

SCARE SHEET: JOHN FORTUNE

[SCARE sheet] John Fortune

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To:



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Sir,

My firsthand knowledge of John Fortune's character and abilities is limited to the time we spent on the first season of *American Hero*, he as an assistant for Peregrine's production company, me as a contestant. I've read the still-classified reports of his previous activity: his long latency and his brief period as a supposed ace while in reality experiencing a slow-acting black queen. As you well know, having personally played a major role in that operation, certain mysteries surround the climax of Fortune's personal crisis that will probably never be fully understood. It's clear, however, he's the first example of a wild carder returning to normalcy without the use of the Trump virus.

I met Fortune a few years after those events. At that time, Fortune was content to remain in the background and perform his duties, which were mostly menial. Of course, Fortune's background as the son of aces Peregrine and Fortunato was well-known on the set, and resulted in a certain amount of derision and even bullying at the hands of some of the contestants. Michael Vogali (aka Drummer Boy) was a leader in this activity, and, in fact, saddled Fortune with the derisive nickname Captain Cruller that was picked up by some other contestants.

It remains unknown what set off the spree which resulted in the destruction of Peregrine's home, the freeing of the ace known as Sekhmet the Destroyer, and her subsequent merging with Fortune. Whatever the facts, the result was Fortune's time in Egypt fighting alone and then later with aces Lohengrin and Jonathan Hive (more commonly, Bugsy), followed by his leadership of the United Nations-backed Committee. That, of course, is a dead issue, since Sekhmet deserted him in New Orleans, making Fortune a nat again.

He's been off SCARE radar since he resigned from the Committee after the New Orleans affair. He hasn't maintained contact with any of his Committee acquaintances, and his current location and occupation are a mystery. But given his complicated history (a latent turned quasi-ace turned nat turned ace turned nat again), it's my recommendation that we track him down as soon as possible and keep tabs on his future activities.

Jamal Norwood

SCARE operative

HISTORY

John Fortune stands out as a unique individual even within the extraordinary bounds of the *Wild Cards* universe. He's the first, and so far the only, known surviving progeny of two aces, Peregrine and Fortunato. A long-time latent, his card turned when he was sixteen. At first he believed he had drawn an ace, a healing power he used to good effect on several occasions. It quickly became evident, however, he'd actually drawn a slow-acting black queen, a mutation promising to end in his death and that of untold others in his vicinity. In his case, the black queen was an increasing body temperature to which he was immune, but which was a mounting danger to those around him. When it became

evident Fortune would have to die to protect the world, his father, Fortunato, entered his body and burned the virus from Fortune's system. This turned Fortune into a nat, but the fight took too much out of Fortunato and he died from exhaustion. (For more on this stage of John Fortune's life, see the *Wild Cards Campaign Setting* book, pages 118-119.)

The sacrifice of a father he hadn't had a chance to really know, as well as the loss of his ace-level powers, sent Fortune into a depression. Without a clear path in life, he became a production assistant on his mother's new television show, *American Hero*, a reality show designed to showcase a number of unknown aces in order to find the next great, as the title says, American hero.

NAME: JOHN FORTUNE	WC NAME: NONE
OCCUPATION: PRODUCTION ASSISTANT ON TELEVISION SHOW; LEADER OF VIGILANTE ACE TEAM, LATER UPGRADED TO U.N.- SPONSORED; NONE	
BASE: BASED IN LOS ANGELES FOR TV SHOW; BASED IN NEW YORK FOR COMMITTEE WORK	
WC STATUS: UNKNOWN	ETHNICITY: MULTI-RACIAL

Fortune's job is menial, at best. All the contestants learn the story of his life quite quickly. Some of them mock and bully Fortune, among them Michael Vogali (Drummer Boy), the six-armed drummer for the band Joker Plague, who is incensed by what he assumes was Fortune's privileged upbringing.

Surrounded by aces and an ace-idolizing culture, Fortune grows angry about his lost his ace powers and his lost opportunity to make a mark on the world. He bemoans this fate to his friends Jonathan Hive and Lohengrin, an accomplished German ace guest-starring on *Hero*.

Bugsy reminds Fortune of a curious footnote in Fortune's past. When Peregrine was pregnant with him, she'd participated in the WHO-sponsored world tour, and while in Egypt she'd aided the Living Gods, a group of jokers and minor aces. One of the Living Gods had given her an amulet she'd claimed would give Peregrine's unborn child "the power of Ra." This is old and largely forgotten news to Fortune. Bugsy was told the story by another *Hero* contestant, Simoon, whose mother is one of the Living Gods. Simoon's mother, worried by the worsening conditions for jokers in Egypt, had asked her to ask Fortune to take up the amulet and help them. Bugsy and Lohengrin think this may lead Fortune to his real destiny.

They go to Peregrine's mansion and eventually find the jewel. Disaster ensues as the scarab beetle embedded in the amulet comes to life and burrows into Fortune's body, ending up encysted in his forehead. Fortune's mind is blasted and he loses control of his body as it morphs into a gigantic, glowing, fire-breathing lioness, who flees the angry aces facing her—but not before getting into a tussle with Lohengrin and burning down Peregrine's house.

