



ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

M&M
SUPERLINK

#2

AMAZING TRIPLE ACTION



NORTH

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ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

AMAZING TRIPLE ACTION

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FIRST APPEARANCE

POLTERGEIST

Poltergeist is a teenage girl who is frightened by the power she taps into. Can she bring it under control and be the hero she wants to be? Or is she right to be afraid?

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: Sandy Smith

Age: 17

Ethnicity: Caucasian\

Hair: Blonde

Identity: Secret

POWER DESCRIPTION

Poltergeist projects an unpredictable psychic force that manifests in a variety of telekinetic effects. Her control of this force is less than perfect, and sometimes it seems like the force is controlling her, not the other way around.

APPEARANCE

Poltergeist usually wears a simple outfit of light gym trousers paired with a crop-top, a mixture of blues and greys. She uses her power to hide her identity, agitating the molecules in front of her face so she appears blurred and indistinct except for the area around her eyes, which stays clear so she is able to see.

PERSONALITY

Sandy is afraid. She has not had her powers for very long and she doesn't know the first thing about controlling



them. She wishes that things could be like they were, and she could carry on with her life just as it was. But that isn't going to happen. It's much too late for that.

She is only seventeen, and a young seventeen at that. She has led a sheltered life, kept on a short leash by her aunt and uncle while she was growing up.

Sandy doesn't trust people easily, but she's looking around for help and support. This combination means she makes life difficult for herself - she pulls close to people quickly if they are willing to help her, then becomes filled with suspicion and doubt and pulls away again. Furthermore, with the force flowing through her, her fears sometimes manifest in a poltergeist rampage.

PAST

Sandy was a normal girl in a normal neighborhood at a normal high school. She was an orphan, growing up in the care of her aunt and uncle, who had no children of their own. They were church-going folk, firm but fair, and as long as Sandy behaved she had no troubles with them.

As so often, Sandy eventually crossed the line. She fell completely in love with a boy at school, a popular boy who didn't even know her name. One night she sneaked out to a party and summoned up her courage to talk to him. It all went well - too well. She drank alcohol for the first time in her life, and got a bit drunk. When the boy started kissing her, she thought she had won the lottery. When he didn't stop there, she thought she had opened a horrible Pandora's box. He was going too far, too fast, and she was too intimidated to say anything to stop him.

Then things went a bit wild. Everything was shaking and flying about. When Sandy opened her eyes, she found that the bedroom they were in had become a scene of chaos and destruction. The boy was unconscious, covered with welts and cuts and bruises. Sandy ran from the scene.

The school turned against her in a moment. The story everyone believed was that she had gone crazy when

the boy had kissed her, attacked him with objects around the room, and wrecked the place then fled. When her parents confronted her about the allegations, she told the truth, and for her honesty she was called a sinner and a liar.

It was only when the attacks started happening at home that her parents came to believe she was possessed by the devil.

A new pastor in her church was recommending an exorcism, and assisted in holding Sandy captive in her parents' basement for weeks. Terrified and betrayed, one night Sandy was able to summon the force and escape. She has been on the run ever since.

DESCRIPTION

Sandy had an ordinary life ahead of her, and while she had her troubles, she was mostly happy with how things were going. Now, that's all over.

Within Sandy is a powerful force. It seems to have a will of its own. When she doesn't use her powers for long periods, she can sense it building up inside her, getting stronger and more rambunctious and waiting for the next chance at release. When she concentrates, she can use it to perform acts of telekinesis. Sometimes it acts of its own accord to protect her. She doesn't understand it, and she is afraid of it, but she feels that it is part of her.

Recently, Sandy has found herself rising out of traumatic situations in an astral body. She cannot yet control this power, but will soon master it. Likewise, she hopes that with time she will bring the force under control.

She wants to go to College and study anthropology. She has been accepted, and when she turns eighteen she gains access to her parents' savings. Until then, she will stay on the run. But it will be a long time before she gains control over the force, and until then it will spin out of control time and time and time again...



POSSIBLE FUTURES

Temptation Island

A villain offers to rid Poltergeist of her inhabiting spirit in return for some favor. She completes the favor, but the cure is a dismal failure. In fact, the villain becomes possessed by Sandy's poltergeist and goes on a destructive rampage through the city, while Sandy herself seeks help in astral form.

Alternatively, the attempt to cure Sandy could come from the Pastor, who has tracked her down at her parents' behest. His exorcism backfires and leaves Sandy trapped between life and death while he becomes an angel of destruction.

Understanding The Force

The force within Poltergeist finally achieves some critical mass and she understands what it is. The force is in fact Poltergeist's emotions, given powers and a kind of sentience of their own. Seeking control over the force is the same as seeking control over her emotions. And if she is ever to dispel the force, she will also lose her emotions forever.

Poltergeist could seek counsel about how to deal with this revelation from a character dealing with a similar problem, or just one who is sympathetic to her. Alternatively, she could respond by refusing to deny her emotions, and giving them full reign. The hurt within this traumatized teenage girl will fuel a swathe of telekinetic destruction that only the characters can stop. If she is knocked unconscious the force will just rage stronger; they can stop her only by talking Poltergeist down, or using a greater force against her.

Coming Into Her Own

The relationship between emotions and the force is the opposite of Poltergeist's belief. The more she suppresses her emotions, the more powerful she becomes, and she is absolutely in command. But as she becomes more powerful, her humanity starts to diminish, until finally she is just a pure expression of an ancient, alien mind - the truth about the force revealed at last.

POLTERGEIST (PL 7)

(Tradeoff: Attack 4 vs. Damage Save 10)

(Tradeoff: Defense 4 vs. Toughness Save 10)

Str -2 (6), **Dex** -1(8), **Con** +1 (12), **Int** +2 (14), **Wis** +3 (16), **Cha** +2 (14)

Tough +1, **Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Skills: Drive +3, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (Art) +6, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +12, Knowledge (Current Events) +10, Knowledge (History) +10, Knowledge (Life Sciences) +6, Notice +11, Search +6, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +3

Feats: Trance

Powers: Astral Form 2; Deflect 4 (all ranged attacks, also melee attacks*; extra: reaction, operates whenever attacked); Telekinesis 10 (feats: Accurate 2, Alternate power: Agitation* 10 (uncontrolled), Hide Identity*; drawback: any use of Telekinesis power might accidentally result in Agitation instead, DC 15 check per session; DC 15 to overcome)

Combat: Attack +0, Defense +4, Initiative -1

- Telekinetic Grab: Attack +4 to start grapple
- Telekinetic Grapple: Grapple check +14, Damage pin and hold

* The power Agitation, the power feat Hide Identity, and the power extra Deflect Melee Attacks are all described elsewhere in this issue.

THE TWIN

The Twin is a strange and unpredictable outcast, in command of primal magics and ready to lash out at anyone who frustrates her.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: Felisa Alonso

Age: 27

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Hair: Black, with a streak of white

Identity: Secret.

POWER DESCRIPTION

The Twin commands a wide variety of magical effects. Her magic is inborn and inherent, not the result of study or training.

APPEARANCE

The Twin wears a long robe and cloak -- an affectation from her years wandering the occult underground. She never wears make-up, but her appearance is striking. Her eyes are a mixture of colors, changing when looked at from different angles. Her hair is long and usually a bit wild, with a thick streak of white above her right eye.

PERSONALITY

The Twin is temperamental and quick to judge. She is motivated primarily by a deep and uncontrollable fear of dangers from her past. She speaks cryptically,

She does not see good and evil in the same way as most. In a sense, her great distinction is between 'safe' and 'unsafe'. She will not question any action that will make her feel more safe, even if it is an evil act in the eyes of others. Likewise, she will not



condone any action that will make her feel more unsafe, even if it is a good act in others' eyes.

She has murdered, once, but is unlikely ever to do so again. However, she has probably allowed people to die when she could have saved them, and she has definitely used her magic to ruin lives and wreck people's wellbeing. She feels little to no guilt for the things she does.



PAST

In Spain, 27 years ago, Maria Alonso gave birth to identical twins, which she and her husband Philip named Felisa and Liana. The twins grew up sharing everything with each other, as each other's best friend and confidante. Felisa was filled with wonder when Liana revealed she had befriended an angel named Christophe. Christophe came and visited her in dreams. Liana and Felisa, already close enough to feel each other's emotions, began to whisper to each other with their thoughts, a trick Liana had been taught by Christophe.

Philip was a distant and often unkind father, while Maria was a loving but unreliable mother. When the twins were fifteen years old, their parents' marriage was falling apart. Maria was carrying on an affair with the small town's Doctor, and the town was small enough that everyone knew. Philip felt his family slipping away from him, and told the Doctor to leave town. The Doctor would not do this, but he ended the affair.

This wasn't the end of things - Maria was upset at being rejected by her lover, and began hounding him, becoming more and more intrusive and obsessive as Philip looked helplessly on. Finally, Philip confronted the Doctor again, and threatened him unless he left town. Maria intervened, and a scuffle broke out. In the confusion, Philip's knife ended up embedded in Maria's chest.

The Doctor and Philip, working together, were able to save her, and Philip staggered home, a shattered man. He did not know that the fight had been witnessed by the twins. The twins confronted their father, blaming him for everything that had befallen them. When the confrontation was over, Philip was dead, stabbed in the heart by the very knife that had almost killed his wife. And Liana was gone.

Felisa could not speak of what had happened. She felt confused, and deeply changed. Some weeks after the death of Philip, she had a dream in which Liana revealed to her the truth. When they had killed Philip, Liana had betrayed the angel from her dreams. Now Christophe was determined to claim her soul and send

it to hell. To save herself, Liana had become spirit and hidden within Felisa's soul. She would hide there until it was, one day, safe to return to life. The reason for Felisa's confusion was now apparent: she was now a mixed soul, with Felisa and Liana both combined within her.

Using the magic that Liana had developed, the Twin ran away from her home, where her mother was slowly recovering and her father was fresh in the ground. She lost herself in the countries of Europe, and then the world.

DESCRIPTION

The Twin has spent over a decade on the fringes of the occult underground, confused and powerful, searching for a place where she will feel safe from Christophe and from others who wish to destroy or control her. In all her travels she has yet to find such a place.

The Twin often calls herself Felisa, and thinks of herself as Felisa, but she knows that her identity is more complex than that. She is just as much Liana as Felisa. She is known in occult circles as 'the Twin', and responds to that name as well.

She understands that Felisa is the most dominant part of her combined self - after all, they came together when Liana went into hiding inside Felisa. Yet Liana was the magician, and so the magic she uses comes not from her dominant self, but from the depths of her subconscious where Liana's essence resides. Felisa cannot speak of most of the magic she knows, as its workings are just as surprising to her as they are to others.

