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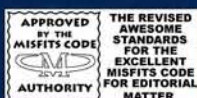
STEVEN
TRUSTRUM

DO-GOODERS & DAREDEVILS



MIXED HEROES

REQUIRES THE MUTANTS AND MASTERMINDS RPG
BY GREEN RONIN PUBLISHING FOR USE



M&M
SUPERLINK

MIS5012

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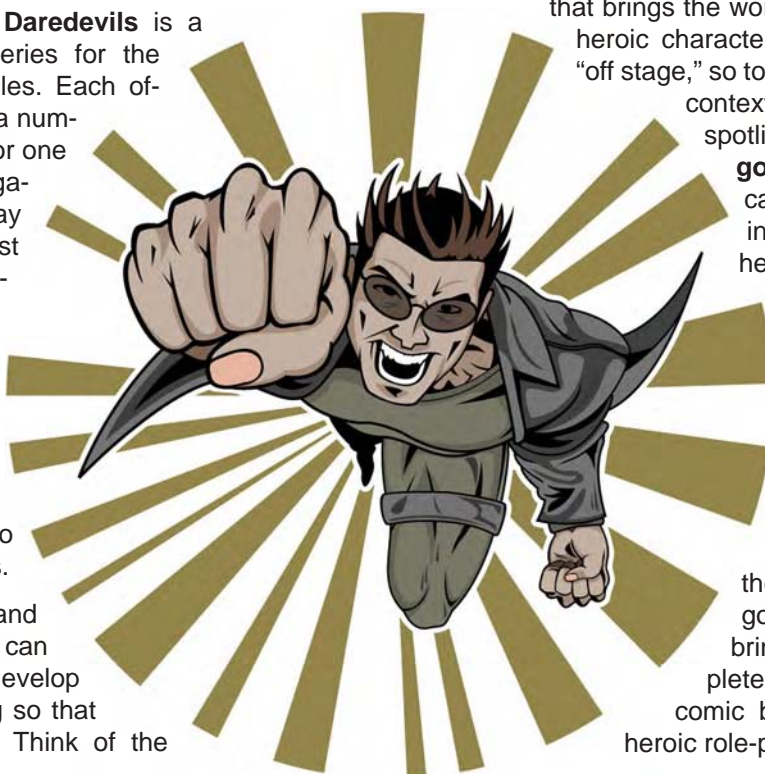
INTRODUCTION

Do-gooders & Daredevils is a new sourcebook series for the **M&M Superlink** rules. Each offering will focus on a number of heroes, and/or one or more heroic organizations that may be inserted into most super-heroic campaigns with little effort. Each organization is built using the rules for constructing organizations presented in **Better Mousetrap**, also from **Misfit Studios**.

The characters and organizations within can be used to help develop your game's setting so that it is more colorful. Think of the

world created within a comic book: it isn't just the character(s) focused on within that particular book that brings the world to life, but also the heroic characters in the background "off stage," so to speak, who provide a context around which the spotlight floats.

Do-gooders & Daredevils can help fill this role in your game, offering heroes that can help out when needed, granting the Gamemaster a voice in the game, or they can be used by the players as characters when time or inspiration is short. Either way, these pre-designed good guys can help bring a sense of completeness and a truly epic, comic book feel to a super heroic role-playing campaign.



METAHUMAN THREAT SCALE

To make using the accompanying characters easier, a threat scale is used throughout this work. Each character will be assigned a threat level from this scale, giving players and Gamemasters alike an idea of how characters and law enforcement agencies should perceive the villain, regardless of actual PL. The assigned threat level takes into account more than the immediate threat posed, as it also considers goals, ideals, behavior, state of mind, and so on.

If desired, this metahuman threat scale (MTS) can be incorporated into your game as the system actually used to assess metahuman threats, in much the same way as the government uses a color system to indicate states of national security awareness and preparedness.

Alpha: Of minimal danger, an Alpha-level threat is relatively low-powered and/or modestly trained. Such metahumans offer little more threat than a common non-metahuman street thug. A typical law-enforcement response should be sufficient to deal with the threat in most instances.

Such a threat can be restrained within standard containment facilities.

Beta: Beta-level threats possess sufficient metahuman abilities and/or training to pose a risk to a typical law-enforcement response. Tactical response units are likely the best way of dealing with such a threat, just to be safe.

