
3	9	Sleight of Hand (Pick Pocketing)	6
3	9	Stealth (Concealment)	6
2	6	Urban Tracking (Underworld)	4
3	3	Wilderness Survival (Alien Desert)	2
3	6	Wilderness Tracking (Alien Desert)	4
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Gauss Gun)	2
1	8	Unarmed Defence (Strikes)	3

PTS DEFECTS

-1	Achilles Heel (Sonic Attacks)	-1
-1	Ism (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal)	-1
-2	Marked (One Arm / Mechanical Arm)	-2
-3	Recurring Nightmares (Mother's fate)	-3
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Mother's fate)	-2
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-1
-1	Unappealing (Shy, doesn't fit in right; Counts as 2 BP on Earth, but does not apply to Prtzm)	-1
-1	Wanted (Drifter; Various law enforcement agencies)	-1

magic. He never spoke to anyone of Prtzm, half-afraid it was a dream. To prove it wasn't a hallucination, Davis regularly brought back small souvenirs. His room was a curio shop, for mixed among the baseball cards and comic books were otherworldly clothes, pendants, knickknacks, and gewgaws. Life was strange but routine.

That is, until the day Chandra bumped an item while cleaning. Neighbours watched, aghast, as the Malloy home folded in on itself, again and again. A one-inch cube of matter was left, completely collapsed upon itself.

Chris stopped speaking to Davis. The two moved above Chris's auto shop, and Davis finished the last month of school. The day classes concluded, Davis left home taking his old "blanket," and a photograph of his mother.

Davis travelled, but spent most of his time in Prtzm. He learned to take care of himself, to fight, and to build. He tried to forget Seattle, and threw himself into the glamour and magi-science of Prtzm. He

apprenticed to the greatest artisans and built his mechanical-arm; he rescued Princesses, and fought the masked Khon-Demons. Eventually, he realised he wasn't facing his past and found the courage to return to Earth.

Three years had passed until Davis stepped back. He had aged prematurely, and lost touch with the "normal" world. He appeared out of thin air on the outskirts of San Jose. Within his first hour back, he was in a fight with some local toughs. The bar fight turned into a mob, but an old Navajo rescued Davis. Anasazi understood Davis could have fled, but also recognised Davis had to stop running.

The two became friends and "Drifter," as Anasazi christened him, was the first of the Untouchables — though it would be years before the group would truly form. The pair travelled for years, while Anasazi shaped his plans. Today, Davis is dealing with his mother's death, but he hopes that by helping others, he can honour her memory. Most of the group finds him odd, but respect and trust him, while he is fond of them all.



LEGACY, DRIFTER, AND RAZE BATTLE AGAINST A GROUP OF KHON DEMONS

LADY STARBRIGHT (250 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

ADVENTURER LEVEL 6, COSTUMED FIGHTER LEVEL 4; 300 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Angela Douglas**OCCUPATION:** Superhero (Deceased)**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Starbright #1**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Jacksonville, FL**AFFILIATION:** None**TERRITORY:** Earth**HEIGHT:** 5'10" (179 cm)**EYES:** Brown (Violet)**WEIGHT:** 135 lbs. (61 kg)**HAIR:** Black (Purple)

Angela was born to a mixed Caribbean Black/Jewish couple, in Florida, in 1945. Neither truly white nor wholly black, Angela learned to adapt to the local rules to survive. As a tomboy on a military base, Angela could get herself into no end of trouble. She needed sharp wits to escape many potentially explosive situations.

When Angela was just 15, she witnessed a star crash to Earth. Riding it down was her long-lost father, John Douglas, who flew through space for the previous five years as a weapon of the Nimbus. Mortally wounded, John explained what he could to Angela: the Nimbus were star people, protectors of life and light, scattered throughout space. Energy beings, they worked symbiotically with champions such as himself to guard the universe against the dying of the light.

The crashed ship was piloted by a Titan of Mars, a secret master of the red planet. John spoke of the many dangers Angela would face: the Martian Titans, the Haud, the Star Hunters, Black Hole Gods, and the Invisible Kings and Queens of Chaos. There would also be human threats, from military personnel descending upon the crash site, to self-styled world dominators. With his strongest love, John kissed Angela's temple and his tremendous energies spiralled into her soul.

As the first emergency vehicles arrived, Angela, blazing with power, carried John's body away. Major Blake White wrote in his report about "what appeared to be a young woman, glowing, who flew off under her own power in a way reminiscent of the American Sentinel." None of his superiors saw the information, however, for when White stole the Martian technology he also took all of his files.

Angela returned home and confessed all that had occurred to her mother. Terry, who had endured many stresses in life, handled the shock with surprising grace — a trait clearly passed to Angela. Terry's one regret was not seeing John this last time. They held a private ceremony for John, where they were joined by the Nimbus. With solar faces and bodies like nova flares, they sang the star song to Angela, calling her "starbright." A cluster dwelt within Earth's sun, and promised to advise and teach her as need warranted.

Terry and Angela set about the practical task of teaching Angela how to use her powers. Angela trained hard, and studied even harder, for Terry drilled into her the notion that there would always be stronger enemies out there, but not necessarily smarter ones. Lady Starbright's first widely recognised action was in Washington, D.C. on Christmas Eve, but soon after she was seen everywhere.

Starbright first met Sentinel in 1961 in Montgomery, Alabama, where she found him watching over a meeting held by Reverend King. Initially overwhelmed and intimidated, Sentinel's openness and warm demeanour calmed Angela, and over the ensuing months they became fast friends. They met infrequently, but their encounters were always during charged situations. Over the years they became very close, even sharing their personal lives. Angela's mom all but adopted Sentinel, and to this day he visits her often.