The amulet had borne the essence of a slumbering ace, Sekhmet the Destroyer, an Egyptian woman named Isra who has been dormant for over twenty-five years. She persuades Fortune to go to Egypt. Sekhmet/Fortune become the jokers' champions, and are quickly joined by Bugsy and Lohengrin, as the mass of Egyptian jokers, mostly unarmed, with only Fortune and the aces to protect them, retreat southward to Upper Egypt. Their battle with various militias and state-sponsored armies is long and hard and not without casualties.

Eventually a team of eight other aces abandon *American Hero* to become heroes in the real world and John Fortune becomes their leader. He and Kate Brandt (Curveball) finally become lovers, and soon afterwards Drummer Boy joins the team, as much because of his desire for joker justice as to try once more to win Kate's affections. Of course, this resparks his animosity toward Fortune, whom he now contemptuously refers to as Beetle Boy.

The aces, Living Gods, and the exhausted joker refugees make their stand at Aswan. Fortune is also worn to the bone. When Fortunato cleansed the wild card virus from his body, Fortune no longer had the potential to receive the full "power of Ra," though what is left is still quite potent, and Sekhmet pushes their shared body relentlessly.

Fortune and his ragged band of aces manage to defeat the Ikhlas al-Din (the anti-wild card Egyptian militia), the Egyptian army, and finally, the army of the pan-Muslim Caliphate, establishing a safe haven



JOHN FORTUNE

POWER LEVEL 6

STRENGTH	STAMINA	AGILITY	DEXTERITY
1	1	1	1

FIGHTING	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	PRESENCE
2	1	1	3

SKILLS

Athletics 4 (+5), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+4), Expertise: Production Assistant 4 (+5), Insight 4 (+5), Investigation 2 (+3), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 2 (+5)

ADVANTAGES

Benefit (Well-off), Benefit (U.N. backing), Inspire

OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +0

Unarmed+4 Close, Damage 1

DEFENSE

DODGE	5	FORTITUDE	5
PARRY	4	TOUGHNESS	1
WILL	6		

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Purpose: John is constantly batted around by fate, and becomes a hero in hopes of directing his life toward a goal, any goal.

Rivalry: When John Fortune and Kate Brandt are a couple, Drummer Boy is a rival for her affections, goading Fortune into juvenile displays and stupid decisions.

Shared Body: John Fortune gains powers from his symbiotic relationship with Sekhmet, but when he's tired or weak she can take complete control of his body (at times without his knowledge).

Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 3 + Skills 11 + Defenses 15 = 51

for the Egyptian jokers and followers of the Old Religion in southern Egypt.

This triumph leads to J.C. Jayewardene, the Secretary-General of the U.N., to create The Committee for Extraordinary Interventions, a group of aces, led by Fortune, who are sent to various hotspots around the world to prevent genocide and violence against innocents, wild card or otherwise. They have their successes and failures, but things come to a head when they confront Tom Weathers, the most powerful ace in the world and agent of the People's Paradise of Africa.

Weathers kidnaps Drake Thomas, the teen-aged ace who can literally go nuclear, intending to use him to vaporize New Orleans. When Thomas and Fortune come face to face, Sekhmet senses that Drake Thomas is a vessel who can indeed achieve the true power of Ra. She abandons Fortune and enters Thomas's body. Weathers attacks Drake, but his plans to destroy New Orleans are foiled by the Amazing Bubbles, who absorbs the resulting nuclear explosion.

But injured and worn out by the conflicts of the last several years, John Fortune is again only a nat. And as a nat he feels he can no longer effectively lead the Committee, so he resigns. Kate breaks off their relationship, leaving him abandoned, isolated, and without purpose. His current whereabouts are unknown.

PERSONALITY

John Fortune is hardworking, personally brave, and dedicated to the idea of helping those less fortunate than himself, although from his work with the Committee he quickly discovers that that isn't as easy as it sounds. He takes the failures of the Committee—even those beyond his control—personally. He's depressed at being a mere nat again, as well as about losing Kate Brandt, whom he truly loved.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Fortune has no powers of his own any longer. See Sekhmet's entry for the powers he gains through their symbiosis.

Through his work with the Committee, he has become an effective and strong leader. He doesn't realize how capable he is in that area, and doesn't know how to utilize it without ace powers.

He's wealthy, and while with the Committee, he has the benefit of U.N. patronage.

ALLIES

Even after Sekhmet abandons him, John Fortune is a beloved figure among Egyptian jokers, and is well-liked by other jokers who know about the work he did to save the Egyptian joker population from genocide. He's respected by every member of the Committee, with the exception of Drummer Boy.

ENEMIES

The leaders of the Caliphate are enemies of John Fortune, both personally and as the leader of the Committee. Drummer Boy sees Fortune as a rival for Kate Brandt's affections.

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