Such a threat can usually be restrained within standard containment facilities, or those that have undergone a minimum of alteration.

Gamma: Threats of this level are an exceptional danger to society and are not easily dealt with by standard law-enforcement personnel (including normal tactical response units.) This is the most common metahuman threat level in most societies and usually represents the apex of threats whose abilities are based entirely on knowledge and training rather than metahuman powers.

Such a threat can rarely be held for long within standard containment facilities, usually requiring specially prepared conditions for long-term confinement.

Delta: Extremely dangerous, and only to be approached in force and with extreme care, Delta-level threats have the capability of causing great damage and represent a significant, immediate threat to life and public resources/services. Delta-level threats are best handled by other metahumans of comparable (individual or combined) power, or by specially trained response units and/or the military.

Such a threat cannot be held within standard containment facilities, requiring specially prepared conditions for long-term confinement.

Epsilon: Entire nations, continents and possibly even whole planets are at risk from Epsilon-level threats. Possessing abilities and/or influence to literally shatter civilizations, nations put great amounts of resources into anticipating and countering such beings before their machinations or rampages cause irreparable damage to a planet's social order, political stability, and/or physical well-being.

Such a threat cannot be held within standard containment facilities, requiring specially prepared, often-unique conditions for long-term confinement. In the most extreme cases, practical containment is impossible and more extreme (permanent?) solutions must be found.

Omega: Omega-level threats are the greatest threat known, as they can affect things on a cosmic scale, be it by eradicating entire intergalactic civilizations or putting the very fabric and stability of reality at risk. This threat level is the broadest in its scope, allowing for a variety of actual ability potencies.

Restraining such threats requires a legendary act by beings of lesser threat levels, or an intervention of another Omega being/artifact/power. Generally speaking, though, Omega-level threats are considered unstoppable forces of nature/the cosmos/whatever, and are better tricked, negotiated with, or avoided altogether than directly opposed, as undertaking the latter can easily result in the dangers meant to be avoided.

Containing such beings requires the power of a sun, act of god, or similarly extraordinary expenditure of cosmic power or influence, feats usually only available to other Omega-level beings or incredibly advanced civilizations.

“-A” Notation: When added to a threat level, this notation indicates the threat is arcane/magical in nature.

“-E” Notation: When added to a threat level, this notation indicates the threat is extraterrestrial (alien) in nature.

“-D” Notation: When added to a threat level, this notation indicates the threat is extradimensional (from another plane of existence) in nature.

“-P” Notation: When added to a threat level, this notation indicates the threat is psychic in nature.

“-T” Notation: When added to a threat level, this notation indicates the threat is Terran (from Earth), but not human in nature.

A

B

Γ

Δ

Σ

Ω

THE PATH OF THE HERO

Choosing to devote one's life to the betterment of one's fellow man is not easy, which would explain why there are so many more super villains than heroes. To use the power or exceptional talents that fate has given you for your own selfish reasons is easy, but to use those same abilities for good, despite the pain to oneself that may result, is how legends are born.

WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION?

With great power comes great responsibility—or so they say. But why should your character arduously toil down the often-thankless road of heroism instead of joyfully hopping and skipping down the relatively easy path of greed and villainy? What will set your super hero apart from all of those other people who have likewise come by superpowers but have chosen not to use them or instead turn them towards their own evil ends? The answers to these and similar questions are necessary if the hero is to have a complete and interesting background that explains why he has allied himself to the side of angels.

But why is a background so important to a character in the first place? Well, in some role-playing games, the explanation of "my character is an agent of the king" or "I'm the local sheriff" is sufficient to explain what motivates a character into heroics, but not so in a super hero campaign. In a world where strange powers set the character so far apart from the rest of mankind, there must be an explanation as to why the character has not succumbed to the corruption of his preternatural abilities.

The easiest answers lie within the realms of black and white, good and evil. Has the character been inspired by the gallantry of an existing, role model? Did he have family members who were also heroes and now it is up to him to carry on the tradition? Did the character witness a tragedy or horrific crime that drove him to fight similar atrocities?