Starbright's kindness and compassion soon earned her many friends on Earth, including Ema'Ge (Slipstream), and Caliburn. She understood Ema'Ge anger at the Haud's viciousness, having seen it firsthand; and although she never truly understood Caliburn, she had great respect for him. Mother Raven became Starbright's best friend, and both women took Red Phoenix as a younger sister.

Starbright also spent much time amongst the stars, working directly and indirectly for the Nimbus, facing every fear her father had named. Starbright's death was untimely and heartbreakingly tragic, and she will be forever missed.

BODY 9
MIND 12
SOUL 18

ATTACK COMBAT VALUE 15
DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE 15
HEALTH POINTS 135

STR 37 **DEX** 19 **CON** 18 **INT** 24 **WIS** 26 **CHA** 36
REF +9 **FORT** +9 **WILL** +13 **BASE TO HIT MODIFIER** +9
BASE AC MODIFIER +8 **HIT POINTS** 104

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
2	6		Attack Combat Mastery		2	(3)
4	8		Defence Combat Mastery		4	8
4	4		Combat Technique (Accuracy, Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent, Steady Hand)		4	(2)
2	2		Divine Relationship		2	2
1	3		Extra Defences		1	(0)
3	3		Features (Attractive x3)		3	3
7	7		Highly Skilled		7	7

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
16	144	Alternate Form (Full-Powered)	16	(114)
1	3	Armour (Optimised vs. Cold)	1	3
1	1	Heightened Senses (Ultravision)	1	1
2	2	Mind Shield	2	2
3	3	Special Defence (Ageing x2, Disease)	3	3

LVL	PTS	ALTERNATE FORM ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
3	3	Adaptation (Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum)	3	3
1	3	Armour	1	3
6	112	Dynamic Powers (Starlight constructs, major; Area 5; Duration 6; Range 4; Targets 7)	6	112
8	32	Flight	8	32
-1		• Detectable (Flight; Glittering star trail, energy signature)		-1
1	2	Hyperflight	1	2
-1		• Detectable (Hyperflight; Enormous energy spike)		-1
6	6	Special Defence (Air x2, Own Attributes x2, Light-based Attacks x2)	6	6
1	4	Superstrength	1	4

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
2	12	Acrobatics (Flying)	14
1	4	Biological Sciences (Alien)	6
3	9	City Knowledge (Empire City: Manhattan)	10
1	4	Computers (Programming)	6
2	4	Cultural Arts (American History)	6
2	2	Etiquette (Upper Class)	6
1	4	Interrogation (Psychological)	6
3	3	Languages (English, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish)	5
1	3	Law (International)	5
2	6	Medical (Emergency Response)	8
3	6	Navigation (Space)	8
3	6	Performing Arts (Public Speaking)	8
1	12	Ranged Defence (Personal)	5
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Dynamic Powers)	5
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)	5
1	7	Melee Defence (Shield)	4

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Achilles Heel (Extreme gravitational fields)	-1
-2	Famous (Lady Starbright; Internationally)	-2
-2	Marked (As Starbright; Starlight glow, purple hair)	-2
-3	Nemesis (White Rooks; Martian Titans; Haud)	-3
-3	Owned (The Nimbus)	-3
-1	Significant Other (Defender of the Nimbus)	-1
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-2

LEGACY (150 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

ADVENTURER LEVEL 3, SKULKER LEVEL 3; 175 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: William Connor (Identity provided by the US government)**OCCUPATION:** Adventurer, former military officer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** The Guard #76**FORMER ALIASES:** Unknown**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Unknown**AFFILIATION:** The Untouchables**TERRITORY:** West Coast**HEIGHT:** 6'1" (185 cm)**EYES:** Grey**WEIGHT:** 250 lbs. (113 kg)**HAIR:** Blond

Legacy cannot help be what he is — a living memento for the dead. His morbid nature causes most to fear him and shy away. He has been called “soul-thief” and “vulture” and far crueller epithets, but he has no choice other than to shun the world, for he cannot control his ability to absorb the powers of the newly dead. He currently bears the powers of Grey Wolf.

Legacy never spoke of his past before joining the now defunct CIA metahuman group, ELITE Operations. All that was known was William Connor joined ELITE in order to gain US citizenship. Previously, he lived in Belgium, where he inherited the powers of the Frenchman, Photonic.

When ELITE disbanded, Legacy went to ground. He was left with his papers, but no direction, and so chose west. For five years, he remained out of the spotlight, until the day he found Anasazi waiting on his doorstep. Anasazi brought a warning of a prototype government agency. This new group, the Order, was in its testing phase, and was hunting “rogue” metahumans such as Legacy. Anasazi offered his help and explained his ideology on second chances. Connor listened attentively but declined assistance. He had always done better on his own, and intended to stay that way.

Legacy kept an eye on Anasazi over the next few weeks, trying to decipher the old man's game. He watched Anasazi gather White Hat and Skybreaker to him like a shepherd collecting a lost flock. Connor did not understand his fascination with Anasazi; he wondered if he was simply lonely.

When members of the still-unofficial Order arrived, Legacy was surprised but not unprepared. He recognised Agent Zero and Sleeper from ELITE, and did not particularly trust them, let alone their companions: the American, Grey Ghost, and Orion. Legacy heard them out, until the American became antagonistic and overbearing. He managed to slip away, but was concerned enough to follow them.