The Twin knows that Liana is hunted by an angel named Christophe, for her betrayal and for the sin of murder. Christophe is just the beginning. She is hunted, constantly, by those who wish to take advantage of her. Christophe may not even exist, but other hunters certainly do, both within the occult underground (where people wish to understand her, tame her, or enslave her) and more conventional society (where she is known as a criminal, albeit not



a serious one, and sought across the world). Perhaps this is the curse of the Twin - always to be hunted, never able to rest.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

Angels

Any character who might be perceived as an angel by the Twin will be subject to special attention. The Twin believes angels created her, by teaching Liana magic, and she believes an angel is hunting Liana and herself. The Twin might see another 'angel' who could intercede on their behalf, and call of Christophe, or at least provide information about him? When the character cannot do so, she may become agitated, or violent, or anguished.

Christophe - Angel or Demon?

Christophe could make his move on the Twin. Is Christophe really an angel, or is he something else? Is he a demon? An alien? A ghost? Did Christophe lie to Liana - or did Liana interpret things to suit herself? Or did Liana lie to Felisa? Is Liana lying even now? The characters could be recruited by Christophe for help, or by The Twin for protection.

Return of Liana

Perhaps The Twin finds evidence that Liana is alive, and knows nothing of Felisa's fate. Everything Felisa believes about herself has been a lie, constructed by someone, or something, to protect her from a more horrible truth. What truth? Perhaps something else hides in Felisa's soul - a demon, a monster, another sorcerer. Someone using Felisa as a dupe to escape justice, or vengeance. The characters could be witness to the reunion between the Twin and Liana, or discover the Twin on a rampage of destruction after her world has been upended. They could be recruited to undertake a journey inside the Twin's psyche and see what is concealed there...

THE TWIN (PL12)

Str -2 (8), **Dex** +0 (10), **Con** +0 (10), **Int** +0 (10), **Wis** +2 (14), **Cha** +4 (18)

Tough 10, **Fort** +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +17

Skills: Concentration +7, Knowledge (Arcane) +8, Language 1 (English), Notice +6, Stealth +4

Feats: Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5

Powers: Astral Form 5 (magic); Healing 10 (magic); Magic 12 (core effect: Paralyze 12; alternate powers: Confuse 12 & Mind Shield 12; Mental Blast 6; Mind Reading 12 & Mind Shield 12; Mind Switch 12; Nauseate (ranged) 8; Paralyze (ranged) 8; Power Control 12; Telepathy 12); Protection 10 (magic)

Combat: Attack +6, Defense +8, Initiative +0
- Ranged Magic: Attack +6



NECROLORD

Necrolord is the dark ruler of the Deathrealm, and he desires to bring the living world under his control. He claims to be a god, but the truth is rather different...

mouth seems crowded with yellow teeth. His skin has become a deep, burnt brown lined with black veins.

These features are usually hidden within the depths of the hooded cloak that he wears, along with a tunic and leggings in a medieval style. All his fastenings are

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: Long forgotten.

Age: Over 700.

Ethnicity: Originally, Caucasian

Hair: None

Identity: Secret

POWER DESCRIPTION

Necrolord uses powerful dark magic, which has been woven into the fibers of his being through the centuries of his Deathrealm rule. When he locks eyes with a living soul, that person receives a glimpse of their own death, and the emptiness that follows. This deathgaze, instills despair in its victims, and he can use it to overcome the mightiest opposition. He wields a vicious deathblade sword, which fatigues those who survive its cut. He is also aided by a horde of minions, the necrovores that are native to the Deathrealm.

APPEARANCE

The Necrolord was once human, but it is hard now to see that. His eyes glow red and his hairless scalp is crested by the ridges that have grown atop his skull. His teeth have elongated slightly, just enough that his





made of bone, and the back of his cloak is decorated with a skull motif, itself created by sewing hundreds of finger bones into place on the fabric.

At his belt, the Necrolord wears a sword. It is usually sheathed in a leather scabbard made from human skin. The sword is long and ebony-black, and crimson energy sometimes plays along its length.

PERSONALITY

In a realm of death, the Necrolord holds sway. He commands swarms of necrovores and cares not one bit for the life of any creature. He is haughty and confident, perhaps overconfident. He fears nothing, least of all death. He will seek to intimidate any who confront him, for he is the God of Death, the mighty force that harvests all souls, and the jaws of the necrovores are the final fate of all who live.

He and the necrovores look always to the living world, which is just out of reach. The spirits of the dead sometimes fall into the Deathrealm, where they are set upon by Necrovores, or, sometimes, captured by the Necrolord and held for his amusement. Like many rulers, the Necrolord likes to hear himself speak, but unless he has a captive spirit the only audience he has is the Necrovores. He speaks to them, but really he is just speaking to himself.

He seeks power. He wants to expand the realm of death to touch every one of the living. The living world is a bauble he hopes to claim.

PAST

The Necrolord was not always as he is now. In fact, his claims of being a god of death are entirely fraudulent.

The Necrolord was once a mystic and priest in Europe's Dark Age, born and raised in what is now southern Italy. He remembers little of this time; indeed, he has made efforts to expunge it all from his memory, the better to consolidate his power as a "god of death".

The death of his father was a great blow to the priest.

He was unable to accept it, and in his grief he began to seek ways in which to cross the bounds of death and make contact once again with his lost father. This path led far away from his religious vows, but so great was his grief that he did not think twice.

Over time, the priest's fascination with death was joined to a conviction that he could attain great personal power from its secrets. His researches led to the discovery of what he called 'death energy', which he learned to use to perform feats of dark magic. Quickly he turned entirely from God and the Church. He was marked for death as a heretic and hunted by agents of the Pope. They could not resist his power, and with their deaths he was able to open a gateway into another dimension - the Deathrealm.

When he entered this new realm, he soon encountered its denizens, creatures he called necrovores, which fed on the spirits of the dead. He remained in the Deathrealm, learning its secrets and mastering his power. His only sustenance became the necrovores. Their power became his power. As time went by, they fell entirely under his sway. Using his magic, he erected a tower in the Realm, and proclaimed himself its ruler. After centuries, he believed himself a god. He forgot about his lost father a very long time ago.

DESCRIPTION

The Necrolord is a parasite. He has claimed a position of power in a dimension not his own, and dominates the native creatures there, sucking their power into himself. He claims to be the lord of death, but if he was removed, there would be no power vacuum left behind. He is utterly unnecessary to the functioning of the realm of death. The necrovores do not need him, or any leader; without him they would revert to their natural behavior pattern without any problem and things would carry on as they had for the millennia prior to his arrival.

The Necrolord sustains himself by eating necrovores. There are always more necrovores - there are more than he can possibly control, but about a hundred are under his sway at any one time. He kills the



necrovores with his sword and tears them apart with his bare hands, eating them. The other necrovores are deeply uninterested in this, so the Necrolord will usually take his food with several Necrovores looking on.

The Necrolord, in his heart of hearts, understands this is the case. He will never admit it, least of all to himself, but he knows he is a fraud. This is the motivation that drives him - he wants to matter. He seeks great power only to sate his desire to be important in the scheme of things.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

The Fascination Game

The Necrolord becomes fascinated by one of the characters, especially one who has a deep connection with death. He may desire to make the character his bride, or his heir - either way, he abducts the character into the Deathrealm and attempts to dominate them using magic rituals. When the captive's friends arrive to rescue him, they will find a new villain fighting against them from the Necrolord's side - the one they had come to rescue.

Rejecting the Spirits

The spirits of the dead stop leaving the living realm. Ghosts accumulate everywhere, and the fabric of reality starts to break. The cause is in the Deathrealm, where the Necrolord has come under attack by an alien invader. The alien knows the Necrolord derives power from the necrovores, who survive on the ingestion of spirits. In order to weaken them, the alien has cut off access for the spirits - they can no longer pass into the Deathrealm from the real world. With ghosts becoming more and more angry in the real world, it is up to the heroes to step into the Deathrealm and resolve the problem.

The True Death God

The Necrolord believes that he discovered the death energy. However, perhaps the death energy discovered him. He was chosen as a cat's-paw in a very long game. Now, the endgame has arrived, and the true god of death will return, and claim everything

the Necrolord has built. Perhaps the true death god was defeated an eternity ago, and the Necrolord has been host to the true god's essence, a spark slowly growing and building as time passed. The true god of death is about to arise and take over the soul of the Necrolord - and only the characters can stop him. But to stop him, they must make the Necrolord remember his long-lost humanity...

NECROLORD (PL 15)

Str +0 (10), **Dex** +3 (16), **Con** +0 (10), **Int** +3 (16), **Wis** +2 (14), **Cha** +3 (16)

Tough +0, **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

Skills: Bluff +9, Intimidate +11, Notice +8, Sense Motive +10

Feats: Attack Specialization (sword) 5, Ritualist

Powers: Drain Constitution 5 (death energy); Death Gaze (Emotion Control 12 (despair only) linked with Precognition 3 (foresee own death only) as an attack; use the Emotion Control Will save for both effects); Device (deathblade sword) 8 (vampiric damage +10, fatigue 10); Darkness Control 3 (death energy); Flight 3; Immunity 10 (life support and aging); Magic 15 (death energy magic; core effect: Snare 15; alternate powers: Blast 15, Portal* 2 (between mystically-connected dimensions only, portal is 25 ft. by 25 ft.), Force Field 15, Teleport 15); Regeneration 10 (+9 recovery bonus, resurrection after one week); Summon Minion 4 (horde of 100 fanatical necrovores; feat: sacrifice); Super-Senses (blindsight using death energy)

Combat: Attack +5, Defense +8, Initiative +3

- Magic Blast: Attack +5, Damage 15

- Deathblade Sword: Attack +15, Damage 10 (vampiric) and Fatigue 10

- Death Gaze: standard action, one target must save vs. Will DC 22 or foresee their own death and suffer Despair

* The new power Portal is described elsewhere in this issue.



TrickBox

ARCHETYPE: HAUNTER

(POWER LEVEL 10)

(Tradeoff: Attack 7 vs. Damage Save 13)

(Tradeoff: Defense 7 vs. Toughness Save 13)

ABILITY SCORES:

STR -2 (6)

DEX -1 (8)

CON +1 (12)

INT +2 (14)

WIS +3 (16)

CHA +2 (14)

SAVES:

Toughness: +1

Fortitude: +4 (+3 base)

Reflex: +4 (+5 base)

Will: +8(+5 base)

SKILLS:

(Skill ranks are given for ease of adjustment.)