It is equally likely the character's motivation is far more complicated and rooted within the world of gray that exists between the polar extremes of justice and crime. Maybe he is a mercenary hero who is only in the business of justice for the money and fame? Perhaps he is just as corrupt at heart as the criminals that he opposes except that for some reason he uses his evil to fight on the side of the just? Only the player behind the character can say for certain.

Whatever the character's motivation to choose heroism of villainy, there are no guarantees that one's efforts will be rewarded or even thanked or welcomed. Sometimes even heroes will be seen as no different than the criminals they fight in the public's eyes, a sad truth that may one lead to a fall from grace (and possibly a subsequent climb back into the light of righteousness.) As with most things concerning the players' characters, entire worlds of possibilities may be opened or closed depending upon what motivates the do-gooder.

TOGETHER WE STAND— HEROIC GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

A constant problem in role-playing in general is coming up with a good reason for the player characters to band together as a group of heroes. In a super hero campaign it is possible to use the obvious, comic book tradition of a shared origin. Somehow, the characters were all in the same place when an incident occurred that would grant them their special abilities. This approach can create its own concerns, unfortunately, because it confines the characters' origins to a narrow commonality, restricting the hero types they may choose from. If the characters were all unwilling guinea



pigs in an experiment, for example, then none of them could be of the martial arts masters who studied for years, aliens, and so on because none would suit this common origins element. Similarly, if everyone just happened to be walking down the same street when a tanker truck carrying toxic goo tipped and spilled its payload on the crowd, there remains little choice but for everyone to be mutants.

To offer the greatest range of character types, skills, powers (and sometimes races), the best move would be for each character to create an origin that is independent—at least in part—from those of the other characters in the group. This is not to say the previous examples are the only possibilities for characters to share an origin, but only that a shared starting point has a greater chance of limiting a player's choices when it comes to what he will make of his character. So, if diversity is what is sought and neither the Gamemaster nor players can think of a way to do so within a shared background, how should the player characters meet and join each other in forming a group?

Almost certainly all role-players are familiar with the old “you are all in a bar, at separate tables, and are approached to perform a task by a darkly clad, shadowy figure” method. This mysterious person inevitably draws the various player characters—who are strangers at this point—into a web of intrigue and deception that causes them to rely upon each other in order to see themselves through to a climactic end.

A few alterations to suit a super hero campaign, within which aliens, evil scientists and power-hungry secret societies seek to take over the world, can turn this common, tired cliché into a workable plot device that gives the group a solid foundation for their future together. Some of the other traditional Gamemaster standbys are to have the characters all framed for the same crime, having them in the same vicinity when a villainous attack occurs, they are all kidnapped or otherwise targeted by a mutual foe, or (to keep things very simple) they all share a similar, secondary background element, such as a friend, relative or workplace that allows them to accidentally learn of each other's secret lives and band together.

How to introduce new player characters into an established super hero group is another matter all together. This event can occur when a player character's death forces him to roll up a new hero or if a new player has been allowed to join an ongoing campaign. The easiest way to handle this problem is to have the new character “try out” for the team, either by luckily having the new character nearby when the group must face a rampaging evil, or by actually holding auditions if the group is established,

reputable and respected enough to be able to do so. It is also possible for the new character to be a relation of another character, even the deceased (“It was too bad about Gamma Ray Gus, but he died like a hero. Good thing for us that his son, Gamma Ray Garry, is here to follow in his footsteps!”)

Resources and wealth will also come into play, as a character from a higher socioeconomic background will be more likely to pull together and finance a team's need that someone who is pulling down minimum wage in his secret identity. But just how wealthy is “wealthy?” Is it rich enough to create an immense, armored underground lair with concealed airstrip, supercomputers, training rooms and souped-up vehicles like a supersonic jet plane and turbine-powered car? Or is it only rich enough to have a nice family manor, a room in the west wing devoted to a gym, and a sports car with a few modifications? The answer largely lies in the Gamemaster's hands and should depend on the type of campaign that is going to be run, thereby limiting the amount of PP that may be spent on such things to what suits the game rather than what the players can afford to spend PP on in a vacuum of relative sense.

Furthermore, if the players' are going to play a group that is supposed to have been established already, and the Gamemaster has no problem with the players having all of these gadgets (it makes sense for their backgrounds and ability to fund), then it is certainly all right for them to possess these items at the start of the game. If, however, the campaign starts with none of the heroes knowing each other and progresses from there to bring about the founding of a new super hero group, the Gamemaster should definitely not allow the group to have so many toys (or maybe restrict them to just one character, the wealthy one, who later shares his money for the good of the group.)