Connor was watching several days later when the Order came to San Dimas, and stormed Anasazi's safehouse. A tense standoff developed as they tried to bully White Hat and Skybreaker into coming with them. Inevitably, a fight broke out, threatening to turn the L.A. suburb into a warzone. To this day, Legacy isn't sure what caused him to involve himself. Perhaps it was a threat to the first person who had expressed friendship in a long time, or maybe he saw the State trying to destroy a true second chance for these kids. His knowledge of Sleeper and Agent Zero, and his surprise blitz attack enabled Anasazi's team to turn the tide and vanish into the smoke.

Over the subsequent years, the team has grown to trust Legacy, but few are truly close to him. In the field, Legacy is second only to Anasazi, for his wisdom and field experience have been proven time again. He has the respect of the younger members. In all their time together, Legacy's power of inheritance has never been witnessed by the team, in part because of Anasazi's intolerance of lethal force. Still, the awareness of what he can do makes the others uncomfortable when they think about it for too long. He has never told anyone of his ability to return from the dead when a metahuman dies near his grave, though. Anasazi is Legacy's best and only close friend, yet Connor also shares a strong camaraderie with Drifter, for both have histories filled with darkness and sorrow.

BODY	9	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	13
MIND	9	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	7
SOUL	9	HEALTH POINTS	90

STR	18 (26)	DEX	17	CON	19	INT	18	WIS	19	CHA	17
REF	+7	FORT	+7	WILL	+15	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER	+7				
BASE AC MODIFIER	+3					HIT POINTS	60				

TRI-STAT				d20 SYSTEM			
LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES		RANK	PTS		
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery		4	(9)		
3	3	Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent, Weapons Encyclopaedia)		3	(2)		
4	4	Heightened Awareness		4	4		
13	13	Highly Skilled		6	(3)		

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES		RANK	PTS
10	57	Mimic Powers (Duration: Special — see page 126; Range 2)		10	(42)
-2		• Activation Time (Mimic)		-2	
-2		• Permanent (Mimic; Must Mimic those who die near him)		-2	
		• Reduction (-4; Target Must be recently dead)			
		• Reduction (-2; Cannot Mimic Stats or Skills)			
-3		• Restriction (Mimic; Forced to Mimic appropriate Defects)		-3	
8	8	Mind Shield (Soul fragments)		8	8
4	16	Reincarnation (Difficult to stop; Body must be completely destroyed)		4	16
-2		• Dependent (Soul stealer — Reincarnation, on Mimic)		-2	
1	5	Sixth Sense (Dead or dying metahumans; Area 4)		1	5
2	2	Special Defence (Ageing x2)		2	2
-1		• Restriction (Youth is restored whenever Mimic power is used)		-1	

LVL	PTS	“GREY WOLF’S” MIMICKED POWER ATTRIBUTES		RANK	PTS
1	3	Armour		1	3
1	8	Extra Attacks (Power Attribute)		1	8
6	6	Heightened Senses (Hearing x2, Smell x2, Ultrasonic Hearing, Ultravision)		6	6
2	2	Jumping		2	2
3	6	Massive Damage (Claws, Fangs)		3	6
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs)		2	2
1	6	Regeneration		1	6
3	3	Special Movement (Cat-Like, Wall-Bouncing, Zen Direction)		3	3
1	6	Speed		1	6
1	4	Superstrength		1	4

LVL	PTS	SKILLS		RANK	
2	4	Architecture (Fortifications)		2	
2	6	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)		5	
2	6	City Knowledge (Los Angeles: Long Beach)		4	
3	9	City Knowledge (Old Berlin: Charlottenburg)		6	
3	15	Demolitions (Artillery)		7	
3	6	Foreign Culture (German, American, British, French)		4	
3	9	Intimidation (Street)		7	
3	3	Languages (German, English, French, Russian)		3	
4	17	Military Sciences (Intelligence Analysis, Tactics)		6	
2	4	Occult (Astrology)		3	
4	4	Riding (Horse)		3	
2	16	Gun Combat (Rifle)		2	
3	27	Heavy Weapons (Artillery)		3	
2	16	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)		3	
2	16	Unarmed Defence (Holds)		3	

PTS	DEFECTS		PTS
-3	Achilles Heel (Mimicked from Grey Wolf; Fire)		-3
-	Incomplete Training (No Special Movement at Level 3)		-1
-	Ism (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal; metahuman parasite)		-2
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Former life; Secret identity)		-3
-1	Wanted (Legacy; For association with the Untouchables)		-1

MAGISTRATE (200 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

COSTUMED FIGHTER LEVEL 3, COSTUMED WIZARD LEVEL 5; 250 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Daniel Fischlin**OCCUPATION:** Adventurer, former RCMP officer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** Amazing Presentations, Vol. III #90**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Montreal, Canada**AFFILIATION:** None**TERRITORY:** Canada**HEIGHT:** 5'11 (180 cm)**EYES:** Blue**WEIGHT:** 200 lbs. (91 kg)**HAIR:** Dirty blonde

Daniel Fischlin grew up in Montreal in the '30s and '40s, and became an RCMP officer stationed in the Northwest Territories. When he stumbled upon an alien hive, he was kidnapped by the Haud and experimented upon by Captain Zin'Tor Jahn. Fischlin was nothing more than a guinea pig for the Haud to dissect and rebuild. Somehow Fischlin's body adapted to the experiments, and he learned how to shape his body into a thousand elemental forms.

Daniel lost 25 years to the Haud experiments, and in that time most of his friends and family aged or passed on. When he escaped from the subterranean Haud base, scattering the vicious reptilians, he was shocked to emerge into a very different world. 1979 was not 1954.