Drive +3 (4 ranks), Gather Information +10 (8 ranks), Knowledge (Art) +6 (4 ranks), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +12 (10 ranks), Knowledge (Current Events) +10 (8 ranks), Knowledge (History) +10 (8 ranks), Knowledge (Life Sciences) +6 (4 ranks), Notice +11 (8 ranks), Search +6 (4 ranks), Sense Motive +13 (10 ranks), Stealth +3 (4 ranks)

FEATS:

Trance

POWERS:

(The power Agitation, the power feat Hide Identity, and the power extra Deflect Melee Attacks are all described elsewhere in this issue.)

- Astral Form 3

- Deflect 6 (all ranged attacks, also melee attacks;

extras: reaction, operates whenever attacked; reflection, redirection)

- Telekinesis 13 (feats: Accurate 3, Alternate power: Agitation 13 (uncontrolled), Alternate Power: Blast 13; Hide Identity; drawback: any use of the power might result in Agitation instead, DC 15 check per session; DC 15 to overcome)
issue

COMBAT:

Attack +1, Defense +7, Initiative -1

- Telekinetic Grab: Attack +7 to start grapple
- Telekinetic Grapple: Grapple check +20, Damage pin and hold

POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 10 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 95 + Combat 16 + Saves 13 - Drawbacks 3 = 150

POWER COSTS IN DETAIL:

Deflect 6

Base cost 2/rank (all ranged attacks)

- extra: change action type to Reaction (+3/rank)
- extra: deflect melee attacks (+1/rank)
- extra: reflect and redirect (+2/rank)

Total cost 6 ranks at 8/rank = 48pp

Telekinesis 13

Base cost 2/rank

- feat: Accurate 3
- feat: Alternate Power: Blast 13 (2/rank)
- feat: Alternate Power: Agitation, with uncontrolled flaw (2/rank)
- feat: Hide Identity

Total cost 13 ranks at 2/rank plus 6 points in feats = 32pp

(Drawback: uncommon, major = 3pp)



ARCHETYPE: OUTCAST MAGICIAN

(POWER LEVEL 10)

ABILITY SCORES:

STR -1 (8)
DEX +0 (10)
CON +0 (10)
INT +0 (10)
WIS +2 (14)
CHA +4 (18)

SAVES:

Toughness: +10 (+0 base)
Fortitude: +4 (+4 base)
Reflex: +6 (+6 base)
Will: +15 (+13 base)

SKILLS:

(Skill ranks are given for ease of adjustment)

Concentration +8 (8 ranks), Knowledge (Arcane) +8 (8 ranks), Notice +6 (4 ranks), Stealth +4 (4 ranks)

FEATS:

Fearless, Fearsome Presence 4

POWERS:

- Astral Form 4 (magic)
- Healing 10 (magic)
- Magic 10 (core effect: Paralyze 10; alternate powers: Confuse 10 & Mind Shield 10; Mental Blast 5; Mind Reading 10 & Mind Shield 10; Mind Switch 10; Nauseate (ranged) 6; Paralyze (ranged) 6; Power Control 10; Telepathy 10)
- Protection 10 (magic)

COMBAT:

Attack +3, Defense +6, Initiative +0
- Ranged Magic: Attack +3

POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 10 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 88 + Combat 18 + Saves 23 = 150



VILLAIN ARCHETYPE: DEATH LORD

(POWER LEVEL 15)

ABILITY SCORES:

STR +0 (10)
DEX +0 (10)
CON +9 (28)
INT +0 (10)
WIS +0 (10)
CHA +2 (14)

SAVES:

Toughness: +9 (+0 base)
Fortitude: +17 (+8 base)
Reflex: +4 (+4 base)
Will: +14 (+14 base)

SKILLS:

(Skill ranks are given for ease of adjustment.)
Bluff +8 (6 ranks), Diplomacy +10 (8 ranks), Notice +6 (6 ranks), Sense Motive +8 (8 ranks)

FEATS:

Attack Specialization (death weapon), Ritualist

POWERS:

- **Drain Constitution 14** (death energy)
- **Device** (death weapon) **8** (vampiric damage +10, fatigue 10)
- **Darkness Control 7** (death energy)
- **Emotion Control 15** (death gaze, choose despair or fear)
- **Flight 3**
- **Immunity 10** (life support and aging)
- **Magic 15** (death energy magic; core effect: Blast 15; select four alternate powers)
- **Regeneration 1** (Resurrection)
- **Summon Minion 2** (horde of 100 fanatical skeletons; feat: sacrifice)
- **Super-Senses** (blindsight using death energy)

COMBAT:

Attack +5, Defense +8, Initiative +3
- Magic Blast: Attack +5, Damage 15
- Death Weapon: Attack +15, Damage 10 (vampiric) and Fatigue 10

POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 22 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 138 + Combat 26 + Saves 26 = 225

POWER COSTS IN DETAIL:

Device 8

Base cost 3/rank (easy to lose)
8 ranks provides 40 pp
- Damage 10: 10pp
- Vampiric extra for damage: 10pp
- Fatigue 10: 20pp
Total cost: 8 ranks at 3/rank = 24pp

Magic 15

Base cost 2/rank
- core effect: Blast 15
- four alternate powers
Total cost: 15 ranks at 2/rank plus 4 feats = 34pp

Summon Minion 2

Base cost 2/rank
- extras: fanatical, horde (+2/rank)
- feats: progression 7, sacrifice
Total cost: 2 ranks at 4/rank plus 8 feats = 16pp



RAZE THE DEMON

(PLOT DEVICE CHARACTER)

Raze is one of a host of powerful demons lurking in the shadows of the realms below.

APPEARANCE

Raze tends to manifest in the form of a gargantuan humanoid burning with fiery energy. Its features adhere to the traditional view of a demon--horned, clawed and fanged. However, for all this, Raze is more humanoid than bestial, capable of subtle expression and eloquent speech.

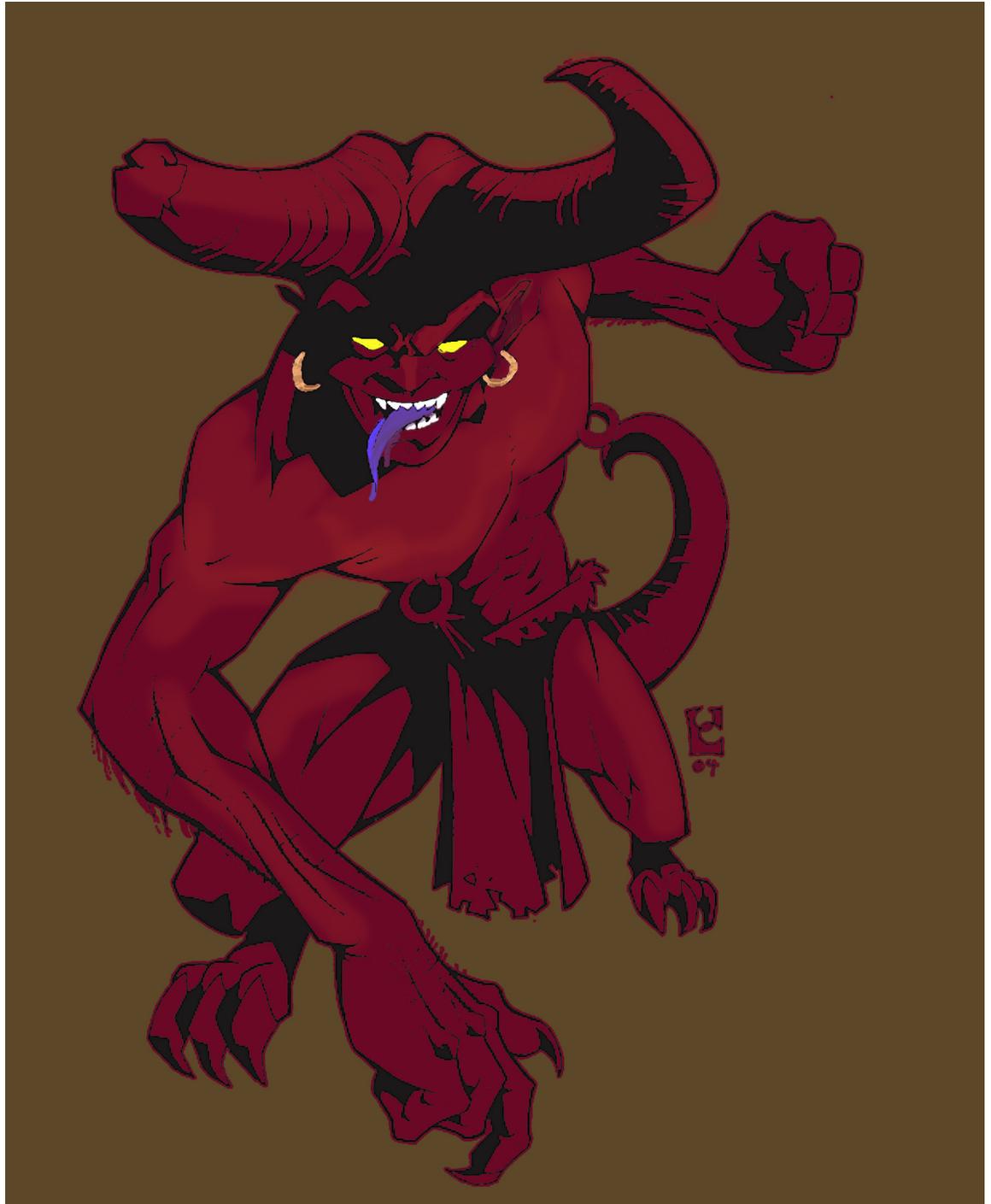
The mere sight of Raze is enough to terrify most people. His mere presence inspires a fear response in most mortals (an automatic Fearsome Presence 5 effect, as a free action).

MOTIVATION

Raze is a glutton who destroys things for the simple pleasure of causing misery. Its motivations are rarely more elaborate than to find new things to eat and precious things to destroy; however, it is quite capable of pursuing fairly

elaborate schemes in order to achieve this simple ends.

Ultimately, its plans and plots are a source of amusement for Raze. Unlike other demonic schemers, it never worries too much about the success or failure of a plan. Like other demons, though, its vengeance is





terrible upon those who make the mistake of wronging it.

KNOWN POWERS

Raze’s manifestation form is an incredibly potent physical combatant. If the manifestation form is seriously hurt or destroyed, Raze can disperse it and create another manifestation form; this takes at least one hour.

Raze can communicate across dimensions at will, with any recipient it chooses, at any time it pleases.

