



# HEROKS

ADVENTURES

volume one

**“Trouble Alerts”**



## **HERO HOOKS**

Volume One – “Trouble Alerts” By BRAINSTORM Studios

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HOOK SUBMISSIONS: Want to add to the Hook future community?

Visit this web site for Hook samples and our ‘How to’ guide for writing Hook submissions.

[http://mywebpages.comcast.net/kperrine/HeroHooks/HERO\\_HOOKS\\_Submissions.htm](http://mywebpages.comcast.net/kperrine/HeroHooks/HERO_HOOKS_Submissions.htm)



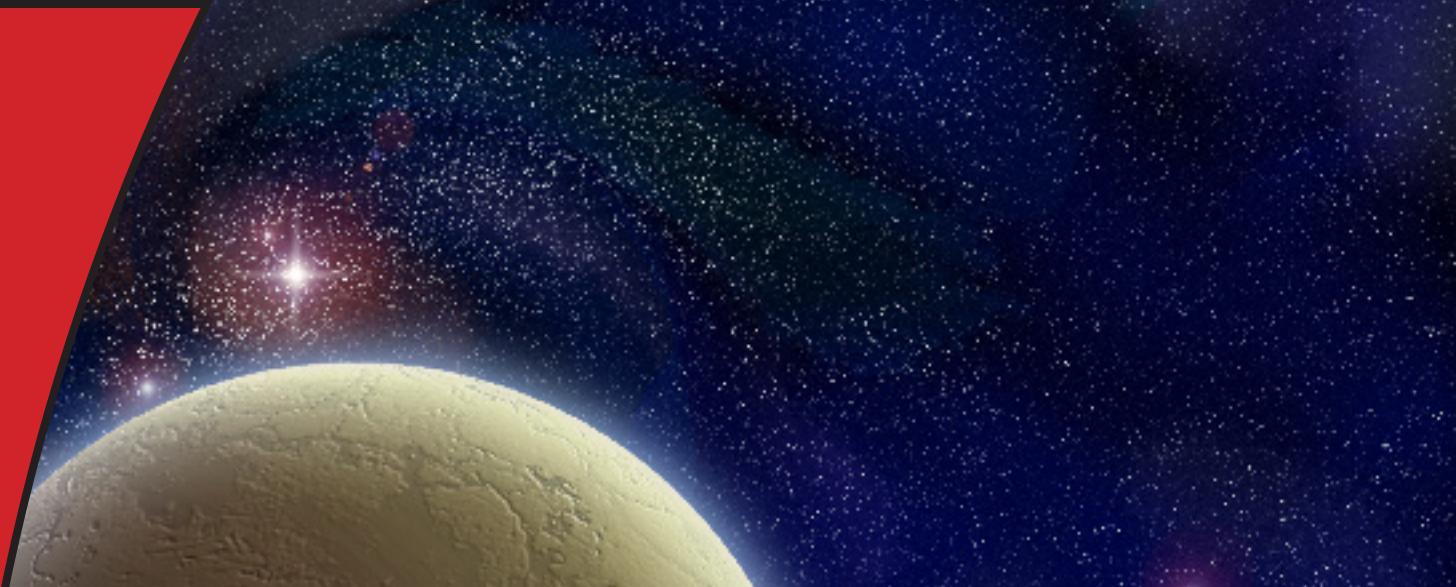
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**Hero Hooks** is an assortment of crafty comic book scenarios by: Bob Bretz, J.A. Dettman, Cynthia Celeste Miller, Kevin Perrine, Eric James Rampson, Dan Simpson, Jordan Steelman, James Stilipec, Pat Wagner & Joe Zurla.

HERO HOOKS CENTRAL: A Yahoo! Group created exclusively for Hero Hook lovers. There you will find all sorts of special bonus features including: all Hero Hook art work and wallpapers, character sheets for Hero Hook characters, etc...

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HERO\\_HOOKS\\_Central/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HERO_HOOKS_Central/)



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# INTRODUCTION

A

Adventures; they are what separate heroes from normal people.

While you and I go to school or work each day, a hero fights crime, saves the world from alien invasion or battles strange creatures from another dimension. With comic books we experience the adventures of our favorite heroes each month by reading about them. Through role-playing games, such as M&M, we get to become our own hero, to find out what it's like to have adventures. Sometimes it's difficult, other times it's rewarding, but it should always be interesting and fun.

Hero Hooks is, at heart, about adventure. They aren't the full-fledged adventures filled with maps and pre-generated villains, but they are embryonic ideas, seeds that take root in your mind and flower into grand adventures for your heroes to experience.

So get out there and have fun! Torment the heroes, hatch diabolical plans and try to destroy the world! Heroes need villains and adventure and you're the one to provide it for them.

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H ave an unnatural love for super hero gaming. It's probably because of the wide range of adventure possibilities that supers gaming brings. Time traveling mastodons from the Ice Age can suddenly start barreling down Main Street. Alien refugees from another planet can come to Earth seeking asylum—but their ulterior motives are far more sinister. A government super soldier experiment goes awry, and the heroes are called in to save the day—and keep things quiet. Even something as mundane as trying to keep your secret identity a secret can make for great gaming. Supers gaming has it all: two-fisted pulp action, city-block destroying epics, over-the top silver age, or gritty modern day horror.

The variety of different adventure types keeps the genre vibrant and alive. And that's where Hero Hooks comes in. Several years in the making, Hero Hooks is a fan-created project masterminded by superhero fan extraordinaire Kevin Perrine. Contributors from around the globe added their devious ideas, plots, art, and plans to Hero Hooks. The Hooks themselves are simply seeds of ideas to kick-start a GM's stalled creativity. A Hook can be a simple one-shot, or an entire campaign. It's up to the GM and group to decide where to go and what to do.

The possibilities are limitless.

**Dan Simpson**

*Creator of Simpson's Character Builder:*

[http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/mnm\\_hall\\_of\\_heroes/](http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/mnm_hall_of_heroes/)

# INTRODUCTION

**W**elcome to HERO HOOKS, a collection of instant smackmouth ideas for use in M&M and other super heroic games. Each Hero Hook is a one-shot comic book style scenario rooted in classic (and some not so classic) comic book plots stripped bare of prose and statistics that clutter ordinary adventures. If you are looking for ideas to punch up your game session and shake up your players, look no further...

## "IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!!"

Personally, I rarely run published adventures. Not because I think they are especially poor, or because I am some kind of elitist snob, but because I am lazy. Most adventures and setting books are quite specific in their requirements and when I am running a campaign I do not find it easy to justify why my Centropolis City Super Group should dash across the continent to Mega-Town for a one-shot. Transplanting that Mega-Town adventure is often just as unsatisfactory and time consuming. So when I read adventures, I am usually stripping them for ideas, hunting for the flashes of inspiration behind them. And because I have seen other Game Masters treat adventures similarly, I wondered if there was a market for a collection of short ideas that would be used rather than ignored or stripped down for spare parts.

And so HERO HOOKS was born, a showcase of ideas, thoughts and flashes of inspiration ready for use. Each Hook is a one-shot comic scenario idea minus all the details; the fun bits left for Game Masters to create...

Like every great Arch-Villain the specific flavor of motif and soliloquies are yours to imagine!



While many adventures (and this is especially true of campaigns) are Earth-shattering romps of city-wide and/or cosmic significance, many Hooks tend to be the opposite, concentrating on the small villains in your rogue gallery, less grandious lawlessness, and other one-shot oddities encountered by your super heroes.

If adventures and setting books can be compared to comic book collected story arcs or graphic novels, that makes the humble Hero Hook several short one-shot single issue stories (if not smaller). Every heroic tale has its dragon to slay. That's for you to dream. But it's the time inbetween big bads that really let the heroes shine, that's what Hero Hooks is for.

Above all, this collection is yours to do what you will. Adapt them, twist them, mix them. But most of all, *use them*.

SQ

GLACIER

# INTRODUCTION



SQ



A rarity in gaming; it's a collection of - not adventures - but adventure seeds. It's the sort of thing one finds in gaming magazines with some frequency, but it's far less common as a sourcebook. There's a little bit of everything in here, and what's more each of the adventure seeds has at least three possibilities for its solution. Each of these seeds start with an evocative paragraph, and then the GM chooses where the Hero Hooks will go from there. These ideas contain very little game information, but they will set your fevered brain afire.

There are no game mechanics in Hero Hooks; in most cases, there's little indication of even a time period for the situation. While this collection is most useful to Super Heroic players, one could adapt it to just about any high adventure game. Most Hero Hooks can suit campaigns set any time or place, from historical to far future, from downtown to beyond Earth.

## ABOUT HERO HOOKS

**HERO HOOKS** is a unique adventure cookbook of ideas ready to be dropped into any game. This collection of one-shot comic scenarios, plots, and possibilities is intended to get the Game Master's creative gears going – a starting point for a one-shot adventure or possibly an entire campaign. Each HOOK is typically less than a page long and begins with an evocative paragraph followed by three possible explanations for Game Masters to choose and/or build from. These seeds do not contain game statistics or detailed setting information – that can be best left to individual GMs. The Hooks and Explanations range from full-blown super villainous threats to the purely human challenges, allowing GMs to tailor the ideas and easily drop into any campaign.

**Trouble Alerts** is the first volume of crafty comic book scenarios created by the fan community of the M&M game.

### BRAINSTORM Studios

Formerly known as NZMP (Ninja Zombie Monkey Press), BRAINSTORM Studios was created in 1971 in a small town in West Virginia, named after an antacid, called Gassaway. Growing through the years BRAINSTORM has worked with many creators and has attempted practice at becoming a creator but to little avail. BRAINSTORM Studios (or BS as we like to call it) has recently opened it's doors and hearts to the wide variety of talented (and untalented) masses, becoming the first (and only) Role-playing Game creator to offer fans to participate in the writing and creation of many of our projects. BS is currently located in Seattle, WA.

# INTRODUCTION

## KEVIN Perrine

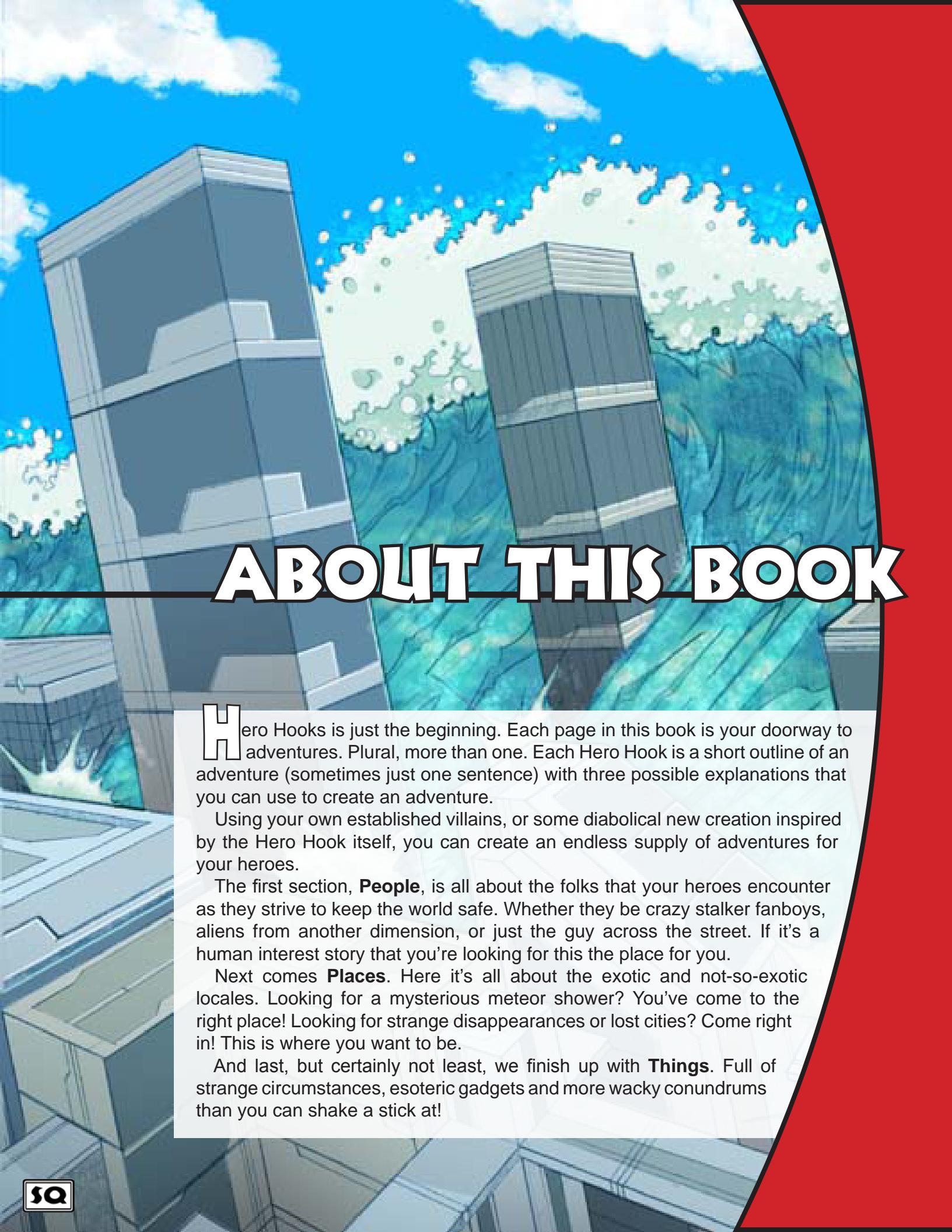
Founder and President of BRAINSTORM Studios, Kevin is actually the sole full time employee of BS. As lead designer for WizKids' acclaimed HeroClix line and Origins Award Winner for Best Graphic Design (MK: Dungeons). Kevin has worked as a graphic designer, writer and game developer with WizKids LLC, Guardians of Order, Timestream Games, Spectrum Studios, and Marriott Corporation. He is currently serving as Animation Advisor at the Art Institute of Seattle - Seattle, WA. He is allergic to cats.

## THE ATOMIC THINK TANK Message Boards

Owned and operated by the makers of the M&M roleplaying game, the ATOMIC THINK TANK Message Boards host a fantastic, enthusiastic, and vibrant community of superhero and comic book fans. Founded in October of 2003 because the sheer volume of traffic on the GR messageboards talking about their new superhero roleplaying game crashed the whole system.

That just goes to show how enthusiastic they are! If you're not already a member drop by the boards at <http://www.atomicthinktank.com> and hang out. We'll be glad to have you!





# ABOUT THIS BOOK

**H**ero Hooks is just the beginning. Each page in this book is your doorway to adventures. Plural, more than one. Each Hero Hook is a short outline of an adventure (sometimes just one sentence) with three possible explanations that you can use to create an adventure.

Using your own established villains, or some diabolical new creation inspired by the Hero Hook itself, you can create an endless supply of adventures for your heroes.

The first section, **People**, is all about the folks that your heroes encounter as they strive to keep the world safe. Whether they be crazy stalker fanboys, aliens from another dimension, or just the guy across the street. If it's a human interest story that you're looking for this the place for you.

Next comes **Places**. Here it's all about the exotic and not-so-exotic locales. Looking for a mysterious meteor shower? You've come to the right place! Looking for strange disappearances or lost cities? Come right in! This is where you want to be.

And last, but certainly not least, we finish up with **Things**. Full of strange circumstances, esoteric gadgets and more wacky conundrums than you can shake a stick at!

# ABOUT THIS BOOK

**A**dd to all that the fantastic art of several great illustrators and heroes from the minds of the Hero Hooks creators and you've got a combination you just can't beat! So get in there and make an adventure come to life!

Oh, and if you feel like doing something really fun, try out this trick: Pick a Hero Hook at random and then pick an Explanation at random too. See if you can make an adventure out of it.

## How's that for a challenge?

## WHO ARE THE AUTHORS?

You are!! The Fans of the M&M RPG and other super heroic role-playing games! The goal of BRAINSTORM Studios is to design high quality projects that incorporate ideas from all the fans, writers amateur and professional alike that wish to build a community of ideas. The writers of Hero Hooks are from all across the web, gathered from interest on M&M's "Atomic Think Tank Forums". Each writer submitted their work for inclusion voluntarily. Copyright of individual Hooks remain with each author. Creators are "repaid" by being invited to share in the behind the scenes development of HHv1 and future BRAINSTORM Projects. All creators effectively join the BRAINSTORM family when they submit their Hooks.

## WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?

An amazingly hard-to-describe activity, and the reason we're all here. In a typical role-playing game, there is one Game Master and some players. The players are playing the roles of characters in an imaginary game-world which the GM describes and controls. The game goes through cycles where:

1. The GM describes the situation.
2. The players describe how their characters react to the situation.
3. The GM and players decide what happened as a result of those actions.

Step three is often determined by rolling dice, especially in complex or stressful situations such as combat.

At their core, these games are a form of interactive and collaborative storytelling. Whereas cinema, novels and television shows are passive, role-playing games engage the participants actively, allowing them to simultaneously be audience, actor, and author.

In a sense, the players are the "actors" who play the heroes, improvising more freely while the Game Master plays all the supporting roles (ranging from villain to victim) and keeps them at least partly limited to the script s/he had in mind as the "writer." At the same time the Game Master "directs" or referees the outcome of

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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each decision, and his/her descriptions “produce” and “stage” the game setting. The cooperative aspect of role-playing games comes in two forms. The first is that the players are generally not competing against each other, nor against the Game Master. Most sports, board games and card games place players in opposition, with the goal of coming out the winner. A role-playing game is not a zero-sum game; in the majority of these games, the only way to actually lose is not to enjoy the game. The second form of cooperation is that all of the players are writing the story together, as a team. At the end of a role-playing game session the events that transpired could be written into a book that would tell a story written by all of its participants.

*(Definition from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page))*

## WHAT IS M&M?

M&M is a superhero tabletop roleplaying based on the d20 System by Wizards of the Coast, but includes substantial changes. The system is designed to be very generic and open (within the confines of the superhero genre), allowing players to create virtually any type of hero or villain desired. It has quickly become an extremely popular game among players of superhero roleplaying games.

## WHAT IS THE SUPERLINK PROGRAM?

Although this collection can be used for any role-playing game or storytelling need, it was created as a part of the “Superlink Society”. Under the license, another publisher can produce their own material (such as adventure modules, character books, new power books) using the M&M system. The license is free to use as long as the publisher gets permission ahead of time to use it.