Daniel tracked several of the Haud across Canada, discovering a nest of vipers buried beneath the heart of Canada's capital. He would transform himself into a fire form to melt their weapons; change to steel to tear apart their armour; and finally become liquid nitrogen to take advantage of their vulnerability to cold. When the battle was done, he received the applause of Parliamentarians stunned to discover what lay beneath Parliament Hill, subconsciously manipulating them. In the aftermath, police and reporters questioned him relentlessly, and it was MP Pierre Trudeau, who not only saved him, but suggested the name "Magistrate."

Trudeau was re-elected to power in December, and asked the Magistrate to serve as Canada's official hero, a position he was honoured to accept. For the next decade, Magistrate was Canada's resident defender. He travelled from Newfoundland to British Columbia and from Lake Huron to the Beaufort Sea. He worked with Sentinel during the end of the Cold War, brokered peace treaties with Russia's Muzhik, and become a good friend and ally of Canada's most internationally celebrated heroine, Mother Raven.

In more recent years, Magistrate has worked hard to extend his mission beyond Canada's borders. He has helped on numerous Canadian peacekeeping efforts, and been recognised by the United Nations for his humanitarian efforts. From 1991 to 1996 alone, Magistrate spent extended periods at more than two dozen peacekeeping operations worldwide.

In 1996, Magistrate was brought on board to help coordinate the creation of the UN's Aegis Joint Task Force, to deal with metahuman crises and hot-spots. Although not a permanent member of the JTF, he regularly acts as a consultant and mentor, and is always on call should his help be required.

Magistrate is on good terms with most of the world's major heroes. Like Sentinel, he is a national hero. Similarly, his background in policing allows him to better understand the inscrutable Caliburn. Meanwhile, his anger at the Haud is second only to Slipstream's. He has cooperated on an international drug operation with Officer Prometheus, and worked with the Baron to defeat Doc Cimitière in Haiti.

Magistrate has the power to change his body into any elemental or chemical form. He cannot mix forms or partially transform, though — he must wholly become that substance. Many of these forms give him distinct powers such as: Elasticity / Mass Decrease in his mercury form; Mass Increase from any heavy metal body; Flight through helium; Special Attacks from strong acids or bases; X-ray detection through silver nitrate; or light-detection by fluorescent chemicals, as examples.

BODY	9	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	13
MIND	9	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	10
SOUL	13	HEALTH POINTS	110

STR	19	DEX	18	CON	20	INT	19	WIS	22	CHA	26
REF	+10	FORT	+12	WILL	+13	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER			+9		
BASE AC MODIFIER						+6			HIT POINTS		
									107		

TRI-STAT			CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES		d20 SYSTEM	
LVL	PTS				RANK	PTS
3	9	Attack Combat Mastery			3	(3)
1	1	Combat Technique (Judge Opponent)			1	(0)
2	4	Defence Combat Mastery			2	4
3	3	Divine Relationship			3	3
1	8	Extra Attacks			1	8
1	3	Extra Defences			1	(0)
2	2	Features (Attractive x2)			2	2
2	2	Heightened Awareness			2	2
12	12	Highly Skilled			3	(2)

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES		RANK	PTS
5	84	Dynamic Powers (Elemental Shapeshifting, major; Area 2; Duration 7)		5	(69)
2	12	Regeneration		2	(7)
8	8	Special Defence (Ageing, Oxygen x2, Disease x2, Own Attributes x2, Poison)		8	8

LVL	PTS	SKILLS		RANK
1	4	Biological Sciences (Physiology)		2
3	9	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)		5
3	9	City Knowledge (Montreal: Old Port)		5
2	6	City Knowledge (Toronto: Waterfront)		3
3	6	Cultural Arts (Literature)		4
2	4	Foreign Culture (Quebecois, Haud)		3
2	8	Interrogation (Psychological)		4
4	4	Languages (English, French, German, Haud: Comprehension, Hebrew, Latin, Yiddish)		4
2	6	Law (Criminal)		2
2	8	Military Sciences (Tactics)		5
2	4	Navigation (Wilderness)		2
2	4	Performing Arts (Music)		2
3	12	Police Sciences (Criminology)		8
2	2	Riding (Horse)		2
2	6	Stealth (Silent Movement)		4
2	4	Street Sense (Territorial Divisions)		2
2	2	Swimming (Free Diving)		2
4	4	Wilderness Survival (Arctic)		3
3	6	Wilderness Tracking (Arctic)		3
1	8	Gun Combat (Rifle)		2
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Dynamic Powers)		1
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Grappling)		2
2	16	Unarmed Defence (Holds)		3

PTS	DEFECTS		PTS
-1	Achilles Heel (Chaos energy)		-1
-1	Famous (Magistrate; Canada-wide)		-1
-3	Nemesis (Zin'Tor Jahn)		-3
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)		-2
-1	Vulnerability (Primal order energy)		-1
-1	Unique Defect: Anachronistic (Lost 25 years to experiments, doesn't quite "click" with 21st Century)		-1
-1	Unique Defect: Haud Implants (Always vulnerable to Haud telepathy)		-1

RAZE (125 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

ACROBAT LEVEL 2, SKULKER LEVEL 2; 150 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Andrea Bhalla**OCCUPATION:** Adventurer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** The Untouchables #77**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Las Vegas, Nevada**AFFILIATION:** The Untouchables**TERRITORY:** West Coast**HEIGHT:** 5'9" (175 cm)**EYES:** Brown**WEIGHT:** 135 lbs. (59 kg)**HAIR:** Black

Ram Bhalla Singh left India as a young man in 1950 to travel the back trails. He followed the Burma Road and explored the strange, exotic, and queer. He met Australian aboriginals on walkabout, explored Pacific volcanoes, and witnessed the Alaskan northern lights. By 1970, Singh ended up in Las Vegas, of all places, stage of the bizarre. With his slick personality and foreign look he found work as an "entertainment producer" for various casinos. He married Bella, a young, Portuguese, cocktail waitress, and had two children, Deva and Andrea.