A good deal of the fun in playing a super hero group from its inception is enjoying the sense of discovery and newness that accompanies such an initial meshing of different character types and origins. The enjoyment from playing out the group's origin instead of just jumping in with things already setup is enhanced for the players by allowing them to aid in the designing of their headquarters, equipment, weapons and vehicles as a part of the campaign's plot, something that is missed out on if the players start a game with an established group.

Another consideration is whether the heroes are sanctioned agents of the government, do they work for a private organization or corporation, or are they independent (and thus likely to be seen as criminal vigilantes in the eyes of the law)? Starting off with an official status with a corporation or government may be fun, but it can also be enjoyable to begin

the campaign as wanted freelancers who later on earn the right to be deputized agents of the military or police. In short, attaining their resources, no matter what they may be, is often best left as a part of the adventure and not as a part of the adventure's background (in this author's opinion, anyway.)

Okay, so now that the players are in their group and have all of their cool gear, how should the Gamemaster handle their individual personalities and origins? To best create a sense of comic book action and heroic drama, the Gamemaster should encourage the players to delve into their character's quirks and personality traits in order to help create the group dynamic. Once the players get into the habit of doing this, the Gamemaster can then begin to dip into each character's background to find material for subplots.

By way of example, if one hero in the group gained his powers in a laboratory accident, how would he react if the lab assistant whom he thought was killed in the tragedy suddenly reappeared as a vengeful villain? Would he feel guilty and therefore be reluctant to battle his old friend? Would he have to act quickly to stop this unexpected turn of events before his secret identity is revealed? Or how about an alien character fleeing the unfair justice of her homeworld? Do law enforcement agents or bounty hunters from her planet show up and begin making trouble for the entire group? How should the team react in the first place, after all, the aliens are the police (even if they are from a different world)? Could the group's defense of their friend, despite her being considered a criminal on her own world (for whatever reasons), possibly result in unfortunate consequences for the entire planet? Or perhaps a character's wife is getting tired of her husband always disappearing without an explanation. Could she believe him to be having an affair and threaten to divorce him? Will she take up and leave with their children when he is off on a mission? Will he be forced to tell her the truth?

Such subplots are only fun if the players first create a detailed background and are later willing to explore the intricacies of their character's personality. Refusing to do either will make the designing of subplots more difficult for the Gamemaster because he will have no way of predicting how a character will react to the situation once it is presented; he could spend several days preparing a cool subplot for one of the player characters only to have the character stubbornly refuse to play along once presented with the story element. This is frustrating for the Gamemaster, to say the least.

It is also just as dangerous to make a subplot that is too involved; when reading comic book titles for a super hero group, you'll notice subplots for a single

character are drawn out over many (sometimes dozens) of books instead of interspersing them more longitudinally. Such timing is equally important in a game because the Gamemaster must simultaneously satisfy all of his players with subplots of their own and each will get bored and frustrated if they are made to wait great lengths while the Gamemaster plays out a story for one player character alone. Preventing this requires the Gamemaster to play up to the characters' backgrounds and personalities a bit at a time, never revealing too much too fast. Good pacing is as much the key to a good subplot as is a good imagination.

So now that we have the heroes together, we know who they are, how they gained their powers and why they formed together as a team, all that's left is to play the game and have a lot of fun!

TEAMING UP—SUPER HERO GROUPS

Why should a Gamemaster use non-player character (NPC) hero groups in a campaign, after all, aren't the player characters enough? Quite frankly, sometimes the answer is a loudly shouted "NO!" Anyone who reads comic books and keeps track of the trends in the industry knows that one of the most popular (and best selling) type of books are those with two or more groups of heroes teaming up or facing off for a single encounter or for an entire mini series. These comics are so popular because they help to fulfill the fan's question of "I wonder what would happen if Hero X faced off against Hero Y?," a curiosity that would otherwise be unanswerable in practical terms. These comics also allow the reader to see how his favorite heroes react to each other, interacting in new ways with different people and possibly fighting villains that they would not normally face. Super hero role-playing is no different.