Raze can extend tendrils of power into people and control them or partially possess them. Through these agents, it can observe and work in the mortal world.

Additionally, if it wishes to manifest, it usually will do so by inhabiting and transforming the body of someone it has under control. This adds an extra layer of trauma for any who would move to stop it - the body it is using is of a mortal, and stopping Raze is often only possible by killing the mortal.

USING RAZE

Raze is a good villain to use in mystic-related games. Its simple goals are readily understandable and easy to build plots around. Its capability for sophisticated plotting is also a source of surprise and mystery for a game.

Raze’s proximity to and interest in the mortal world means it is easily contacted by mortal sorcerers in search of power or secret knowledge. Raze brings all such beings under its control, and waits for an opportunity to use them for its own advantage.

RAZE - MANIFESTATION FORM COMBAT STATISTICS

Size: Gargantuan (space 20 ft., reach 15 ft., height 50 ft., weight 200K lbs.)

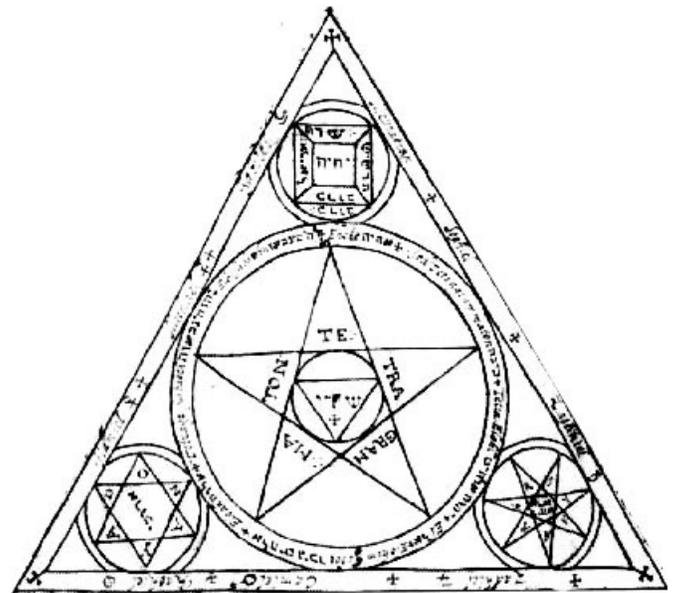
STR +20 (50), **DEX** +10 (30), **CON** +20 (50)

Tough +20, **Fort** +30, **Ref** +20, **Will** always succeeds

Feats: Share Extra Effort 8, Share Touch Effect 8, Teamwork 3

Powers: Blast (*magic or fire as desired*) 20

- Combat:** Attack +20, Defense +20, Initiative +10
- Blast: Attack +20, Damage 20
 - Punch: Attack +20, Damage 20
 - Grapple: Attack +20 to grab, Grapple checks +52





NEW POWERS:

AGITATION

Effect: General

Range: Touch

Cost: 3 points per rank

Action: Standard

Duration: Concentration

Save: Toughness

Objects around the user become highly agitated, taking to the air and whirling about and battering anyone in their path. The effect has a circular area with a 5-foot radius per rank, centered on the user. All targets in the area are automatically subjected to a damaging area effect with a damage bonus of equal to the power's rank.

Agitation can only be used when there is a sufficient quantity of small, hard items in the affected area. At the GM's discretion, the damage bonus may be halved

or otherwise reduced to reflect an insufficiency of items.

Individual items are affected as if lifted and thrown by a character with effective strength equal to the power's rank. The power is not selective; all items in an area small enough to be affected will be caught up in the effect.

(Moderate general effect 2, duration (concentration) +1, area effect +1, limited - requires items -1 = 3/rank)

PORTAL

Effect: General

Range: Touch

Cost: 3 points per rank

Action: Standard

Duration: Sustained

You can open a doorway between two dimensions.





This portal is usable by anyone. Anyone who steps through the portal (a move action) arrives instantly in the other dimension. The portal is two-way, so people can pass through the portal from the other direction as well. For one rank, you can open a portal between your home dimension and one other. For two ranks, you can move between any of a related group of dimensions (mystical dimensions, alien dimensions, etc.). For three ranks you can open a portal to any dimension.

The portal is 5-ft.-by-5-ft. in size. You can apply Progression feats to increase the size of the portal.

The GM should take the same care with this effect as recommended for the Super-Movement power Dimensional Movement.

(Major general effect 3 = 3/rank)

HIDE IDENTITY **(NEW POWER FEAT)**

This feat allows some aspect of a power to conceal the character's identity. The effect is continuous and personal. The specific form of the effect often relates to the power's descriptor. For example, a character with Element Control (fire) might have her features obscured by flame while in costume; a character with Mind Control (alien) might have an alien consciousness project in front of his face.

DEFLECT MELEE **ATTACKS** **(NEW EXTRA FOR DEFLECT POWER,** **COST +1/RANK)**

You can also block melee attacks using your Deflect power, using your Deflect rank in place of your normal attack bonus.

SHARE EXTRA EFFORT **(NEW POWER FEAT)**

When you take this feat, choose one other character with the same power (including descriptor).

You can share your energy with this character to make an Extra Effort for their benefit. You must be at touch range from the recipient. As a full action, you lend your power's energy to the target. The target performs the action as if at one power level higher than they possess, ignoring power level limits. At the conclusion of the Share Extra Effort full action, you become fatigued, as for Extra Effort.

SHARE TOUCH EFFECT **(NEW POWER FEAT)**

When you take this feat, choose one other character. You can use your touch effect on this character at range, as long as the target character accepts the touch effect. If this effect is used as an attack, it automatically misses the target. (This is like the 'ranged' extra, but it is limited to one person only.)



Insider Info

THE COVEN

This group of mystical women seek to gain personal power through manipulation of The Twin. They have been a force for good in the past, and could be so again, but currently they are devoted to dark and selfish motives.

ORIGINS OF THE COVEN

On Halloween night, 1969, a group of nine women met in Los Angeles. They were all explorers into the realm of the unknown. All knew of the secret places beneath reality, and had insight into the hidden truth of the occult. They decided to band together to support each other in their quest for mastery of this power, and took an oath to walk the path together, wherever it should lead.

The Coven's members found their powers growing as they continued to explore together. On the first anniversary of their oathswearing, Halloween night 1970, they faced their first real threat - an ancient sorcerer who had been trapped within the margins of time, and who wished to escape into reality and wreak vengeance upon the world. Together, the Coven faced this sorcerer and dealt with his threat.

As the years passed, the Coven found themselves facing other dangers. The occult underground was always busy, and nothing was ever simple. Time after time they fought incursions or obscene manipulations by supernatural threats.

In time, the membership of the Coven began to shift. Several original members left in order to devote their time to their families. New members were recruited and the Coven continued. Its impact upon the world

began to shift in the 1980s, as the path they traveled began to lead into more sinister places. The Coven began actively seeking to increase its own power, and it became willing to commit ever greater sins in order to do this. Soon the Coven, for so long a defender of reality, became a threat to it, opposed by white magicians and other occult heroes.

In the early 1990s, a Coven plan went disastrously wrong and several of its members died, killed by the very spirits they had conjured up to control. Other members left, renouncing their oath. In their wake, the remaining members renewed their oath to walk the path, and collectively decided that the path they had been following was no longer right. A new path was needed, one to help lead the world into light. With new recruits restoring their numbers to nine, the Coven was reconstituted and began once again to assist in the defense of reality, although in a very quiet way, not advertising their presence to anyone.

On Halloween 2000, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Coven's founding, several original members met with the current membership to perform a ceremony of renewal. The ceremony was crashed by the Coven's original foe, the ancient sorcerer. This dangerous mystic came in peace, however, and was received in that spirit by the Coven. When the gathering was assaulted by twisted reflections of the past lives of all its members, he showed the Coven how to tap into ancient energies and unite into a single mystical force. With this new power, the Coven was able to drive off their dark foes.

Since that time, the Coven has been a more powerful force than ever before. However, it has slipped further and further from the noble path decided in



the early 1990s. Now the Coven is utterly amoral, and its motives are supremely selfish. It is also far more powerful than it has ever been. Together, these aspects make the Coven a tremendous threat to the entire world.

(*The ancient sorcerer who faced the Coven in 1970 and 2000 is left undeveloped here, to allow a GM to use a suitable occult figure from his own game world.)

JOINING THE COVEN

The Coven does not usually entertain applications; it recruits when it needs to. There are always nine people in the coven, all of them women who have some command of magic or other occult arts, and a knowledge of arcane lore. The Coven often operates within a wider circle of arcane people, and it is this pool that tends to be the recruiting ground for new members. If a woman has ambitions to join the Coven, she must establish herself within the Coven's wider circle, and then wait to be approached. It is an approach that may never come.

When a new Coven member is needed to bring the group's numbers back to nine, the Coven hold a special meeting to nominate possible new members. After much discussion they come to a consensus about who to approach. This person is contacted by the Coven member who nominated her, and asked if she is interested in joining.

If she is interested, then the nominee becomes a pledge and a period of trial and testing begins. This has been handled in many different ways through the years, from simply meeting all the Coven members and joining them in a gathering, through to the current form, which is much more arduous. Coven pledges are forced to undergo a series of mystical tests, involving the endurance of great physical pain and tremendous psychological assault. Each of the Coven members sets one test, so the pledge must pass eight in all. If the pledge falters at any of these stages, the Coven will refuse her entry and strip her of her status as pledge.



If the former pledge persists, and asks for a final chance, the Coven will relent. The pledge will be able to redeem her failure by undertaking a special task for the Coven, one that will take her into great danger. Only if she succeeds will her request for a second chance be considered. This task will also vary a great deal, but will often involve entering another dimension to steal something of value from a sorcerer or demon there.

If the pledge accepts, and then completes the task, then the Coven will meet one last time. If all members feel that they can trust this newcomer, then she will be given membership in the Coven. In due course, it will be revealed to the pledge that she was never meant to pass the initial barrage of tests - they were deliberately made so difficult that she couldn't possibly succeed. Only those pledges who are not dissuaded by failure,



and who show the strength of character to persist and ask for a final chance, and then who carry out a truly dangerous challenge, are fit for membership in the Coven.

The successful pledge must make the oath before the Coven, and then she becomes a full member. The oath's key lines are as follows:

Upon my eyes I swear, I shall honor the power within my breast, I shall cultivate it, I shall claim it as my own.

Upon my tongue I swear, I shall honor my sisters, I shall serve them, I shall accept their service, I shall be loyal above all to them.