Andrea was born in 1983, five years after her brother. As a girl, she found life very restricted and frustrating. Deva was allowed many freedoms and privileges she was not privy to, dictated by their father's strong rule. Their mother died of cancer when Andrea was 14, and Ram withdrew into his business. Although rarely home, when he was present the environment was crushing. Andrea realised freedom could be found outside the house, and she rebelled, pushing her boundaries. In Vegas, there's always something to do at any hour of the night....

Andrea stayed out late; she shoplifted; she got into fights. And at 15, her metahuman powers developed. Andrea had been found an East Indian gang of pick-pockets and con artists. They dealt in soft drugs and skirmished with other gangs. Andrea was caught selling marijuana to tourists in another gang's territory. Two punks cornered her in a deserted parking lot, and threatened to hurt her badly. As Andrea's fear and anger rose, she felt a sharp fiery burn inside her, which became a glowing red aura. Without warning, a series of energy bolts exploded from her, instantly killing her two attackers.

Andrea was numb and frightened. She had no idea where her powers came from, but vaguely suspected her parents were responsible. Slowly, she grew to like the idea of them and experimented, learning her range of abilities, but worried about her lack of control. The powers often seemed to get away from her. Her pangs of guilt subsided as she convinced herself the two deaths were deserved, but she never wanted to kill again.

Andrea became even wilder, escalating to real robbery. Andrea's arrogance and pride swelled, and her infrequent visits home diminished to the point where, when Ram threw her out after a bitter argument, little changed. The one smart thing Andrea did was to keep her powers secret from everyone — including the cops that found her in a victim's house. Andrea was arrested, convicted, and served a year as a juvenile.

When Andrea was released, she contemplated the "big time." Throughout her sentence, she kept thinking how easy it would be to escape, and make just one or two big scores. It all went wrong when she tried to rob an armoured car, and Andrea ended up facing off with an armed security guard. Before anyone was seriously injured, however, Anasazi and the Untouchables intervened, pulling Andrea safely away.

Once the situation had calmed, Anasazi simply listened to what Andrea had to say. She was frustrated, lonely, confused and angry. For the first time she was treated like an adult, and she found it far more appealing than a life of crime and fear. Andrea joined as Raze. Although she often worries about losing control of her powers and hurting an innocent or teammate, she is learning. She connected well with Skybreaker, for Paulo understood her background best, and has developed a crush on him. Raze, Skybreaker, and White Hat tend to stick together, leaving the veterans to brood.

BODY	7	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	10
MIND	7	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	10
SOUL	7	HEALTH POINTS	70

STR	14	DEX	19	CON	14	INT	15	WIS	13	CHA	17
REF	+10	FORT	+4	WILL	+3	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER	+5				
BASE AC MODIFIER	+8					HIT POINTS	32				

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
	3	9	Attack Combat Mastery		3	(6)
	3	3	Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes x2, Steady Hand)		3	(2)
	5	10	Defence Combat Mastery		5	(8)
	1	8	Extra Attacks		1	8
	1	3	Extra Defences		1	3
	3	3	Features (Attractive x3)		3	3
	3	3	Highly Skilled		5	(4)

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
1	1	Adaptation (Radiation)	1	1
-	-	Enhanced Dexterity	1	(0)
4	8	Flight (Skimmer)	4	8
-4		• Activation Time (Flight; 1 Round; +2 BP must restart)		-4
-1		• Detectable (Flight; Red glow, radiation signature)		-1
1	7	Force Field (Stops 40; Regenerating; Full Impact; Limited: Only Front Arc; Area 3)	1	7
-1		• Detectable (Force Field; Red glow, radiation signature)		-1
1	1	Heightened Senses (Gamma Vision)	1	1
2	2	Jumping	2	2
-1		• Detectable (Jumping; Red glow, radiation signature)		-1
4	16	Special Attack "Energy Storm" (40 / [2d6+4]) Damage, Area Effect x2, Flare, Penetrating: Armour x2, Penetrating: Force Fields x2, Backblast x2, Inaccurate x2, Slow)	4	16
4	4	Special Attack "Red Bolt" (60 / [3d6+6]) Damage, Flare, Penetrating: Armour, Penetrating: Force Fields, Backblast, Inaccurate)	4	4
4	4	Special Attack "Focused Blast" (120 / [6d6+12]) Damage, Flare, Penetrating: Armour x2, Penetrating: Force Fields x2, Backblast x2, Limited Shots x2, Short Range, Slow, Unreliable)	4	4
2	2	Special Defence (Own Attributes x2)	2	2
3	3	Special Movement (Balance, Cat-Like, Wall-Bouncing)	3	(1)
2	12	Speed	2	12
-1		• Detectable (Speed; Red glow, radiation signature)		-1

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
2	12	Acrobatics (Jumps)	7
2	6	Area Knowledge (Las Vegas; Downtown)	3
2	6	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)	5
2	6	Disguise (Make-up)	4
1	2	Foreign Culture (Sikh)	2
3	3	Languages (English, Hindi, Portuguese, Punjabi)	3
1	2	Performing Arts (Dance)	2
1	3	Seduction (Clubbing)	2
2	6	Sleight of Hand (Pick Pocketing)	4
2	4	Street Sense (Gang Activity)	3
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Red Bolt)	2

