



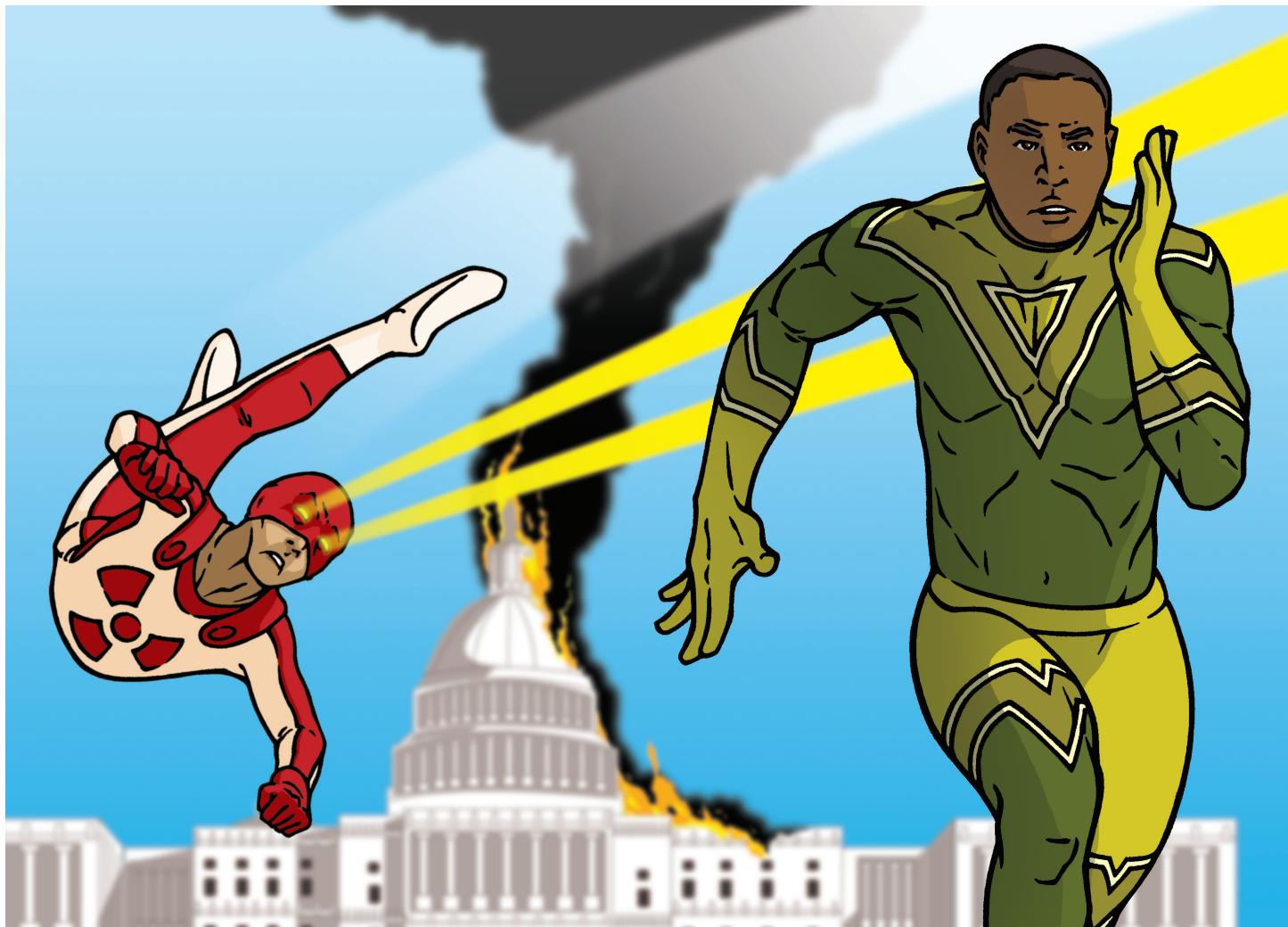
ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

M&M  
SUPERLINK

#3

# AMAZING TRIPLE ACTION





ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

# AMAZING TRIPLE ACTION

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# FIRST APPEARANCE

## FIREBIRD

Firebird can create fire and use its energy. She has a hard, no-nonsense attitude and a confrontational personality, and anyone who meets her is bound to feel the heat...

### PERSONAL DETAILS

**Name:** Mireya Lim

**Age:** 30

**Ethnicity:** Latino/Chinese

**Hair:** Black

**Identity:** Secret

### POWER DESCRIPTION

Firebird can absorb and control fire and heat. By concentrating she can superheat air, causing flame to burst into existence where she pleases. She can coax a tiny flame into an inferno that surrounds her. She absorbs fire, and holds its energy within her. She can use this energy to strengthen her body or to emit a dangerous stream of fire.

### APPEARANCE

Firebird is an ethnic mix, Latina/Chinese, and quite distinctively beautiful as a result. Not that she has any interest in playing beauty queen - she is most often found with her hair tucked under a cap, in old greasy overalls, coaxing that extra bit of grunt out of this or that vehicle. When she dresses up in her supers gear, she wears an a-cut crop top and matching pants, with a chain belt and boots, and lets her hair down to its full shoulder length. When she is storing fire energy, her whole body is wreathed with flames.

### PERSONALITY

Firebird is fierce, tough and demanding. She's will not hesitate to shoot down ideas she thinks are foolish. She is also passionate, supportive and sometimes



reckless. People interacting with Firebird often feel like they are being tested by her. She gets into arguments easily, but doesn't take anything personally.

## PAST

Mireya Lim always loved cars, particularly fast cars. Not just driving them, either - she loved understanding them, getting down in the works and figuring them out. Her earliest memories are of riding in the passenger seat of a cousin's slick sportscar.

Mireya's mother and father were both second-generation immigrants, and they both slaved away for long hours at humble work in order to provide their children with the best opportunities. Their efforts were rewarded when two of her brothers went to university, and another started his own business. As the youngest daughter, Mireya wasn't sure that these paths were right for her; nor were her parents, who didn't give Mireya the encouragement they gave her brothers.

Teenage Mireya ran a bit wild. She raced cars on the underground circuit, and hung with a gang who regularly stole cars and took them joyriding. Eventually, however, she decided that it was time to grow up. She quit her youthful troublemaking, left home and looked for a job. It didn't take long for her to find employment as a mechanic, the first of a long series of jobs in the field.

## DESCRIPTION

Mireya isn't interested in being a hero for its own sake. She has a perfectly satisfying life working with wrenches and fast cars, and wouldn't shed a tear if she never had to use her special powers again. She doesn't keep a secret identity, being suspicious of the whole idea. Her moniker 'Firebird' was something she adopted only reluctantly, on the advice of Joe Warlock, who briefly convinced her to be a member of his Power Team. She rapidly found that being a member of a hero group was not for her.

She still has a wild streak, but has left behind the selfishness of her youth. She sees herself as a responsible adult, and values her strong work ethic

above anything else. As a woman in a masculine field, she has to work particularly hard in order to silence her critics, but this does not bother her as she likes to work hard and relishes the challenge. Her politics are broadly conservative, and she has little time for those who try to coast through life without putting in a solid day's work.

While Mireya gets on well enough with her parents and brothers, her extended family relationships are less stable. Both her parents came from traditional families who opposed marrying someone of a different culture. Her parents went ahead with the marriage anyway, and while bridges weren't burned on either side, they were certainly singed. Mireya is, as a result, very sensitive to what she sees as cultural close-mindedness, and feels something of a cultural orphan. She feels no deep connection to either side of her heritage, an absence that sometimes saddens her. Her cultural isolation sometimes manifests as a fierce opposition to racism in all its forms.

## POSSIBLE FUTURES

### Back In The Cape

Mireya could become enthusiastic about heroics once again. This could be motivated by a series of events where her interventions are successful and received positively, and where she sees a concrete benefit to the community as a result. Player characters could be involved in this, recruiting her back to costumed heroics or advising her on how to recognize the good she has achieved with her powers.

### Firebird No More

Mireya isn't far from deciding never to use her powers again. One bad event could tip her in this direction. A painful defeat or a horrible failure could motivate her to throw in the towel. A more profound motivation for quitting could emerge if she creates a fire that gets out of control and hurts or kills innocent people.

### Voice of Reason

Sometimes, super-powered beings are tempted to make the world a better place by imposing change



from above. If Mireya sees a group of supers trying to do this, she will not be pleased and will not be shy about saying so. She disapproves of anything that takes away the freedom of the ordinary person. Depending on how this confrontation unfolds, she could become a very active opponent of such a plan and its adherents.

### Recklessness Returns

Mireya's life is settled at the present time. If this situation is upset, she could abandon her sensible, hard-working approach to life and revert to recklessness. This is particularly likely if someone hurts or threatens her family. She will not stand by while there is a threat to those closest to her, and will throw out every rulebook as she attempts to answer that threat.

## FIREBIRD (PL 12)

**Str +0 (10), Dex +4 (18), Con +0 (10), Int +1 (12), Wis +1 (12), Cha +3 (16)**

**Tough** +0 (+12 when fully Con-boosted), **Fort** +7 (+19 when fully Con-boosted), **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**Skills:** Concentration +7, Craft (Mechanical) +15, Drive +19, Knowledge (streetwise) +10, Notice +6, Profession (mechanic) +12, Search +6

**Feats:** Equipment (2), see below; Improved Tools - Craft (Mechanical)

**Equipment:** Late-model sports car. (Str 25, Spd 5, Def 9, Tough 8, Sz Large, EP 7); Three expensive firelighters which produce a small flame. (Strike 1, Sz Minuscule, EP 1 each)

**Powers:** Absorption 24 (Boost Con; limited to fire/heat only; energy storage; alternative power Boost Blast 12 and Boost Fire Control 12; slow fade 1 point per 5 minutes for both energy storage and boost effects); Transform Air to Fire 6 (move action; touch range only; acts as +6 damage fire)

**Combat:** Attack +7, Defense +7, Initiative +4  
- Fully-boosted Blast: Attack +7, Damage +12

## MANAGING FIREBIRD'S POWERS

Firebird's energy absorption and energy storage mean she is at her most powerful when she has some time to prepare. If caught off-guard and without energy stored, she can be extremely vulnerable. When she has a few rounds to 'power up' she usually takes the following steps:

### Round One

She uses a move action to transform the air around her into fire with a +6 damage bonus. Then, as a reaction, she absorbs the damage from the fire, gaining 6 energy points. She immediately uses these energy points to boost Fire Control to 6.