Upon my heart I swear, I shall walk the path of power with my sisters, we shall follow it together, and we shall pursue it wherever it shall lead us.

So mote it be.

SECURITY AMONG THE COVEN

The Coven meets and conducts its business in the security of a range of magical protections. All formal Coven meetings are preceded by a ritual of concealment, which shields the women from intrusions both mystical and mundane.

Each of the Coven members takes care of her own security arrangements. Some Coven members are more careful than others. Some cover their homes with layer upon layer of mystic defense, while others trust to the most basic forms of protection.

The Coven are cautious. They trust their Coven-sisters and have little trust for anyone else. They will rarely speak of Coven business outside formal meetings, and when they do, they do not speak frankly but only make allusions and veiled references.

WHO'S WHO IN THE COVEN

Margaux Febvre - this thirty-something witch is the current leader of the Coven, inasmuch as the Coven has a leader. She is a passionate believer in the Coven's right to explore its power to the natural conclusion of such explorations, conventional ideas of ethics and morality be damned. Right now, that means the Coven is gathering more and more power unto itself, and the list of people who fear it is growing. Margaux keeps her own list - of those who might be able to stand against her. Soon, she will run out of reasons not to start crossing names off that list, by whatever means necessary.

Julie Cantrell - this gray-haired fifty-five year old was one of the founding members of the Coven back in 1969. She has maintained a close interest in the welfare of the group since leaving it in 1978, and after the renewal ceremony in 2000 she found herself invited back into the fold. She has accepted, and is enjoying greater power and purpose than ever before. She has grave reservations about Febvre's attitudes and the grasping atmosphere within the Coven, but she cannot deny her affection for holding real power in her grasp. Her attitudes currently are conflicted, but Febvre is keeping a close eye on her....

WHAT NEXT FOR THE COVEN?

Occult Dominance

The Coven makes a play for power and starts luring male sorcerers into traps and banishing them to distant dimensions. They plan to bring the entire occult underground under their sway. It is, they think, long past time they had a chance to exercise some rulership and demonstrate their fitness to hold authority among the secret ones. But their power play will send ripples throughout the world, and the heroes might find themselves recruited into the war for power, with or without their consent.

Rival Covens

After a dispute turns nasty, the Coven splits down the



middle, and both halves form new Covens. These two Covens become fierce rivals, and their battles threaten to destroy something the characters hold dear. Can the heroes prevent these angry witches from tearing each other apart and wreaking havoc in the process?

Infiltrating The Coven

A female mystic character may have to infiltrate the Coven. Perhaps she hears rumors that the Coven are planning an act of magical terrorism or conquest, or conversely, that they might be turning into a force for good again and she thinks she could assist in this redirection. Inside the Coven, she makes new friends and new rivals, and is in constant danger of discovery...

COVEN MEMBER (PL12)

Str -1 (8), **Dex** +1 (12), **Con** +0 (10), **Int** +3 (16), **Wis** +3 (16), **Cha** +3 (16)

Tough +0, **Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +9

Skills: Knowledge (Arcane) +10, 14 ranks in other skills

Feats: Share Extra Effort 8, Share Touch Effect 8, Teamwork 3 (*New Feats are found in the TrickBox section of this issue*)

Powers: Magic 6 (core effect: Coven Shield (Impervious Protection) 6; Alternate Powers: Teleport 6, Electrical Control 6, Super Movement Dimensional Traverse 2, Life Control 3, Concealment 6, Illusion (sight and hearing) 6, Fire Control 6, Water Control 6, Air Control 6, Earth Control 6, Obscure (sight and hearing) 6, Levitate 4 (affects others and can be used as an attack), Super Senses Mystic Awareness 1 and Mental Link with other Coven members 8.)





ATA Presents...

TATTERED VEIL

The Twin has drawn the attention of the **Necrolord**, who sees in her a way to bring about a massive change in the Deathrealm. The Necrolord's attentions in turn draw **The Coven** to her side - but the Coven have their own plans. Soon a war breaks out for the fate of the Twin, with the characters caught in the middle...

This adventure plan is intended to promote mystery, misdirection and an aura of foreboding. The Twin has learned that no-one is to be trusted, and that everyone will try to take advantage of her. In this adventure, her fears are revealed to be very well-founded indeed...

HOOK

The characters become involved when a group of necrovores (see *Fight Scenery* section of this issue for stats) break through the dimensional wall from the Deathrealm. However, something is very wrong - the creatures, which are normally ghostly while in the living world, materialize in full physical form, and they attack the living with their fearsome claws. Amongst those menaced is the Twin. She has been singled out for special attention by the creatures - they surround her, howling and spitting, as she uses her magic to defend herself.

The characters will become involved as appropriate to their particular situation. They might happen upon a school bus being menaced by a hungry necrovore, or rush to the scene after receiving an alert from the police, or they might themselves be targeted by necrovores. There should be approximately two necrovores for every hero, enough so the heroes don't

have too much trouble putting the creatures down. When a necrovore is defeated, it fades back to the Deathrealm. When more than half the creatures are defeated, the rest abandon their mission and also fade back to the Deathrealm.

The creatures were sent to this reality by the Necrolord. He has used a ritual to give the necrovores material form in the living world, and commanded them to seek out the Twin and, if possible, abduct her and bring her back to the Deathrealm with them. The Necrolord is not expecting to seize her on this attempt - just finding her was his real goal. He expects the Twin's own magic will be more than a match for his necrovores, and he will be right.

(Characters who are capable of dimensional travel may follow the necrovores into the Deathrealm. The Necrolord will not face them if he can avoid it, and if he does, he will do his utmost to destroy him. Even if he is killed, however, he will resurrect himself after a week.)

DEVELOPMENT - THE TWIN

It should be obvious to the heroes that the Twin was being particularly targeted by the creatures. Unless she has met the heroes before, she will do her best to hide from the heroes, and will be very suspicious of them. Even if she has previously been friendly, she may have reverted to a suspicious attitude.

The characters may wish to pursue her in order to determine what was happening. If she evades them,



their next contact will be with the Coven.

If the characters convince her to speak with them, they will learn that the Twin doesn't know why she was attacked or what the creatures were. All she knows is that her magical concealment spells have recently been shredded by a force she doesn't understand (the 'tattered veil' of the title). Depending on how much she comes to trust the characters, she may share more about her past and her quest for security. She may agree to stay with the characters until the mystery is solved, but it is more likely she will try to go her own way.

If the characters conduct wider research into what they faced, they will learn from the occult underground that the creatures they faced were necrovores from the Deathrealm. However, necrovores are meant to be ghosts, and these most definitely were not. Little is known of the Deathrealm except that spirits go there after they die, and that it is protected by the Lord of Death.

DEVELOPMENT - THE COVEN

The Coven have heard through the occult underground that the Twin was attacked by necrovores, and that the characters were involved. They send Julie Cantrell to approach the characters and ask for help in finding the Twin.

The Coven want to find the Twin because they know she is a powerful being, and they hope to learn from her and help her master her own magic. Their intent to help her is perfectly genuine, but they also intend to increase their own power by coming to understand her. Julie Cantrell will not volunteer that she has rejoined the Coven, given its questionable reputation, but she is known among the mystically inclined to be one of the Coven's members when it was acting for the greater good.

The characters may be in a position to bring the Twin and Cantrell together; they may decide to help Cantrell find the Twin; they may decide that it isn't any of their business at all.

If they ever meet, the Twin will be suspicious of Cantrell. In time, however, Cantrell's positive nature and empathy, combined with the fact that the Twin doesn't understand her own magical powers, will convince the Twin to take a chance and see what Cantrell can teach her.

The Coven will try to help and protect the Twin. If and when she is abducted into the Deathrealm, they will follow, and do everything they can to save her - short of seriously risking their own lives, of course. They will approach the characters to come with them, and provide access for them into the Deathrealm.

DEVELOPMENT- THE NECROLORD

Meanwhile, in the Deathrealm, the Necrolord prepares his next assault. He locates the Twin again using his magical rituals, and waits for an appropriate time. Then he sends through a horde of manifested necrovores, accompanied by a special creature built just for the occasion - a deathrager. The creatures are instructed to bring the Twin back into the Deathrealm. They can do this by subduing her, and carrying her unconscious form with them as they fade back across dimensions.

The Twin herself will involve the heroes this time. She knows they faced the necrovores before, and she will seek out their help again, contacting them by telepathy if not by any other means. Depending on how far away the characters are, they may only arrive when it is already too late to stop the necrovores.

If the characters are stopping the necrovores and the deathrager, the Necrolord himself will step across dimensions and abduct the Twin. If even this attempt fails, the Necrolord will give up this attempt and regroup - but soon he will make another try.

The Necrolord wants the Twin because he knows she has a connection with an angel. Using a magical ritual, he hopes to bring forth the angel into the Deathrealm. His plan then is audacious - he will spill the blood of the angel upon the Gate that leads



from the Deathrealm. An angel's blood, spilt on the Gate, will cause it to shatter and break. Suddenly, the Deathrealm will be closed off from any higher place - spirits entering it will have no escape. The Necrolord's power will grow.

TWIST - RAZE

A demon named Raze is the third party with an interest in the Twin. Its interest is straightforward - it wants to eat her.

Raze has possessed the Coven's leader, Margaux Febvre. Febvre had contacted Raze in her continuing quest for personal power, and as part of this deal, the demon put a tendril of its power into her. It has kept tabs on her as she hunted out the Twin, and the Twin's obvious mystical importance means just one thing to Raze: a tasty, tasty snack.

When the moment is right, it will materialize through Margaux Febvre, and attempt to devour the Twin.

CLIMACTIC SCENE

Everything will likely come to a head in the Deathrealm, before the Gate. The Necrolord will conduct his ritual to summon an angel. The Coven will come to the rescue, and Raze will reveal itself.

Does an angel appear? That depends on the GM's plans for the Twin. The summoning might fail completely, or some other force might appear. However, if Christophe the angel appears, then the Twin's story is apparently true, at least to a point. Christophe may be furious, or may be full of peace; he may be determined to punish the Twin, or may be planning to forgive her.

If an angel does appear, and the Necrolord manages to damage it, the gate should shatter. The Necrolord's realm could be permanently changed, or the damage could be put right by any number of powerful beings. The Deathrealm itself could repair the Gate - the Necrolord is, after all, just a parasite there, and he has no real understanding or power of the realm he claims to rule.

Raze will remain on the scene precisely as long as it remains interested, or until it eats one or two people. It will eagerly try to devour the Twin, and may turn its attentions on members of the Coven or the Necrolord or the characters. If an angel arrives, it may even try to eat the angel.