Moreover, most players of **M&M Superlink** have a pretty good idea of what the game's setting is supposed to be like, including the heroes and villains involved, because they are likely to have read the same sourcebooks as the Gamemaster. Even if the players have never opened one of these books before, they are probably aware their characters are not the only good guys around fighting the forces of evil. So then, to present to a player the idea that they are only ever going to cross paths with villain after villain and never so much as see an NPC hero is ridiculous and can detract from the game's internal sensibility. Not only this, but to deny the player characters the opportunity to interact with their peers is to deny them a chance to role-play and have some fun with

some NPCs who want to do something other than just beat them up and rob the local bank. Enter the concept of the “crossover.”

The player characters can meet a group of heroes in a crossover game session for any number of reasons. Obviously, if the player characters are hunting down or otherwise involved with a group of dastardly super villains who operate on a large scale (world conquest, submerging the eastern seaboard, killing the first born son of every household—you get the idea), then it is highly likely that other heroes from the subject area have also taken note of the situation.

Crossovers can also occur when there is a misunderstanding between two or more groups of heroes. Maybe the established NPC heroes do not agree with the methods and goals of the mysterious player characters or merely want to learn more about them. In so doing, a confusing incident occurs which leads to a battle. This scenario can be great fun because the player characters are forced to defend themselves while knowing they really don't want to be fighting people who are also on the side of law and order. As such, the heroes will have to defeat the NPC without overly harming or killing them—probably requiring a lot of extra planning and quick thinking on the part of the players rather than allowing them to resort to pure brawn and deadly blasts of energy. Whether the NPC heroes are going to likewise restrict the violence of their methods—though they more than likely will, they are heroes after all—is another matter.

NPC hero groups can also be helpful to create entire storylines for the game's future or to add fuel to already existing plot elements. Does one of the player characters save the life of a heroine from the other group, setting the stage for a possible romance? Does the resolution of a misunderstanding (and unfortunate battle) between the two groups set them on a path towards friendship that will later see them both acting together to fight an overwhelming, common foe, or do the two groups become embittered over the incident and a rivalry (friendly or otherwise) or outright hatred arises, leading to a series of battles and cases of one-upmanship in the future?

And the Gamemaster should not be afraid to take the information provided and alter it as he sees fit. The sourcebooks are meant to be a foundation for the Gamemaster's campaign and should not become a rigid boundary that hampers the imagination. If the Gamemaster so desires, the player characters could become involved in a situation (or series thereof) that radically alters an NPC super hero group or individual character. Was one of the player characters unfortunate enough to be the cause of an accident that kills one of the NPC or someone they care

about, leading that NPC or his teammates to swear to have the character responsible brought to justice (or worse yet, to see his head on a platter)?

Maybe the two groups had teamed up against some powerful villains and during the battle an NPC hero is captured because of a player character's actions. Is the NPC killed? Was he tortured only to later return seeking revenge on the player character? Do the villains brainwash him into becoming a criminal himself, something that may cause the once-hero's previous teammates to look upon the player group none too favorably (see *Fallen Angel* in **Misfits & Menaces: Mixed Villains**, also by **Misfit Studios**, for an example of this.) It is also quite possible that a relationship (of friendship or something more) between a player character and an NPC hero may lead to the NPC leaving his or her previous group to join that of the player character. If this happens, does the NPC's leaving cause bad feelings between the two groups or do they remain friends? The possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of the players and Gamemaster (and maybe also by the size of the comic book collections that they can reference for ideas when stumped.)

Be careful not to let the NPC heroes rob the spotlight, however. Sure, it is sometimes necessarily humbling to have a group of NPC heroes swoop in at the right moment to pull the player characters out of the fire, but the player characters should then be given the opportunity to return the favor for the sense of their own satisfaction and to keep the campaign's plot balanced. To make NPCs the center of a campaign's attention not only lessens the players' fun but it also makes them feel as though they are no longer a part of the plot and now only an extra pair of hands to roll dice for the Gamemaster as the latter tells his story. The focus of using a group of NPC heroes to aid the player characters should always be on cooperation (or opposition) and the shared goal, not on whether or not the player characters *needed* the NPCs' help to finish the mission. If the players ever get the sense that the Gamemaster is using the NPC heroes to rub the players' noses in their mistakes or shortcomings, the Gamemaster can look forward to having a disgruntled group on his hands (and rightfully so.)