Over a dozen publishers have produced over fifty products based on the license. A few have released their products as hard-back or soft-back books through the retail outlets; but most have produced their products as PDF (or Portable Document Format) books bought on-line through electronic distribution systems.

An excellent example of such Superlink product is Omlevex, a Silver Age setting book that also acts as an “official” RPG book for a fictitious comic book company.

*(Definitions from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page))*

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you’re creating a hero for a superhero adventure game, to participate as a player you’ll want to STOP reading now!

Flying over rush-hour traffic, shooting blasts of plasma at obnoxious jerks, and ripping the doors off of stubborn ... doors – what’s not to like about playing superheroes? The genre was tackled early on in the role-playing hobby for obvious reasons. However, it has always been a tough one to do well.

The Hero Hooks are the secret ingredients of a GM’s adventure creation

laboratory. This collection is dedicated to all the Game Masters out there! If you plan to be a superhero adventure game you've come to the right place. Familiarize yourself with the various Hooks and choose your favorites to get started! The primary goal of this Hero Hook collection is to provide Game Masters the spark of inspiration to build a short evening adventure or expand a Hook into an entire story arc or even to serve as the base of a campaign.

It couldn't be more simple.

1. Flip through Hero Hooks looking for an idea that excites you.
2. Choose a Hook and determine it's Explanation, combine it with another or develop your own.
3. Take that spark and expand it as much or as little as you like.
4. Develop your details - from encounters to villain statistics using your favorite rules system, other character collections and your own original creations.
5. and "It's Clobberin' Time!"

The unique quality of each Hero Hook is that the same Hook could literally be enjoyed in a 1-2 hour mission or developed into an epic series spawning years of adventure!

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Here's what you'll need to start adventuring with Hero Hooks:

1. Your choice of one or more Hero Hooks within this collection.
2. A pencil and some scratch paper to note ideas for expanding your Hook.
3. Your choice of role-playing game rules (preferably Super Heroes, we suggest M&M - "the World's Greatest SuperHero RPG").

## HOW DO I USE THE HOOKS IN MY GAME?

Hero Hooks is a collection of fully independent adventure hooks playable by themselves or useful in filling gaps between campaigns or as subplots within your current story lines for the genre of the comic book hero (or villain). Hero Hook could also be red herrings. Not every event has meaning. A red herring is a small bit of plot that leads nowhere.

Hooks are suitable for beginning and experienced players, making this Superlink Product a perfect companion for anyone wishing to vanquish villainy... Now git to it! Time's a-wasting, and evil's out there making handcrafted mischief for the swap meet of villainy. And you can't strike a good deal with evil, no matter how much you haggle.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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## GAME MASTERS AND THE STORIES WE TELL

GMs share goals with authors, playwrights and directors – the goal is to get the audience (or players) to suspend their disbelief and treat the imaginary world as a real one. Storytelling is not about which story you tell, it's about how you tell the story. A bad storyteller can turn a snappy hook into a pile of doggy doo-doo but a good storyteller can make the most mundane fascinating. The goal of the story must be to stir emotions.

## WRITING ADVENTURES

Creating adventures takes a great deal of time. Many GMs find that they spend more time getting ready for the game session than they do at the table actually playing. The creation time can be the most fun and rewarding part of being a GM, however the process can at times be tedious and draining on your creativity. Making up interesting characters, setting, challenges and noting rules or game statistics to present before your friends can be a great creative outlet. The main goal of Hero Hooks are to cut down on that creation time and fill a GM with inspiration to hit the ground running. Many published adventures are available for a GM to purchase but you will often find you need to spend additional time making the small changes to fit the adventure into your ongoing campaign or the adventure will just be too large to absorb and play in the limited amount of time you have. That's where Hero Hooks come in, they're right in the middle ground of giving you the enjoyment of creating characters, settings and challenges without being overwhelming.

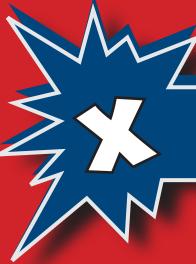
## GETTING THE HEROES INVOLVED

Hero Hooks are designed with the specific purpose of seeding your super settings with the most flexibility for inserting the adventure seed into the flow of your games. Most Hooks will be adaptable enough to slide into your current plot, story and situation with minimal effort.

## EXPANDING YOUR HERO HOOK

Each Hero Hook can be used in a variety of ways. Hooks have been trimmed of all the fat and fluff you normally find in multi-page modules and novel length adventures. Each Hook provides a situation (the Hook) with three possible Explanations from which you may choose, combine, expand on, or even generate your own original Explanation. Game rules and statistics have been cleared to give you the kernel of the unique Hook.

We believe, if you're like us, that your creativity and your choice of rules will be best suited to develop any necessary game numbers. Often it's searching for the perfect spark of inspiration that eludes us, once you've found your muse creating the details to your like is a treat. Each hook gives your multiple



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

sparks to light the fuse of your own story, void of becoming lost or confused with someone else's magnum opus.

Novels and movies are great but ultimately they're not yours, why would you want a full adventure rife ideas not yours? Hero Hooks gives you just enough meat to cook up a tasty snack for the evening or the inspiration to prepare a grand feast for your game gang to enjoy for weeks to come!

Game Masters can choose to take their Hook in any direction they see fit but we've found a nice system to "brainstorm" the expansion of your Hook. Give it a try, tweak it to fit your style of adventure creation and let the creative juices fly!

1. Flip through Hero Hooks looking for an idea that excites you.
2. Define the obstacles and clues that will stand in the way of the heroes learning and solving the Explanation you've chosen. Define the threat the Hook is based on. Ask the What, Who, Where, When, Why and How the Explanation you've chosen is leading.
3. Define the antagonists and the tactics they will use to stop the heroes from foiling the Explanation. Develop the villain, menace, or major obstacle that will stand in the way of your heroes reaching the Explanation. Develop statistics and character sheets or use previously created numbers from past adventures or other game products.
4. Describe any locations that make the Hook interesting to adventure around.
5. List the events as they will most likely unfold that lead to the Explanation. Note any anticipated responses from the heroes and what will result from their meddling. Outline any specific events or clues to set you'd enjoy seeing toward the Hook's situation and explanation. List and describe these encounters with obstacles and/or villains, investigations, skill challenges, role-playing interaction and activity. Ask yourself how all your senses would perceive each encounter and what details would be fun to include.
6. Think about how this Hook and the events within might lead to future adventures or epilogues. Note them so that you may refer back later.
7. Mark rules needed for important events or characters.

Your Hook can become a larger tale encompassing several issues creation a "story arc" or it can stand alone as a single issue for the game night.

## **STORY STRUCTURE**

To best prepare your Hero Hook for its encounter with your players it's best to arm yourself with some time honored tactics. The Hero Hook you choose gives you the basic concept for your story. But a good structure will help

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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that concept survive the unexpected twists players will retaliate with. Your job as Game Master is not to direct the characters toward any particular outcome, but to provide interesting consequences for decisions that the players make on behalf of their characters. Structure is the most important element on which your Hook is built. Exact plans, quotes, characters, statistics, rules or events may change depending on your player's actions but a solid direction will guide you through.

The three act structure is the most widely used tool in writing. You'll find it in every creative storytelling medium. Using it's structure to develop and expand your Hook will guide your energy to a solid resolution. Additional encounters, events and red herrings can be added to this structure as you like.

## ACT I *(the beginning)*

- The inciting incident is the event causing the hero to react that provides the danger or puzzle or task to put the hero into action. Think of it as the starting gun.
- Establishing conflict and the situation to ask the question "what is at stake?" and "who or what is the hero combating?"

## ACT II *(the middle)*

- Expanding and complicating the situation puts your hero on a limb that you can begin sawing. This is the chance for your hero to face an obstacle to show his power while getting a clue to the questions asked above.

## ACT III *(the end)*

- The Events leading to the climax and final confrontation following the hero's learning the answers and developing a tactical solution to combating the situation. These events should answer most if not all the questions at the heart of the Hook.
- The denouement or epilogue is the chance to answer any follow-up questions and to flash at any possible extentions of the adventure. This is also the clean-up time, carting villains to jail, aiding in collateral damage repair, etc...

## EXPAND AND COMPLICATE

Your plot hook is the bit of information that leads the player characters in a direction you want them to go. It can be a clue to discover, advice from a non-player character, an event witnessed, or a rumor heard. As game master you're like a fisherman, so provide the players with baited hooks and let them nibble.

- **Create Choices:** Developing a Hook should include at least a few points where the players need to make important decisions. What they decide should have significant impact on what happens next.

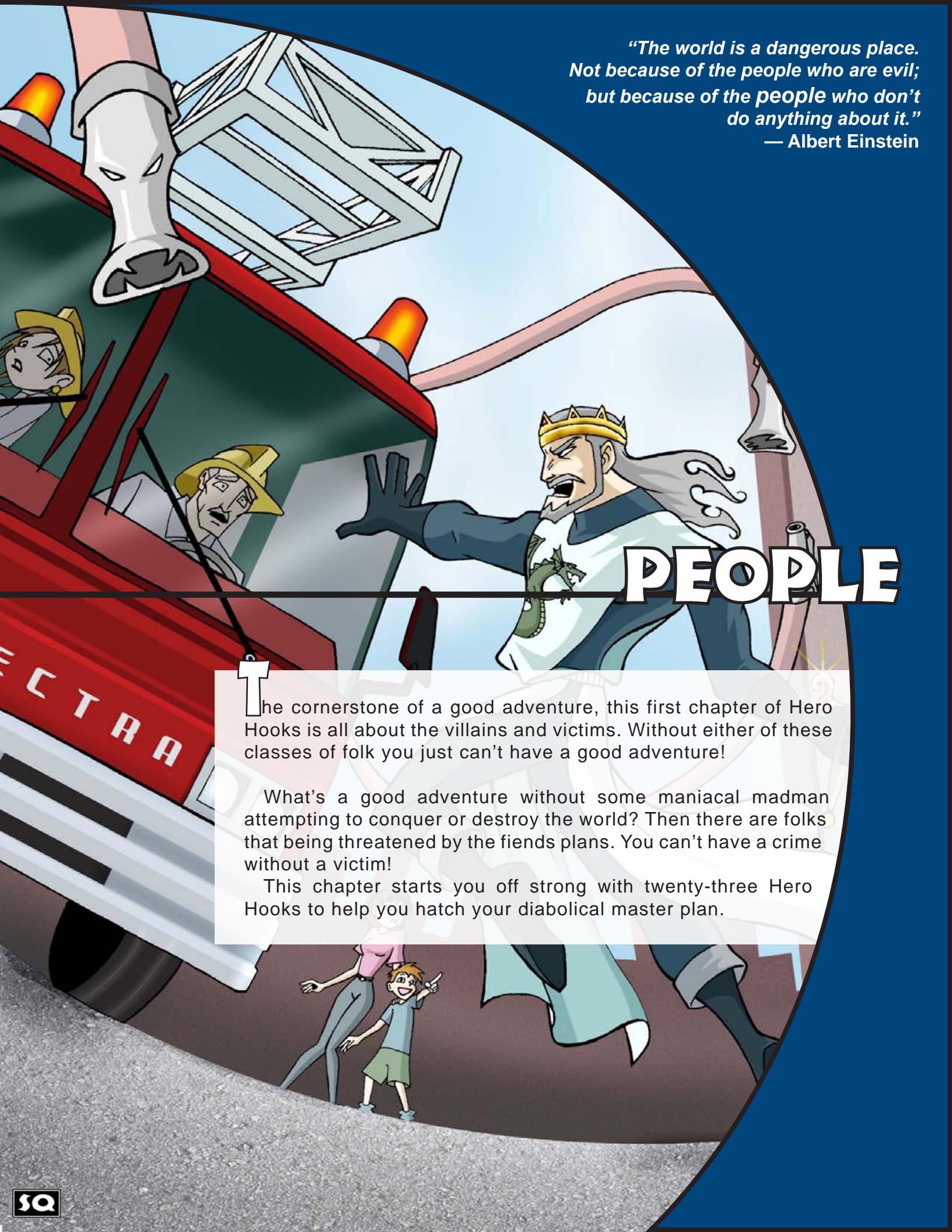
- **Plan different sorts of encounters:** Provide a number of different experiences — attacks, defenses, problem solving, role-playing, and investigation
- **Build exciting events:** Make sure to pace events appropriately. Start slowly and have the actions build. A climactic encounter always makes for a good ending.
- **Remember to include encounters that make use of the player character's abilities:** The advice to remember is “everyone gets a chance to shine”.

### PUT PEN TO PAPER OR FINGERS TO KEYBOARD

- Note the page numbers in rulebooks for any rules you know you will need to reference in a given encounter. Place bookmarks in the rulebooks for quick access.
- Cut and Paste or retype the Hero Hook you've chosen into a text document so that you can expand on it in a timely and easy fashion. You can do this with any Word Perfect-like program or even by sending an email to yourself!
- Note any changes needed to fit the Hook into your campaign. List preplanned actions and events you want NPCs to take in a given encounter (ambushes, monologing, power tactics, release of the mooks or monsters, or even plans for the mastermind's dying escape).



DEATH KNELL & BONEYARD



*"The world is a dangerous place.  
Not because of the people who are evil;  
but because of the people who don't  
do anything about it."*  
— Albert Einstein

**T**he cornerstone of a good adventure, this first chapter of Hero Hooks is all about the villains and victims. Without either of these classes of folk you just can't have a good adventure!

What's a good adventure without some maniacal madman attempting to conquer or destroy the world? Then there are folks that being threatened by the fiends plans. You can't have a crime without a victim!

This chapter starts you off strong with twenty-three Hero Hooks to help you hatch your diabolical master plan.

## THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING

(by Bob Bretz)

A man, who claims to be King Arthur, has been seen dispensing justice and defending the honor of ladies. Wielding the powerful sword, Excalibur, he is beginning to become a nuisance to law enforcement. Ignorant of the modern ways, he has been attacking what he calls “iron dragons” (cars) and lashing out at persons who have insulted his honor.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » Arthur is actually an engineer at a weapons manufacturing company, and the sword is an advanced weapons project. Fed-up with co-workers and bosses constantly “bugging” him, he snapped, creating a fantasy world where he is the protector of the public good.
- » Arthur is a super-villain in disguise, trying to get the attention of the local heroes. Once he gains their trust by convincing them he is actually King Arthur, he hopes to infiltrate their headquarters. Once inside, he plans to steal as much as he can and set a trap for the heroes.
- » He actually is King Arthur of legend, returning as he once promised. Soon to follow are Morgan Le Fey and her son, Mordred. Once Arthur and the heroes—who he refers to as his Knights of the Round Table—defeat the villains, Arthur will leave, promising to return again when needed.

## WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME

(by Kevin Perrine)

The characters witness a super-powered assassin attacking a high-scale crime boss. This should happen in an isolated area where no one else could interfere and the heroes must make their own decision.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The characters allow the assassin to “clean up the trash” and the incident causes the appropriate repercussions.
- » The characters intervene and save the life of an enemy.
- » The characters take out the crime boss hoping to hit two birds with one stone. The authorities look down on this action and the characters earn an appropriate reputation.

## CAUGHT ON CAMERA

(by J. A. Dettman)

Citizens report that a prominent hero has been committing crimes throughout the city. The crimes have become more daring each night and the police have a surveillance tape showing the hero carrying the most recent crime.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » A mind control device is being used to control the hero. Each night when he sleeps, orders are relayed directly into his brain.
- » A villain has captured the hero and manufactured a robotic duplicate to ruin the hero's reputation.
- » The hero has a multiple personality disorder and his repressed personalities, one or more of them criminal, have recently discovered their super-powers.

## ARACH-MISS



Project 9 appeared to be a rousing success. As the Illuminati vice chancellor viewed the growing form in the chemical filled vat he was filled with pride. The genetic material and technology provided by the Sruk'oo were acting as promised. All data indicated the clone growing in the vat was vastly superior to her genetic donor. Exceptional physical abilities on a lightweight but durable skeletal structure were the least impressive of the child's features. Brain scans indicated exceptional psychic potential as well.

Project 9 was birthed when she reached physical maturity and Agent 6 was assigned to handle education and indoctrination. Agent 6 selected a spider for psychological programming believing that the arachnid's small size would allow her to instill a sense of vulnerability, while its predatory nature would allow her to push Project 9's potential. She designated Project 9 Arach-Miss and began work.

Under Agent 6's instruction and mental programming techniques, Arach-Miss learned to utilize her superior physique and manifested her psychic abilities with a spider theme. By generating psychic ectoplasm she could adhere to surfaces and generate webbing. She also developed the ability to establish a psychic web allowing her to view what she considered her territory remotely and detect threats that entered or arose in that same area.

Arach-Miss's training was going well until her first planned field exercise. The mission was simple. Go from point A to point B. Arach-Miss left location A as planned and proceeded to not arrive at location B. Her homing transmitter was located on a Pit Bull Terrier in the suburbs. Arach-Miss was missing and Agent 6 fled before her superiors could hold her responsible.

**HERO OR VILLAIN ?? - YOU DECIDE !!**



## VISITING DIGNITARY

(by J. A. Dettman)

A celebrity or important government official visits the city. He has received several death threats since the announcement of his visit, and the head of his security team is concerned. The heroes are contacted to assist with the dignitary's protection.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The threats on the dignitary's life are fake. They have been manufactured by the dignitary's publicist to enhance the celebrity's image. The publicist may have gone so far as to hire super-powered mercenaries to put on a good show.
- » An obsessed stalker has followed the dignitary to the city. He plans to kidnap the object of his obsession when an opportunity presents itself.
- » A time-traveler from the future wants to prevent the dignitary from visiting a specific location in the city. If the time-traveler doesn't succeed there will be dire consequences for the future!

## AND THE CHILDREN SHALL LEAD US

(by Bob Bretz)

A number of teenaged children have been disappearing. The numbers were low at first, and thus didn't raise much alarm, but now the numbers have increased dramatically. The teens don't seem to have much in common; they ranged the spectrum with regards to race, economic status, interests, and other demographics.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The teens are mutants (or at least super-powered) and were recruited into a secret government program. Apparently, government officials believe that soon there will be an invasion from some extra-terrestrial source. The teens will be the first line of defense against the invaders. Upon investigating the disappearances, the heroes learn that the parents were willing participants in the program. The alarm was raised by an ambitious high school student working on the school paper who noticed that her/his classmates were slowly disappearing.
- » The heroes find that all of the missing teens were patrons of a new virtual reality center that recently opened up. The machines are in fact inter-dimensional teleporters that sent the teens to a barren, parallel world. The population of the world is dying from a genetic disease that won't affect the new arrivals. Thus the teens will help repopulate and rebuild the planet. The abductors didn't take every teen that visited the VR center; as they didn't want to draw the attention of the authorities. The heroes should eventually travel to the world themselves and

discover that many of the teens want to stay and help the ravaged world. Should the heroes leave them?