In order to give this climax time to play out, it is important to ensure the characters are unable to rescue the Twin quickly. The Necrolord, anticipating interference, will have made her rescue as difficult as possible. She will be defended by necrovores and the deathrager (if it survives), and a mystical ward will surround her body. Anyone who touches the ward will suffer great pain (Damage 15).

None of these are the real defense. The main power keeping the Twin in place is the binding of her soul to the Deathrealm. Her body can be carried free from the ward, or reportedly out, or rescued in any number of ways - but her spirit has been magically tied to the location of the ward. If her body is taken, her ghostly spirit will still remain in place, writhing in agony.

The ward will lift with the defeat of the Necrolord. Creative heroes, or great magicians among the characters, may be able to find a different way to lift the ward.

RESOLUTION

The Necrolord is likely to be defeated, and even if he succeeds, he will find the Gate soon restores itself. It is another lesson that his power in the Deathrealm is limited, and his understanding is weak. Will his pride drive him to greater acts of hubris?

The Coven will be shaken by the revelation that Febvre was concealing Raze within her. Depending on the outcome of the battle and the way they have interacted with the Twin, they may commit themselves further to an amoral route to power, or instead may start moving towards the side of good once again. The heroes may become allies or opponents, depending on these events and the choices made by the Coven members.



The Twin may have completely changed by the end of this encounter. She may have encountered her angel, or had her beliefs in an angel shattered; she has been manipulated and exploited by the Necrolord, Raze and her supposed new friends in the Coven. She may wish to flee and lose herself once again in the world. Have the heroes shown her compassion, and proved worthy of trust? The behavior of the heroes might tip the scales for or against this decision.

Raze, of course, will not change one tiny bit.

One final question remains: all of this was set in motion because the Twin's magical concealment began to fail. Why was this? Did the Necrolord's rituals cause this to happen? Or is something else going on?

DEATHRAGER (PL12)

(Tradeoff: Defense +7 vs. Toughness +17; Attack +10 vs. Damage +14)

Str +14 (38), Dex +3 (16), Con +10 (30), Int -2 (6), Wis -2 (6), Cha -2 (6)

Tough +17/+10, Fort +17, Ref +14, Will +8

Skills/Feats: Climb +22, Notice +6, Search +6

Powers: Blindsight 4 (deathsense); Dimensional Movement 1 (earth and Deathrealm); Growth 8 (permanent); Leaping 5; Paralyzing Punch (Strike 14 linked with Paralyze 14); Protection 17 (impervious but ablative)

Combat: Attack +10, Defense +7, Initiative +3
- Paralyzing Punch (melee): Attack +10, Damage +14 and Paralyze 14
- Grapple (melee): Attack +10, Grapple +32



CHRISTOPHE THE ANGEL

No statistics are provided for Christophe. An angel should be a plot device character. He should not be immune to injury, however, in order that the Necrolord's plan to spill his blood has a chance of succeeding. It is reasonable to assume that the Necrolord's plan relies entirely on taking Christophe by surprise...



Fight Scenery

THE DEATHREALM

Across the walls of reality, beyond everything we know, is a place of bleak cliffs and shuddering winds and hissing predators. This is a realm of death, and it holds many terrors...

OVERVIEW

When someone dies, their spirit leaves their body. At this point the spirit may cross over into the Deathrealm. There, the spirit makes its way through the trackless wastes, seeking some kind of safe harbor or a way to move on to a final destination. And all

this time, the spirit is hunted by the hungry necrovores - stalking creatures of darkness, who fly with the gales and can smell the scent of the newly dead from far away...

(Of course, many spirits find alternative fates and never enter the Deathrealm at all. The reasons why some spirits go this way and others, other ways, remain profound mysteries.)

Spirits within the Deathrealm manifest in a physical form similar to the one they had left behind, but undamaged. The form's flesh is cool and the colors of





its skin, clothing and hair are dimmed and pale. The spirits are self-aware, and most conclude swiftly that they have died. They are undead beings, with no Constitution score.

Newly arrived spirits also soon realize the danger they are in. The necrovores are also physically real, and they attempt to hunt down and devour the spirits like any predators seeking out their prey.

CROSSING OVER

Reaching the Deathrealm is not easy. Traditionally there is only one way to reach the Deathrealm - to die. However, for those who know the secrets, there are other ways in.

Characters may wish to enter the Deathrealm for a number of reasons. Perhaps they hope to speak to, or perhaps restore, the spirit of someone newly-dead. Perhaps they wish to shepherd the spirit on to safety beyond the horrors of the Deathrealm, by fending off the necrovores. Perhaps there is a threat from the Deathrealm manifesting in the real world.

Whatever the reason, the Deathrealm is a different reality, and to reach it a character must be able to cross dimensions. Dimensional Movement of some kind is a necessity. Some characters will have this power already. A character with the Ritualist feat and the Knowledge (arcane lore) skill can open a dimensional gateway using a magical ritual. A character with Astral Form may be able to pass through to the Deathrealm as well. (Note that the Deathrealm is a mystical dimension, so some types of dimensional traverse won't be able to open a way there.)

If these ways are not open to the characters, then more creative means must be used. Essentially, the characters must feel themselves die. This will free their spirits from their bodies (as if by an Astral Form) and allow passage into the Deathrealm. The complication with this approach, of course, is ensuring the characters feel themselves die, while still ensuring their bodies remain alive to be returned to later on.

Living beings in the Deathrealm retain their ordinary

physical form, and their colors and physical condition remain unchanged. If the living and dead meet in the Deathrealm, the difference between them is obvious to all - those who live are almost glowing with their life energy, while the dead are pale and dark and cold.

HISTORY

This death dimension is not Hell, or Hades, or any of a variety of other places where the spirits of the dead congregate. This dimension is newer than those. This realm of death came into being only when the living began to understand what death was. This realm was created from their fear of death.

The necrovores crawled out from the shadows between its rocks and precipices. Soon they took to the air. The dead who were passing through the realm became their prey. Those spirits who were devoured by the necrovores never reached their final reward.

And so it went for uncounted years, until about seven hundred years ago, when a living human entered the realm of the dead with conquest on his mind. The necrovores left him alone, and he used his magic to bring them under his sway. Then he built himself a tower, and declared himself the Necrolord, master of the realm of death.

As the years passed, the Necrolord's claims became more grandiose, until finally he claimed that he was an eternal god of death itself. The necrovores served him without complaint. But patiently, they wait, for he too will someday become just another spirit, and then they shall take great pleasure in devouring him completely.

TOWER OF THE NECROLORD

The Necrolord dwells in a tower built from the blasted black rock of the Deathrealm. It is a twisting spire, spiking out from the top of a high peak, giving incredible views into the horrific wastes and barrens of the Deathrealm. The tower is narrow, no more than fifty feet in diameter at its widest point, but more than two hundred feet tall. A staircase winds up the interior, and on its different levels the Necrolord keeps captives and trophies and strange ancient books and



other secret things.

At the tower's base, the Necrolord maintains his throne room, with a high vaulted ceiling and a throne made of the bones of giant alien beasts. Here, the Necrolord meets with visitors to the Realm. Here, he is the master of all and he will brook no impertinence. His rule within his tower must be absolute, and to preserve this any challengers must be ruthlessly cut down.

NECROVORE NESTING CAVE

At the heart of the Deathrealm there is a great pit, like the maw of a gigantic worm. A horrible wind blows from this pit and scours the realm. Within its ridged interior nest the necrovores. They lurk here by the thousands, far more than even the Necrolord could guess. Mostly, the necrovores sleep. The creatures out hunting spirits are a tiny fraction of their true number. But should a cataclysm come - should the realm be shaken awake - then they will all emerge, in their masses, and everything that every lived will be consumed by the terrible swarm.

THE GATEWAY

The spirits who walk through the Deathrealm have an instinct that they are going somewhere, although they do not know the way. That may be because there is no way to know - the constantly changing geography of the Deathrealm mean talk of a 'way' becomes swiftly meaningless.

Nevertheless, this is what the spirits seek. This great gateway gives access to other realms which anathema to the necrovores and the Necrolord. Any spirit who passes through this gate is presumed to move on to his or her final reward or expected afterlife, none the worse for the ordeal in the Deathrealm.

The gate appears differently on different occasions, but most typically it is a hundred-foot tall pair of stone pillars, roughly carved so the left pillar bears the approximate figure of a man crowned with the sun and the right pillar the approximate figure of a woman

bearing the moon over her belly. Between the two pillars, a shining point of light marks the exit from the Deathrealm. Spirits who touch the light are instantly pulled into it, and escape the Deathrealm and its depredations forever.

Of course, things are never that easy. The gate is often haunted by necrovores, who can sense that spirits move towards the gate like moths towards a flame. Many times a harried spirit has made it through terrible hardships to this final point, only to be devoured by a necrovore insensitive to the fact that he was only inches from his literal salvation.

NECROVORES

Necrovores are predators, who feed on the spirits of the dead. Spirits entering the Deathrealm that do not swiftly pass on into a higher (or lower?) realm are eventually caught and eaten by the Necrovores.





However, some spirits appear not to be to the Necrovore's taste. These spirits are able to pass through the Deathrealm unmolested.

Necrovores can also interact with any of the living who enter the Deathrealm. They will sometimes attack and eat the living. Sustained contact with a necrovore drains away a living person's Constitution, in addition to any physical damage caused by the creature's fierce jaws.

However, necrovores do not automatically attack the living. They are just as likely to ignore them entirely. The only exception is when a living person entering the Deathrealm has, in some way, 'cheated death'. This aspect of a living person will draw masses of curious necrovores, and sooner or later the creatures will decide to destroy the aberration once and for all, and attack...

Necrovores can also reach into the real world. Sometimes they simply fall across the dimensional wall, exist there for a short period of time, then slip back into the Deathrealm. While in earth-reality, they can hunt down the spirits of the dead that have not yet passed over to the Deathrealm, and also those spirits that never will pass over. In the real world necrovores, like the spirits they hunt, exist only in an astral form.

STATISTICS IN THE DEATHREALM

Necrovores in the Deathrealm have the power of Constitution drain. Spirits, of course, do not have a Constitution score, and can only be damaged physically by the Necrovores. This power applies exclusively to occasions when the necrovore attacks a person who has entered the Deathrealm while still alive.

Str +2 (14), **Dex** +2 (14), **Con** +0 (10), **Int** -3 (4),
Wis +3 (16), **Cha** -1 (8)

Tough +0, **Fort** +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Skills: Notice +7, Stealth +6

Feats: None

Powers: Drain (Constitution) 2, Flight 3, Super Movement (Dimensional Movement to Earth, uncontrolled), Super Senses (using death energy; awareness of spirits with a range increment of 1,000 ft., blindsight with a range increment of 10 ft.)