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Blind Fury (If cornered or on edge of defeat)	-1
-1	Ism (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal)	-1
-1	Significant Other (Skybreaker)	-1
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-2
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Sealed criminal record for robbery / murder of two men)	-2
-1	Wanted (Raze; For association with the Untouchables)	-1

SKYBREAKER (125 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

ADVENTURER LEVEL 2, SKULKER LEVEL 2; 140 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Paulo Martínez Ramírez (The Mexican authorities believe Paulo Ramirez to be deceased; he currently goes by the name Ricardo Garcia Cortés)

OCCUPATION: Adventurer

FIRST APPEARANCE: The Untouchables #3

FORMER ALIASES: El Gigante

PLACE OF BIRTH: Mata Ortiz, Mexico

AFFILIATION: The Untouchables

TERRITORY: West Coast

HEIGHT: 5'11" (180 cm) **EYES:** Brown

WEIGHT: 200 lbs. (91 kg) **HAIR:** Black

Paulo grew up in a village in the northern state of Chihuahua, where his father worked as a potter. Paulo's troubles started during high school where a gang harassed him almost daily, fighting with him and stealing from him. In his second year, Paulo ended up in a showdown with the gang's leader. Paulo fought bravely, but not well, and was knocked to the ground gasping, while a crowd of schoolmates watched. The leader pulled a knife, and Paulo knew if he didn't get up he'd be scarred, or worse. He forced himself to stand and charged. With every punch that landed, Paulo felt stronger and braver and bigger. He hit him for two years of misery and torment. He hit him for everyone who had been bullied. Paulo hit him because it felt good to be on top. The hush of the crowd finally calmed Paulo, and he looked down, down, down upon his unconscious foe. Paulo stood twelve feet tall.

Paulo panicked, and ran. By the time he got home, he had returned to his normal height. Paulo confessed the events to his parents, and started to grow again! They knew he could not stay in the village, for there had been too many witnesses. Only last year the Mexican army took away a 13 year old girl from a nearby town; it was said she could fly.

Paulo was sent to live with an aunt in the city of Ciudad Juarez, on the US border. Juarez was torn by violence and poverty, and Paulo struggled to retain his values amidst such chaos. His parents cautioned him to never use his powers, nor even tell his aunt. Unfortunately, an attempted robbery caused Paulo to break the rule in front of her. She was frightened and furious with him, and chased him out.

With no home and no resources in Mexico, Paulo travelled north and snuck across the border to El Paso, Texas. He blended in with the teeming, illegal transients and worked for slave wages. Once again forced to use his powers, Paulo stopped a bus from running a friend over. A local deputy of the Juarez Cartel saw Paulo, and pressed him into service with threats ranging from INS to violence against his family. Having no one to turn to, Paulo relented, and became a mafia enforcer known as El Gigante.

Paulo worked for the Cartel for six months before he was badly beaten by the metahuman Nagrita, in an L.A. turf war. Worried that they would lose territory, Paulo's boss invested in the Artificer, who created the Storm Bands. In the rematch, El Gigante beat Nagrita soundly. But Paulo was terrified, because they were turning him into a walking piece of artillery.

Anasazi sought Paulo out, and found the boy hiding in a bar. Anasazi offered him a fresh start, one where he would have support of friends, and where he would be asked to help, not hurt, people. Paulo instantly accepted, and they staged a fight in which El Gigante "died."

Skybreaker likes all of his teammates. He laughs at Drifter's quirky humour, and has never tried to puzzle Davis out. Paulo is in awe of Legacy's prowess, and Anasazi's wisdom. He understands what Raze has been through, and sees her like a kid sister. On the other hand, he's had a crush on White Hat since their first adventure, but has always preferred to stay silent.

BODY	8	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	10
MIND	5	DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	5
SOUL	8	HEALTH POINTS	80/180

STR	16	DEX	14	CON	18	INT	11	WIS	15	CHA	16
REF	+5	FORT	+6	WILL	+4	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER	+5				
BASE AC MODIFIER	+2					HIT POINTS	40/90				

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
	3	9	Attack Combat Mastery		3	(6)
	3	3	Divine Relationship		3	3
	5	5	Highly Skilled		6	(5)
	2	8	Item of Power (Storm Bands)		2	8
	1	2	Massive Damage (Brawling)		1	2

LVL	PTS	ITEM OF POWER "STORM BANDS" ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
1	3	Armour (Optimised vs. Electricity)	1	3
4	4	Special Attack "Lighting Strike" (60 / [3d6+6] Damage, Penetrating: Force Field, Spreading, Backblast)	4	4
4	4	Special Attack "Calling Thunder" (80 / [4d6+8] Damage, Area Effect, Indirect, Long Range, Flare, Flare: Audible, Backblast, Inaccurate, Limited Shots x2, Slow)	4	4
-1		• Backlash (Special Attack "Calling Thunder;" Suffers 20 / [5] Damage)		-1

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
3	3	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight x2)	3	3
-2		• Dependent (Heightened Senses, on Grow; See page 126)		-2
5	40	Grow	5	(30)
4	16	Special Attack "Giant Crush" (100 / [5d6+10] Damage, Muscle-Powered, Quake, Melee, Backblast)	4	(11)
-2		• Dependent (Special Attack, on Grow; See page 126)		-2
4	4	Special Attack "Thunderclap" (100 / [5d6+10] Damage, Area Effect x2, Knockback, Muscle-Powered, Stun, Limited Shots x2, Melee, Static)	4	4
-2		• Dependent (Special Attack, on Grow; See page 126)		-2
2	2	Special Defence (Own Attributes x2)	2	2
5	10	Tough	5	10
-2		• Dependent (Tough, on Grow; See page 126)		-2