THE LONE WOLF

For some super heroes, working in a group provides a sense of security in the knowledge that someone is watching your back and that the strengths of one's teammates will make up for one's own vulnerabilities. As part of a team, a hero has the option of versatility, of choosing to fight the opponent whose

abilities best suits his own, and the benefit of knowing you can likely accomplish far more as a group than any one member could alone. Then again, some who choose to fight for the cause of justice see things differently.

Justice is not always the same as the law, and so there are men and women who fight for the rights of their fellow man under their own terms and are branded as criminals for doing so. Such vigilantes will do what they think to be right at the expense of the trust of heroes who work within the law. Many heroes who follow the letter of the law would just as gladly see the vigilante behind bars as they would a destructive villain. For this reason if no other, most vigilantes operate on their own or with a few allies who have proven themselves to be of a like mind. Almost as a rule, vigilantes (the more violent variety in particular) prefer to fight a lonely war from the shadows, existing between the brilliance of the law and the darkness of corruption.

This is not to try and say that all solo heroes are law breaking, self-righteous vigilantes. There are certainly an equal if not greater number of heroes who are considered vigilantes because they do not have the official backing of a government body, although they adhere to the law as strictly as would any peace officer. Why then would these noble heroes work alone? Some have simply not yet found a team that will accept them (or that they are willing to join), others may be rogues who left just such a group in the past or whose teammates were all killed or retired, they may believe other heroes won't agree with their personal vendetta, or maybe they simply desire to fight the forces of evil on their own.

No matter why a hero chooses to walk a lonely path, almost all inevitably find themselves teaming up with other heroes—if only for a brief while—at various times in their career, and it is within these opportunities there may be found the opportunity for interaction with the player characters.



The Cowl

PL 5

STR

DEX

CON

INT

WIS

CHA

+2

+5

+2

+2

+2

+4

15

20

15

14

15

19

TOUGH

+2/+4

FORT

+7

REF

+12

WILL

+9

Skills: Acrobatics 12 (+17), Bluff 10 (+14), Climb 3 (+5), Computers 1 (+3), Concentration 5 (+7), Craft (chemical) 4 (+6), Craft (electronic) 6 (+8), Craft (mechanical) 2 (+4), Disable Device 2 (+4), Disguise 2 (+6), Drive 1 (+6), Escape Artist 8 (+13), Gather Information 1 (+5), Intimidate 1 (+5), Investigate 3 (+5), Knowledge (arcane lore) 1 (+3), Knowledge (business) 3 (+5), Knowledge (history) 2 (+4), Knowledge (physical sciences) 3 (+5), Knowledge (streetwise) 1 (+3), Knowledge (super-beings) 4 (+6) *, Language (French, Hindi), Notice 3 (+5), Perform (dance) 4 (+8), Profession (hypnotist) 7 (+9) *, Profession (illusionist/stage magician) 10 (+12), Profession (impressionist) 1 (+3), Search 2 (+4), Sense Motive 4 (+6), Sleight of Hand 10 (+15), Stealth 8 (+13), Swim 2 (+4)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Ambidexterity, Attack Focus (melee) 4, Attractive, Benefit (Wealth) 3, Blind-fight, Breakfall 2 *, Connected (business world, stage magicians) 2 *, Contacts (business world, stage magicians) 2 *, Defensive Roll, Distract, Dodge Focus 4, Elusive Target, Equipment 15, Evasion, Fascinate (Bluff, Profession [illusionist/stage magician]) 2, Hide In Plain Sight, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Master Plan *, Improved Throw, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Inventor, Master Plan, Mesmerist *, Quick Change, Quick Draw, Reliable Attack (whip) *, Sneak Attack, Startle, Wire Fighter *

Powers: Gadgets 5 (6 PP/rank) 30

Equipment: Undercover shirt. The seams and cuffs of the Cowl's suit hide wire and lock picks while the belt buckle has a hidden compartment filled with gunpowder and a piece of flint. Also hidden in pockets in the cloak, inner lining of the jacket and just behind the neck are a variety of gimmicks, including flash powder, a miniature camera, miniature audio recorder, rope and miniature grappling hook, explosive pellets, mini-tracers, caltrops, and any number of other useful items. He'll also carry a number of Devices made with his Gadget power, as suits his goals. Heavy pistol, bolos, whip.