### Round Two

She can sustain the fire as a free action. She absorbs another 6 points of fire damage as a reaction and boosts Fire Control from 6 to 12. Then she uses a standard action to seize control of the fire and expand its intensity from +6 damage to +12 damage. (This leaves her with a move action to spare.)

### Rounds Three to Five

She can sustain the fire, and her control of it, with free actions. She absorbs the 12 points of fire damage each round. She uses this to boost her Con to 22 (round 3), her Blast to 12 (round 4), then to boost her Con to 24 (round 5). This power build up uses reactions, so she can take ordinary full actions while this is going on.

### Round Six

Firebird is now fully boosted. Her power fades slowly (1 point or rank per 5 minutes). If she can spend this many rounds preparing, she becomes a very fearsome opponent.



# TORNADO

Tornado can surround herself with hurricane-force winds. She is unafraid to speak her mind but her jokey attitude makes her seem capricious. This made it all the more surprising when she betrayed her team into the hands of their greatest enemy...

## PERSONAL DETAILS

**Name:** Tabitha Pyke

**Age:** 23

**Ethnicity:** Caucasian

**Hair:** Blonde

**Identity:** Secret

## POWER DESCRIPTION

Tornado can agitate air molecules in her immediate vicinity. She can use this to surround herself with a whirling hurricane which deflects missiles heading her way and protects her from most physical harm. She is skilled at using the winds to redirect missile attacks towards other targets. She can also use this agitated air to fly and to blast a solid wall of air pressure towards a target. She has demonstrated the ability to suck the air out of someone's mouth and suffocate them, but she doesn't use this power often.

## APPEARANCE

Tornado is a spunky white girl with a slightly punkish dress sense. She favors tight, form-fitting clothes. Her supers outfit is a pair of sleek silver pants and a blue leather jacket strapped tight over the top - this being a combination that can withstand the whirlwind surrounding her when she goes into action.

## PERSONALITY

Tornado is determinedly individual. She can be temperamental, quick to judge, but also quick to forgive. She is often driven by her emotions to unconsidered acts, which fools many into thinking she never thinks about anything. In fact, she spends long hours by herself thinking obsessively about everything she experiences. Her anarchist political beliefs have

been very carefully thought through, as have her responsibilities to herself and her ex-teammates after the disaster that was her betrayal.

## PAST

Tabitha Pyke was a typical middle-class girl with rebellion in her heart, although not much to rebel against. When she emerged from a mysterious storm with strange powers over the wind, she figured it was time to make her rebellion kick into gear. Adopting the name Tornado, she stepped out into the world and tried to make it on her own.

Tornado started out as a villain. She had been down on her luck and fallen in with the wrong crowd when she was offered a job. The next thing she knew, she was in line for the biggest paycheck of her life as a low-rent troublemaker, hired by the Barren to be an enforcer on a kidnap job. This brought her into conflict with Skimmer and C.J. She was defeated, but managed to escape.

Skimmer and C.J. encountered her again when she was taking it upon herself to put some serious fear into the hearts of men who abused their partners. Skimmer convinced her that this kind of vigilante activity was a step too far, and on reflection she agreed. She started following his lead into the realm of heroics.

Over time, Skimmer and Tornado began teaming up more frequently, and eventually Skimmer nominated her for membership of the Power Team. Tornado joined the team, and was a member in good standing for some time. The friendship between Skimmer and Tornado deepened into something more, but neither of them had the nerve to act on the romantic tension between them.

Then the recent crisis struck. When the Power Team was at its most vulnerable, Tornado revealed that she had been working with the Barren the whole time, and she handed the team over to the masked villain. Things looked bleak as the Barren tore through the Power Team's headquarters. Only Skimmer remained at large.



It was Tornado who cornered Skimmer. She was faced with a choice - turn Skimmer over to the Barren, or help him take on the villain. She chose Skimmer. The pair managed to turn the tables on the Barren and free the rest of the Power Team.

After this point, Tornado was a figure of suspicion. Her teammates had been stunned by her betrayal. She was not given a chance to explain herself, however, because hard on the heels of their defeat by the Barren, the Power Team were attacked by an even more dangerous foe. This attack marked the end of the Power Team.

Ex-Power Team members are avoiding Tornado at present. She is not welcome in their lives. Only Skimmer has maintained contact with her, and despite her betrayal, they have embarked on a tentative romance.

## DESCRIPTION

Tabitha enjoyed being on the Power Team, and she misses it now it's gone. She knows she was a member the whole time under false pretenses, but she genuinely appreciated the chance to be a hero and counted several of the team as friends.

Tabitha worked for the Barren because she believed in his goal of tearing down the state. She didn't approve of all his methods, and didn't agree with his plan for what would follow that, but she thought supporting him was the best way to destroy the current systems of control. It would be a traumatic change, but it would be for the good in the end.

She no longer thinks this is a good idea. She is convinced now that the cost of such schemes is too high - too much suffering, too much misery, no matter what the outcome. She has not abandoned her goal of a proper anarchy, nor given up her belief that this is unlikely without massive revolution, but will not directly pursue that goal if the revolution will hurt so many people.

## POSSIBLE FUTURES

### A Further Betrayal

Is Skimmer's faith in Tornado misplaced? Will she engineer another reversal at some future time? She played the part of loyal Power Team member for a long time while waiting for the Barren's plan to come to fruition - why should anyone believe that she is being honest again now? Tornado could indeed betray some heroes again, either to the Barren or to some other force. More likely, however, that Tornado's current blacklisted status will cause problems between her and other heroes, perhaps leading to confrontation when an overzealous hero group decide to take her down...

### Anarchy in the U.S.A.

Tornado wants anarchy. She genuinely wants this system of non-government to emerge and be successful throughout her country. She can talk lucidly about Kropotkin and Freetown for hours, shooting down the obvious criticisms that anarchy means chaos. When someone comes along who can realize that dream without the horrors of the Barren's approach, what will she do? Will she fight for her dream? Or will she let it slip away?

### Government Intervention

The U.S. government is not comfortable with a prominent super-powered person espousing anti-government views. They will start putting pressure on Tornado to stop. Government officials will arrange meetings with Tornado's friends and fellow heroes, promising to make their and their families' lives miserable with tax investigations and other bureaucratic harassment unless they try and talk Tornado down.

## TORNADO (PL12)

**Str +2 (14), Dex +3 (16), Con +0 (10), Int +0 (10), Wis +1 (12), Cha +1 (12)**

**Tough** +12 (force field), **Fort** +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Intimidate +8, Notice +4

**Feats:** Nil

**Powers:** Blast (air ram) 12; Deflect Slow Attacks 12 (free action, reflection extra); Flight 4; Force Field 14 (reaction, physical attacks only); Suffocate 7

**Combat:** Attack +8, Defense +10, Initiative +3  
- Air ram: Attack +8, Damage +12



# FAMINE

Famine is the embodiment of exploitation. He will suck the life and energy out of anything he can, and do so with glee. But he does not act out of malice, and the energy draining isn't his primary goal. What Famine really wants is power and wealth, and he doesn't care who has to suffer along the way.

## PERSONAL DETAILS

**Name:** Donald Taylor Landy

**Age:** 37

**Ethnicity:** Caucasian

**Hair:** Brown (really, none)

**Identity:** Secret

## POWER DESCRIPTION

Famine's touch can suck the life out of people, reducing them to near-skeletons. Likewise, his touch can drain the life out of trees and other organics, reducing them to brittle dead things. His true appearance is concealed by a continuous illusion which makes him seem like a normal man. He also has the power to walk on air, and the sinister ability to transform an innocent person into his fearsome henchman Feast.

## APPEARANCE

Famine usually appears as conservative businessman Donald Taylor Landy. He's handsome, with slicked-back brown hair and a photogenic smile. He wears the latest cut in business suits, expensive (but not ostentatious) and elegant.

That is all illusion. Really, Famine is an emaciated figure with papery white skin and no hair. His teeth are pronounced and stained with black. He wears nothing but faded, decaying rags. And he smiles. He smiles all the time.

## PERSONALITY

Famine is evil, sadistic, and more than a little deranged. He takes an almost sexual pleasure in sucking energy from living things. He seeks to acquire more wealth, particularly by allowing his

companies to thrive and prosper. He is always concerned with deriving personal benefit from any situation, and has no compassion within him at all. He is very clever and canny in his business dealings, but if he has a weakness it's how he lets himself be distracted by his obsession with decay. He'll sometimes be unable to resist draining the life from someone, even though he has a number of good reasons to leave that person alone. This weakness has led to his incarceration on more than one occasion.

## PAST

Donald Taylor Landy was a hotshot young executive in a sportswear company who was sent to tour the factories where the sportswear was manufactured and oversee the introduction of a new chemical process into the clothing manufacture. The factories, in impoverished nations to the south, were really sweatshops. Donald saw that worker conditions were beyond appalling. He met with workers representatives who told him the full story of their exploitation, the vicious oppression of the bosses, the pittance they were paid. They wanted to work - they just wanted a better deal than this. And they opposed the chemical process. They didn't want to be guinea pigs for human exposure to the chemicals.

The exploitation Donald witnessed was enormous. There was no way to rationalize it, nor to excuse it. Instead Donald ignored it. He reported back to head office that everything was going according to plan. He personally insisted on the introduction of the new chemical process and stayed on to ensure it went well. When a demonstration formed at the factory's gates, he loaned the company helicopter to local police to help shut it down. He watched from his hotel with a clear conscience and a confident expectation that he would soon be promoted.

The new chemicals caused a number of workers to fall sick. Soon reports came in of workers dying, as a direct result of Donald's decision to go ahead with the chemical introduction. Donald didn't care. On the last day of his visit to the factory, furious workers cornered him in a booth and doused him thoroughly with a concentrated dose of the chemical he himself had signed off on. The damage it did to his flesh was

horrific. He was quickly hospitalized, and when he became stable, he was flown back home.

Despite receiving the very best medical care he hovered on the edge of death for weeks. Finally, his eyes opened and he sat up. His body had decayed, but the chemical had reacted upon him in other ways. He was now Famine.

## DESCRIPTION

Famine is incredibly wealthy, with major shares in several corporations. His knack for business and his complete lack of scruples have helped him maneuver himself to great wealth. He usually hires himself out as a consultant and advises companies as to how they can increase their profits. He knows every trick in the book for doing this, most of it extremely unethical or downright immoral if not outright illegal. He doesn't care, and neither do his clients.