Combat: Attack +4, Defense +4, Initiative +2
- Bite (melee): Attack +4, Damage +2
- Grapple (melee): Attack +4, Damage Drain (Constitution) 2

STATISTICS IN THE REAL WORLD

In the real world, necrovores exist in a kind of astral form. Characters with mystical or mental awareness can easily detect them, while others can sense their presence with a Notice check (DC 11). The necrovore's physical statistics and attacks only apply against other astral presences, such as the spirits of the newly dead; to non-astral beings, the necrovore is both invisible and incorporeal.

Str +2 (14), **Dex** +2 (14), **Con** +0 (10), **Int** -3 (4),
Wis +3 (16), **Cha** -1 (8)

Tough +0, **Fort** +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Skills: Notice +7, Stealth +6

Feats: None

Powers: Astral Form 1 (limited - no physical body, unable to become visible at will, unable to move anywhere in range instantly), Flight 3, Super Movement (Dimensional Movement to Deathrealm, uncontrolled), Super Senses (using death energy; awareness of spirits with a range increment of 1,000 ft., blindsight with a range increment of 10 ft.)

Combat: Attack +4, Defense +4, Initiative +2
- Bite (melee): Attack +4, Damage +2
- Grapple (melee): Attack +4, Damage Drain (Constitution) 2



Action Stations

SPOOKSHOW

Superhero characters are the mightiest of the mighty. They can lift mountains and turn back alien invasions. Yet come Halloween, there are plenty of ways to send chills down the most super of spines. Most horror RPGs contain a wealth of good advice about running scary stories; the advice here is specific to bringing these kinds of adventures to supers games.

SCARES IN THE COMICS

Horror comics have never had the sustained prominence of superhero comics, but at times -- notably during the "occult hero" boom of the early 70s, when characters like Ghost Rider, Deadman, Doctor Strange and others proliferated, they have been the big fish in the comics pond. There is an extremely healthy tradition of scary stories being told in the comics medium. These stories range from the grand guignol of early EC, to the giant monster tales that were a staple of pre-superhero Marvel, through the supernatural tales so beloved of DC, all the way to the modern era where imprints such as Vertigo explore new kinds of horror.

Comics being what they are, the Big Two have often tied their horror comics into their superhero worlds. This broad church approach is handy for supers gaming too. Celebrate Halloween in your supers game with a scary story or two.

LAY IT ON THICK

The conventions of supers tales are strong - costumed heroes smashing villains through walls and flying through the air. In order to take a supers game and push it into the horror realm, you need to overcome this by amping up the conventions of horror. It isn't just night - it's a dark and stormy night, with lightning and thunder and torrential rain. It isn't just dark - the lights go out across the city and the clouds come in

thick over the stars. The man at the door isn't just a stranger - he's a scarred, emaciated albino wearing a long dark coat and a hat that covers his eyes.

Don't hold back on this sort of thing. You're contrasting these horror moments with characters who can make things explode with their eyes, and you need to go big in order to match that.

NO FIGHT SCENES

Supers games are traditionally built around getting to the next set-piece fight scene. If you want to push your game into scary-story territory, then don't be seduced by this option. When characters can punch something, then they aren't going to be scared any more. This holds true even if the fight seems unwinnable (say, a mighty demon), or ultimately counts for nothing (a swarm of skeleton minions). The mere act of getting into a fight shifts the tone of the game, and reminds everyone that they're in a supers story, not a horror one.

GIVE US SOME

Knockback!

WE NEED LETTERS FOR OUR LETTERS PAGE! QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, RANTS, RAVES, YOU NAME IT!

SEND EMAIL TO

MORGUE@GMAIL.COM

OUR LETTERS PAGE WILL BEGIN WITH ISSUE THREE!



Instead, hold back on the fight scene. Every time the characters think they have a chance to smash someone or something, snatch that chance away. They'll be frustrated, sure, but they'll also be feeling vulnerable and off-balance - exactly what you need in order to get them scared.

NEGATE THEIR POWERS

For similar reasons, a nice way to get the characters off-balance and feeling vulnerable is to negate their powers. Either take their powers away entirely (a villain with Nullify can do this) or find ways to set up the situation so their powers are useless - trap physical characters in a psychic trap for example, or put the character in a situation where their Power Loss drawback kicks in.

KEEP THEM SEPARATE

Separating characters is always more work for the GM, and can be a pain to manage effectively at the table, but a horror story is the best time to take this approach. Characters who are together can cover each others' back, second-guess each others' decisions, and complement each others' powers. Characters who are alone are a mess of vulnerabilities. Sure, the character can level mountains with her kinetic control, but that isn't much help when you're being stalked through the woods by angry ghosts...

GIVE THEM RELIEF

It's rarely a good idea to let the horror tropes win out over the super ones. At the end of the day, the underlying logic of the supers genre should reassert itself, and the characters should have a chance to smash a villain, foil the evil plot or otherwise save the day. This isn't a hard and fast rule, of course, but it is the most reliable way to ensure the group has fun. Everyone did sign on to play a supers game, after all, not a horror one!

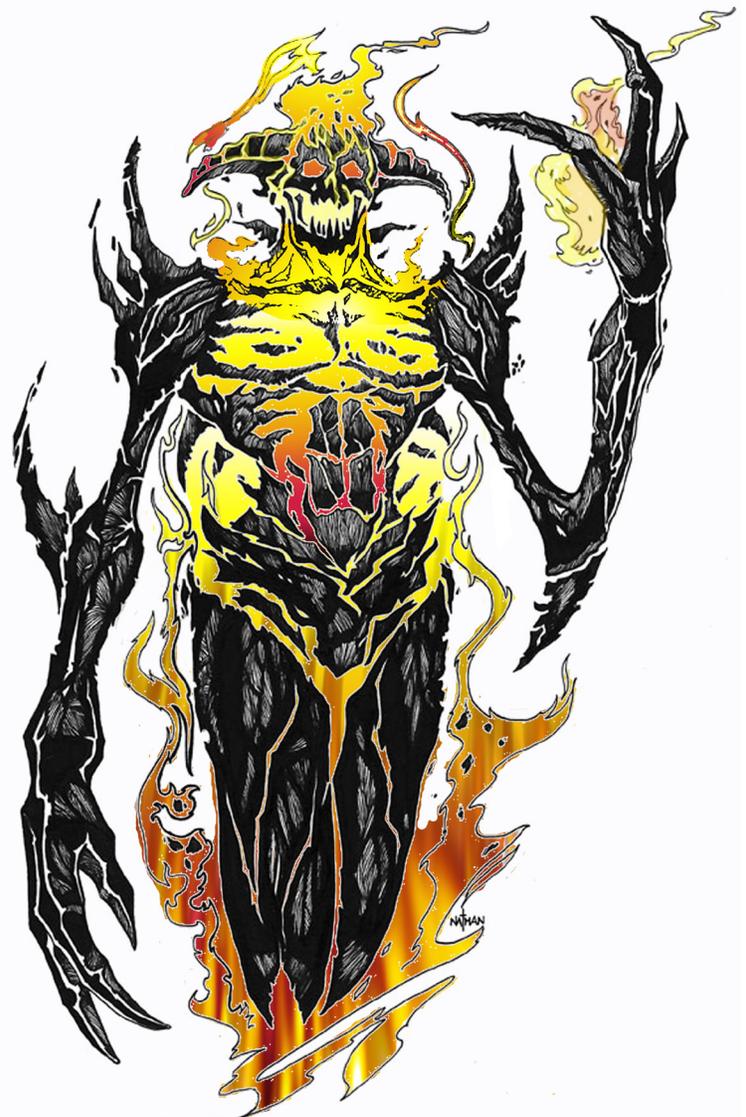
TYPES OF VILLAINS

If you're doing a horror story, certain kinds of villains are particularly appropriate. The classic monsters,

of course, zombies and vampires and werewolves. Magicians and witches are another extremely appropriate power to face.

It is also fine to use traditional supervillains, although ones who are in some way appropriate to the horror genre. Some supervillain powers which are often appropriate are Anatomic Separation, Astral Form, Darkness Control, Emotion Control (fear), Illusion, and Possession.

Villainous motivations should also be appropriate to the horror genre. Madness and revenge are good motivations for scary villains, while greed and thrills are unlikely to be as effective. (Of course, a bit of creativity can find ways for greed to become an absolutely terrifying motivation - the key point is to make sure the motivations are appropriate.)





Origin Issues

#2: DEVELOPING HERO CONCEPTS

Last month's column recommended some group preparation time before starting your new supers game. Making sure that everyone is on the same page about a whole bunch of issues will pay off in spades once the game gets underway.

Now that you've sorted out the groundwork for your new game, it's time to come up with some heroes.

It's worth pointing out right up front that character concept in most supers games has two sides - the character's powers and the character's personality. They are both very important in supers-genre games, and you should develop them together, rather than figuring out the first and letting the second fall into place later on.

WORKING TOGETHER

In sorting out the groundwork together, the whole group should have an understanding of the kind of game they're shooting for. Characters can then be created around that shared idea.

It often works well for ideas for characters to be developed in groups. Each player can share their ideas for others to feed on and bounce off. Additionally, there is one particularly important benefit from developing your character ideas as a group: niche protection.

However, it's worth making explicit that the ground rules for discussion are a bit different for character creation. A player's character is usually something very personal, or something destined to become very personal. It is absolutely crucial that the player doesn't feel like their character has been decided for them. (Unless that's what they ask for!) The group

should make suggestions, tons of them, but never say "your character must be like this." It is also fine for a group to say "we don't think that idea's going to work too well, for these reasons." Closing off some ideas is not the same as forcing an idea on someone.

(It is possible that the group might come to disagreement in this process - for example, a character idea that one player loves, and the others think will make the game less fun. Sometimes these disagreements can be awkward to resolve, but it is better to sort out the problems up front, rather than have the game grind to a painful halt in session three.)

POWER NICHE

In supers games, characters tend to be remarkably powerful, matched only by the might of the villains they will face. A good way to ensure that everyone in the game has plenty of opportunity to contribute and feel valuable, each character should exploit a different niche. Like the classes Fighter, Wizard and Rogue, each of the supers should bring something new to the table.

At its most basic, this means that character powers shouldn't overlap. Your group doesn't need two gigantic superstrong hand-to-hand fighters. Not only are you limiting the ways your group will be able to solve problems in game, your setting up a situation where two players compete for the same spotlight moments.