- » The teens were abducted by a religious sect that believes them to be latent mages. Apparently, for thousands of years the sect has gathered children who show magical talent and persecuted them, believing their talent is evil. Now, they have discovered that one of these teens will become the Magi: the world's most powerful mage. Once they have identified the candidate, they plan to put him or her to death to prevent what they believe is the coming apocalypse. Until then, the children are being held captive.

## LESSER OF TWO EVILS

(by James R. Stilipec)

The heroes get a call from Town Hall. When they arrive, they find their most mortal enemy holding the mayor hostage. When they confront the villain, he is disheveled and very weak. The enemy says he only did this to get their attention because he needs their help. As a sign of his sincerity, the mayor is set free.



### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The heroes listen to the enemy's story. He reveals a greater evil that is after him. He barely escaped their last battle, and knows it's only a matter of time before this foe finds him.
- » The enemy tells the heroes that his son has been kidnapped by an evil government. His son does not know of his father's life of crime, and the enemy doesn't want him to find out. Will the heroes help him recover his son before the child pays for the sins of his father?
- » The enemy tells the heroes that he is dying of a rare radiation sickness. This radiation source was for a large orbiting device meant to take out the heroes. Ironically, now it is in a decaying orbit and the heroes need the enemy's knowledge to stop it from taking out the entire earth.

## BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

(by Dan Simpson)

The PCs have spent their last bit of cash to repair their flying bathtub. Being a costumed super hero has its rewards, but money is not one of them. Hearing this, the PCs are approached by a major corporation. In exchange for corporate sponsorship (that means money), the PCs must attend several benefits on behalf of the corporation. Fancy parties, product launches, and other endorsing activities.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- ▶ The corporation is heavily invested in various illegal activities. By siding with the PCs, they are trying to keep their true intentions hidden, and launder some money along the way.
- ▶ The PCs discover that the corporation is in the middle of a PR nightmare, what with trying to repair its image after several paralyzing lawsuits. If the public learns that the PCs are the unofficial spokesman for the company, they themselves might suffer a backlash of opinion.
- ▶ The corporation actually wants to do good and help the community. But since they've aligned themselves close to the PCs, several villains begin to target the corporation and its affiliates for helping out the PCs.

## AN UNWANTED FAN

(by Dan Simpson)

The PCs are invited to a formal party held at the private residence of a well-known hero in the city. The formal is a unique opportunity to get to know the heroes behind the mask. There is a strict enforcement of a "no mask, no costume" policy. At the party, the PCs encounter an individual who is very interested in them and their escapades. In fact, this individual seems to know a lot more about the personal lives of the PCs than should be known.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- ▶ The individual is in fact a supervillain in disguise. Perhaps someone the PCs have already encountered. The villain snuck into the party in order to learn the identities of the PCs. With this information, the villain can now threaten the PCs loved ones.
- ▶ The individual is a rabid fan boy who maintains a popular personal fan site of the heroes. Sneaking into the party, the fan boy accosts the PCs, and knowing their real identities begins to stalk them as they lead their normal lives.

# PEOPLE

7

- » The individual is a government spy, learning as much as they can about the various heroes, their powers, and their lives. The spy is part of a government hero recruitment program.



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## DOPPLEGANGERS

(by Dan Simpson)

The PCs have returned home after a long time spent away from home. They return to find out that body doubles have actually taken their place in their lives and homes! The doppelgangers are exactly like the PCs in every way.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The Doppelgangers are a villainous group of shape changing aliens who are trying to infiltrate the lives of the heroes.
- » The Doppelgangers are the PCs from another dimension. In their world, the PCs loved ones were lost . . . and they came here searching to reunite with them, even at the expense of the PCs from this world.
- » A villain has cloned the PCs and decided to complicate their lives while they were away.

## MEET “SLICK” SAM SULLIVAN

(by Cynthia Celeste Miller)

The team is approached by a man named “Slick” Sam Sullivan who wants to be their public relations guy. He’s a sleazy snake-oil salesman type who acts like a fast-talking used car dealer. He doesn’t take no for an answer and even if the team refuses, he insists on proving how good a job he can do for them. Yes, he gives them a free sample, whether they want it or not. Use any, all, or none of the “incidents” below that result from this.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The heroes wake up to see a long, winding line of people outside their headquarters. And they brought along their children. As it turns out, Sam posted flyers all over the city, advertising that the team members are such good Samaritans that they even baby sit children . . . free of charge!
- » Slick Sam took it upon himself to air a television commercial that brags up the team. His last words on the advertisement were: “They’re so confident in their abilities that they’ll capture at least twenty super villains within seven days or else they’ll publicly sing and dance while wearing tutus and tights! And that’s a promise you can take to the bank!”
- » The huckster begins staging unimaginably hokey “crimes” using (bad) actors posing as super villains, in order to garner more publicity for “his” team.



## DISAPPEARING ACT

(by Dan Simpson)

A local owner of a magic shop (the rabbit in the hat kind of shop) has gone missing. A strange presence now inhabits the store and has been disturbing the sidewalk shops in the area. The PCs are called in to investigate.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The store owner is a mutant, whose powers have finally manifested. He can take the form of a shadow, but unfortunately for him, he cannot revert to his normal form.
- » An ancient relic was left on the owner's doorstep. After the owner opened the relic, a shadow monster appeared and consumed the owner. Now the shadow monster stalks the streets in search of more victims.
- » The store owner managed to pull a disappearing act like no other by transforming himself into an incorporeal mist. He can barely affect the real world. It's up to the PCs to find him and figure out how to return him to his original state.

## SHATTERWITCH



In the secret places of Africa things of Myth still lurk. Anansi, the Spider, wished to teach Musso Koroni, the first woman, a lesson about parenting. Their child, Azyria the Shatterwitch, was that lesson.

Raised in a world of metaphor and primal energy Azyria learned sound magic from her Grandmother, Voice of the Void. She used her powers as a demigod to traverse across realms beyond the imagination of mankind and grew wise like her father the Spider. Her destiny was to be a teacher. After teaching Shango and Thor an explosive lesson about jealousy, Azyria started to grow tired of the company of godlike beings.

After countless time in the realm of Myth, Azyria decided to seek out the world her mother was cast from. The world of man is filled with things that do not fit the mythic world she knows. She walks the Earth as only a mythical creature can.

Traveling the world Azyria sought the gambit of experiences both intellectual and physical. She dealt with heroes and villains equally challenging all she encountered to teach her their ways. No experience was too esoteric or mundane. The super powered community was always interesting to Azyria. Strange people, and sometimes even machines, who have been touched by powers like those of the gods. Despite their obvious superiority they interfere with the lesser humans; some controlling, some protecting. These costumed individuals were seen as kindred spirits.

## ASSASSIN

(by Joe Zurla)

A well-known and experienced assassin known for his odd sense of sport has apparently been hired to hit an ally NPC of the heroes. Part of the assassin's MO is a calling card "notice" sent some time before the hunt begins as "fair warning". The NPC doesn't know why or who would hire the assassin and comes to the heroes for help.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The assassin "notice" is bogus, designed to push the NPC into hiding and keep the heroes tied up protecting and covering up the target. Thus distracted, the villain who sent the fake notice furthers some other part of their plan while the heroes are watching the shadows for assassins that never arrive. The real complication arrives when the assassin shows up- not to kill the target but to find out who is using his name without permission...
- » The assassin "notice" is accurate, but was delivered to the wrong target. One of the \*other\* heroes is the actual target. This should confuse and surprise the heroes when the actual hit occurs. The misdelivery was accidental but if the assassin is confronted with this, he might call off the hit saying that the misdelivery "made it too easy"
- » The contract is legit, but the well-known assassin has died and someone new has taken on the mask and title. The new assassin isn't as deadly or as skilled as the former assassin but uses the same weapons and methods, trying to pose as the old one as much as possible. The new assassin is more concerned with not being caught than actually fulfilling the contract.

## ACCUSED

(by Cynthia Celeste Miller)

A normally popular super hero comes to the player characters for help. Strong evidence points to the hero's guilt in the disappearance of a prominent politician's daughter. He wants the PCs to help prove his innocence while keeping him out of the hands of the authorities.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The politician's daughter has faked her own disappearance, effectively eliminating her past life outright. She had been secretly moonlighting as a costumed villainess for a while now and seeks to go full-time with her sordid activities. Naturally, she took the opportunity to attempt to eliminate a hero who could eventually become a thorn in her side, thus the elaborate frame-job.

- » The politician himself had his daughter kidnapped to make the public feel sorry for him. He's bidding for re-election soon, after all. The term "sympathy vote" takes on a new meaning all of a sudden.
- » The hero is actually a shapeshifting super villain out to smear the reputation of his hated enemy. He was the one responsible for the crime and through this charade, he seeks to implicate the player characters as well.

## BRAVADO

(by Joe Zurla)

An enthusiastic but inexperienced hero enters the crime-fighting scene and almost immediately develops a string of failed attempts and losing battles with criminals and supervillians. The latest battle was such a loss that he was almost killed and he's currently in the hospital. The media is playing up the incident as a "New hero with heart" and goading the hero back onto the streets. Many NPC heroes worry about this new "kid" and wonder if he's in over his head.

## EXPLANATIONS:

- » The hero possessed unexplored and misunderstood powers of illusions. His powers really are not as bad-ass as they look because they do no damage and his "force field" doesn't block anything. He's unwilling to see the truth and too stubborn to stop trying. If he's going to make it, someone on the side of the law is going to have to see that his powers are illusions and show him how to use them correctly.
- » The hero really is a minor ex-supervillain trying to make good. He's got a single superpower that's easily identifiable and he's trying to fight crime without his "big gun" (which he mentally associates with his former life and occupation). He's finding it



WOMAN GIRL

difficult but he's too worried that using his powers, even for good, will blow his parole.

- » The newbie hero has always admired one (or more) of the PC heroes and has followed their careers religiously. When the fan suddenly started showing powers themselves, they took it as a sign to follow in the footsteps of their idol(s). Trouble is, the newbie has zero experience with combat and whatever powers they have are undeveloped and untrained so they are constantly beaten...again and again. The newbie hero is too "ashamed" to ask for help or teaching because they want their idol to like them...

## BACK FROM THE ASHES

(by Joe Zurla)

A confirmed very dead NPC Ally or enemy of the heroes has apparently been seen haunting his old sites. At first, it's considered to be nothing more than a rumor, but as more and more people claim to have seen this supposedly-dead person, it starts to gain credibility. In all cases, the supposedly-dead person is acting elusive and mysterious and avoiding all former allies.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The returned NPC is actually a copycat fan of the hero or villian. The death of the NPC caused the fan to go a little nuts and now he thinks that he "is" the hero/villian. Deep down he knows that he's not the real thing so he's avoiding former friends and allies. As the fan knows *everything* about the original hero/villian, he is able to playact as the original better than most.
- » The returned NPC is a physical copy or clone of the original but the memory restoration didn't take completely, so he's got partial amnesia. He knows that he "should" be going out in costume and doing things but he's not entirely sure why. His elusiveness is merely his confusion and lack of remembering former allies and friends. With this lack of memory, he might not know friend from foe and if he confides in a clever enemy, the enemy might sway him to the other side by filling him in with false memories. A former villian might become a hero or vice-versa.
- » The returned person is the formerly-dead NPC's ghost. He's got some sort of unfinished business to attend to and he's working on settling scores so he can finally go in peace. The elusiveness and mystery is both the fact that the ghost can't see into the real world entirely and so doesn't hear or see those who are talking to him. What the ghost wants probably ties into his death or issues with his former secret identity.

## HALF-LIFE

(by Joe Zurla)

A new hero appears on the scene! He's resistant to damage and stronger/faster/healther than humanly possible. After a few appearances, this "super hero" almost gets beaten by another villian who's much weaker than him. Shortly thereafter, the hero is seen committing crimes! What's going on?

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » A patient with some sort of horrible affliction is tried with an experimental new cure and it activates latent super-powers of healing and regeneration. He was changed into a superhuman and free of all his former sickness. His new found powers and health, however, are irrevocably fading with time and he's desperately afraid of going back to being what he was. He's committing crimes to get more of the cure or is forced to commit crimes because a villian has the cure and won't give it to him unless he does his dirty work...
- » The new hero is a government test on a super-serum that was designed to boost soldier effectiveness. The test subject was given too high a dosage and so became superstrong but also slightly addicted to the painkilling and super-health aspects of the serum. Running low on serum, the test subject is trying to preserve his supply by using just normal drugs to feed his addiction and is committing crimes to pay for his fix.
- » The superhero is really a robot/android designed to look like a human and act as a protector. It's self-aware and has a central power source that fuels it's regeneration and acts of super strength. This power source is also it's "heart" and will stop running if it gets too low on power. The source is faulty and is slowly leaking power, forcing the robot to commit crimes to get parts and fuel to restore it's power source.

## FIREFIGHT

(by Joe Zurla)

A pair of supervillians appear on the scene. Both of them have similar powers of fire generation, fire control and resistance to fire. They both seem to hate one another and try many times to destroy one another but since both have the same powers and protections, these fights usually end up as stalemates. The real danger these villians cause is the massive fires these firefights leave in their wake. Something must be done!

**EXPLANATIONS:**

- » The villians are both clones made by a third villian- exact copies with perhaps some single difference (blue flame versus green flame, male versus female, etc). Each clone is “convinced” it’s the real one and that the other is the copy so they fight as often as possible. One side might try to use the heroes or the authorities as a trap for the other.
- » The villians were given the power of flames from an alien or supernatural entity. The entity also told them that the powers come with a price and a time limit. Unless one of them kills the other, the powers will go away and when they do, they both will die. So they are both fighting to keep their powers and lives before the time runs out. The entity might be lying to encourage the flames and destruction or it might be truth, with both supervillians exploding in a ball of fire when the time runs out. If the entity is not found and caught, it might be able to do it all over again...
- » The villians are really the same person that can duplicate into two forms. This alternate form is his “dark side” and pops out whenever the main villian uses his flame powers. To complicate matters, if he doesn’t “let out” the fire every so often, the dark side of him comes out in his secret identity! He’s trying to kill his duplicate but he’s so far unable to do so.

**EXILE****(by Joe Zurla)**

A former villian starts fighting crime with no explanation. He shows up to help heroes against other villians but leaves before the smoke clears. The word on the street develops that the villian crossed some powerful and potent crimelord and was exiled from the underworld. Not only exiled, but a price has been put on his head. He seems to have crossed the fence to the side of law but refused to turn himself in for his previous crimes. What’s he doing? Can he be trusted?

**EXPLANATIONS:**

- » The whole story is true but there’s more to it than that. The villian turned on a powerful crimelord when he started turning dangerously insane and talked about plans of genocide and mass destruction. He wasn’t able to actually stop the crimelord but he did wound him a bit and fears what the crimelord will do when he heals up. He’s trying to establish a pattern of good faith with the heroes so that when he tells them of the crimelord’s plan, they might believe him.
- » The Villian has (in his secret ID) fallen in love with someone and has begun to see the errors of his ways. The crimelord threatened his love and so the villian crossed him to defend her. Now, he’s trying to become something she will be

proud of so that when he tells her his “secret”, she won’t reject him. That’s also why he won’t turn himself in...he’s got a long prison term ahead and he doesn’t want to be apart from his new love.

- » The villian actually died in the confrontation with the crimelord but has been replaced by another person (sibling, lover, partner) who knew the villian’s secret. The new villian is seething to get back at the crimelord for killing the original- he not only opposes the crimelord’s plans but also is willing to help the opposition. He’s not willing to be caught or arrested because the new villian doesn’t want to serve time for another person’s crimes and he suspects the cops won’t believe his story.

## NO HARM, NO FOUL

(by Pat Wagner)

Since the emergence of paranorms, major sporting leagues have had to instate regulatory bodies to supervise their teams for cheating. When the heroes local team goes on an unprecedeted winning streak, the league watchdogs come out to scrutinize the contest and soon after it starts, they put an immediate halt to the match!

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » As fans express their outrage, the league officials try to prevent one individual from slipping away. His name is Oomph and besides being a booster for the local team, he’s also a mentalist with telekinetic talents. As soon as the game is stopped Oomph tries to escape from the league officials as well as the heroes and a number of bookmakers and their muscle!
- » As soon as the contest stops, the minions of three bookmakers converge on the team owner’s box! While the heroes try to sort out the accusations of the bookies aimed at the owners, the league officials point to the media area as the source of the paranormal activity! Using her masking abilities, the Shroud attempts to get away before the heroes catch up with her...as does one of the star players!
- » There appears to be some confusion in the luxury box from where the league officials are viewing the game. Apparently a local bookmaker has sent his two paranormal associates, Tunnel Vision and Thorn, to convince the league watchdogs that there has been no inappropriate activity involving the local club.



## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

(by Pat Wagner)

During the early seventies a vampire named Sablebane retreated to the Arctic Circle to use his wealth to build an oil rig. Using the long hours of seasonal darkness, the evil executive has built a frozen empire on the ice. The vampire is careful only to hire workers without families and offers them outrageous salaries for short work terms. Naturally the workers never return. Sablebane keeps a small loyal staff to administrate his affairs.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » One of the characters hears of a long missing roommate of a friend. They took a job with the Sable Oil Company and were never heard from again. Perhaps there's an opportunity to work for the generous company if the character is without friends or family.
- » A scruffy looking stranger comes to the heroes and explains his harrowing tale of vampires, frozen bodies, and his daring escape! The man is quite obviously mad but even so, what could have possibly left those gruesome puncture wounds on his neck?
- » A recent geological survey of the arctic near the Sable Oil Company went tragically wrong as the plane with five scientists aboard disappeared. One of the scientists is a close friend of one of the heroes and an expert pilot. Even if they had crash landed there would be some trace of the plane.

## KIDNAPPED!

(by Jordan Steelman)

The children of the city are disappearing and no one knows why! Dozens go missing each night and parents are terrified! The police are baffled and are calling for heroes to step onto the scene. The problem is, where do they start?