Famine also self-identifies as a supervillain. He loves taking on superheroic types, and rarely hesitates to indulge his life-sucking desires. He maintains several small hidden lairs, and his ability to project an illusion of an ordinary person has been a great help in keeping him out of trouble. He has been incarcerated twice, neither time for very long, and is currently on the official FBI wanted list. This doesn't concern him in the least.

Famine could be behind any increase in efficiency for companies and organizations. He can't be in any place too long, however, before he starts tearing the place apart just for the hell of it. His instinct is to destroy everything he touches, no matter how much he wants to benefit from it.

## POSSIBLE FUTURES

### Consultant Commotion

If a character owns a corporation or other organization, or if a friend or contact of a character does, then Famine could turn up as a hired consultant. When he figures out that a superhero is associated with the corporation, he will start manipulating things to provoke a confrontation, even if it sends his

consultancy business into chaos.

### Political Animal

Famine could also turn up involved in a political campaign. His ability to make deals and source finance would be a great asset to any campaigner. He could latch on to a campaign by an honest and upstanding politician, in order to sabotage it, or to corrupt the candidate; or he could be genuinely supporting an already-corrupted candidate. If he slips up along the way and drains the life out of a staffer or two, well, that kind of thing can be covered up, if the right people are assigned to the job...

### A Festival of Feasts

Famine could find some way of increasing the number of Feasts he can create. Instead of only one Feast being possible at a time, Famine could start creating multiple Feasts, transforming every person he meets into a Feast and watching the havoc spread. He could do this simply to enjoy destruction and chaos, or as a early stage in some greater scheme...

### FeastFamine

Famine might also one day decide to turn his Feast-creation powers on himself. The strange interaction between Feast's powers and Famine's could turn him into a ticking time bomb, staggering through a major metropolitan area and becoming more gigantic and more unstable every second, destined to destroy everything around him when he reaches critical mass...



## FAMINE (PL 10)

**Str** -1 (8), **Dex** +3 (16), **Con** +2 (14), **Int** +4 (18),  
**Wis** +4 (18), **Cha** +5 (20)

**Tough** +2, **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

**Skills:** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Drive +9, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (business) +18, Profession (consultant) +14

**Feats:** Benefits (Wealth 3, Status (business) 1), Connected, Contacts, Uncanny Dodge

**Powers:** Drain 6 (Str, Dex and Con all at once); alternate power: Drain 4 ranged; alternate power: Corrode 9 (as a move action, organic material only); alternate power: Life Control 6 ranged); Illusion 10 (visual effect, can only be used to make Famine look ordinary); Super-Movement 1: Air walking; Super-senses 2: Detect Life (ranged); Transform into Feast 10 (if target fails a single Will save, they are transformed into Feast both physically and mentally, otherwise the transformation fails; only one person can be Feast at a time)

**Combat:** Attack +5, Defense +10, Initiative +3  
 - Ranged Drain: Attack +5, Damage Drain 4 from Str, Dex and Con  
 - Draining Touch: Attack +5, Damage Drain 6 from Str, Dex and Con

(Note that the Transform power costs 50pp and takes Famine significantly beyond the typical 150pp limit for PL 10 characters. As a villain, Famine is not subject to these limits, and as his Transform power will be used mostly on NPCs in play, the point excess should not result in an unbalanced play experience.)

## FEAST (PL 10)

Famine's servant and companion Feast is enormous and grossly obese. Feast's gigantic bulk is made up of protective layers of pink superflab. These rolls of fat are so extensive that it is impossible to tell Feast's gender.

In fact, Feast's gender and true identity change frequently. Feast is not one being, but a series of servants created by Famine from civilians. Both body and mind are changed to bring Feast into being. Famine can only create one Feast at any one time. When Famine chooses, or when another Feast is created, the transformation is reversed and the victim reverts to their normal form, with no memory of their experience as Feast.

Feast is able to devour anything. Whatever it can stuff inside its mouth is consumed. Feast has one overriding goal and desire, and that is to eat everything in its path, without pause or restraint. Feast is totally loyal to Famine, and Famine is the only one who can keep Feast on a leash or give Feast directions that will be followed.

All Feasts created by Famine have the same basic abilities. The following template can be applied to any living human. (At the GM's discretion, it may be more widely applicable.)

### Feast Template

Replace the character's ability scores with the following:

**Str** 26 (+8), **Dex** 6 (-2), **Con** 10 (+0), **Int** 6 (-2)  
**Wis** 6 (-2), **Cha** 6 (-2)

The character gains the following powers:  
 Burrowing 3 (3 pp); Corrosion (eat through anything) 10 (limited: only when able to feed self with substance) (10pp); Immovable 6 (6pp); Protection 10 (10pp); Super-Strength 4 (8pp)

**Template Cost:** 0pp (ability scores), 37pp (powers)

The character retains all other traits (skills, feats, powers, drawbacks).



# TrickBox

## ARCHETYPE: FIRE CONTROLLER (POWER LEVEL 10)

### ABILITY SCORES:

STR	+1 (12)
DEX	+2 (14)
CON	+0 (10)
INT	+1 (12)
WIS	+2 (14)
CHA	+2 (14)

### SAVES:

Toughness:	+0 (+10 when fully Con-boosted)
Fortitude:	+4 (+4 base; +14 when fully Con-boosted)
Reflex:	+8 (+6 base)
Will:	+8 (+6 base)

### SKILLS:

<i>(Skill ranks are given for ease of adjustment.)</i>	
Concentration	+7 (6 ranks)
Notice	+7 (5 ranks)
Search	+6 (5 ranks)

Assign 52 more ranks in skills, maximum rank 15.

### FEATS:

Any Three Feats

### POWERS:

- Absorption: Boost Con 20 (limited: fire/heat only; extras: energy storage; feats: slow fade 2 (energy storage), slow fade 2 (Boost effect), alternate power (Boost Blast 10 and Boost Fire Control 10 with slow fade 2))
- Transform 5 (air into fire; flaw: touch range only so fire appears around character; extras: move action; creates up to a +5 damage fire)

### COMBAT:

Attack +5, Defense +5, Initiative +4

- Fully-boosted Blast: Attack +5, Damage +10

### POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 16 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 78 + Combat 20 + Saves 16 = 150

### POWER COSTS IN DETAIL:

#### Absorption 20

Base cost 4/rank

- core effect: Boost Con 20
- flaw: limited to fire/heat only (-2/rank)
- extra: energy storage (+1/rank)
- feat: alternate power: Absorption 20 with core effect Boost Blast 10 and Boost Fire Control 10
- feat: slow fade 2 (energy storage)
- feat: slow fade 2 (Boost effect)

Total cost 20 ranks at 3/rank plus 3 points in feats = 63pp

#### Transform 5

Base cost 3/rank

- core effect: air into fire; fire will do damage equal to power rank
- flaw: limited to touch range (-1/rank)
- extra: change to move action (+1/rank)

Total cost 5 ranks at 3/rank = 15pp



# ARCHETYPE: AIR CONTROLLER

(POWER LEVEL 10)

(Trade-off: Defence 8 vs. Toughness 12)

## ABILITY SCORES:

STR	+2 (14)
DEX	+3 (16)
CON	+0 (10)
INT	+0 (10)
WIS	+1 (12)
CHA	+1 (12)

## SAVES:

Toughness: +12 (force field)

Fortitude: +3 (+3 base)

Reflex: +9 (+6 base)

Will: +7 (+6 base)

## SKILLS:

(Skill ranks are given for ease of adjustment)

Climb +5 (3 ranks), Craft (choose one) +10 (10 ranks),

Intimidate +5 (4 ranks), Notice +4 (3 ranks)

## FEATS:

This template has no feats.

## POWERS:

- Blast (air ram) 10
- Deflect Slow Attacks 10 (extras: free action, reflection)
- Flight 4
- Force Field (wind) 12 (flaw: limited to physical attacks, extra: reaction)
- Suffocate 5

## COMBAT:

Attack +5, Defense +8, Initiative +3

- Air Ram: Attack +5, Damage +10

## POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 14 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 0 + Powers

90 + Combat 26 + Saves 15 = 150

## POWER COSTS IN DETAIL:

### Deflect Slow Attacks 10

Base cost 1/rank

- extra: change to free action (+2/rank)

- extra: reflection (+1/rank)

Total cost 10 ranks at 4/rank = 40pp

### Force Field (wind) 12

Base cost 1/rank

- flaw: limited to physical attacks (-1/rank)

- extra: change action to reaction (+1/rank)

Total cost 12 ranks at 1/rank = 12pp



# VILLAIN ARCHETYPE: LIFESUCKER (POWER LEVEL 10)

## ABILITY SCORES:

STR	-1 (8)
DEX	+3 (16)
CON	+2 (14)
INT	+4 (18)
WIS	+4 (18)
CHA	+5 (20)

## SAVES:

**Toughness:** +2 (from Con); +7 vs physical damage  
**Fortitude:** +10 (+8 base; +2 from Con)  
**Reflex:** +17 (+14 base; +3 from Dex)  
**Will:** +12 (+8 base; +4 from Wis)

## SKILLS:

Assign eight ranks in Skills.

## FEATS:

Assign two feats.

## POWERS:

- Drain 10 (Str, Dex and Con all at once; alternate power: Drain 7 ranged; alternate power: Corrosion 10 (move action); alternate power: Life Control 10 ranged)
- Illusion 10 (visual, can only be used to make the user look ordinary)
- Protection 10 (physical damage only)
- Super-Movement 1: Air walking
- Super-Senses 2: Detect life (ranged)

## COMBAT:

Attack +5, Defense +10, Initiative +3

- Ranged Drain: Attack +5, Damage Drain 4 from Str, Dex and Con
- Draining Touch: Attack +5, Damage Drain 6 from Str, Dex and Con

## POINTS TOTAL:

Abilities 34 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 52 + Combat 30 + Saves 30 = 150

## POWER COSTS IN DETAIL:

### Drain (Str, Dex, Con) 10

Base cost 3/rank

- feat: alternate power: Drain 7 (extra: Ranged; 4/rank = 28pp)
- feat: alternate power: Life Control 10 (flaw: Ranged; 3/rank = 30pp)
- feat: alternate power: Corrosion 10 (extra: move action; 3/rank = 30pp)

Total cost 10 ranks at 3/rank plus 3 points in feats = 33pp

## FAMINE'S TRANSFORM POWER

### Transform target into Feast 10

(links Physical Transform 10 & Mental Transform 10)

#### Physical Transform 10

Base cost 3/rank (transform one thing into another thing)

- flaw: only one transform can be sustained at a time; to transform a new target, the last target must be released to revert to normal (-1/rank)
- extra: duration increased to Continuous (+1/rank)
- extra: alternate save (Will) (+0/rank)

Total cost 10 ranks at 3/rank = 30pp

#### Mental Transform 10

Base cost 3/rank (completely alter the target's mind)

- flaw: only one transform can be sustained at a time; to transform a new target, the last target must be released to revert to normal (-1/rank)
- extra: duration increased to Continuous (+1/rank)

Total cost 10 ranks at 3/rank = 30pp

Target receives a single Will save to avoid the combined transformation.