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
2	4	Driving (Cars)	4
1	2	Foreign Culture (Mexican, American)	2
2	2	Gaming (Gambling)	2
1	3	Intimidation (Street)	2
1	1	Languages (Spanish, English)	2
2	2	Sports (Football)	2
2	4	Street Sense (Gangs)	4
1	12	Ranged Defence (Personal)	2
1	10	Special Ranged Attack ("Lightning Strike")	1
2	16	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)	2
3	24	Unarmed Defence (Strikes)	3

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Famous (El Gigante, in Mexico)	-1
-1	Ism (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal)	-1
-1	Marked (Tattoos on chest, arms, neck)	-1
-1	Recurring Nightmares (Time with Juarez Cartel)	-1
-1	Significant Other (White Hat)	-1
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity)	-2
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Ramirez is thought to be dead)	-3
-1	Wanted (Skybreaker, for association with the Untouchables)	-1

WHITE HAT (150 CHARACTER POINTS — TRI-STAT)

GADGETEER LEVEL 4, SKULKER LEVEL 1; 175 POINTS — d20 SYSTEM

IDENTITY: Tammy Wiseberg**OCCUPATION:** Hacker, adventurer**FIRST APPEARANCE:** The Untouchables #4**FORMER ALIASES:** None**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Austin, Texas**AFFILIATION:** The Untouchables**TERRITORY:** West Coast**HEIGHT:** 5'5" (165 cm) **EYES:** Green**WEIGHT:** 120 lbs. (45 kg) **HAIR:** Blonde

"White Hat Warning: This Site Is Not Secure" is Tammy's signature tag, stamped upon all networks whose security she evades. All the information one could want is just hanging there, dangling in the digital ether; one only has to know how to reach it. Tammy has been doing it naturally for most of her life, for she is a born technomancer, able to work the mojo of the wired because computers simply like her.

Although Tammy's parents were very busy — her father was a very successful architect and her mother a talented painter — she never wanted for any indulgence. They summered on a ranch where Tammy learned to ride. She was a very bright child who was fascinated by electronics, taking apart radio controlled cars at 8, and building her own by 9. Tammy excelled at math and science, and skipped two grades, starting high school at age 12.

Grade 9 was a difficult time for such a young girl. While Tammy maintained excellent marks, having few friends caused her to withdraw. A previously outgoing child, she spent her free time watching movies, especially Westerns and Sci-Fi spectacles. The only good thing about high school was computer class. The machines were enthralling and had so much potential! She often stayed late to hang about the Computer Club. Once again her talents pushed her friends away, for Tammy outstripped them quickly. She realised she could do things with the computer that none of them could, including their teachers.

Rather than stand out, Tammy isolated herself again, but begged her parents for a home computer. Tammy seemed happy amongst the circuits and networks, and so her too-busy parents indulged her and then left her to her own devices. She was soon navigating BBSes, learning about hacking, cracking, and phreaking. Despite this obsession, Tammy maintained decent grades, although her programs did the work for her.

Tammy graduated with a scholarship to Rice University, and her parents sent her off to Houston at 16. No better than high school, Rice was in many ways worse. She still knew more than the teachers, while her classmates only wanted to party. Her grades slipped badly because she ways always doing her own projects. She coasted for two years, applying herself to other work.

Finally free of any supervision, Tammy was able to indulge every tech-related whim. Her abilities blossomed and she realised her true powers. Mundane activities like hacking the university to change her marks, or even sweet talking a bank machine for spending cash, were a breeze. She needed a challenge, and White Hat started attacking the most difficult systems she could find.

Inside the FBI's most secure servers, White Hat discovered a top-secret project to study and track metahumans. Suddenly, Tammy realised her intrusion had been spotted, and that they had tracked her location!

Tammy fled from her apartment as an FBI task force was breaking down the door. They found evidence of numerous computer crimes, but she evaded them. White Hat hid in L.A., but the FBI dogged her. Salvation came from an unlikely source, a ragtag band led by a wizened Navajo. Anasazi not only offered his help, but also his friendship.

BODY	7	STRENGTH	4	ATTACK COMBAT VALUE	9
MIND	13			DEFENCE COMBAT VALUE	7
SOUL	7			HEALTH POINTS	70

STR	9	DEX	15	CON	15	INT	28	WIS	20	CHA	15
REF	+5	FORT	+5	WILL	+11	BASE TO HIT MODIFIER	+2				
BASE AC MODIFIER	+2					HIT POINTS	34				

TRI-STAT	LVL	PTS	CHARACTERISTIC ATTRIBUTES	d20 SYSTEM	RANK	PTS
2	2		Features (Attractive x2)	2	2	
2	2		Combat Technique (Concealment, Portable Armoury)	2	2	
9	9		Highly Skilled	9	(7)	
5	10		Gadgeteer	5	(8)	
4	8		Gadgets (Mini-computer, flare resistant goggles, micro-tool kit, computer-enhanced Harley Davidson called "Ghost Horse," etc.)	4	(6)	
2	8		Item of Power (Costume)	2	(4)	
1	3		Wealth	1	3	

LVL	PTS	ITEM OF POWER "COSTUME" ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
2	4	Armour (Unarmoured Head)	2	4
1	2	Defence Combat Mastery (Threat analysis)	1	2
1	3	Extra Defences (Defence matrix)	1	3
-1		• Restriction (Extra Defences; Not against Mind / Soul attacks)		-1
2	2	Heightened Awareness (Scanners)	2	2