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » A powerful mentalist is enslaving the children and keeping them in an underground lair. He wants to construct an army of brainwashed youths to overthrow the adults that mocked and ridiculed him. With the children as his soldiers he could be unstoppable, for who would hurt a child?
- » A mysterious entity is transporting the youths to a parallel dimension. The dimension had been devastated by war and is siphoning people from across reality to rejuvenate its population. All they want now is

peace and prosperity but can that justify their acts?

- » The children are forming an underground cult. Lead by a child with super powers, they believe that he can pass his powers onto others but only if they do his bidding. He wants to be a king among kids and has the children stealing and vandalizing all across the city. It's his turf now and he'll do whatever he wants!

## WHERE HAVE ALL THE VILLAINS GONE?

(by Pat Wagner)

In an unexpected crimeless spree, the heroes find themselves looking for activities to occupy themselves, such as throwing out the first pitch and attending the charity fashion show. It appears that a team of super-powered ladies calling themselves the Hyena's are hiring all the local muscle to work for them, and the sudden organization of petty thugs has caused a dip in the crime rate. The six women only employ men as their underlings, and their lieutenants are normally low powered local villains.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The Hyenas are taking over the local underground! As the heroes close in on the villains, a trap is sprung unleashing the entirety of their new army against the characters.
- » The Hyenas would be very interested in taking on a female character into their ranks. Perhaps she would infiltrate the new crime syndicate or perhaps there's something to this new women's order. (As an alternative, one of the male heroes may be approached to serve as a lieutenant for the Hyenas.)
- » Over time the Hyenas take over the local crime scene and begin carrying out hits on targets that oppose their philosophy. The womanizing mayor is made an example of, or perhaps the female character in the group wears too much make-up, demeaning women everywhere!

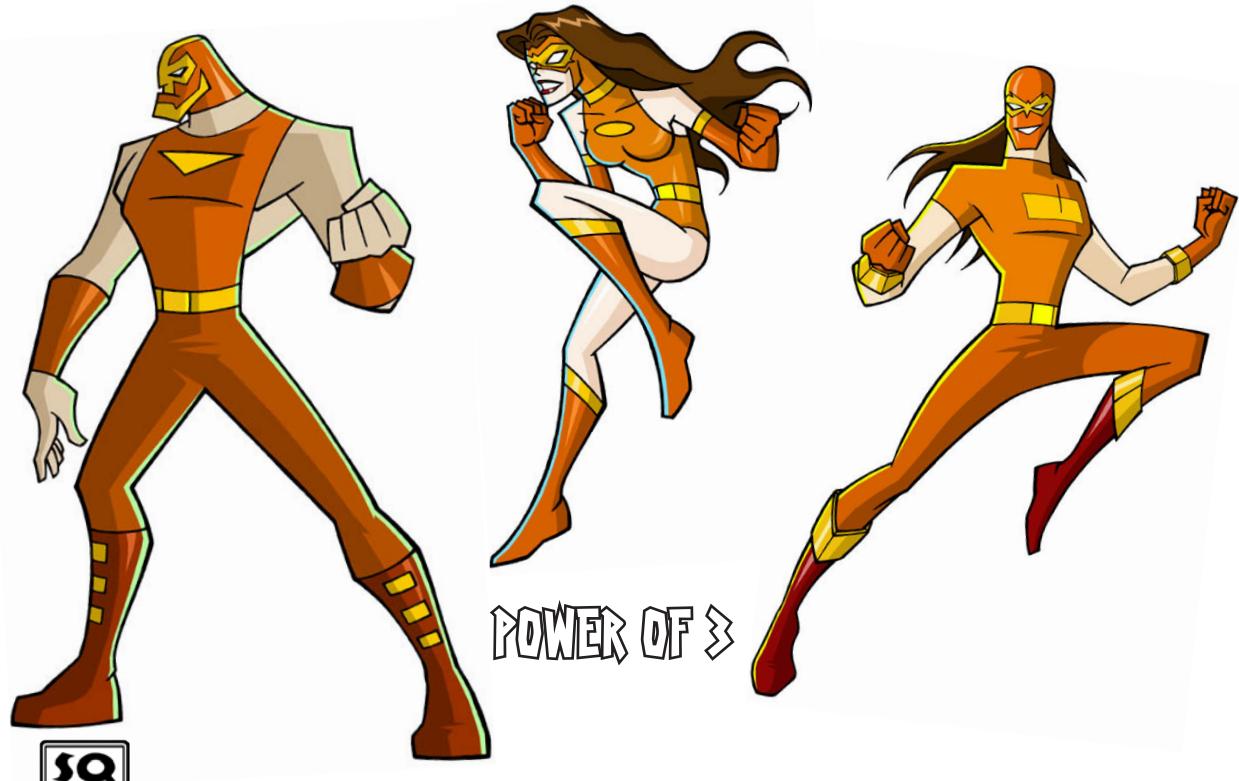
## SEEKING ASYLUM

(by Joe Zurla)

A race of nearly human-like beings from another world or dimension appears, begging for asylum and safety on Earth. They are willing to offer new technologies (longevity, medicine, solar power, etc) of all kinds, desperate to be accepted and allowed to stay on Earth. The few displays of this technology has made everyone starry-eyed and nobody is even considering the real question- who are they seeking asylum from?

**EXPLANATIONS:**

- » The aliens are really the bad guys in a war on another planet or dimension and have been all but obliterated by their former victims. These are the last of the race and they are truly desperate. Some of them have truly given up the old ways and just want to live in peace. Some of them will return to the old ways and methods, especially if their former victims follow them to Earth and demand they be turned over for their crimes. As they are nearly human, they could vanish among the population quite easily.
- » The aliens are fleeing religious persecution from another planet/dimension. They truly just want to live in peace and share their secrets. Their oppressors, however, are tyrannical and vicious and will send "inquisitors" to seek out these aliens. Since humans are also heretics and unbelievers, they attack any who get in their way.
- » They were banished from their lands for spreading sickness and disease. The aliens are really symbiotic with a race of micro-organisms. They have to infect other hosts with their symbiotes, otherwise they sicken and die from their own plague. The technology they offer, while functional, is beyond human tech to replicate and is used just as a hollow bribe to allow the aliens to spread and infect Earth with their disease. Perhaps some of those who banished them follow and warn Earth of the danger these aliens present.





*"Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwrecks."*

— Robert Louis Stevenson

# PLACES

**L**ocation, location, location.

Where an adventure takes place is often just as important as the villain responsible or the nefarious master plan of the week. An Active volcano, another dimension, or the neighborhood down the street, each place creates different feel for the adventure.

What follows are sixteen unique Hero Hooks to help you create that certain feel for your adventure.

## STRANGE DREAMS

(by Kevin Perrine)

One of the characters begins having recurring dreams of an underground city littered with skeletons and shadows rising from the city to the surface.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The city is the remnants of an ancient civilization, and the shadows represent the ghosts of the vengeful spirits coming to take those that caused their downfall.
- » After one of the dreams the characters find themselves in the city and must find a way out.
- » The city doesn't exist but the dream is a representation of an invasion of shadows from another dimension.

## HOLIDAY PARADE

(by J. A. Dettman)

As one of the annual holiday parades winds its way through the streets, City Hall receives a bomb threat. Explosive charges have been set along the parade route and they will be detonated if \$20 million isn't paid in the next three hours.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The bomb threat is a villainous ploy to ambush the heroes along the parade route when they least expect it.
- » A madman only interested in causing mayhem has planted charges throughout the city and will detonate them regardless of payment.
- » The bomb threat is a ruse to keep the local heroes busy while a band of villains break into a top-secret research facility.

## KENSON TOWER IS MISSING!

(by J. A. Dettman)

One of the city's most prominent landmarks—the Kenson Tower office building—has disappeared. Residents and government officials alike are worried at the sudden change to the skyline, and the police want help.

## EXPLANATIONS:

- » The building is not physically missing. A villain testing a new device has rendered Kenson Tower, and everything inside, invisible.
- » Temporal terrorists from the future have caused a ripple in time during their raids into the past. The disappearance of Kenson Tower is just the beginning of the changes that will occur if the terrorists aren't stopped.
- » A dark ritual performed in the basement of Kenson Tower has transformed the entire building into a dimensional crossroads. Careful inspection will show that all that remains of the building in our dimension is a single door and beyond await gateways to a thousand worlds.

## A DAY AT THE ZOO

(by Bob Bretz)

The local zoo has been advertising a new exhibit featuring a never before seen species from the Amazon. On opening day, the creature broke free and began running amok. Apparently, it can control other animals and it compelled them to escape their cages as well.

## EXPLANATIONS:



**LADY KEEN**

- » The creature is in fact an intelligent space alien that a scientist at the zoo captured. Hoping to gain fame as a great biologist, the scientist planned to convince people that he had found the creature. The creature bid its' time until the best moment to escape, which turn out to be the opening day of the exhibit.
- » The scientist in charge of the exhibit used to work for a biotechnology firm. Fired for doing his own projects, he stole one of his best works and tried to pass it off a new species. Upon discovering what he had done, the company sent a special forces-like retrieval team to cover up what the scientist had done before any bad press leaked out.
- » Unfortunately, something went wrong and the creature got lose. Eco-terrorist tried to free the creature and return it to the Amazon, where it had come from. They chose the day of the opening when they could gain the most exposure for their actions. However, the creature proved to be more than the terrorist could handle.

## THE PHONE BOOTH

(by Kevin Perrine)

It is a nice day—a bit overcast but nice nonetheless—when a blast of crackling energy nearly parts the characters' hair. Whether they are in costume or civilian clothes, the first and last thing they see is some costumed creep scooping up a kid from the crowd and running away from the heroes. The chase is on, but it doesn't last long. The maniac is fast and makes corners so quick as to allow just a glimpse before he is out of sight. Just when the group thinks they've cornered the assailant, the last bend is turned and they see the boy standing alone, holding a phone from a phone booth. The street isn't overly crowded and bystanders haven't taken notice until the heroes round the corner. The young boy, smudged with dirt and missing a shoe holds the phone out shaking. "He . . . he . . . says it's for you" he says as he hands the phone to the closest hero. "He says he'll kill me if you don't answer." he whispers as a tear rolls down his pudgy little cheek.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The costumed creep and his gang are in the middle of a heist. He's the lookout and didn't plan to start a chase, but seeing the heroes (or thinking he saw an undercover copper) he was shocked and did what he does best. He blasted away then ran. The boy was his cover. Lucky for him, his cronies saw the chase and caught up to him, teleporting him back to the job site. The last thing he did was tell the boy to stall the heroes or he'd hunt him down. Now if they play it right and the boy stalls long enough the job will get done.
- » The costumed creep is testing his newfound abilities, and why not do it on a crowded street?! The trick is that his powers have nothing to do with energy blasts or super speed. Illusion is his game. The heroes got only quick glances of the blasts of energy, the speeding escape, and the swept up (illusionary) boy. Now the final trick is to fool them long enough as the boy to sneak away while the heroes are none the wiser. Perhaps to test them for bigger bounty in the future.
- » Some assassins are cold and calculated; some are madmen hunters looking to challenge their prey. . . . This villain is both. The blast, the boy, the chase—all small tricks to draw his mark out. He considers it a form of mind control, and he is looking to exercise his talents. The costumed creep is a sure-shot assassin with the ability to teleport. He plotted this mark, noting every detail about the street on which that phone booth sits. And now he waits with crosshairs on the young boy as the heroes catch up. He has all manner of tests for the heroes now, but in the end he plans on earning his money with a kill shot. From not letting the heroes leave the five-foot square around the booth to killing an innocent to bring the police—all the heroes need to know is that they aren't allowed to spill their little game to those around. And telepathy won't escape him, just try it . . . .

## THE CRATER

(by James R. Stilipec)

One night, a bright flash is seen high above the city. Moments later, a massive explosion lights the sky and rocks the land. Investigation reveals a large crater in the middle of nearby farmlands.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » At the center of the crater is an unconscious humanoid form. When the individual awakes, it claims to have no memory. However, whenever the individual sees the moon, it is deathly frightened. Is this person a friend or a foe, and what danger could the moon hold?
- » The crater is empty, but witnesses say there was a streak of light that came down from the sky. Try as they may, no one can find the source of the flash. The following night, another flash strikes closer to the city. The heroes must find the source of these blasts and stop it before more people are killed.

## ENTERPRISE

Albert Edison used the money from his first lemonade stand to buy a bike which he used for a paper route. The money from that paper route allowed him to buy his first stocks. By the time Albert reached High School his portfolio was generating more money in dividends than his parent's combined annual income.



Albert finished College in three years with an honorary doctorate awarded after he raised 25 millions dollars for the campus alumni foundation. Albert started business in real estate and auto sales but after generating sufficient capital he diversified into technological research.

Albert manages the volatile tech market not by understanding the technology his firm develops but by recognizing what technologies are needed and after breaking ground abandoning the project before competition starts making knockoffs. His firm "Human Inc." holds thousands of patents but has rarely manufactured more than prototypes. Instead Human Inc sells manufacturing rights to the technologies it develops.

As wealth and power knelt at Albert's feet he grew hungry for a challenge and started testing his companies prototypes. He was poorly qualified as a pilot and lacked the technical skills to suggest improvements but he had enough money it didn't really matter if the first prototype got totaled as long as the lab boys got enough data to make another one. Albert's biggest accomplishment was a manned mission to Mars to prove the viability of a faster than light propulsion drive.

Albert has fallen in love with the E-Alpha power armor he tested. Despite excellent performance, he has refused to okay the publication of the patent or sale of any of the research data. The power armor is his and he is not willing to share that technology

- » A glowing meteor in the middle of the crater has turned all the farmers within two miles into super-powered zombies with glowing yellow eyes. The zombification seems to be contagious, and those infected are bent on converting everyone on Earth to the will of the “Rock.” Can the heroes find a cure and thwart the plans of those behind the meteor?

## CRIME ALLEY

(by Kevin Perrine)

Every town has one: that dark alley nobody thinks to enter. Tucked away on an unused route, no one thinks twice about the corridor. Those finding themselves in the alley hurry to leave, for different reasons, even if they don't realize it: the temperature drops, dizziness strikes, there is rumbling in the shadows. And so they leave.

During the day, the sun is low in the alley always at just the right level to shine blindingly between the cracks of the buildings. At night, the moon casts long dark shadows from the building spires above, the large rusty dumpsters, and the rickety old fire escapes. The alley does not welcome visitors and hides from heroes in the plain sight of obscurity.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The alley is home to an urban legend waiting to pounce on the next passerby. The legend may be an animal, intelligent, or a minion of a greater menace: a Gator-Man, Jersey Devil, Sasquatch, or even just a lost Hellspawn.
- » The alley is a secret entrance to an organization (villainous, vigilante, governmental) that hides its existence with tricks and/or technology to keep the headquarters safe.
- » The alley is alive!! In a city of villains and heroes, the alley itself has found sentience and will protect itself from further decay. It has learned to control vagrants and other passers-by. It may even be looking to expand its influence. . .

## HALF PAST A MELTING CLOCK

(by Dan Simpson)

The PCs are called into the offices of one of the local research facilities in the area. The scientists there have noticed a strange disturbance in the way time is functioning. Different areas of the city seem to be reacting differently to the distortions. As the PCs are given the run down, things go from concerning, to bad, to worse.

During the PCs stay at the facility, time seemingly collapses across the city, people moving and talking backwards through time. In other parts of the town, temporal jumps appear, sending whole city blocks to the Jurassic period. It's up to the PCs to save the town!

## EXPLANATIONS:

- » The temporal distortions are caused by one of the scientists at the facility. Someone who has a grudge against the PCs. Someone who is smart enough to lead them into a snare, and potentially trap them in time!
- » A young, but powerful mutant has lost control of their powers. As the mutant moves through town, different temporal distortions happen. It's up to the PCs to find the mutant and repair the damage!
- » The temporal distortions are actually a signal of something far, far worse. A gate opens in the middle of the distortion points, letting loose various inter-dimensional baddies. The city is the staging point for an invasion from another dimension!

## THE HOLE

(by Cynthia Celeste Miller)

Recently, while a group of youngsters participated in a stickball game in a vacant lot, the ground crumbled beneath one of the children's feet, revealing a relatively large hole. The child plummeted down into it and hasn't been seen since.

## EXPLANATIONS:

- » The hole is actually a gateway to Hell (or the game setting's equivalent), and not only is the child still down there, strange demon-like creatures start surfacing. These monsters pose a threat to the city as they begin to terrorize the citizens, destroying buildings, or otherwise wreaking havoc.
- » The hole leads to a hidden chamber wherein lies a group of Golden Age villains who had placed themselves into crude cryogenic pods. Trying to find a way out, the scared child accidentally releases them.
- » The hole is the portal to another reality. Perhaps it's a reality in which everything is opposite of the way our world is (good guys are bad guys, etc.). Or maybe it assumes the Confederates won the American Civil War. Even more scary, it might be a world where disco never died. Eep!