# CRASHING INTO THINGS

Firebird prefers to get around driving an extremely fast sportscar. It is inevitable that some day she'll decide it's a good idea to steer that car at someone or something and hope to hit it. Here's how to manage the action when someone tries to steer a vehicle so it hits a target.

## BASIC RAMMING

The driver or pilot of the vehicle makes a Drive or Pilot skill check, as appropriate. This is opposed by the target's Acrobatics check (unless the target is inanimate or unaware; see below).

If the target wins the opposed check, the driver does not succeed in causing a collision.

If the driver wins the opposed check, the target is hit by the vehicle as if by a slam attack.

Damage bonus is +2 if the vehicle was engaged in normal movement, +4 if it was in accelerated movement. Add a further bonus equal to the Speed rank of the vehicle, provided a minimum distance was moved equal to that rank. If the target is closer than that, the Speed bonus is reduced accordingly.

The attacking vehicle suffers damage equal to half the total damage bonus inflicted on the target (round down). A normal Toughness save is allowed against this damage.

## HANDLING INITIATIVE

If the ram is attempted during a combat round, follow the initiative order as normal. The driver must announce an attempt to ram a target a turn in advance, to give the target a chance to ready the Avoid maneuver. The Avoid maneuver is a standard action, whereas the Ram maneuver is a full action.

## MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

If a target is being attacked by multiple vehicles at the same time, avoiding them becomes more difficult. For each ram maneuver after the first, the target's check to Avoid receives a -4 penalty (cumulative).

## MULTIPLE TARGETS

A driver can try and hit a group of targets who are all clustered together. The driver chooses one target as the primary target. All other targets in the path of the vehicle (as determined by the vehicle's size) are considered secondary targets. The driver makes one single check opposing all these targets. Each target makes an Acrobatics check opposing this check result. Secondary targets who lose the opposed check are allowed Reflex saves (DC 10 + driver's attack bonus) to halve the damage bonus (or, with the Evasion feat, allowed to avoid all damage).

## UNAWARE TARGETS

Should a target of a ramming attempt be unaware of the driver's intention to ram, the avoid maneuver cannot be attempted. Instead, the target is only allowed a Reflex save (DC 10 + driver's attack bonus). If successful, the damage bonus is halved (or, with the Evasion feat, no damage is received).

## INANIMATE TARGETS

The target cannot avoid the ram and receives full damage.



### Example Crash:

Firebird, behind the wheel of a snazzy sports car (Speed 5), races towards the grotesquely obese Feast. She decides that the best way to end his threat quickly is to smash the car right into him.

Firebird's Drive check bonus +19. Feast's Acrobatics skill has 0 ranks, and his Dexterity is 8, giving a check modifier of -1. Unsurprisingly, Firebird wins this opposed check and hits Famine with her car.

Firebird has been engaged in accelerated movement for several rounds while closing in on Famine, and the disgusting villain is hit with the full damage bonus of +9 (+4 for accelerated movement, +5 for Speed).

Firebird's sports car suffers the effect of half this damage bonus, +4.

## USING FULL PURSUIT RULES

These rules are extrapolated from the full rules for pursuit. Here are the details of the Avoid maneuver for use with the full pursuit rules:

### AVOID

The target surrenders any lead and concentrates on avoiding being rammed.

**Lead:** 5 lengths or less

**Success:** The target avoids being Rammed by the closing pursuer, but the lead is reduced to 0 lengths.

# GROUP MEMBER COMPLICATIONS

In game worlds that are more nuanced than 'good guys vs bad guys', player-character heroes are seen by the public in complex ways. A character who is perceived to be associated with a certain ideology or to belong to a certain group is going to be judged accordingly. This article presents a new kind of complication for characters to possess: 'group member' complications.

### COMPLICATIONS & BENEFITS

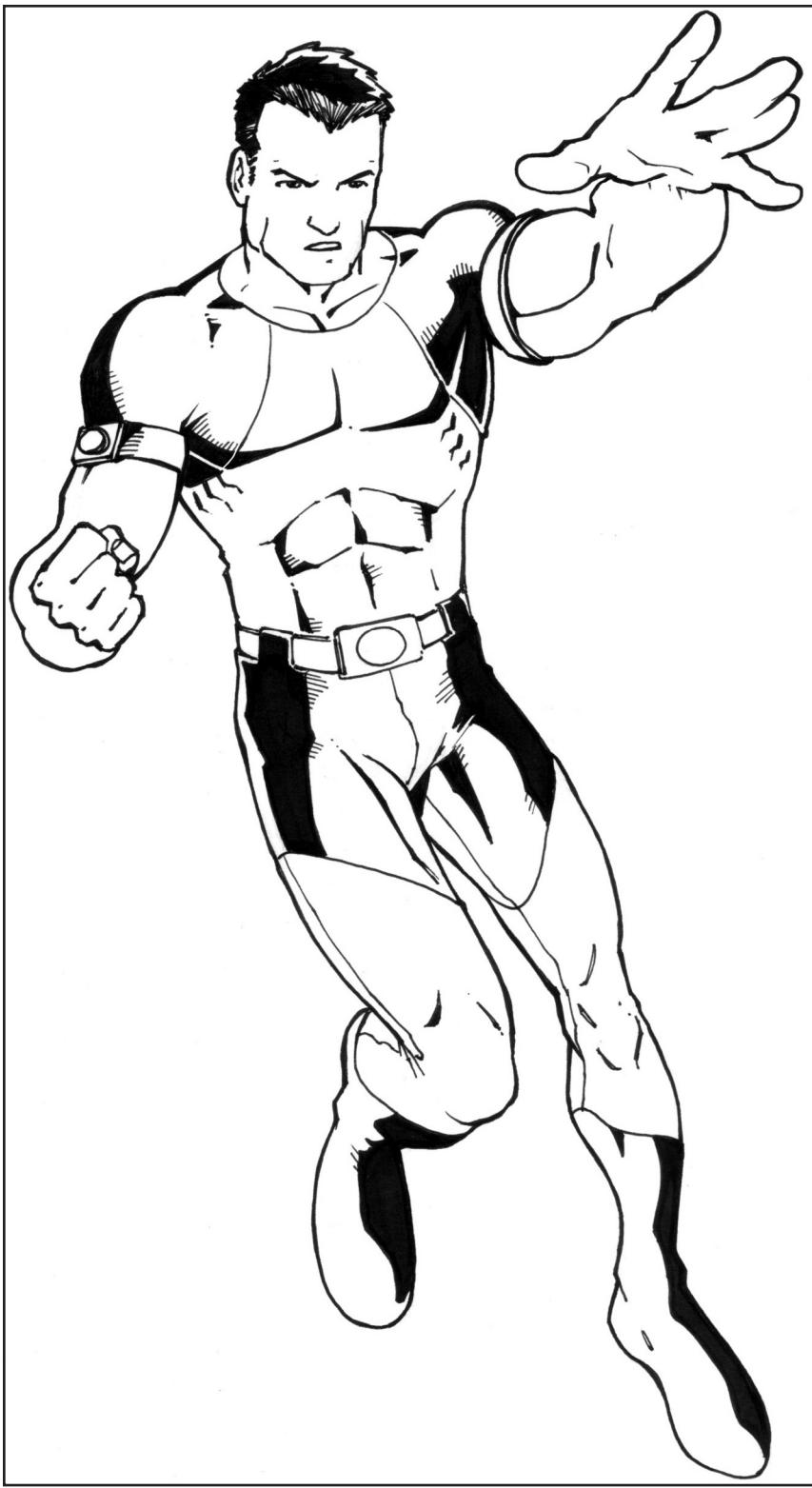
Consider a hero who is seen in the eyes of the public as politically left-wing. This hero's liberal associations will serve as a complication in some circumstances - for example, a visit to a conservative southern town could be a very frustrating experience for the character. On the other hand, if the character's adventures take him to the campus of a liberal West Coast university, he might find everyone is much easier to deal with.

The same, in reverse, applies to a character who is widely known to be an evangelical Christian. The character could hit roadblocks on campus but be welcomed in the small town.

### RECORDING GROUP MEMBER COMPLICATIONS

This kind of complication should be written as 'Known as [member of group]'. For example: Known as Conservative, Known as Italian, Known as Muslim, Known as Pacifist.

The important part of this kind of complication is how the character is seen, which may not reflect the truth about the character. Characters could be given a political reputation by opportunist politicians or over-enthusiastic media types, or even as part of some villain's wicked plan. Sometimes reputations like this take on a life of their own. A hero who defends an animal shelter from alien attack might be known ever



after as an animal rights activist, even if the hero hates animals and had no idea what was in the threatened building.

## IN-GROUP BENEFITS

We have seen how group identity can provide

complications for characters in certain situations. However, there is a flip side: the character will sometimes derive a benefit.

If the character is a member of a group with a distinctive identity, the character can benefit from this membership. When interacting with people who identify themselves as members of the same group, the character can spend a Hero Point to use the Connected and Contacts feats for the duration of the interaction.

(Normally, the character can spend a Hero Point to gain the benefit of one feat for one round; the benefit here is twofold: the character receives two feats for the price of one, and the effect lasts one interaction instead of one round.)

## RESTRICTIONS

This kind of complication should be restricted for groups with strong identities, either from within or without. If group membership is generally taken for granted, the character shouldn't be able to gain a benefit from belonging to the group. If group membership is special, and makes you 'part of a club', then the character should gain the benefit. This can change from situation to situation and place to place as well. The GM has the final call on this in any given situation.