LVL	PTS	POWER ATTRIBUTES	RANK	PTS
4	8	Computer Scanning	4	8
-2		• Concentration (Computer Scanning)		-2
3	57	Dynamic Powers (Major, Technomancy; Mind / [Int] Based; Area 3; Duration 4; Range 2; Targets 3; see page 126)	3	57
-1		• Detectable (Electro-magnetic signal)		-1
-		Enhanced Intelligence	1	(0)

LVL	PTS	SKILLS	RANK
5	20	Computers (Intrusion/Security)	7
3	6	Cultural Arts (Movies)	4
2	4	Driving (Motorcycle)	4
4	16	Electronics (Miniaturised)	7
3	6	Forgery (Electronic Documents)	4
2	2	Gaming (Computer Games)	4
2	2	Languages (English, Japanese, Net-slang)	4
3	12	Mechanics (Micro)	7
2	16	Power Usage: Dynamic Powers	7
2	2	Riding (Horse)	4
1	8	Gun Combat (Pistols)	4
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Dynamic Powers)	4
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)	4
1	8	Unarmed Defence (Throws)	4

PTS	DEFECTS	PTS
-1	Achilles Heel (Electro-magnetic attacks)	-1
-1	Famous (White Hat, in national hacking circles)	-1
-	Incomplete Training (No Organisational Ties at Level 3)	-1
-1	Ism (Feared for being a metahuman / criminal)	-1
-1	Less Capable (Strength)	-
-1	Phobia (Being imprisoned)	-1
-1	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)	-1
-2	Wanted (By the FBI and NSA)	-2

Tammy is accepted for who she is, and her new friends are interesting, warm, and engaging. She is fascinated by Drifter, but doesn't understand his cross-dimensional science. Tammy is aware of Skybreaker's crush on her, but has never acted on it. She loves being part of the group, but remembers to email her parents when she can.

KICKBACK

If the character is not properly braced (normally taking one action), when the weapon is fired he or she will suffer kickback, and be thrown back 2 - 4 metres.

MIMIC DURATION: SPECIAL

For 15 Points, Legacy is able to permanently Mimic the Powers of a target. The only way he loses these Powers is by Mimicking another target, thereby replacing his copied Powers. This is an optional rule, breaking the PMV Rank limit of 10 for a specific play-effect. GMs should not allow this kind of new rule without careful consideration.

DEPENDENT DEFECT

Several of Skybreaker's Attributes are Dependent on Grow. For every Level that Skybreaker Grows, he gains access to a corresponding Level of Tough and Special Attacks. Thus, when using Grow Level 2 (18' tall), he has Tough Level 2, and his Giant Crush and Thunderclap attacks do 40 / $\llbracket 2d6+4 \rrbracket$ Damage.

ATTACKING MULTIPLE TARGETS WITH ONE ATTACK (d20 SYSTEM)

When a character absolutely must take down a number of targets but he or she does not have enough Extra Attacks to do so, the character may attempt to use one attack to strike multiple targets. For each additional target beyond the first, the character suffers a -4 penalty on his or her attack roll. Only one attack roll is made, not one per target. Each target, however, is allowed to make a defence roll as normal. Additionally, any damage inflicted is reduced by half. Thus, if a character attempted to swing his sword and strike three people in one blow, he would make one attack roll with a -8 penalty (-4 for each of the two extra targets). If he successfully hits any of the targets, his damage is reduced by half.

CLOBBERING MOOKS RULE

Silver Age Sentinels (Tri-Stat) has rules in Chapter 3 that detail Attacking Multiple Targets with One Attack (the d20 System version of the rule is presented above). As presented, however, that ability to take down multiple targets with one swing presumes the combatants are of similar power levels, hence the cumulative -4 Attack check penalty.

Yet in comics, characters like Sentinel can smash through a room of Nazis without breaking a sweat, because the goons, thugs, and mooks are thematically insignificant. When Lady of the Lantern takes on a gang of teenage hooligans, or Corbae single-handedly takes on a restaurant full of Mafiosi, the action is very cinematic and representative of comics.

Therefore, when a character is attacking numerous opponents who are much weaker, the Attack check penalty is not as severe.

For every difference of at least 50 Character Points $\llbracket 5$ character (or ECL) levels $\rrbracket$ between the attacker and defenders, the penalty for each additional target is reduced by 2 cumulatively. The character does not suffer any penalty attacking significantly weaker multiple opponents — 100 Character Points $\llbracket 10$ levels $\rrbracket$ lower than the character. Additionally, normal damage is inflicted against mooks rather than the reduced damage that attacking multiple opponents with one attack incurs.

Target Character Points	Target Level or ECL	Cumulative Attack Penalty
Equal to or higher than attacker	equal to or higher than attacker	-4
0-49 lower than attacker	1-4 lower than attacker	-4
50-99 lower than attacker	5-9 lower than attacker	-2
100+ lower than attacker	10+ lower than attacker	0

EXAMPLE: Corbae (150 Character Points in Tri-Stat / $\llbracket 175$ Power Points, or ECL 13 in d20 System $\rrbracket$) is trying to smash three KGB thugs (90 Character Points / $\llbracket$ ECL 4 $\rrbracket$), with a heavy table. If they were his equals, he would make the roll with a -8 check penalty (-4 for each of the two extra targets). Since they are weaker than him (60 Character Points / $\llbracket 9$ ECLs $\rrbracket$ weaker), his check penalty is only -4 total (-2 for the second target, and -2 for the third target).

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