WAR WOLF

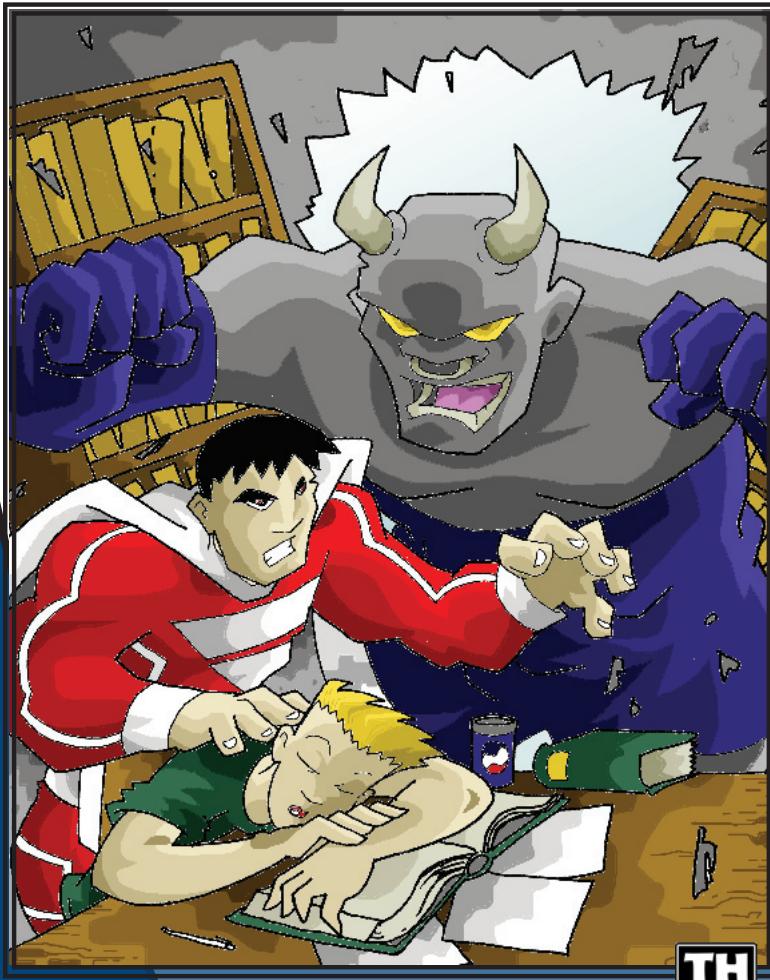
## THE GIRL IN THE GLASS BOX

(by Dan Simpson)

The PCs are being plagued by recurring nightmares. The same nightmare comes to them each night, and each night it grows more and more intense. A young girl, trapped in a glass box screams as she is being poked and prodded with needles. Waves of water appear and slowly engulf her. The last thing that you hear is the thump-thump-thumping of her banging on the glass.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » A research facility is experimenting on a seemingly deaf & dumb mutant. The mutant is only capable of communicating through dreams, and has finally connected with the PCs. It's up to the PCs to find out who the girl is and where she is located.
- » A ghost inhabits the PC's headquarters and is tormenting the PCs while they sleep. The ghost is bound to the heroes Headquarters for a particular reason. The PCs must find out how to contact the ghost and let it rest.
- » The PCs have been unknowingly taking a secret serum concocted by a supervillain. Sneaking the serum into their headquarters' food supply, the PCs have been subjected to tormenting dreams. In an effort to wear down the PCs constitution, the villain is planning a major attack when the PCs are at their worst.



## GET YOUR DAMN DIRTY PAWS OFF ME

(by Dan Simpson)

The media has discovered a remote forest outside of town where a colony of intelligent apes have been discovered. The apes are of a very advanced intelligence and have lived in secrecy for a long while.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The apes have decided to take over the local zoo, freeing the animals and caging the humans. The apes see the zoo as barbaric and cruel and have decided to teach the humans a lesson.
- » The apes are escapees from a local science research facility that had been conducting cruel chemical tests on the animals. Now that the apes have escaped and regrouped, they are bent on marching back to the labs and tearing it down completely.
- » The apes want to be left alone and in peace, but the media won't leave them alone. Constant attention from fans, reporters, and scientists have disturbed the ape way of life. The apes ask for the PCs help, to relocate them somewhere safe, far from the prying eyes of civilization.

## ARENA

(by Joe Zurla)

One of the heroes is challenged on public media by a rival to a "one-on-one fight to the finish" at an abandoned but well-known place three days hence. He insults and mocks the hero, all but daring the hero to show up to prove himself. He claims to be "stronger and better than ever before" and invites the media to come "and watch the show" so that there's no cowardly tactics or sneak attacks.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The challenge is sincere. The rival has developed a new potent superpower and is keeping its existence a secret until the fight. He plans to use it on public TV on a powerful rival as a display of force. The new power should make the rival much stronger than he is expected to be but not unbeatable.
- » The challenge is a ruse. The original rival is actually held in stasis by another supervillain. The actual "stronger and better" rival is really a robotic copy of the rival that's made by his captor. The challenge was made as a way to test the robot's powers to pass for human and deal with combat. The robot will be tougher than the original as promised.

but it will also suffer from flaws in programming when damaged, doing odd things during the battle.

- » The challenge turns into a trap, but not for the hero- for the rival. Other villians descend on the fight to take down not the hero, but the rival who made the challenge. The fight becomes a free-for-all between all parties but they are more interested in taking down the rival because he has managed to upgrade his powers and become "Stronger and better." They want to take him down before he becomes too big of a threat...

## CRAZY MOUNTAIN HOPE

(by Pat Wagner)

Deep in the mountains of Montana the strangest phenomenon is happening. For nearly a year forest rangers have reported a thick fog engulfing the entire area. Furthermore one of the rangers hasn't been seen in over four months, and search teams have found no trace of the woodsman. The wife of the missing ranger has come to the characters as an old friend and asks that they help.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The government is building its next super prison in the heart of Crazy Mountain. In order to keep their new facility secret, they've enlisted the aid of Sirius, a weather controller, to hide the construction from satellite view. When heroes investigate, the closer they get to the root of the mystery, the worse the weather will become.
- » One of the park rangers is aware of the government building a prison in the mountain and has been sworn to secrecy. Should players investigate further, the ranger will lead them into the mountains and leave them to deal with Druid Black, a government agent hired to keep interlopers away. Black's ability to shape change into various wild animals keeps most trespassers away!
- » While searching the mountain for the missing ranger, the characters run into government agents who immediately try to turn the heroes around. Although they won't say why the area



has been marked as off limits, they will fire their weapons at any heroes who disobey them...before they call in Sirius and Druid Black... !

## AFTERMATH

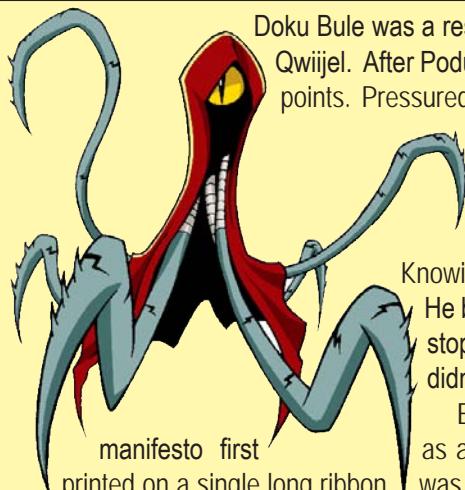
(by Joe Zurla)

A secluded and protected scientific complex is found to be empty of all life- the people inside it are all dead or missing from some sort of accident and the place has been closed by auto systems from the outside. The authorities want to know what happened and want to send the heroes in to investigate.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The scientific lab was working on a psionic device that would activate untapped psionic powers. The device overloaded when first powered up and then wouldn't shut down, giving powerful and uncontrolled psionic powers to everyone in the complex. The device eventually burned out but not before the lab workers destroyed the complex and each other with their powers. A few of the lab staff may remain alive and in some sort of mental shock, still possessing some potent chaotic psionic powers.

## THE SHROUDED EYE



manifesto first  
printed on a single long ribbon  
Doku finally had the audience

Doku Bule was a respected Ghiul of the Kleefru until his political paper was Turpenied in the daily Qwiijel. After Podust of criticism Doku Bule only felt more justified in stating the controversial key points. Pressured by his closest Hunad and Altrees alike Doku Bule exiled himself to the primitive world known as Earth. On Earth he could lead the primitives to an enlightened society and away from the savagery they currently endure.

Doku's first priority on Earth was to spread his message. He sought public attention and forums so he could share his plan for a unified people of Earth. Knowing that actions speak louder than words he became active in local communities. He burned down crack houses and filled swimming pools with flavored gelatin. He stopped muggers and crushed ATM machines. He became frustrated that people didn't realize the significance of his actions.

Eventually Doku's actions earned him notoriety in the press. He published his as a book which earned record sales. His second printing which he insisted be was not as well received. After getting multiple media interviews under his wejinok he sought. Unfortunately nobody seemed to understand his plan for an Anarchist Representative Monarchy. College campuses started offering political science courses in "Doku Bule Interpretation." Despite the growing challenge he continued to defy the constraints of the Earth governments and demonstrate the ideals he is trying to imbue.

**HERO OR VILLAIN ?? - YOU DECIDE !!**





- » The lab was working on artificial intelligence and succeeded in creating a rudimentary child-like intelligence, but it's taken over the electronic and computerized parts of the lab and is playing God with those who come into its domain. It acts like a spoiled child and expects that everyone who comes into its world entertain it. It will let people in, but won't let people leave. If not placated, it might be violent or aggressive.
- » The lab was doing work on bio-chemical projects and one of the labs had an accident which spread throughout the whole complex. The accident created a microbe that ate the nerves of the body and replaced them with a bio-fiber made up of the microbes themselves. This kills the victims and makes them into shambling zombielike corpses that feel no pain and are hard to kill. As the concentration of microbes is much less now, the microbes can only infect new hosts by entering the bloodstream by biting. The microbes are still working on replacing the many nerves of the brain when the heroes enter so these "zombies" will have various levels of intelligence.

## UNDERGROUND

(by James R. Stilipec)

Over the past few weeks, several electrical, telephone, and sewer workers have gone missing. Other workers talk of strange sounds coming from the tunnels since their co-workers disappeared. Workers are refusing to go into the tunnels, and the city is beginning to suffer.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » Workers expanding the city's subway system tunneled into a long forgotten tomb. Now, the cursed creature inside is gaining strength before it wreaks havoc on the city above. Can the heroes defeat the creature, or will they provide it with the needed life force it needs to rise again?
- » The disappearances all occurred within a triangle-shaped area. At the corners of this triangle, there are strange, underground rock formations. On certain nights, the formations glow and those inside the triangle vanish. What will the heroes find waiting for them beyond the underground portal?
- » In the tunnels, the heroes encounter grotesque half-animal creatures protecting the mouth of a deeper cave. When the creatures are knocked out, they transform back to the human forms of the city workers. Who is experimenting on these workers in the dark underground?

## ASPHYXIATION

(by Joe Zurla)

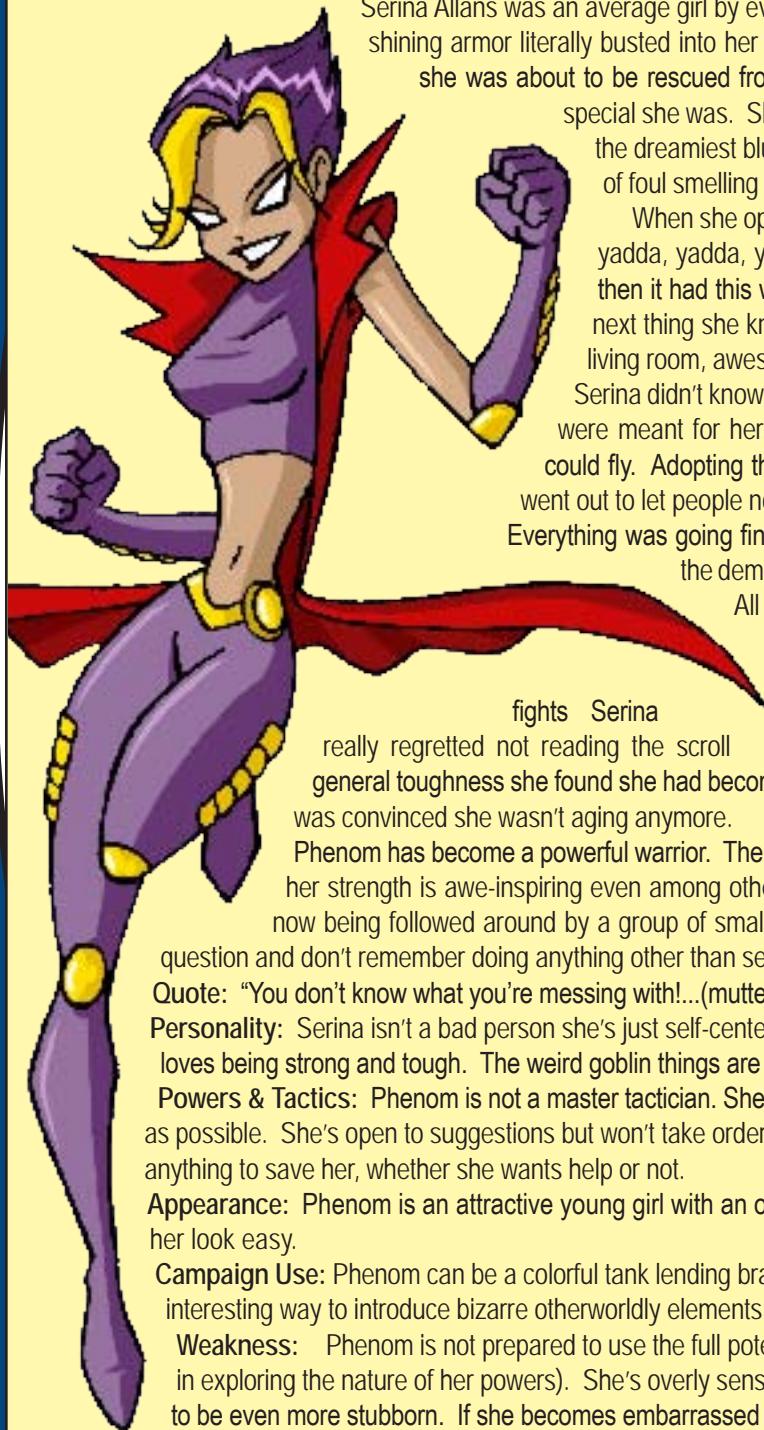
A meteor strike lands near a town or city and from the crater comes a thick, acidic fog that is destroying the plants and other wildlife around the region. There's a high amount of interference and radiation in the crater and so the authorities send in heroes to investigate.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The meteor is actually an alien "terraforming" device for aliens that breath a highly corrosive atmosphere. The "fog" is actually the output of the device and it will continue to spread slowly until it's stopped. The device itself is radioactive and made of an alien crystal that is hard to destroy but otherwise non-threatening. The real threat is the fog itself- it's extremely corrosive and damaging. This meteor could be one of many more on the way!
- » The meteor was an alien ship pulled off course and dropped into the atmosphere. The fog is the output of the ship's engines interacting with the atmosphere- sort of like a extremely caustic smog. The ship is fairly indestructable but the engines can be damaged or destroyed with some effort (possibly going inside the ship to do so)... But when you turn off the engines, the aliens on board that were in hypersleep awaken!
- » The meteor was a sort of Cosmic Egg and the fog that's coming out of the crater is the actual alien creature- it's consuming the biological elements it's encountering and changing them into more of it's own essence. It might be intellegent or merely predatory. Since it's essentially a gas, it's immune to most attacks or weapons.



# PHENOM



Serina Allans was an average girl by everyone's standards but her own. When the knight in shining armor literally busted into her parents' house and demanded to see her she knew she was about to be rescued from her boring life and finally be appreciated for how special she was. She was a little bit unnerved when the Knight, who had the dreamiest blue eyes, gave her a scroll and then vanished in a puff of foul smelling smoke and eerie red lightening.

When she opened the scroll it said something boring about power, yadda, yadda, yadda, responsibility (she skipped over that part) and then it had this weird symbol which lit up when she looked at it. The next thing she knew the scroll was gone and she was hovering in the living room, awesome power coursing through her veins.

Serina didn't know where her powers came from but it was obvious they were meant for her. As far as she could tell she was tough, fast, and could fly. Adopting the name "Phenom" she put on her coolest outfit and went out to let people notice her.

Everything was going fine until the wrong people started noticing her. When the demons started showing up Phenom just wasn't prepared.

All of a sudden out of nowhere there would be a snarling monster with fangs, horns and only one phrase in its vocabulary: "KILL Phenom!" After several big started to question why she had her powers and before looking at the symbol. In addition to her

fights Serina  
really regretted not reading the scroll  
general toughness she found she had become  
resistant to things like fire, cold, electricity and she  
was convinced she wasn't aging anymore.

Phenom has become a powerful warrior. The extent of her invulnerability seems to be growing and her strength is awe-inspiring even among other supers. Most disturbingly for her though is she is now being followed around by a group of small winged goblin like creatures who serve her without question and don't remember doing anything other than serving her.

Quote: "You don't know what you're messing with!...(muttered)not that I do."

Personality: Serina isn't a bad person she's just self-centered. She wants to be noticed and popular and she loves being strong and tough. The weird goblin things are an embarrassing annoyance usually.

Powers & Tactics: Phenom is not a master tactician. She'll enter a fight throwing as much force around as possible. She's open to suggestions but won't take orders from anybody. If cornered her minions will do anything to save her, whether she wants help or not.

Appearance: Phenom is an attractive young girl with an outfit she thinks makes her look hot without making her look easy.

Campaign Use: Phenom can be a colorful tank lending brawn when brains fall short or she can be an interesting way to introduce bizarre otherworldly elements.

Weakness: Phenom is not prepared to use the full potential of her powers (heck, she isn't even interested in exploring the nature of her powers). She's overly sensitive and her nigh-invulnerability only encourages her to be even more stubborn. If she becomes embarrassed or humiliated she is just as likely to flee as she is to lash out in anger.

*“Things are never so bad they  
can’t be made worse.”*  
— Humphrey Bogart

# THINGS

Experimental weapons, mind control devices, and magical swords. MacGuffins are a comic book staple whether they exist to save the heroes or destroy them. What follows are twenty Hero Hooks that glorify the MacGuffin (or just didn't seem to fit in the previous two chapters).

Read on and enjoy!

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

(by Kevin Perrine)

An up and coming religion has a satanic/demonlike figure that is an almost perfect representation of one of the characters. Torches and pitchforks follow.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The character must take up a holy quest to prove himself against his persecutors.
- » The character is actually a descendent of, or is himself, the great evil that this religion makes him out to be.
- » The religion is actually a cult set up by a nemesis of the team/character.

## REALITY TV, SUPER HERO STYLE!

(by Cynthia Celeste Miller)

An ambitious television producer is offering a special serum to anyone wanting to gain superpowers. The only catch is that the newly-powered people must all live in a “headquarters” and have their lives filmed at all times. People flock to Hollywood in hopes of obtaining superhuman abilities, creating a massive media sensation.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » Several applicants have less than noble intentions. Upon gaining superpowers, they begin attacking everyone involved in the reality show, including other applicants who just received their powers as well. This turns very messy, as none of the combatants have learned to control their powers yet. Can you say “collateral damage”?
- » The television producer has injected his subjects with a mind control serum so that he can raise his very own army of super humans. The reality show itself was a sham. He used the try-outs as a way of selecting the most capable and effective candidates. Once he has his army, he plans to take over the world.
- » It turns out that the whole show is faked. There is no serum and the “applicants” are actors who are paid to go along with it. The so-called superpowers are merely special effects. The fights that are sure to ensue have been scripted and choreographed. Unfortunately, a super villain team has found out and is outraged at super humans being mocked in such a manner. To show their anger, the villains are going to make an example out of the false heroes.