Group membership should always be seen as clearcut, even if the character's real situation is quite complex. Firebird couldn't choose as a complication "known as liberal on immigration issues but not on other issues" because it's too complex

an idea. If it doesn't make a good soundbite, it isn't appropriate.

# Flight Sceneru

# MIGHTY HARVEY amusement park

It's a world of amusement that's fun for all the family! Everyone's favorite hero, Mighty Harvey, has assembled the most exciting attractions you'll ever see and opened the gates to you. Why don't you come by? You'll have a mighty good time!



## LOCATION GUIDE - KEY ATTRACTIONS

1- FERRIS WHEEL	5- WATER WONDERLAND	9- HAUNTED MINE	13- MINI-RACERS
2- ROCKY MT. RAPIDS	6- GAME ARCADE	10- LAKESIDE DINER	14- THE WHIP-N-WHIRL
3- FORT LAWRENCE	7- SILVER STAR CENTER	11- HARVEY HQ	15- SPINETLINGER 3D
4- BOAT RIDES	8- KIDS WORLD	12- HARVEY MALL	16- ROLLER SPECTACULAR
			17- EMPIRE CITY EXPRESS



## OVERVIEW

The Mighty Harvey Amusement Park is a 450-acre landscape of rides, challenges, food outlets and exhibits. It is very popular with families, who relish its wholesome morality and professional approach to keeping everyone happy. It is built around iconic superhero Mighty Harvey and the wide range of cartoon and comic characters who followed him. A large and smiling staff keep the place spotless and the visitors happy, while staff members in costume as Mighty Harvey characters cavort and play and pose for photos.

## HISTORY

The Saturday-morning cartoon “Mighty Harvey And His Friends” was a big hit in the early 60s. It showed the cheerful Mighty Harvey outwitting a colorful collection of foes using his tireless strength, his skin of steel, and his ability to make gigantic leaps. Mighty Harvey was an icon for a generation of girls and boys. Mighty Harvey’s last cartoon appearance was in 1967, but by that time the Mighty Harvey brand was appearing on a whole stable of cartoons and comics, and the character became a cultural icon. In 1971 the Mighty Harvey Amusement Park was opened to celebrate the imaginative world of the Mighty Harvey brand.

The park’s popularity has waxed and waned, but it has never been in danger of closing. It has tried to stay ahead of the trends in amusement park entertainment, offering elaborate rides and sophisticated attractions alongside the classics that have served it well for its entire history.

In the late 1970s a real super-powered person was employed to live in the park as Mighty Harvey Junior. This went horribly wrong less than a year later with allegations of improper behavior by the employee, and he was promptly fired and quickly forgotten. This is the only time in the park’s history that it has engaged a super-powered individual in any capacity, at least according to the official record.

## HARVEY HEADQUARTERS (HHQ)

The centerpiece of the park is Harvey Headquarters, where Mighty Harvey watches the world on his monitors and stores his superhero equipment. Harvey HQ has a striking design, with big brightly-colored spurs spiraling up a dozen stories to tower over the rest of the park. This building is an amazing realization of the wild design that first appeared in a 1963 cartoon. The HHQ silhouette still appears at the conclusion of every Klaxon Media cartoon, and is extremely well-known.

Aside from spectacular views over the rest of the park, attractions within HHQ include Harvey’s Monitor Room, which features real-time camera footage from central city locations in fifty of the world’s major cities; Harvey’s Leapatory, where kids and adults get a chance to leap through the air like Harvey does; Harvey’s Hall of Wonders, which features a mind-boggling collection of optical and physical illusions that were supposedly collected by Harvey during his adventures; and the Harvey History Ride, which journeys through the whole of history in Harvey’s time machine, to see life-sized puppets dance the dances and sing the songs of the past. The History Ride is an original attraction, essentially unchanged since 1971, and is the ride everyone feels they have to experience while at the park.

**Harvey Headquarters** (Huge structure, Toughness 8)

## THE ROLLER SPECTACULAR

This classic old-style roller-coaster has been in the park since it opened, and in fact dates back even older than that; it was first built in 1949, in this site’s previous incarnation as a county fairground. It has three major dips and one loop, and a number of other twists and turns. Its safety record is impeccable; the worst mechanical failures have been cars stopping at the top of the peaks, and this happens no more than once or twice a decade.

The roller-coaster’s tracks hamper movement across

them. The tracks count as a bad surface and reduce movement by half unless the character has Super-Movement: Sure-Footed or an equivalent ability.

Characters can also climb and move through the roller-coaster's lattice structure. The supports are wide but uneven (to balance, Acrobatics DC 12) and set slightly too far apart to make unassisted climbing easy (Climb DC 20).

The lattice structure is wide enough that characters with Super-Movement: Swinging can swing around it and flying characters can pass through it. However, the GM may call for a check to avoid falling or collision if the character is distracted (by combat, for example).

The roller-coaster's highest peak is 70 feet in the air (+7 damage bonus to fall from this height). Most of it is lower than this; assume 30 feet as an average falling height.

**Roller Spectacular** (Huge structure, Toughness 12)

**Roller-Spectacular car** (Large vehicle, Strength 25, Speed 5, Defense 9, Toughness 7)

## FERRIS WHEEL

The giant Ferris Wheel is another original attraction, and is very popular with young children. It is located on the western side of the park and gives a good view over the park area, with the Harvey HHQ rising up at the center.

The cars of the Ferris Wheel are enclosed in transparent plastic. Each can hold a dozen people without being overcrowded, and can carry the weight of five times as many. A super-strong villain could tear one of the cars off and hurl it across the park; the spokes connecting the cars to the superstructure are Toughness 10, and the cars weigh about 2 tons.

The Ferris Wheel's spokes are thick and slippery, and with the constant movement they are very difficult to climb on. (To keep balance while moving on the

spokes, Acrobatics DC 25, or DC 35 if the wheel is turning; Climb DC 25 or DC 30 if the wheel is turning).

**Ferris Wheel** (Huge structure, Toughness 10)

## WATER WONDERLAND

The northern section of the park was redeveloped into an extensive water attraction in the mid-80s, and offers plenty of opportunities for visitors to get into newly-purchased Harvey Swimwear and splash about. There are lots of shallow pools and sculpted rivers to wade or swim along, many of them lined with animatronic creatures and other amusements. The multi-level waterslide maze is a particular favorite with kids and teens, offering the chance to slide down and clamber up colorful, watery tubes in a search of the entrance to the spectacular glory slide.

A large number of Mighty Harvey personnel are on safety duty here, to ensure that there's no chance of a child drowning - such a disaster would surely close down the park in an instant.

A chase sequence through the waterslide maze would be full of problems. The environment is cramped and the materials are not strong, and it's often crowded with civilians, so there's plenty of opportunity for innocents to be endangered. Hiding in the maze gives a +10 circumstance modifier to Hide checks when opposing a Search attempt.

**Waterslide maze** (Large structure, Toughness 5)

## SPINETLINGER 3D

The Spinetlinger 3D is one of the newest attractions in the park. Six people at a time are strapped into carriages which set off along tracks into the depths of the attraction, where jump shocks and unexpected lurches provide a scary experience. The grand finale of the ride pitches the carriage into what seems like an



out-of-control plummet into the very depths of hell. This is popular with teenagers and braver children, as well as adults who can forgive the cheesiness of some of the scare attempts. A lot of rumors surround this ride - the 3D illusions in the hell sequence are astonishing and more than a few patrons claim to have witnessed something unusual in its halls.

**Spinetangler 3D** (Large structure, Toughness 10)

**Spinetangler 3D carriage** (Medium vehicle, Strength 20, Speed 3, Defense 10, Toughness 8)

## MAINTENANCE TUNNELS

The Mighty Harvey park is honeycombed with extensive underground maintenance and supply tunnels. Everything that doesn't add to a visitor's experience is kept out of sight down here. There are concealed entrances to the tunnels all over the park, in the sides of attractions and the back rooms of food halls. The maintenance tunnels come together under Harvey Headquarters, which is where the park's energy and support systems are managed and surveillance cameras throughout the park are monitored. They also connect to the main entranceway, where the central administration of the park is located.

Because the character costumes are so heavy and hot, one function of the maintenance tunnels is to allow staff members a chance to cool down and rest. Some of the park's key characters will have four or five staff members taking turns outside; characters in the tunnels could be surprised to enter a room where four Missy Melindas are all sitting around reading magazines and drinking soda. If the characters are chasing a shapeshifter through the tunnels, things could get very confusing very quickly!

There are some tunnels, particularly under the Water Wonderland, that are off-limits to all staff without special authorization. The staff share plenty of rumors about what might be going on down there, with theories ranging from the storage of cryogenically frozen founders of the Mighty Harvey brand, to

the existence of well-maintained bunkers giving protection against nuclear war.

Signage within the tunnels points clearly towards the Harvey Headquarters and the main entrance, but signs in other directions are cryptic; zones are color-coded or letter-coded in a system even the staff have trouble with, let alone casual visitors or uninvited intruders. The tunnels are also heavily penetrated by cameras - these are monitored from the central administration area, not from the maintenance area under HHQ.

## SECRETS

Mighty Harvey is owned by Klaxon Media, formerly known as Klaxon Recordings. Klaxon started out making radio shows and migrated to television and more recently into other media such as stage, film and computer entertainment. Klaxon Recordings was bought by the Hite Association in 1955, and Klaxon Media is part of the Hite Association empire.

As might be expected of a Hite Association enterprise, there is more going on at Mighty Harvey than is immediately apparent. The Hite Association is working towards a number of sinister goals, and the Mighty Harvey Park gives them a useful resource towards investigating methods of manipulating and pacifying human behavior.

There might be a full-fledged Hite Association research cell operating in the depths of the park, developing strange chemicals or new robot technologies. New attractions could try out hypnosis effects or subconscious suggestions.

Aside from Hite's interest, there might be a number of closed-off sections of the tunnels in which villains could make their lairs or into which lost children could stumble. Across the long history of the park, any number of weird and wonderful beings have been drawn to its shiny lights and endless array of amusements; perhaps some of them never left...

# THE HITE ASSOCIATION

The Hite Association is a roundtable of some of the world's most powerful businessmen. They meet on a regular basis to further their common interest. The Association views laws and human rights as inconvenient obstacles, and while it is careful not to flaunt the law, any heroes who try to uphold the public good will find themselves tripping over it time and time again.