Framing things positively, niche protection means that each character should have a special area in which they excel, and which is shared by no other characters. If each character has a clear area of expertise, then everyone will have more fun, and it will be much easier for the GM to deliver entertaining encounters that engage all of you.

(Of course, this need for difference doesn't need to go too far - there is certainly room in most groups



for two super-strong characters who are good in a fight. Just make sure that there is enough difference between the two characters to ensure they won't be constantly stepping on each others' toes, and that each of them has a special area in which they alone excel.)

PERSONAL NICHE

Characters in supers games tend to be defined in terms of their powers, and rightly so - these are big, dramatic pieces of color which clearly set the character apart. However, characters in supers games also have personal concerns and personal conflicts. Since the 1960s, these aspects of a supers character are almost as important as the powers. Unless you decided to play in a classic golden age game, your characters' personal lives are going to drive a plenty of the game's events and deliver a lot of its drama.

You don't need to figure out a particular subplot for your character, although if you do come up with one so much the better. All that's really needed is a general idea of the kinds of issues the character will be dealing with due to their personal situation. A character's secret identity is always a good source of this kind of conflict, but it far from the only one.

In a group situation, just as it's important to ensure character powers don't overlap, you should ensure your character personal situations cover different ground. The most important reason for this is the most simple: it's more interesting that way.

If every character has a distinctly different set of personal concerns, then the game as a whole will be rich with subplot and drama. Both GM and players have more to work with in creating new plotlines and plot twists, and in finding new ways for characters to interact.

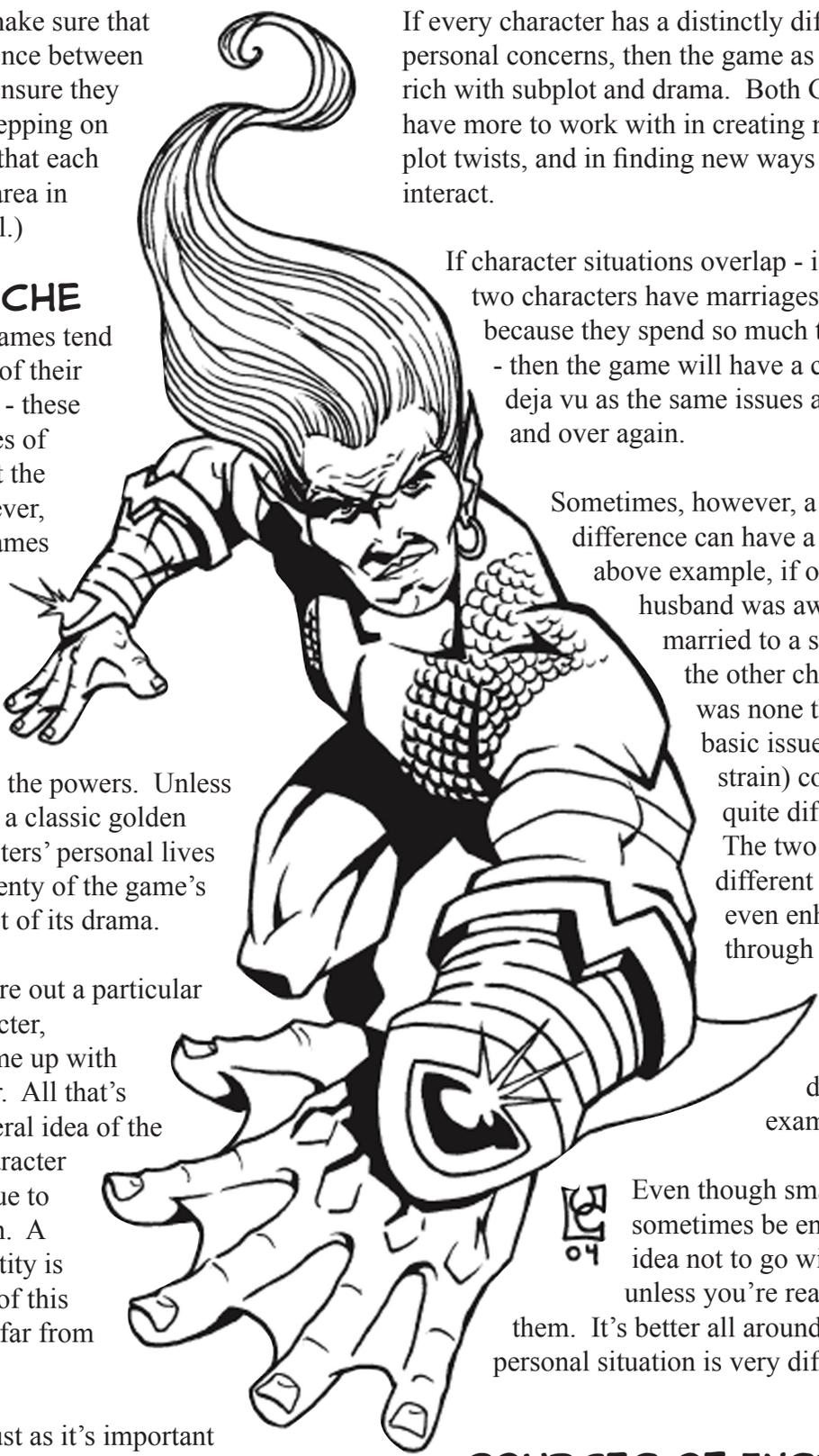
If character situations overlap - if, for example, two characters have marriages breaking down because they spend so much time superheroing - then the game will have a continual sense of deja vu as the same issues are addressed over and over again.

Sometimes, however, a fairly small difference can have a big effect. In the above example, if one character's husband was aware he was married to a superhero, while the other character's spouse was none the wiser, the same basic issue (marriage under strain) could play out in quite different directions. The two similar-yet-different stories could even enhance each other through their contrasts - if one marriage improves while the other deteriorates, for example.

Even though small differences can sometimes be enough, it's a good idea not to go with similar ideas unless you're really taken with them. It's better all around if everyone's personal situation is very different.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

First up, a word of warning: don't be afraid to rip off the greats. If your character idea is basically famous-superhero-number-five with green tights instead of





blue, that's fine. The copyright police aren't going to come knocking on your door, and the originality police don't even exist. In fact, there's a very respectable tradition in supers comics of ripping off famous characters in order to play with the character's underlying mythology. Or just to have some cool fun. Anyway, the pros don't worry about it, and neither should you. All that matters is that the idea gets you, and the group, enthusiastic.

So you're sitting around in a group, and you're ready to come up with distinctive, niche-protected supers characters. If the ideas aren't already flowing thick and fast, or you want to switch to a new thinking groove, try considering the following questions:

* When you were a kid, what kind of super power did you daydream about having? Who was your favorite superhero? What was your favorite movie? What did you want to be when you grew up? (Childhood wish fulfillment is a powerful part of the supers genre, and a potent source of inspiration.)

* The last time you were frustrated, what kind of super power first leaps to mind as a good way of answering the frustration? (Overkill is entirely appropriate here - if the frustration was, say, dropping your toast, a handy super power might be 'super dexterity', but the first thing that leaps to mind might be 'use blazing eye heat-rays to disintegrate fallen toast and then make some more really fast'.)

* What was the last great supers movie you watched? What was great about it? Can you take key moments from that film and plug them into the a character? How about by inverting them - if a character in the movie had made a different choice, what would have happened? Does that create an idea to explore?

* On your favorite TV show, what character do you care about most? Could that character's personal issues be adapted for a character in the game?

* Maybe your powers and your personality should reflect each other - if your character has cold powers, should he be emotionally distant? Or maybe they should contrast each other - a character with invisibility might love nothing more than being the center of attention?

PULLING IT TOGETHER

At the end of this discussion, everyone should have their character concepts - the powers they wield and the kind of personal situations they'll be dealing with. Combined with the groundwork done beforehand, the group should now have a pretty good idea of what the game will feel like. The players can go off and work on refining their ideas - coming up with details like names, costumes and so forth. The GM, however, has some very important work to do.

Next issue: Developing Key Villains.





Last Minute Rescue

Horror is the opposite of superhero, at least when you're talking genre. The superhero genre is ultimately about empowerment, while horror is ultimately about disempowerment.

The main characters in a superhero story are defined by their ability to do all kinds of amazing stuff, to bend and shape the world to fit their desires and generally be awesome and mighty. Stories tend to come from meeting antagonists who are equally awesome and mighty, or from interacting with the stuff around the edges of the mightiness - things your great power just can't help you with, like moral choices, family responsibilities, and public opinion.

The main characters in a horror story are defined by their inability to do much of anything. Whatever abilities and resources they have are usually stripped from them at the earliest possible moment. Stories tend to come from meeting antagonists who are far more powerful, or from interacting with situations that are out of their control and threaten to engulf them entirely.

(Of course, genre is a broad brush and both the horror and superhero genres contain a wide variety of expressions. In a sense it's kinda silly to pretend that the word 'genre' makes them equivalent, when really it disguises how they really do very different things. Nevertheless, horror and superhero stories naturally tend towards opposite extremes for the experiences of their main characters.)

However, there are a bunch of ways to bring the elements of horror into super heroic stories. Consider how death works in horror stories and superhero stories. The impermanence of death is one of the standing jokes about the supers genre - a significant character may kick the bucket, but they won't stay dead for long. On the flip side, death is sacred when it's used in the personal history of a superhero. Many heroes are motivated in some deep way by the death of a loved one.

Here's a trick to use come Halloween, then. Have your superheroes contact their beloved dead.

Perhaps the deceased return as ghosts on Halloween night. Perhaps the heroes encounter them in a dimension of death. Perhaps the deceased just turn up on the street, alive and well. Perhaps it isn't real, just a villain's trickery. Perhaps it is really them, but they are being controlled by another dark force.

Build these stories around the reasons why the deceased is important. Challenge the most fundamental building blocks of the character's psychological make-up. If a character seeks vengeance against crime for the murder of his parents, have the ghosts of his parents tell him vengeance isn't the answer. If a character is heroic to expunge the guilt for allowing her sister to die, have the sister's spirit say that superheroes don't honor her memory, but leaving the costume behind to raise a family would.

Force the characters to confront the reasons behind their existence and the choices they have made. This can make for extraordinarily good dramatic sequences, as the players and characters both come face to face with the reasons why they have chosen to be heroes.

That's the real benefit of bringing horror elements into supers games. The contrast throws into sharp relief just how amazing it is to have special powers. You'll never feel more super than you do just after you overcome horror.

Peace,
morgue

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