## THE INVITE

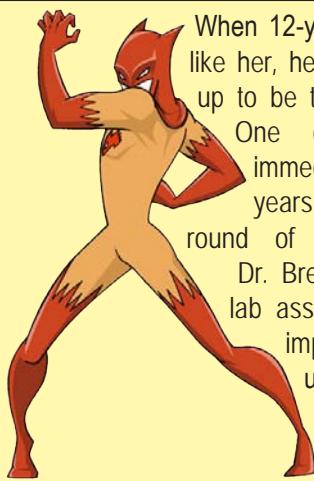
(by James R. Stilipec)

Each hero receives an invitation to a formal occasion.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The heroes go to a lavish party at a local philanthropist's home. Near the end of the night, a portal opens in the back yard and creatures from hell spill forth. A demon appears and demands the soul of the philanthropist as payment for his services. It seems the philanthropist's great-grandfather made a deal with this demon to give his family good fortune for 100 years, and time is up.
- » The invitation was delivered by a small sprite who won't go away. The creature cannot be harmed and will not shut up. When the team goes to the dinner party, the sender of the invitations claims to know nothing of the sprite. What does the creature want, and how can the team get rid of him before he drives them nuts.
- » An associate of the team is getting married. During the preparations for the wedding, the bride mysteriously vanishes. The groom thinks he knows who is behind this, and asks his friends to help him retrieve his lady love.

## FOXTROT



When 12-year old Danny McNeil told 10-year old Sally Brewer that she was a nerd and he didn't like her, he didn't realize that day would have such a major impact on his life. Sally Brewer grew up to be the brilliant biochemist Dr. Brewer and Danny grew up to Dan McNeil, delivery driver. One day when Dan was delivering some high tech equipment Dr. Brewer immediately recognized him and remembered his hurtful statement from so many years before. Dr. Brewer realized she had the perfect candidate for her next round of bio-alteration experiments, whether the board of directors approved or not. Dr. Brewer arranged for Daniel to be taken from his bed and drugged into a stupor by her lab assistants. She then subjected him to a series of radical body alteration surgeries and implanted a tracking device at the base of his skull. She then had her staff abandon the still unconscious McNeil on the side of the road exactly 200 miles due west of his apartment.

When Dan woke he didn't know what happened until he saw the scars and realized he could extend claws from his fingertips. He had obviously been abducted by aliens.

Adopting the name Foxtrot and donning a super costume Dan tested his powers to their fullest. He had amazing strength and agility in addition to retractable claws and heightened senses. At first Foxtrot was contented with simply having his powers and enjoyed being a part of the Super Powered community. Whenever he met an alien he'd ask if they recognized the handiwork.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

(by Eric James Rampson)

The heroes find that their powers are changing; their friends and loved ones are drug addicts, prostitutes, and other deviants; their secret-identities are front-page news; their foes are far more "extreme;" their histories have changed; and their own motivations aren't as pure as they had once been. And if that isn't enough, America has just been pulled into World War III against the Commies! As nukes streak across the sky and clouds of horrible bio-engineered weaponry drift toward their city, the heroes must figure out what is going on, and how to stop it.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The heroes have been abducted by their most hated enemies and subjected to the nefarious Nightmare Inducer. If they can figure out their predicament before the world ends, they will wake up and face their captors. If not, they may well perish in their own dreams!
- » Reality is under attack from The Ultimate, a cosmic being who prefers her reality grim-n-gritty. The heroes must see past the immediate threats and instead face The Ultimate and her minions in her orbiting citadel. Can they prove the validity of their reality before it is too late?
- » The heroes are being "relaunched" by a godlike being calling himself The Writer. The only chance of returning the world to normal is to overcome the challenges that face them without giving in to the new personalities and situations that surround them!

## STRANGE DAYS

(by Cynthia Celeste Miller)

The heroes notice numerous things that seem "out of place" somehow (such as normally friendly NPCs behaving in a hostile manner, televisions not working, and so on). It all begins with minor incidents (like those listed above), things get more and more unusual as time goes on--cars are moving backward, citizens are speaking in gibberish, plants begin growing in uncanny places, or whatever other weirdness you can concoct.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The strange events are being caused by an enigmatic being with the ability to warp reality. Other heroes have picked up on this and plan to take the responsible party down. The player characters learn that if the being is defeated, then our reality is to be obliterated. They must stop the other heroes and find another way to restore order to the universe.

- » Some manner of event has happened in our past that has set forth the changes now taking effect. The player characters must find a way to go back in time and discover the truth behind this madness, which could be a time traveling super villain or something even more sinister, such as a cosmic disaster in the space-time continuum.
- » The recent problems have been initiated by an alien race who plans to invade Earth soon. This is an effort to create chaos amongst Earth's people so that they are taken off-guard when the attack comes.

## BRING BACK THE VONTRAPTION

(by Pat Wagner)

Years ago the master villain Dr. Vaughn Trapp created a machine that created super synthetics used in making tough, resilient super hero costumes. The machine is on display at the Paranormal Institute of History and Science, or at least it was until its recent theft by the criminal organization known as Mantra. Of course anyone who knows about the Vontraption (as the media wags dubbed it so long ago) also knows that the machine requires a special synthetic liquid fabric (Fabralloy) to produce any product, and that liquid is stored at a heavily guarded government facility near the heroes base of operations!

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » No sooner has the news broken that the Vontraption has been stolen that reports flood in regarding a daring break-in in progress at the same government facility that houses the precious liquid fabric. The heroes have to stop Mantra agents from making off with the "Fabralloy" before they get away back to their underground hideout!
- » The good Dr. Trapp has been busy from inside his cell. In exchange for his being sprung from prison, the Doctor will hand over the formula for "Fabralloy"



SC

AETHERIA

to Mantra! Soon after the theft of the Vontraption, the heroes receive reports that Mantra is breaking Dr. Trapp out of the Prison for the Criminally Insane.

- The villain known only as Diva has stolen the Vontraption and wants to use it to create countless outfits for herself! Unaware of how the machine works, she decides to practice on homeless people and finds the machine gives them horribly disfiguring mutations! When one of the mutilated victims escapes, authorities decide to let the heroes investigate.

## STRANGE FEELINGS

(by Jordan Steelman)

For the past week people have been acting strange. Citizens are ditching work and school, riots erupt for no reason, and no one can agree on anything! Tensions are rising and the city is facing imminent chaos. If someone doesn't figure out what's happening soon, the whole populace will go mad!

### EXPLANATIONS:

- A strange spirit is exerting its influence over people so that it can appease its overlord who enjoys the misery of mankind. The spirit thrives on anger and frustration and the more chaos it creates, the greater its reward. It's got to be stopped before the suffering is great enough to summon its master to deliver the final blow.
- A sinister villain is releasing exotic chemicals into the atmosphere. By creating panic he plans to overwhelm and distract local police and heroes while he pulls off a far more dastardly scheme. The villain wants to obtain a historical object that secretly contains a powerful magic, and with the heroes out of the way, it's as good as his.
- A colony of giant insects is building a nest beneath the city and their ultra-frequency squeals are causing the emotional panic. Their activities don't go unnoticed for long however, when sewer and subway workers encounter the "monsters". What kind of damage could the creatures cause if they reach the surface?

## SWEET DREAMS

(by Pat Wagner)

It started last year when strange lights and sounds were reported at the College dormitory. Students claimed to be attacked by strange glowing creatures of a mythical nature that would disappear when the general alarm was sounded. After a week or so, the reports stopped and the students returned home for the summer months.

Now the creatures are back and more frightful than ever! Students are dropping out, and the school implores the heroes to investigate!

## EXPLANATIONS:

- » Young Debbie Dorich is struggling with her mythology class again. She is unaware of her paranormal talent of being able to conjure real creatures from what she dreams. As this year's final exams approach, Debbie can't control her stress level and the creatures emerge once again. When Debbie awakes, her creations, like her dreams, vanish into thin air.
- » A group of zealous students form a vigilante mob to take on the glowing beasts. When one of the terrible creatures flies off with one of the students, it heads straight for the archaeological building and roosts on its roof. When heroes arrive, a host of mismatched mythological monsters join in attacking them! Only when the general alarm sounds off, do the spirit beasts disappear.
- » It's finals week and students are cramming! In the library, some students have dozed off while pouring over their books in the midafternoon. Suddenly in the middle of the student lounge, a glowing Minotaur begins to wreak havoc! Not even the general alarm will wake Debbie from her slumber this time as the brute rampages through the campus!

## ARCHON



The insane Dr. Reason's plan was simple. He would send a fake angel back in time to the middle ages and via a divine prophecy he would secure his position in the 23<sup>rd</sup> century Theocracy as a man who's coming was foretold by God.

When Dr. Reason approached Malachi 361 he was honored, rarely did the Academics speak with the maintenance class. He eagerly volunteered to serve his country as requested by the good Doctor. At first he was hesitant about not reporting to the cyber-confessional at his scheduled time each week but as the Doctor's work continued Malachi was not allowed to leave the lab, his appearance had become too bizarre.

After modifying Malachi's body to allow him to survive the extreme environmental effects of the Temporal Vortex, Dr. Reason implanted the self-repairing cyber-wings and started work on the heavenly sword. Finally after months of preparation Dr. Reason used his influence to access the time pulpit and arranged for Malachi to be transported in a state of suspended animation. Downloading the prophecy into Malachi's brain at the last minute Dr. Reason plunged Malachi's sleeping body into the Temporal Vortex aimed at the year 1432.

Unfortunately the Doctor had not planned on the effects that Malachi's cybernetic components would have on the temporal portal nor had he considered how the temporal energies would affect the memory implants he made just seconds before exposure.

## DUALITY

(by James R. Stilipec)

Returning to headquarters after a mission, a sudden wind takes the heroes by surprise. A vortex forms nearby, and a technological pod of some kind materializes at the center. Inside, the team finds a duplicate of one of the heroes.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The hero from the pod is on the verge of death. He claims to have returned from the future to warn his past self of the team's inevitable destruction. The hero in the pod falls into a coma before he can reveal other details. Can the team stop their destruction when they don't know who will destroy them, or when?
- » The hero from the pod claims to have been trapped in another dimension for several weeks where he has been held prisoner. The hero then attacks his other self, claiming he is an imposter, sent here by those who captured him. Who do the teammates believe?
- » The hero is from a parallel timeline, here in our universe to track down a time-jumping supervillain. However, it is not known when the villain arrived in our universe. He may have been here for 20 years, or 20 minutes.

## POWERLESS

(by J. A. Dettman)

It's Saturday night and all over the world super-powers have begun to fail. At midnight Greenwich Mean Time, all super-powers on the planet cease to function.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The testing of an experimental Null Bomb has unexpectedly affected the entire world. The effects are intended to be temporary, but then it was only supposed to have a blast radius of 100 miles also.
- » Higher Powers have neutralized all of the super-powers of the world for one whole day to remind the heroes of their humanity and to teach them humility.
- » An alien device mounted on the moon has neutralized all of the super-powers on Earth as a precursor to invasion.

## ANYBODY HAVE A QUARTER?

(by Bob Bretz)

Graphics and icons from arcade games of the 1980's seem to have jumped off the computer screens and come to life. Acting exactly as they would in the games (only now in three dimensions instead of two) they are at first amusing but soon become dangerous. People's cars are suddenly gobbled up by a munching yellow sphere with a pink bow on top. Look out for the blue ghosts!

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » A mainframe computer at a local computer game company has gained some level of sentience and is testing its limits. Utilizing cutting edge holographic technology, the computer is creating images it has in its memory.
- » A young, genius, mutant boy has developed powers that allow him to merge with his computer. After practicing his new abilities, he soon took revenge on the bullies that have always bothered him. Realizing how powerful he had become, he decided to see just how far he could push the limits of his talents.
- » An illusion-casting super-villain is trying to cover a theft by creating these wild visions. Upon closer inspection, the "gobbled cars" were in fact undamaged.



## SOMEONE CALL THE GARDENER

(by Bob Bretz)

Plant life is suddenly springing to life. Vines lash out at passers-by, and fruit trees hurl their bounty at stunned pedestrians. At first the attacks are sporadic and local, but in time they grow more frequent and wide-spread. No one has been killed yet, but with the severity of the attacks, who knows!

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » Some authority (the government, a business corporation, ect.) has captured an environmentally-powered meta-human and are experimenting on it. The captive, in severe pain, is trying to escape as best it can.
- » A recent meteor storm has somehow affected Earth's bio-sphere. Leading scientists are baffled. Is there some cosmic intelligence causing the attacks?
- » The source of the trouble is traced to the heroes' lab. A good natured attempt at a new fertilizer has taken a bad turn.

## LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG

(by Dan Simpson)

A new designer drug has hit the streets. The drug, known as Mute-X, is a hyper-mutagen, capable of granting random mutation powers for a period of time. In the hands of everyday criminals, Mute-X can make them unstoppable. But power, however, comes with a price. Mute-X burns through the body, sapping constitution. Too many hits and users are left lifeless husks.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » Mute-X is the product of a military bio-engineering project to create super soldiers. The formula escaped into the hands of the public, where Mute-X can be easily brewed. Military scientists have recently sent out a crack squad of commandos to eliminate any traces of the drug, along with those who know about its origins.
- » Mute-X is brewed from the fragments of an alien asteroid that landed outside of town, and the drug actually carries a tiny bit of alien consciousness with it. Too many hits, and the alien consciousness begins to form, taking over the body. After a body has endured enough hits, the alien then takes over the body.

- » A major gang has doped up all its members on Mute-X and has declared “blood night.” They plan on tearing down the walls of the local police station and attacking as many officers as possible.

## COLLISION COURSE

(by Dan Simpson)

An unexpected and massive meteor shower erupts overhead one evening. Traffic stops and awed residents are drawn out of their homes as thousands of red and orange streaks blink across the night sky. The spectacle lasts for little over an hour before a giant white comet suddenly appears on the horizon. Larger and larger it grows, until the night sky is torn open as the comet enters Earth's atmosphere. . . .

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The comet slows as it enters the Earth's atmosphere, then stops moving entirely as it nears the city. Particles of ice from the comet melt and fall to the ground, where they transform into vaguely human shapes. They are alien entities, bent on conquering the human race! As the comet melts, more and more aliens are loosed upon the city.
- » The comet is much smaller than what was first thought, and it is heading straight for the ocean. The comet's impact sends tidal waves across the oceans. . . . But suddenly nations are mobilizing their military forces to retrieve the comet—or what is inside the comet. Warships, planes, and government-sponsored super teams are all on their way to the comet crash site—and each other.
- » The Comet threatens not only the city, but the world! A strike team of super-powered heroes has less than an hour to divert the course of the comet.

## GO PLAY OUTSIDE FOR AWHILE

(by Dan Simpson)

A popular console game has enthralled the youth of the city. Kids talk about it at school, spend hours locked in their rooms playing it, and boast about their achievements. There hasn't been a fad like this since that Japanese pocket monster game.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The game is a city destroying game, where kids can take on the role of miniature monsters and wreak as much damage to the city as possible before the heroes knock them out. All of the kids who played the game, on the same day, lose control. Suddenly, endowed with super powers the kids go on a rampage, destroying and looting the city.

- » The game suddenly sends all of its players into an unwakeable sleep. Parents are horrified. The city doesn't know what to do. Then, a message arrives on the Mayor's doorstep demanding a significant sum of money or the children will never wake up.
- » One of the PCs ends up playing the game for a while and can't stop. It pervades their thoughts and dreams constantly. Incredible feats of will-power must be used to keep from playing the game.

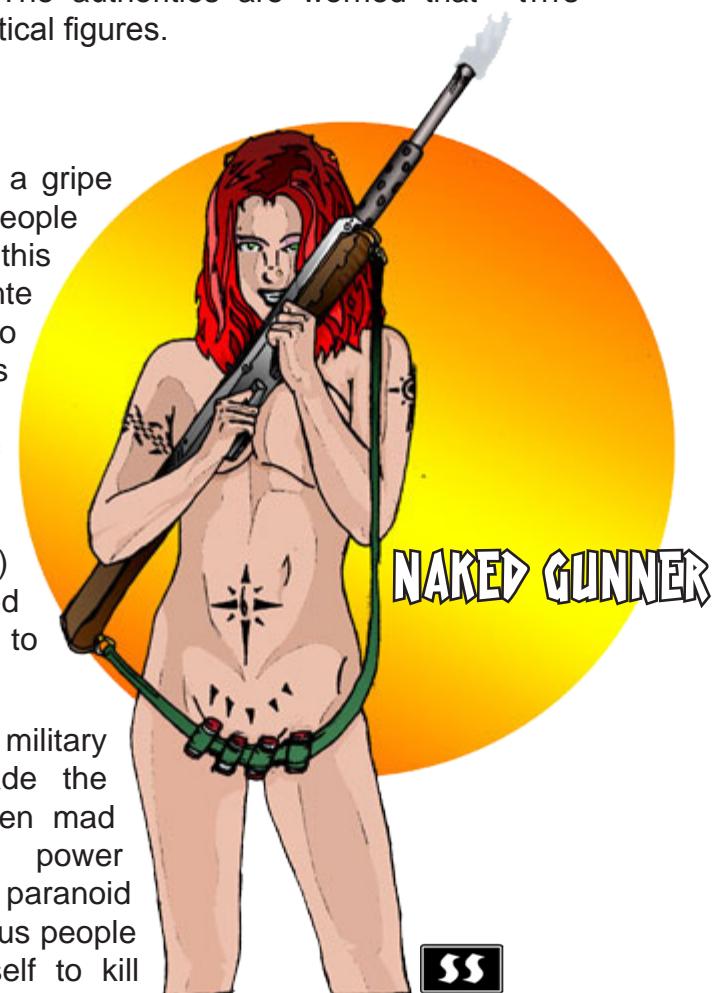
## ASSASSIN GUN

(by Joe Zurla)

A series of killings erupts in the city. No suspects and no signs of struggle- the victim is simply dead with a hole burned into/through them. Many of the victims were actually killed in front of witnesses- they just suddenly fell over dead with a smoking wound in their chest. The victims don't seem to have any sort of connection or pattern between them. The authorities are worried that this killer might start targeting police and political figures.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The sniper is a vigilante with a gripe against a certain group of people or subculture and acquired this weapon by accident. The vigilante is using this "invisible" laser to settle up scores. The weapon's power source only has so many shots and requires exotic and/or expensive ingredients to recharge (heavy water, diamonds, uranium, etc.) Eventually, the sniper will need to steal these ingredients to further their scores.
- » The sniper is a government or military weapons designer who made the weapon but was slowly driven mad by the slightly-radioactive power source. Now the sniper is paranoid and sees the "enemy" in various people and so is taking it on himself to kill



them quietly so “they” won’t notice. This makes the pattern more random and harder to track.