## ORIGINS OF THE HITE ASSOCIATION

Renowned entrepreneur Jonathan Hite founded the association in New York 1897. The association's goal was to keep its members, all New York businessmen, one step ahead of society. Their motto then and now is 'knocking on the door of tomorrow'.

Although the Hite Association originated as a talking shop, it has over time become a corporate body in its own right, with a Chief Executive appointed by the board and charged with administering a number of Hite-owned projects.

There are currently thirteen members, although the number has been as high as twenty-four and as low as

## ACTIVITIES OF THE HITE ASSOCIATION

The Association meets once a year on exotic islands or dramatic mountain retreats to report on new opportunities and discoveries. Members also meet for lunches or golf outings when they have things to discuss.

The Association owns a surprising array of research centers, think-tanks and other ventures, such as:

- Klaxon Media, a major player in the television, film and music industries;
- the Hite Association Research Center, a home for cutting-edge investigation into the very edges of scientific thought, branded with the Hite Association name itself;
- the MAXIS organization, formerly a government body and now contracted out to the Hite Association.

The only shared purpose of the Hite Association is to increase the wealth and power of its members. They understand the value of getting to the future



first - not just knocking on the door of tomorrow, but stealing the key and making off with all the cool stuff inside. The world has offered tantalizing clues of great secret knowledge just out of reach, such as the hidden Eternity People and occasional evidence of time travel. The Hite Association is eager to find and exploit these sources of knowledge.

## WHO'S WHO IN THE HITE ASSOCIATION

The following are some of the more well-known members of this organization:

**Martijn Calderon** - this thirty-something wunderkind is the chief executive of the Hite Association. Calderon is charming and extremely clever, with a fearful self-discipline. Calderon, like his father and grandfather before him, benefits from an innate mental protection (a Mind Shield 13 effect).

**Moxie Westfold** - one of the board members, Westfold is the founder and owner of the Moxie's Bar and Restaurant chain, which stretches from coast to coast and into thirteen other countries as well. Moxie's grinning face winks down from the frontage of every Moxie's establishment. Westfold is a major shareholder in countless Fortune 500 companies, and is a canny businessman with a social conscience and a ruthless streak, He is fascinated by the potential of new technologies to upend the social order.

## WHAT NEXT FOR THE HITE ASSOCIATION?

### Chasing Membership

The CEO of a major corporate power desperately wants membership in the Hite Association. She takes increasingly drastic steps to achieve this, including abducting a superhero to use as a research subject, hoping to use the results as an entry bribe.

### Internal Wars

The Hite Association has always had internal disputes, but these have never turned really serious. A Hite Association split could start a secret war as various new technologies are claimed by one side or the other and rushed into action. The characters might have to cope with the collateral damage, or they might be caught right in the middle.

### Future Found

The Hite Association discovers an actual door to the future. Where did it come from? What price did they pay? Who stands to gain from giving it to them? And is there any chance this door will be used responsibly for the good of all, rather than greedily with the potential to unravel the entire fabric of reality?cause this to happen? Or is something else going on?

## IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Personalize the Hite Association to suit your game. If there are villains who are major corporate powers in your gameworld, or other corporations with questionable practices, then put them on the Hite board. When your heroes crash a board meeting, have a bunch of familiar faces staring back at them.

If your group's financial backer has a seat on the Hite Association board, then the group has a problem, as eventually the Association will ask for something. If the characters refuse to comply, ha new team of super-powered heroes might turn up to occupy their Hite-funded headquarters...

## HITE ASSOCIATION OPERATIVE

The Hite Association has an elite roster of operatives they use to achieve covert goals. This is one such operative. The operative is armed with some exclusive, top-secret Hite Association technology.

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

**Tough +0 (+4 with defensive roll), Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5**

**Skills:** Climb +5, Escape Artist +7, Notice +5, Search +4, Stealth +7, Survival +4



**Feats:** Accurate Attack, Assessment, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 4, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Quick Draw, Track

**Combat:** Attack +4, Defense +4, Initiative +7

- Hand to Hand: Attack +4, Damage +1
- Disorientation Gun: Attack +4, Damage Nauseate 4

### Equipment:

- Stealth Suit (reflects light around the wearer, equivalent to invisibility to normal vision. Concealment 2 costs 4 equipment points)

- Aura Goggles (allows the wearer to see into a spectrum of 'parallel light', equivalent to Blindsight. Super-Senses 4 costs 4 equipment points)

- Disorientation Gun (causes target to experience a wave of unsteadiness and vertigo, equivalent to Nauseate 4. A ranged Nauseate 4 effect costs 12 equipment points.)



# ATA Presents...

# CARNAGE RISING

The Mighty Harvey Amusement Park is at the center of a bitter labor dispute. Many of the park's workers are picketing the site after negotiations for a pay rise and better conditions went wrong. For a friendly, family destination like the Mighty Harvey park, this could be devastating, and to make matters worse, two superheroes have turned up in the demonstrating crowd at the gates.

The real threat, however, comes from within, as Feast and Famine appear in the heart of the park and enact a horrible transformation...

## HOOK

The characters can get involved through watching the coverage of the dispute on television, or more directly, by having a stake in the outcome. Perhaps a cousin is involved in the picket? Characters with labor-rights angles have a natural motivation to be involved. Also, characters with established ties to Firebird or Tornado might well turn up on their account. Finally, the characters could just have chosen today to visit the amusement park, and they find the picket in progress.

An alternative route for establishing character involvement is through Famine and the Hite Association. Characters could have followed a trail of clues to the park, either seeking out Famine or on the trail of some of the Hite Association's secrets. The confusion at the gates provides a perfect opportunity for slipping through security and subjecting the park to a full investigation.

## DEVELOPMENT - THE DEMONSTRATION

The workers at the gate have gathered because of a breakdown in negotiations. Word had been received of a plan to make all employees redundant and then re-hire them under new, lesser contracts. The workers' negotiators asked instead for more pay, more break-time, and a better deal for the illegal immigrants who do many of the low-status tasks in the park. Management was not interested, and the workers' union representatives were quick to aggression, resulting in a total breakdown and the current crisis.

The picket line is colorful and rowdy but has been forced to limit itself to the outer limit of the park's grounds, at the main entrance to its parking lot. The hundred-seventy picketers have not stopped a steady flow of customers, who drive their cars into the parking lot through other entrances, or head in on buses and don't even notice the protest.

There is a strong media presence at the picket line; local news television is eager to get dramatic images of conflict in front of a center of family fun such as the amusement park. Thus far, however, nothing more dramatic has happened than a few chants and a brief shouting match between picketers and security guards.

## DEVELOPMENT - TORNADO

Tornado arrives because she cares about the rights of workers. She intends to encourage the protesters to take risks to injure the Mighty Harvey operation where



it hurts - its public image. A dramatic slogan scrawled across the iconic Mighty Harvey gates, or a banner strung up on the ferris wheel, would deliver great benefit to the cause. Ultimately, she opposes the entire system in which these negotiations are taking place, but supporting workers' rights is a good immediate focus.

Tornado arrives in costume, and immediately ingratiates herself with the leaders. She avoids addressing the TV cameras, which quickly recognize her, but puts herself in shot whenever a leader is speaking on camera. She is, however, reluctant to do anything herself other than support the demonstrators. She knows that whenever she brings her powers into a situation, things tend to get complicated, fast.

However, this reluctance to intervene will not last. Eventually, egged on by demonstrators, she will use her powers to start placing the workers' message on every prominent piece of Mighty Harvey real estate she can. At this point, other heroes on the scene will be forced to decide whether or not they intervene, or even support her. Note that any hero who is in costume will be automatically looked upon by others as the right person to step in - other protesters will encourage heroes to go and join Tornado, while park managers will ask the heroes to stop her.

## DEVELOPMENT - FIREBIRD

Firebird is there because of the immigrant workers and her concerns that racism underlies their poor treatment. However, she is cynical about the union leaders and their exploitation of the immigrant workers as a bargaining chip in their negotiations. She has no love for exploitative corporations, but nor does she support grandstanding unionists - both, she sees, are bad for everyone.

She is there undercover, and will stay undercover, watching from nearby. If and when Tornado gets involved in putting up banners and scribing graffiti, she will break cover and use her powers to intervene.

She doesn't want Tornado making things worse, and her use of powers gives Firebird the right and responsibility to stop her.

Additionally, there is no love lost between them due to Tornado's role in the Power Team's demise. She was not a member very long, but she has immense respect for Joe Warlock, and Tornado's rumored betrayal of the team make Firebird angry.

If the characters aren't careful, they could have a very fierce fight on their hands. The political differences between Tornado and Firebird are heightened by an absolute personal incompatibility, and someone might get hurt unless the characters step in the middle...

## TWIST - FEAST AND FAMINE

However, inside the gates, another threat looms. Famine is inside the park, having toured it in his civilian guise as Donald Taylor Landy. On his tour he transforms the helpful aide showing him around into Feast, and then pours a strange concoction into the park water supply. Slowly, as patrons of the park come into contact with the water, either drinking it, swimming in it, or consuming food washed with it, they fall under the effect of the greed virus.

Famine's greed virus is a horrific creation. As the patrons of the park suddenly start running through its attractions and thoroughfares, falling hungrily on every morsel, their humanity lost beneath their bestial behavior, Famine and Feast will roam about, exulting in the chaos they have engineered.

(It should be noted that Famine cares not one whit for the workers. In fact, he explicitly supports their exploitation, and would worsen without a second thought it if he was in charge.)

## THE GREED VIRUS

Those who are exposed to the greed virus must make a Fortitude saving throw, DC 18. Failure means the character becomes affected by the virus. A successful



save means the character is safe from the virus for the next ten minutes, after which time they must save again.

Characters affected by the greed virus are driven by an overwhelming and uncontrollable hunger. They will be unable to stop themselves from devouring everything in sight. Their first instinct with everything is to attempt to eat it. They move only to find more food, and they will fight each other fiercely to claim it. Some victims may attempt to eat other people, if no other food is apparent. A part of the victims remains unchanged, just enough to watch their own horrific behavior but unable to arrest it in any way.

This is a continuous effect. It ends when the virus passes out of the target's system, which takes one to three days.