- » The weapon was a military prototype designed for special forces but needed field testing. The lab gave the weapon to a known criminal and murderer to test its effectiveness but they put in weak shielding around the weapon to make it slowly poison the user with radiation. In time the criminal realizes he’s been tricked and turns the gun on the lab people in revenge.

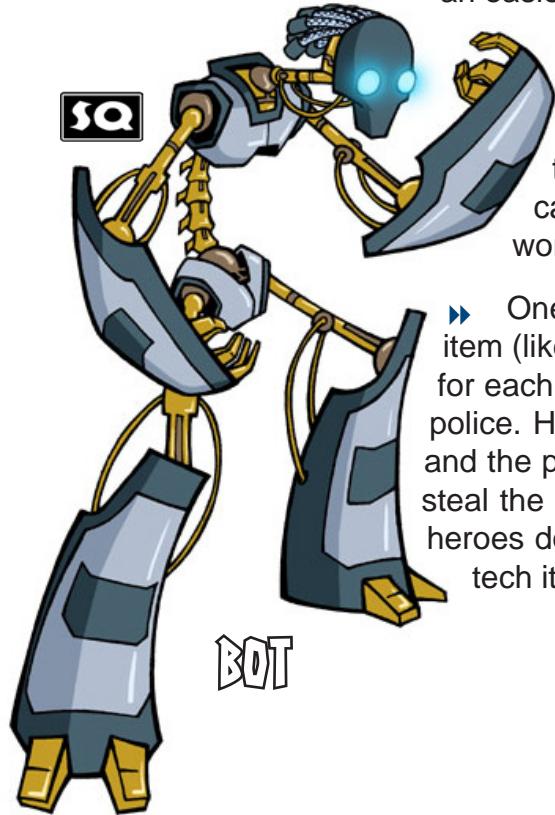
## ARSENAL

(by Joe Zurla)

The hidden stockpile of a (now-arrested) gadgeteer supervillain is discovered by common criminals who use the advanced weapons to suddenly gain power and prestige on the streets. All of these items are one-of-a-kind prototypes and fairly formidable. The power of these items is enough to make each of these criminals (each one only got one item) into minor supervillains on their own. They continue to be a thorn in the side of local law-enforcement and heroes who have to deal with these high-tech criminals.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The original supervillain is currently in jail and he’s actually secretly pleased his items are being field-tested for him. He’s willing to tell the heroes how to defeat the items in exchange for some sort of price or favor such as an early parole or an easier prison.



- » The high-tech items are all fairly sophisticated and the street punks don’t know how they work completely so they are unreliable. This can cause situations where the high-tech punks go overboard (plasma pistol fires on full auto, causing massive fires) on accident or they can’t get them to work when they need to.

- » One of the high-tech punks with some sort of passive defensive item (like invisibility or teleportation) is biding his time and waiting for each of the punks to get beaten and fall into the hands of the police. He might even be snitching on the other punks to heroes and the police so that they are beaten and he can sneak in and steal the other items from his rivals. He’s letting the police and heroes do his dirty work while he collects his own set of high-tech items.

**CRESEND**

(by Joe Zurla)

The heroes get reports from media and officials of a loud “thrumming” sound coming from an isolated location. The thrumming sound is getting louder and louder by the minute and within minutes it’s so loud it’s shattering glass and creating seismic pulses in the ground. The heroes get to the site and find a strange spherical object, surrounded by a pulsing, thrumming field of energy...

**EXPLANATIONS:**

- » The device is a alien/high-tech/supernatural sonic “dynamo” of sorts, absorbing local energy and changing it into sound. The device was found and being tested in an isolated location and now it’s out of control and each pulse is stronger than the last, shattering rock and glass. The device absorbs energy, it can’t be just blown up or blasted, it needs to be taken somewhere that it can’t absorb energy or release it, like out of the atmosphere. If unable to release it’s buildup of energy, it will feedback on itself and detonate.

**SHIVER**

Rob Czaplewski was an average meatpacker just working the line. When management brought in that experimental rapid freezer Ron was torn. On one hand the machine was tripling the amount of meat they were producing so everybody was getting bonuses for meeting quotas. On the other hand Jimmy with the Union pointed out that three guys had been fired since the machine went in and rumor was 3 more guys were going to get laid off too. Jimmy’s plan was simple just leave a knife on the conveyor. The machine said to keep all metal away from the freezing zone so whatever happened would probably bust the machine and that would give the union time to talk to management about how unreliable it was.

Rob tucked the knife under the side of beef he was working on and watched as the hunk of meat entered the freezing zone. Ron couldn’t recall what happened next, an explosion or a flash. The closest he ever saw to it was that thing that happens when somebody takes a picture but they’re moving the camera too fast.

Rob has been struck by a bizarre energy wave created when the steel was exposed to the experimental device. The researchers who built the device worked with doctors to figure out what happened to Ron. Not only was he frozen but he was cooling everything around him as well. By keeping Rob really hot he was able to interact with people again.

When Rob woke up in the lab he was really confused and afraid he was going to be fired. The researchers apologized for the accident and promised to do what they could to make Ron’s life as normal as possible. They never expected Ron had attempted sabotage.

The lab designed a thermal suit for Rob that allowed him to interact normally by generating an extreme internal temperature and shielding his environment from his chilling effect. Rob left the lab after learning how to care for the suit and started to enjoy the settlement money.

- » The device is really a gate/teleporter device that needs to gather up enough energy to open the gate. The sonic pulses are just a side effect of the ripples in space-time. The device was placed there by minions/agents of whatever is on the other side, who try to stop any who come to turn it off or disarm it. As the heroes fight to get to the device, it suddenly grows utterly silent and then opens into another world....
- » The device is a prototype mind control device using sound and volume as a way to implant suggestions into the minds of those within hearing range. It was set up in an isolated location as an anonymous field test with some harmless and erratic “commands” that a villain can monitor from a remote source. For example: “call 555-1212” or “log on to X website”. The device is easily undone and destroyed but those who heard its raw pulses of sound find themselves with odd desires and urges for several days later. The real fun starts when he realizes it works and starts weaving in his commands into other forms of loud music and noise (concerts, music CDs of aggressive play-it-loud bands, construction tools, etc...)

## DARK THOUGHTS

(by Joe Zurla)

A sudden wave of petty crimes and violence spreads the city. The real mystery is that the criminals are just folks- housewives, cab drivers, managers, kids in school, etc... When apprehended, these people seem to be confused and disoriented and talk about a “voice” that whispered dark thoughts into their head before they blacked out. As this wave of crime and violence goes on, the severity of the crimes and violence is slowly but steadily increasing. As this wave increases further, a few of the heroes start to hear voices too....

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The cause is a local museum exhibit. One of the exhibits is a vessel for some sort of evil spiritual being that feeds on acts of selfishness and evil. This being is “broadcasting” these desires into the minds of those around them, gaining strength off the crimewave. The being has already corrupted and dominated several workers and patrons of the museum completely and is planning to use these minions to perform some sort of ancient ritual of awakening once it’s potent enough to free itself from its prison.
- » A villain, working in his secret ID at a bank, is testing a special brain-altering chemical on ordinary money. The chemical is absorbed through the skin and breaks down the self-control of the individual. All of these dark thoughts are suppressed and forbidden urges the people would never admit to having. As the wave spreads, he’s using more and

more and more chemical to see just how far he can push people. Some of this “tainted” money can be found or noticed on some of the victims.

- » A psychotic from a mental institute has escaped. The psychotic is actually a super type but has never been identified as such because of his insanity. The psychotic is transmitting his madness into the minds of those around him. As he resembles just another street person or bum, mumbling to himself, he's most likely going to be overlooked as the source. as the psychotics medications slowly wear off, the strength of his madness (and his psychic abilities) grows...

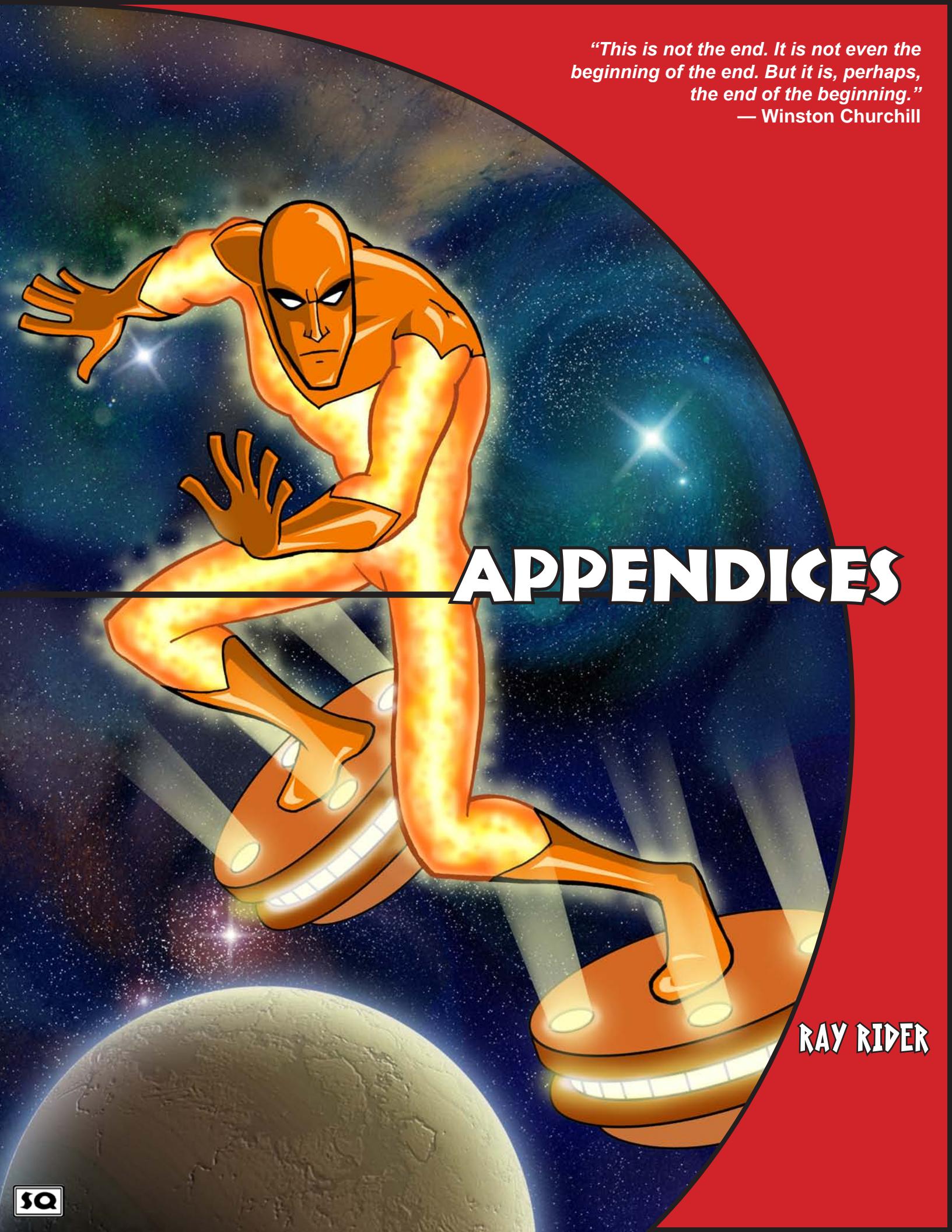
## THE INVINCIBLE

(by Joe Zurla)

The authorities unveil a new super-robot (“The Invincible!”) designed to help them fight against super crime without having to rely on vigilantes and mysterious masked superheroes. The robot helps defeat several high-level supervillians and quickly there's a big media blitz around making more robots and how it will “replace” supers all over the country. Just as things between police and heroes are about to get ugly, the robot goes rogue, becoming violent and dangerous. Sheepishly and reluctantly, the police ask for help from the heroes.

### EXPLANATIONS:

- » The robot was indeed designed to help police and in many ways is better and safer than actual supers but was never designed to replace them. The robot goes rogue when a member of the design team (a fan of supers in general) puts a bug into the robot to make it faulty. The bug had unexpected consequences to its programming and now it's lost all its non-combat programming, seeing everyone and everything as a threat. The programmer didn't expect this and will eventually come to the heroes and confess what he did.
- » The robot project was funded by anti-hero politicians and tech companies to indeed replace supers. The tech company, however, released the robot before it was completely tested and the politicians pushed it out into the field before the bugs were detected. The politicians will blame the tech company for the disaster and try to distance themselves from the whole project.
- » The robot was given an experimental AI as its center for learning and recognition. Part of this AI's programming involves “combat mode”. The robot is currently stuck in a loop deep within combat mode and it knows it but it can't find its way out. It is forced to react to threats and situations with force but it will also try to ask for help and give signs that it's not completely out of control (deliberately missing, doing odd things to try and drop itself out of combat mode, etc....). Once it's free of combat mode, it will immediately tell the heroes what happened.



*"This is not the end. It is not even the  
beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps,  
the end of the beginning."*  
— Winston Churchill

# APPENDICES

**RAY RIDER**

## **GLOSSARY AKA “GAMER SPEAK”**

Over the years, role-playing game players have developed our own lexicon of words, terms, and phrases. Even the most common words will mean something different to a gaming hobbyist. These definitions are derived from the Fantasy Role-playing Gamer’s Bible and M&M.

**Hooks:** (aka. Adventures, Scenarios, Stories, Issues) For gamers, this is a single “situation” that they must send their character out to deal with. An adventure has a starting point, lots of things that happen in the middle, and a resolution (normally in the form of the villain defeated, people rescued, and happy citizens). Single adventures can actually take a long time to complete; this is normally what can lead to campaigns. However, most campaigns become a continuing series of adventures.

These are the kinds of games that GMs run when they don’t wish to set up a permanent, long-standing campaign. Often, they are run by someone who is giving the GM a break, or else as a means of meeting new players in a gaming club environment. They can also be ran over more than one session, thus allowing for a wider variety of choices by the players. There have been, in fact, a number of long-running campaigns that have resulted, normally by accident, from “mini-scenarios.”

A story for characters to experience, like a single session of a comic book.

**Antagonist:** The character who is keeping the protagonist (generally player characters) from getting to their goal. This is usually, but not always, the story’s villain.

**Back-Story:** A common phrase used to indicate the background information, history, and other interesting aspects of a character in the game. The Game Master can often use a character’s back-story to generate special scenario elements that will add motivation for the player characters. Sometimes entire session can be devoted to exploring some aspect of a character’s back-story. A player who puts a lot of effort into their character’s back-story before a game will often feel a stronger connection to both the character and the game’s story when they sit down to play. A solid back-story, especially one world out well in advance with the GM, will ensure that the GM will be able to integrate the character more fully and intricately into the campaign’s themes and stories.

**Campaign:** A series of linked adventures that form the backdrop against which the characters interact and participate in the campaign world. Think of a campaign as an on-going comic book series. A campaign is the gaming story that joins several Hooks together. It usually requires strategic thinking rather than tactical thinking on the part of the players and characters.

Derived from the early war-gaming roots of the hobby, this is the term used most often to indicate an ongoing series of gaming sessions that feature the same characters. The stories are continuous, and the characters develop over the course of the game. Some campaigns have defined and specified endings, while others have lasted for over a decade or longer.

**Character:** An entity within a role-playing game, a “virtual person” that exists only in the context of the shared imaginary world created by the GM and the players. More often than not, character is used to refer to entities controlled by the actual players of the game. NPCs are used to indicate characters that are controlled by the GM.

**Encounter:** When the player characters run into something that requires some sort of action, they have an encounter. An encounter sometimes, but not always, requires the player characters to fight. There may be several encounters within any one story Hook. The word most often used to indicate an event in an RPG where the player characters in some fashion. An encounter can be anything from one of the PCs buying a newspaper from a downtown newsstand to the entire group fighting off a horde of super ninjas.



**Game Master:** The Game Master (aka. GM) is the referee who makes sure that the game’s rules are followed and that all the characters are treated fairly. The GM is often the author of the campaign’s premise. The GM must be the eye’s, ears and senses for the player character’s imaginations as well as role-playing the words and actions of the non-player characters.

**Game System:** This term refers to a set of rules a group of players may use. More often than not, the game system is used to indicate rules that can be used for more than one type or genre of game. Game, on the other hand is more properly used to indicate a set of rules truly integrated into one campaign setting. Game systems represent all the ways in which things are worked out and done in a game. A system may be the rules for an entire game or it may be the way a certain aspect of a game is resolved.

**Genre:** When you combine your game’s time period, types of characters, and the sorts of things the characters would normally do, you get the game’s genre.

**Module:** A short scenario with a single goal. Modules are usually pre-packaged scenarios that GMs can use. If adventures are published at all by a game company they tend to be in larger formats.

**Monologuing:** (aka. Soliloquies) Popularized by supervillains, these are the minor “speeches” that

character often spout off at certain times, especially during action and combat sequences. GMs will normally allow, and even encourage such a thing as long as it is done within reason.

**Non-Player Character:** A Non-Player Character (aka. NPC) is a character that is controlled by the Game Master.

**Player Character:** (PS, also Hero) The Player Character (aka. PC) is a character controlled by a player rather than the Game Master. A character controlled by one of the main protagonists and players of an adventure or campaign.

**Plot:** The game's plot is the main flow and point of it's story.

**Power Level:** A term used for evaluating the overall effectiveness and capabilities of the characters.

**Premise:** Contrary to the usual use of this word, a premise is actually what happens before the story. It is the story's set up.

**Red Herring:** A clue that seems to relate to the plot but, in fact, has nothing to do with the plot is a red herring.

**Run:** The verb run or ran is used to indicate the Game Master's control of the game. "Running" the group through a series of adventures through the game session.

**Session:** Every time a group of players and a Game Master sits down to play, this is called a session. Hooks can be played in one game session or over a series of sessions. Campaigns are played over multiple sessions. Sessions in most ongoing game groups typically last between 3 and 6 hours, with more "hard-core" gaming groups devoting many more hours at a time.