## CLIMACTIC SCENE

As Tornado and Firebird resist every attempt to calm them down, and the park's visitors cause increasing havoc as they fall under the influence of the greed virus, Famine and Feast make their way to the management offices by the gates and drag the park's management out into the sunlight. Famine has attempted to do business with the park's owners and been refused, so this is his revenge. Famine forces his virus on the management, and then adds an extra spice: using a one-time variation of his Transform power, he transforms the managers so they want to eat human flesh. Then he sets them loose on the protesting workers, in front of all the cameras.

If the characters don't act fast to stop this, there could be some bloody scenes along the picket line. Use the Bystander statistics for the aggressive managers, but give them a +2 circumstance bonus to their attack bonus and damage bonus, reflecting the power of their hunger.

Famine doesn't stick around to watch his victims attack the picket line. He sees his work here as now complete, and climbs aboard Feast to make his getaway.

## RESOLUTION

Depending on how the various dangers and threats are resolved, the characters may have ingratiated themselves with the Mighty Harvey management, or made some surprisingly powerful new enemies. Tornado and Firebird, likewise, could become long-term friends or rivals based on what happens here.

Famine is likely to be captured by a suitably determined hero team. He isn't at all concerned about this. No prison has ever held him for long.



# Action Stations

## DEVELOPMENT SCENES

It is a rare superhero comic that does not feature a fight scene. Depicting the action as super-powered guy tries to take out another super-powered guy is the bread-and-butter of supers comics, and it might be the most fundamental part of the entire genre.

However, it's also a rare superhero comic that features nothing but fight scenes. There are always other things going on - personal and romantic subplots, troubles at work and home, political and social issues being argued or experienced first-hand.

A typical supers game will feature a bunch of characters, maybe in an organized group, maybe not. Usually, each of these characters will have their own set of issues, their own complications, their own supporting cast. Juggling all of this material can be a headache for a GM. They're probably managing several general subplots alongside the main plot, and likely several character-based subplots as well. Keeping on top of all this material is a demanding job.

One way in which the job can be made easier is by sharing it. This system allows players a role in authoring scenes which showcase their characters and develop the subplots that most interest the player. Players are rewarded not just by their increased participation and ability to fine-tune the game to their interests, but also in a very concrete way.

## DOWNTIME ROUNDS

The GM is in charge of pacing the game, and structuring the events of each session. When the GM desires, the players can be brought in to help drive the game. This is handled in downtime rounds.

First, the GM announces that the game is entering a downtime round. Every player around the table rolls an unmodified D20; this determines downtime initiative. The GM rolls initiative as well.

In order of initiative, each participant is able to choose a scene they wish to play out. The participant may also decide to pass on their turn, if they cannot think of a scene to set..

## SETTING SCENES

Each participant chooses a scene. They decide the following:

- **where and when does the scene take place?**
- **who is present in the scene?**
- **what begins the scene?**
- **what is the scene's general purpose?**

They may also decide the following:

- **what is the scene's specific agenda?**
- **what is the context of the scene?**

The 'general purpose' of the scene is simply what the scene is trying to address. It might be 'to show where my secret identity lives', 'to give our two characters a chance to talk' or 'to investigate that weird mystery subplot'.

The 'specific agenda' of a scene is like the purpose, but it goes further and is more specific. It might be 'to bring my Obsession complication into play', 'to have our two characters agree to work together in future', or 'to discover the secret the butler's been keeping'



The context of a scene is just what has gone on around it. For example, perhaps a participant wants to explore how two characters interact when they are frustrated. The context could be set to ensure the characters are frustrated - perhaps one character has just had her car towed, and the other character has just lost another game of chess to the headquarters supercomputer. The participant can also suggest in this way what might be on the minds of the characters in the scene.

The participant can choose any player's character to be the subject of the scene - their own character need not be involved in the scene at all. Some GMs may even allow scenes that do not involve any player characters, describing action between NPCs as if witnessed by the readers of a comic.

Many development scenes will revolve around the complications in a character's personal situation. Scenes might introduce a new setback, develop a previous setback, or resolve a setback. The participant may set a scene because they are interested to see what would happen, or in order to create a situation where a reward is likely. Ways to earn rewards from a scene are described below.

The GM has authority to modify certain aspects of the proposed scene, or outright veto the scene, but this should only be done when absolutely necessary (for example, to avoid contradicting an ongoing subplot about which the scenesetting player is ignorant).

Players have authority to negate any usage of their character that they think is unlikely or inappropriate; for example, a truly godly character is unlikely to be receiving a lapdance in a strip club. Again, this should only be done when absolutely necessary, and it probably indicates a misconception about the character on behalf of the other person that should be cleared up.

Scenesetting works best if everyone around the table is able to make suggestions, but the final say is always with the participant. If suggestions are getting too rowdy, the GM should step in to ensure the participant is able to make a decision without pressure from others around the table.

## PLAYING SCENES

When the parameters have been set, the GM should begin the scene. The GM's role is to turn the idea for a scene into a moment of play, as per normal. The GM may ask for some initial assistance from the participant who set the scene - for example, if a scene is called on a dock at night, the GM might ask that player to describe the dock. However, the GM should not hand over GMing duties entirely to a player



(unless that kind of shared role is something your group has discussed previously and is comfortable with).

After it has begun, the scene unfolds exactly as if it arose in the normal course of play. The participants in the scene have no obligation to pursue a stated agenda for the scene - it will often happen that a new direction for a scene will emerge in play. It is important that players don't feel like they are 'going through the motions' here. These scenes should always feel like genuine opportunities for play.

The GM and the scene-setting player should work together to figure out a good point to stop a scene. Scenes can be very short. Some scenes might take only ten seconds to play. This is perfectly fine.

## DEVELOPMENT SCENE REWARDS

At the conclusion of a full Downtime round, the GM should issue any rewards for the scenes completed. Players earn the ordinary rewards for suffering setbacks from complications, for good roleplaying, and for acts of heroism.

The same reward should be given by the GM for any clever or inspiring use of downtime scenes to showcase key themes and issues in the game.

Players are encouraged to keep this in mind, and set scenes that revolve around setbacks and complications for their character. A character's setback can even be the subject of a scene in which they are not involved. For example, a character with an 'enemy' complication might set a scene where the enemy reveals unpleasant secrets about the character to a team-mate, complicating her life without her knowledge.

The GM may prefer to hold over these rewards until the following session, because Downtime Rounds can sometimes take up a lot of play-time. (There is no point gaining a temporary benefit from a Downtime

Round if time spent on the Downtime Round squeezes out any opportunity to use it!)

Development scenes can also be used to depict character improvement. Characters purchasing new skills or feats, building new equipment, or otherwise spending character points may be required by the GM to depict this activity in at least one Development Scene before making the change to their character sheet.

A canny player will be able to think of ways to use a development scene in multiple ways. If a scene can show a character practicing a new skill, dealing with a setback, and advancing a subplot all in one, while giving the player a chance to do some great roleplaying, the player will reap a whole bunch of rewards at one stroke.

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# Origin Issues

## #3: DEVELOPING KEY VILLAINS

Over the past two columns, your new supers game has worked out its shared assumptions and developed its core hero concepts. Now it's time for the flipside of hero creation: coming up with the villains who will be the main menaces in your game.

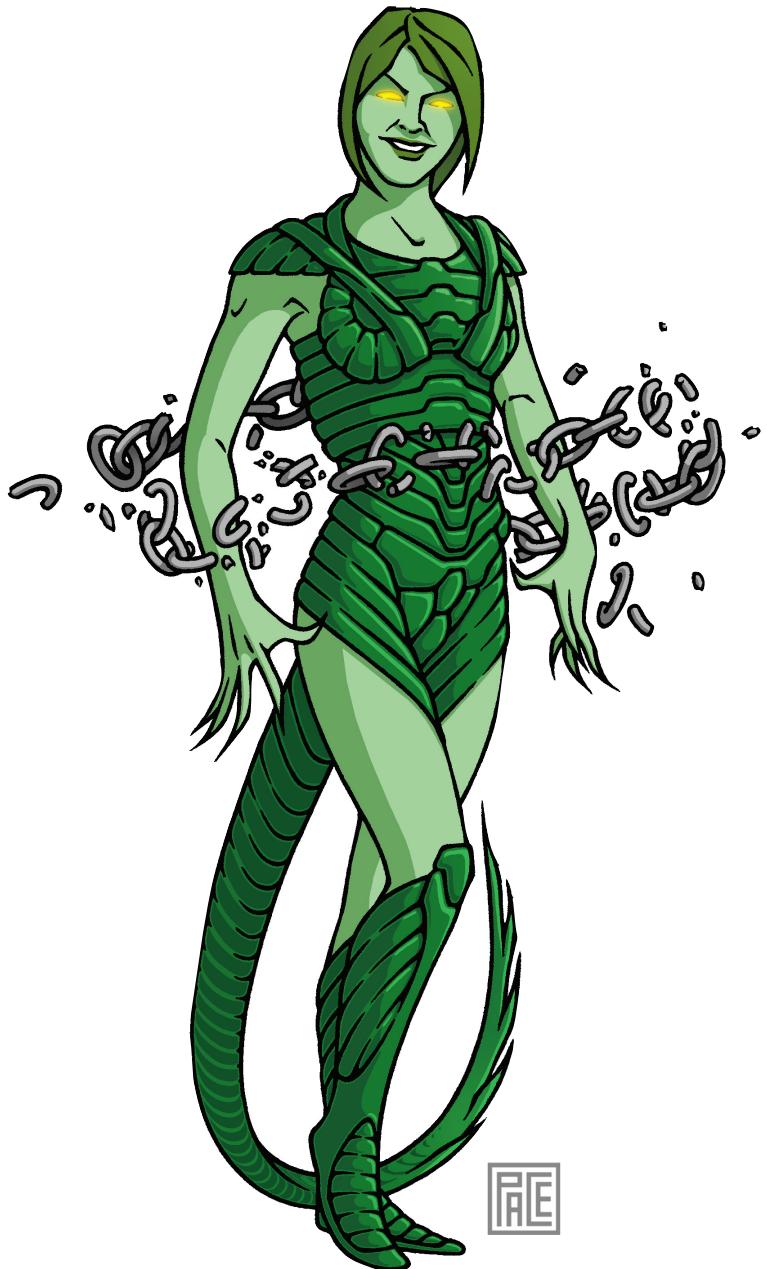
Most supers games will deal with the adventures of a group of superheroes in a more-or-less four color world. If your game has a different focus, then the following advice may not be entirely appropriate, but there will be useful material in what follows for even the most unlikely settings. For example, a game setting in which everything is shades of grey, with no true heroes and true villains, will still benefit from having a set of characters to provide adversity and contrast with the player character group.