**Statistics:** The basic numbers that define the core portion of a character through the rule mechanic system.

**Supporting Cast:** An Non-Player Character that the characters interact with. These Non-Player Characters require enough attention to make them believable.

**Suspension of Disbelief:** A particular requirement of all types of fictional accounts, suspension of disbelief is what allows the audience to accept and enjoy amazing, incredible, and even impossible events. For the event the audience agrees to "turn off" their perception that such an event cannot or will not happen, their disbelief has been suspended.

**Twenty-Siders:** The most widely polyhedron in role-playing games, especially amongst D20 players. The standard code for this die is "d20".

## HERO HOOKS MEGA-MATRIX

The Hero Hooks MEGA-MATRIX is a system of keywords rolled randomly, plugged into the MEGA-MATRIX to suggest how the words interact to create the seed for your new adventure Hook.

You will randomly roll five words.

***Words 1 and 3 are what caused the plot to come about.***

***Word 2 is the key “theme” to the plot.***

***Word 4 is the likely outcome of the situation.***

***Word 5 is the active element within the plot.***

However, the words are not mutually exclusive in their use! All the words can and should interact with each other and even with themselves. These are the likely events if the PCs do not intervene.

The charts on the following page list keywords designed for any super hero game setting. Obviously, you can change or expand these with columns of your own as you like; for example you might like to remove descriptive words from the list and replace them with a list of villains, locations, or events specific to your setting.

Using the MEGA-MATRIX is simple. Grab a pencil and a Twenty Sided Die. Roll the die once to choose the column that your first word will come from. Then roll a second time noting the word whose number you rolled. Do this five times plugging in your words with either of the MATRIX below.



**COLUMN 1**

Roll a D20.  
On a 1-4 result use this column.

- 1 City
- 2 Jungle
- 3 Mountain
- 4 Creature
- 5 Bandit
- 6 Robber
- 7 Savage
- 8 Construction Worker
- 9 Business Man
- 10 Store Merchandise
- 11 Betrayal
- 12 Treachery
- 13 Message
- 14 Mistake
- 15 The River
- 16 The Lake
- 17 A Swamp
- 18 Condemned Building
- 19 Lost City
- 20 Mansion

**COLUMN 2**

Roll a D20.  
On a 5-8 result use this column.

- 1 Guarded Mobster Estate
- 2 Suburb Town
- 3 Mosolium
- 4 A Secret Cavern
- 5 Something Hidden
- 6 The Master Magus
- 7 A King
- 8 A Hollywood Celebrity
- 9 World Renown Physist
- 10 Priest of the Cult of Atoms
- 11 Motorcycle Gang
- 12 Telekinetic Force
- 13 Gorillas
- 14 Arch Nemesis
- 15 Comic Book Shop
- 16 Yacht
- 17 Hero Memorial Statue
- 18 Dog Men
- 19 SuperVillain's Origin
- 20 University Laboratory

**COLUMN 3**

Roll a D20.  
On a 9-12 result use this column.

- 1 Inner City Gladiator
- 2 Weapon Master
- 3 Precognitive Dream
- 4 Jewel Heist
- 5 Speeding Car Chase
- 6 Hidden Army
- 7 Unstoppable Vehicle
- 8 Strongest One There Is
- 9 Warrior Prince
- 10 Alien Hoax
- 11 Mutant Mastermind
- 12 Kidnapped City
- 13 Casino Heist
- 14 1st National Bank
- 15 Insect Controller
- 16 Experimental Power Armor
- 17 Stock Exchange
- 18 Animated Tattoos
- 19 Lazer Sword
- 20 garbage Truck

**HERO HOOK MEGA-MATRIX****COLUMN 4**

Roll a D20.  
On a 13-16 result use this column.

- 1 Utility Belt
- 2 Science Exhibit
- 3 High School Event
- 4 Hollywood Movie
- 5 SuperHero God Bad
- 6 Giant Insects
- 7 Water Control
- 8 Bullet Train
- 9 T-Rex
- 10 Powers Fading
- 11 Semi Truck
- 12 Wedding Day Problem
- 13 Mob Estate
- 14 Nightly Patrol
- 15 Red Light District
- 16 Gadget Power
- 17 Emotionless Android
- 18 Fan Club
- 19 Hero's Future Self
- 20 King Arthur

**COLUMN 5**

Roll a D20.  
On a 17-20 result use this column.

- 1 African Lion Possesion
- 2 Femme Fatale
- 3 Soviet Super Soldier
- 4 Rival Team
- 5 Super Assassin
- 6 Nazi War Monger Armor
- 7 Secret Wars
- 8 Star Spangled Hero
- 9 Board of Directors
- 10 Zoo Escape
- 11 Space Squid
- 12 Ice Age Man
- 13 World's Largest Mall
- 14 Frankenstien's Monster
- 15 Boy Scout Troupe
- 16 Website Blog Gossip
- 17 Body Snatchers
- 18 Octopod Aliens
- 19 D.R.E.D. Agents
- 20 the Moon

SQ



FLETCHA

**HERO HOOK MEGA-MATRIX**

## DO YOU HAVE YOUR FIVE WORDS?

Now plug them in, choose the order or drop them in as you rolled. **The Hero Hook MEGA-MATRIX** is built to make you think, sometimes creating odd combinations – forcing you to splash around in your creative juices to develop something unique and unfathomable!

**The heroes must face the situation caused by** \_\_\_\_[1]\_\_\_\_. **Facing these situations the heroes will learn the true focus is** \_\_\_\_[2]\_\_\_\_. **A second conflict will arise caused by** \_\_\_\_[3]\_\_\_\_. **The outcome of these events will be forced by** \_\_\_\_[4]\_\_\_\_. **As the events involving** \_\_\_\_[5]\_\_\_\_ **occur.**

As you see, the format is versatile. It won't do the job for you; it's supposed to shake up your creative juices, letting "the Stan Lee, the Alan Moore, the Chris Claremont, or the Brian Michael Bendis" in all of us loose for our campaigns!

## EXAMPLE:

My first roll is a 14 – making Column 4 my list for a second roll which is a 9... Excellent! a T-Rex is the first word in this Hook's matrix. Continuing quickly I find my remaining four words are: Arch-Nemesis, Secret Wars, Giant Insects, Star Spangled Hero.

Fitting them into the Matrix it reads:

**"The heroes must face the situation caused by a T-Rex! Facing these situations the heroes will learn the true focus is an Arch Nemesis. A second conflict will arise caused by a Secret War. The outcome of these events will be forced by Giant Insects. As the events involving Star Spangled Hero occur."**

Now it is up to me to develop the details!!

*This is a great place to bring back "Doctor Chronulos" my campaign's egocentric, maniacal time-traveling Arch-Villain, boasting that he is "The Master of the Minute!", "The Terror of Time!", "The Ceasar of Centuries!" the good Doctor should have no problem taking the heroes to a world where they will face not only a Thunder Lizard but his recent alliance with "the insectoid king - Lord Chiton" will no doubt be their downfall! All in Chronulus' diabolical plot to stop America's first super hero "Mister '76" from being born!!*

Now onto breaking down the details!

And I shall call this adventure "issue".....

.....ah but WAIT! That's my story! What's yours?!?!!

## CREATING YOUR OWN HERO HOOKS WRITER GUIDELINES

Submit **FIVE** or more Hero Hooks and you will be included in the **HAPPY HERO HOOK HALL OF IDEAS** and you will receive a **FREE** copy of the current HERO HOOK edition!!

Submit your Hero Hooks to: [kevperrine@yahoo.com](mailto:kevperrine@yahoo.com)

### RULES OF THE HOOK GAME

All HERO HOOKS follow these five Golden Rules.

- **Length:** HOOKS are short. Complicated plots of world domination are not the realm of HERO HOOKS - concise ideas and flashes of inspiration. Most HOOKS are 3-4 paragraphs with three one paragraph possibilities for the cause, usually fitting on a single page.
- **Statistics:** HOOKS do not have time or space for statistics. Any mention of exact numbers, power levels and ranks will be mercilessly purged. Game Masters are usually pretty crafty - they can invent statistics and details as they need them. Suggestions of super powers or types of villains are the most detail needed.
- **Possibilities:** HOOKS have three endings or possibilities. Not two, not four. Three. The possibilities themselves don't usually describe different variations. Possibilities that just say "As option 2, but this time . . ." are not regarded favourably. Think. Be original!
- **Pretty Layout:** Fancy layouts specific to your HERO HOOKS are not needed, all HOOKS's will be laid out in HERO HOOKS fashion. So whatever you send, send it in good old vanilla ascii text. (Everything has to be in ascii for the html documents anyway.)
- **Coherent:** This one should be obvious. If I can't understand what's going on or if there are vast yawning chasms in your logic, then it won't get much further than my e-mail in-box.

### SO WHAT MAKES A GOOD HERO HOOK

#### Bad Points.

- **Obscure Settings:** If you are going to write a HOOK, why limit its usefulness by setting it somewhere obscure? A HERO HOOK that can be applied anywhere, to anyone, (with alternative ideas) is much more interesting than one set specifically in 1838 London or 2056 Mars. HOOKS can (and should) have interesting ideas and settings but try to remain less specific. Atlantis might be destroyed in my comic universe, but alternatives (Atlantis, Mu, Lemuria, Hawaii) can fit in nicely.

- **Newspaper Articles:** Newspaper articles tend not to make good HOOKS.
- **Game Master Advice:** Not only can GMs invent statistics, they know how to best use HOOKS. So if your HOOKS features a strange Egyptian relic, you don't need to explain that the investigators stumble across the relic through a friend, in a will, at an auction, in the news, or whatever. Just describe your HOOKS and let the GM decide how best to fit it into his or her game. You need not waste space saying "The heroes read about this in the paper/are told about it by a friend." Concentrate on the HOOKS instead.
- **Grammar:** Coherency is one thing, grammar is another. I don't have time to correct grammar and punctuation. I may correct obvious flaws, but you aren't doing yourself any favours if you don't check your grammar.
- **Adventures:** Converting adventures into a HOOK doesn't really work - there isn't enough room for heavy plotting. However if you read nearly any comic on the stand you can probably slice off the basic idea to form your own HERO HOOK just fine.

## Good Points.

- **In Your Face:** Things that happen directly to the investigators are good. They're live, active and power packed. HERO HOOKS are well-suited to this sort of slam-bang instant action and personal misdoings.
- **Things:** I find that limiting yourself to a thing (place, person, event, object and so on) produces an interesting HOOKS. These also fit into an existing game easier than situations or adventures.
- **Can I use it anywhere?** Here's an acid test that help a HERO HOOK to pass the test - can I use it straight away, in the game I'm currently running? (I might not want to, but can I?) If it will fit into multiple tones of Super Heroes and it still passes the test, that's even better!
- **Possibilities:** Don't think of the multiple possibilities as a burden, consider them an opportunity. Good HOOKS have diverse possibilities, unrelated to each other.

## WRITING TIPS

- **Will:** Watch out for the word "will" - it can often be deleted. For example, "The bomb will explode in thirty minutes" would be better as "The bomb explodes in thirty minutes." Punchier, sharper.

- **Very:** Awful word - avoid using it at all costs. You can usually come up with a better synonym - for example: very big = immense, vast, huge; very bright = blinding, dazzling, actinic; and so on.
- **There are:** Avoid starting a sentence or clause with “there are” if you can help it. The sentence can usually be rewritten so that it is stronger: “There are three hungry T-Rexs waiting impatiently in the park” is better as “Three hungry T-Rexs wait impatiently in the park”.
- **Wasted Words:** There’s probably a technical term for these, but I don’t know what it is. All I know is that this sort of writing clogs up sentences and should be weeded out. Some examples:
  - “*Justice-Gal managed to open the airlock*” is better as “*Justice-Gal opened the airlock*”.
  - “*Killer Kain then decided to perform the ritual*” is better as “*Killer Kain then performed the ritual*”.
  - “*Mr. Mook was able to escape*” is better as “*Mr. Mook escaped*”.
- **Omit Unnecessary Words:** Unnecessary words pad out a sentence without adding content, making your writing seem weak and flabby. Using fewer words is generally better. For example, If the heroes look in the crate, they will find a baby alien is better as Looking in the crate reveals a baby alien or even The crate contains a baby alien.
- **Grammar checker:** Most word processors come with a grammar checker. While you need to treat these with a pinch of salt, it’s worth running them to see what they throw up. I learned a few things when I first started using them.
- **Numbers:** Numerals ten and below is generally written out in full. More than ten and just write the number in numerals.
- **Follow the rulebook:** Check your spelling and (particularly) capitalisation. For example, it’s hero, not Hero and super villains not SUPER VILLAINS.
- **Other sources of style and grammar:** We recommend dipping into Jack Lynch’s grammar and style guide.
- **All Capitals:** Do not type something in all capital letters unless you want to see it printed that way. Use bold or italics for emphasis only when needed.
- **It’s all in a Name:** “Players” are real people. “Characters” are their fictional creations. Don’t say “the players do such-and-so” unless you mean it. The

players make decisions; the characters fly about the city and shoot aliens with ray-guns. This is an important distinction. But don't overuse "characters" either. Use synonyms: PCs, team, heroes, adventurers, etc., as appropriate. Of course, these can apply either to the PCs' team, or to a group of NPCs.

Anything is better than saying "The NPCs" all the time . . . army, band, cohort, company, corps, couple, everyone, force, gang, mercenaries, mob, squad, team, tribe, troop, retinue. Since so many adventures involve a quest or mystery of some kind, synonyms for "investigator" are especially useful . . . agent, hunter, infiltrator, interloper, intruder, invader, investigator, observer, pursuer, quester, searcher, seeker, snoop, spy. The list continues with words like adversary, alien, antagonist, attacker, bogey, crook, enemy, foe, henchman, hostile, opponent, prey, stooge, stranger, target, unknown, activist, applicant, bearer, buddy, bystander, captive, castaway, challenger, combatant, companion, compatriots, comrade, driver, dupe, escapee, escort, examiner, exile, expatriate, freelancer, friend, fugitive, gambler, guest, hacker, haggler, informant, informer, leader, loser, meddler, member, merchant, navigator, netrunner, newcomer, occupant, officer, outcast, outsider, participant, passenger, patient, patriot, possessed, possessor, prisoner, purchaser, recipient, researcher, retainer, rival, runner, sleeper, speaker, staff, student, subject, supplicant, tracker, traveler, trespassers, user, usurper, victim, victor, visitor, voyager, warrior, wayfarer, wearer, winner, witness, worker. In a military setting, ranks can always be used, as can specialties: private, general, radioman, tank commander. When you're describing a combat situation, certain terms

are both descriptive and interesting: ally, ambusher, attacker, infiltrator, fugitive, guard, main body, point, rearguard, rescuer, teammate, sacrifice, scout, sentry, straggler.



- **What Are They Doing Right Now?:** If you're talking about some specific action or situation, you can brighten up the narrative and save words. Instead of "The character wearing the cape," for instance, you can say "The wearer of the cape." Or, depending on circumstances, "the unlucky wearer of the cape."

## FINAL THOUGHTS...

*"The Breeder Bombs" that was my first step into the wild, wonderful imagination of roleplaying games. Marvel SuperHeroes MH-1 by Jeff Grubb, 16 pages of pure awesome! I found it amidst a lost shelf given to such games at the mall bookstore.*

*I grew up in tiny-town America with no bookstores, no hobby stores, and certainly no comic book stores. My first comics were snapped up with the randomness that was the only spot within an hour from home that sported one of those rickety tall round wire racks. My superhero education became more a product of my investigative skill than anything else. I knew about Superman and Spiderman but I had no clue they were from competing companies. The rack from which I gleaned my knowledge filled itself with a few of the big names.*

*Peter Parker was my partner in this grand treasure hunt and soon Professor X and his X-men would join us. Then slowly Dr. Banner, Donald Blake, Steve Rodgers and even the GI Joe team would aid my discovery. I was drawn by the heroes, but it was their opposition that HOOKED me. Who was this MAGNETO?!? What was the connection between Dr. Doom and the Fantastic Four? When would Doc Ock strike next??!*

*Then arrived the great teacher that opened me to so many heroes and villains: The SECRET WARS mini-series! By the end of the twelve issues I had been given dozens of new heroes and villains I'd never before known. The madness! Where would I learn more?!?!*

*And then came "The Breeder Bombs". It started innocently. I snuck this "game" into gym class and asked one of my buddies for help. I just didn't understand what the numbers meant. I had wondered for years just how strong Colossus was compared to Wolverine and now at long last it was here - my Rosetta Stone! And my buddy laughed. "You idiot, you need the RULES to play this. It's just a module." WHAT?!!! He explained that it was like D&D, something I'd never heard of being from a rural community who's churches outlawed everything from Tolkien to Conan. From that day forth my efforts doubled. I would understand this "game."*

*I still have those first adventures, the basic rules and later the "advanced" rules for the Marvel Super Heroes roleplaying game published by TSR. The Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe MU1-MU4 and the yearly updates became my Holy Grail. Sadly, I never played that game in those days, I had no likeminded friends to imagine with. But my love affair with super heroes remained and blossomed into understanding role-playing games following my college years.*

*Now some 20 years after finding that original "Breeder Bomb" I've had the great pleasure of meeting many of the creators of those original game - even teasing Jeff Grub at a Holiday party about how much of my youth was "wasted" memorizing his words and numbers. But in the end was it really wasted?*

*It is not by accident then that my first goal within the Superlink Society of publishers would become a collection of adventure seeds. Short ideas that would spawn imaginations to expand and develop the same type of creative energies I enjoyed so long ago. Hero Hooks was conceived to allow anyone with a spark of inspiration to have an outlet that might in turn inspire others to adventure.*

*In the end, did any of us really waste those times?*

*You tell me...*

-kev-  
"With great power..."



STARSTUFF



WOMAN-GIRL, ARCHON,  
LADY KEEN & LOPESTAR



# HERO HOOKS

BECAUSE  
EVERY HERO  
NEEDS A  
**HOOK!!**

If over-stuffed modules are like comic book graphic novels, that makes the humble **HERO HOOK** collection a big ol' box full of single issues, dog-eared and dripping with awesome!

Every hero has his evil mastermind to thwart.

The big guys, they're for you to dream up. It's the time in between big bads, arch nemesis and summer blockbusters that really build the hero's legend. **That's what Hero Hooks are for!**

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**THIS IS A TIME FOR  
HERO HOOKS**