### PLAYER INVOLVEMENT

Villains are crucial to superheroes. They don't just provide antagonism - they demonstrate exactly what it is that makes the hero a hero. They highlight the strengths of the character and stand in direct contrast to everything the character represents. In a very real sense, villains are a part of a hero's identity.

For this reason, the first place to go when you're considering villains for your game is to your players. Ask them who their personal arch-villain should be. They might be full of ideas, or they might be keen to let you come up with the bad guy. Either way, invite them to participate in the creation of your core villainous concepts.

For each character in your game, you should devise an arch-enemy. This is the character who is the eternal thorn in the character's side, the one who will keep coming back to make the character's life difficult.



For the group as a whole, you should devise a master-villain. This is the character who is the fearsome recurring threat for the entire super-team, the one they fear most and desperately want to bring to justice.

### ARCH-ENEMY POWERS

An archenemy's powers should in some way reflect



the powers of the hero they partner. There are two main ways to achieve this:

Firstly, the villain could have powers that are a natural opposite of the hero's. For example, a fire controller hero could be matched with an ice controller villain; a super-technician could be matched against a magician.

Alternatively, the villain could have powers that are a natural match for the hero's. For example, a winged melee combatant could be matched with another flying close-fighter; a superstrong brawler could match another superstrong brawler; a genius tactician could face off against the only mind cleverer than his.

A less common approach is to make an arch-enemy's powers be a different variation on the same theme as the hero's. For example, a character who derives their power from the sacred spirit of the lion might have as an arch-villain a character who derives their power from the sacred spirit of the hyena - their power suites might look entirely different and not be a particularly good match, but they are linked through their common theme.

Often, but not always, the arch-enemy and the hero should both occupy the same power niche in a notional group (although the villain will probably not belong to a group).

The villain's powers should always bear some relationship to the hero's powers. Ideally, if you listed the key powers of all your heroes and all your villains in a pair of anonymous lists, someone who knows nothing else about the characters should be able to guess instantly which hero power pairs with which villain power.

## ARCH-ENEMY ROLE

The role of an arch-enemy in story terms is to highlight the most important aspects of the hero. Every time the arch-villain comes on the scene, it should make it more clear for everyone around the table just what it is that makes this hero special and heroic.

Consider the personal niche of the hero. This could take any number of forms - a driving motivation, a code of honor, a continuing moral dilemma, and so on. The arch-enemy should push the core of this niche right to center stage, and shine light on it from a new direction.

Because a character's personal niche could be such a wide variety of things, it's hard to imagine a general rule that would do this for all characters. Some examples will demonstrate the idea a bit more clearly.

Consider a character whose overwhelming motivation is patriotism - a heroic love of country and its people. The character's arch-enemy could be a character who is also a patriot, but one who exemplifies a dark side of patriotism, such as blind love of authority and racism. Alternatively, the arch-enemy could represent anarchy, hatred of government and authority, the chaotic answer to the hero's order.

A character who is trying constantly to live up to the memory of his heroic father might have an arch-enemy who is a neglectful son, trying to destroy the legacy of his own father. The arch-enemy might be a bad father, one who is the opposite of the character's father in every way. A different approach might have the arch-enemy be from the past, seeking answers in the present in a parallel of how the hero seeks guidance from the past.

A character who is cynical and morally ambiguous, sometimes using violence to get things done, and happy to breach the code against killing that binds most superheroes, might face an arch-enemy who represents hypocrisy in a very moral stance - a corrupt moralizing politician, for example. This would justify the cynicism of the character, provide proof of that cynical world view and shed light on the character's ultimate goals. Another arch-enemy might be a glimpse of what the character might become - a remorseless killer who lost all sense of his own moral compass a long time ago, but whose general aim and methods are eerily similar to the character's own.

You know you have a good idea for an arch-enemy when you can imagine the two characters sitting down



for a meal together under terms of truce and having a high-tension conversation that is great to listen to. Ideally the two characters will have plenty to learn from each other and plenty to say to each other, but the gulf between them - whatever form it takes - will put every scene between them on edge.

## MASTER VILLAIN

Now, you need to perform exactly the same process for the group as a whole. Consider the super group as a single combined entity. The heroes are the group's 'powers', so the villain should reflect them in some way, as well as being able to stand against them without being instantly defeated. The role and function of the group should also be reflected in the villain's nature and goals.

Your master villain will cast light on the overall purpose of the group. Issue one discussed several different types of teams, and there are plenty of other kinds that are possible. During early discussion, the kind of group you have should have been established - whether it's a government agency, an alien task force, or a billionaire detective and his amazing friends. The master villain should operate to contrast with or highlight the kind of group being played.

For example, a government-sponsored group intended to stop invasion from the stars will have a natural master villain in the alien commander in charge of infiltrating the earth. An alternative master villain could be someone who wishes to encourage or even assist an invasion (for whatever personal reason).

An outsider team, on the run, has a natural master villain, namely whoever is hunting them. An alternative master villain could be someone who keeps trying to recruit them to his villainous cause.

The most important thing to remember when designing the powers of master villains is their defensive range. If it comes to a fight, the master villain will be facing a whole team of heroes who will each get an action every round and who all want desperately to take the bad guy down. Give your

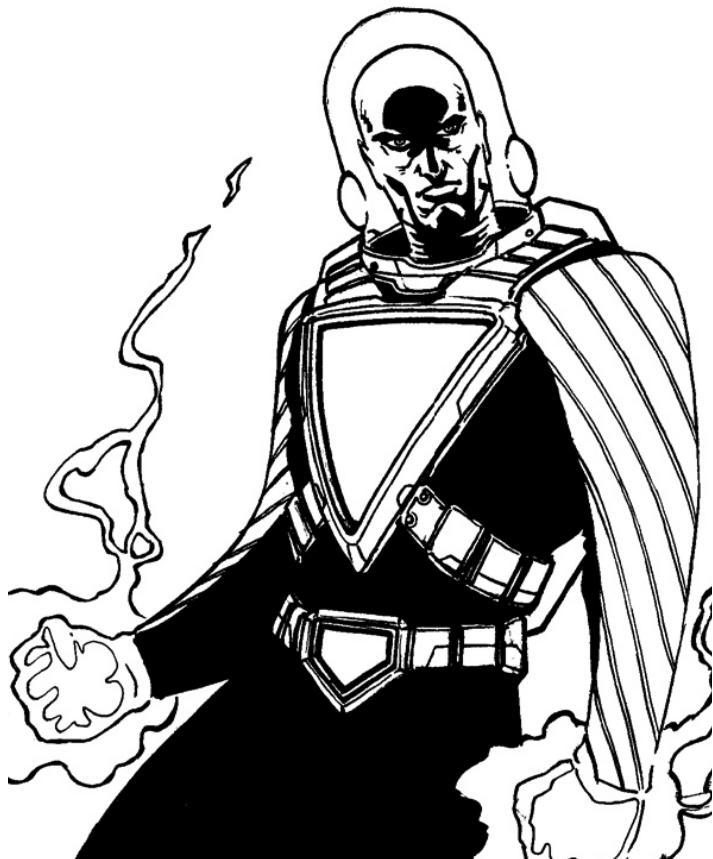
master villain good Protection and a good Defense. Otherwise, you might be forced to create a new master villain sooner than you'd like.

## PULLING IT TOGETHER

It's important to remember that none of this is set in stone. You should consider the first few sessions of play as a trial time for all of this - if your keystone villains don't work quite how you'd like, it's not too late to try an alternative master villain or to create a new arch-enemy more suited to a character. Often it will take a few sessions of play before the hero characters really settle in, and the appropriate villainous match for a character may not be apparent until then.

We now have the three big tasks complete - the initial discussion, character creation, and villain creation. It's time to start thinking about the first session of actual play, and what it will feature.

*Next issue: Introducing Characters*



# Last Minute Rescue

This issue features a set of characters with a political spin. Firebird is a deliberate complication of traditional left-right politics; Tornado is a political anarchist; Feast and Famine are (both literally and figuratively) expressions of the dark side of hyper-capitalism. What place does all this have in a game of tights-outside-underwear and leaping tall buildings in a single bound?

Supers comics have drifted in and out of political content through their long histories. Some of Superman's earliest villains were labor bosses who cruelly exploited their workers. The 70s is celebrated as the era of 'social relevance', when Captain America quit because there was a criminal in the Oval Office, and Green Arrow discovered his ward was a junkie. The most esteemed supers comics of the 80s, Watchmen and Dark Knight Returns, were also rich with political subtext, and politics stayed around through the 90s and has come to prominence again in the early 00s.

Often this is framed in terms of 'bringing superheroes into the real world'. And in a way, it's inevitable - as soon as you have Peter Parker angsting about whether he should be Spider-Man, you have a world in which characters are recognizably human, and human characters have political opinions. The trick is in how you bring these elements into play without undermining the existence of superheroes. Some comics writers have worked wonders in walking this fine line - Kurt Busiek's Marvels and JMS' Rising Stars spring to mind.

The problem with this kind of content is the juxtaposition of symbolic and literal content. When you surround a character who is really a symbol with a concrete political environment, you have a weird disconnect. When Captain Justice beats up the Agents of Avarice, that's a symbolic conflict being played out through colorful cape-wearing symbols. When

Captain Justice faces a corner drug dealer, that's something else entirely, especially if the dealer is depicted with understanding or compassion.

Put it another way: symbolic conflicts are easy. Two symbolic entities crash into each other, fight a whole lot, one emerges victorious. Real conflicts are much harder, just like real problems in the world tend to be incredibly hard to resolve and full of buried complications.

So why does any of this deserve a spot in your supers game? Well, maybe it doesn't. Did your pre-game discussion rule out this sort of material? If so, you'll want to strip out the political aspects of the characters in this issue.

As written, the characters in this issue are all blunt instruments - they will throw political opinions in the faces of your player characters. Use them and see how your players respond. Players are experiencing the world through protagonists with incredible powers and weighty responsibilities, and real-world issues can put everything in context in a way no other content can.

Just remember, no-one comes to your table each week for a political sermon. Explore this content because it makes for fascinating stories, and learn from what you discover through play - but if your fun is in trouble, steer a different course. Fun is what's most important in the end.

--morgue

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