Drawbacks: Damage Restriction (gadgets, non-lethal only) -1

Combat: Attack +4 (+8 melee), Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (heavy pistol), +2 (whip), Defense +6 (+10 dodge), Initiative +9

Abilities 38 + Skills 32 (128 ranks) + Feats 58 + Powers 30 + Combat 20 + Saves 19 - Drawbacks 1 = 196

* See *Better Mousetrap*

Desmond Coleridge III was always a bright, dexterous child who was seen as a marvel by his parents, the wealthy industrialists from Ottawa, Mary and Desmond Coleridge II. Before he was finished high school, Desmond was performing live magic shows at local dinner clubs under the comical name "The Great Mesmeero," staging displays of illusion and mentalist ingenuity that surprised and entertained even the greatest of skeptics. Despite being famous socialites, Desmond's parents were surprisingly supportive of their son's gift. In fact, when he graduated from college they encouraged him to travel the world for a few years to ply his trade and see the sights. Marcus, Desmond's envious and spiteful younger brother was all too happy to see him gone.

Desmond eventually found his way to India where he stayed for many years, studying mysticism and gaining a reputation as a skilled illusionist, eventually meeting and marrying a local woman. They had several months of incredible joy together before she was robbed and killed as onlookers did nothing because the caste-minded locals disapproved of her marriage to a foreigner. Overcome with grief, Desmond returned home to his loving parents. No longer able to look at society with the closed eyes of an idle bystander, the mourning magician used his father's growing influence and finances to secretly fund his new ambition: a personal war on crime and racism. Ottawa soon found itself with a shadowy new hero, one who quickly earned the respect of the public and police alike, but his secret couldn't stay hidden forever. After a few months of sneaking about as the Cowl, Desmond's parents finally uncovered the truth.

When his brother, Marcus, returned from his own globetrotting quest of self-discovery a few years later, he not only found that his parents were allowing Desmond to take over control of the family businesses but he was also let in on the latest

Real Name:
Desmond Coleridge III

Aliases:
The Great Mesmeero

Threat Level: Beta

Age: 38

Height: 5 feet, 9 in.

Weight: 178 lbs

Native Language:
English

B

family secret. Angered at how his parents could talk about nothing except how exceptional Desmond was, Marcus' old jealousies came to a head. Losing control in his anger, Marcus killed both his mother and father before escaping into the night, leaving a stunned Desmond to grieve for their loss.

Vowing to avenge his parents and bring his brother—now the international assassin Bloodbath (see **Misfits & Menaces: Mixed Villains**, also by **Misfit Studios**)—to justice, Desmond has taken on his duties as the Cowl with renewed vigor. Although both Desmond and Marcus are aware of the other's secret identity, neither has released it to the world for fear of their own secrets being revealed in the process. However, Desmond now uses his vast resources to continue to fight crime and to track his brother around the world.

Desmond has a swashbuckling personality. He is extremely charming, cavalier and has more than a little rogue in him. However, he still maintains his morality and sense of honor and fairness, using these ethics as the basis for his crime fighting. Desmond will do almost anything to protect innocents, especially children, whom he sees as the only true means to bettering society.

Appearance: Desmond is a handsome man with a truly dashing appearance, nearing middle age. His once-black hair is graying at the sides, is trimmed short and swept backwards. He has a fine, Roman nose above a well-groomed gray moustache that hangs just past the corners of his mouth while keen and kind, gray eyes peer forth from above.

As the Cowl, Desmond wears a dark blue suit styled after the traditional magician's suit of the '30s with a black mask making it seem as though there is no face beneath the deep purple cape and cowl from which he draws his name. Within the folds of his suit, hood and gray gloves are hidden numerous items, tools and tricks while his pistol and trademark whip hang from his black leather belt, concealed within the folds of his cloak. Cowl does not like to use the pistol (he has a code against killing) and reserves it for emergencies.

PLAYING A 150 PP COWL

Using the Cowl as a PL 10 player character requires cutting his expended PP back to 150. Here are some suggestions on doing so:

- Reduce his **Gadgets** ranks (–6 PP per rank) or remove the power altogether (–30 PP)
- Reduce the ranks of skills not directly related to his career as an illusionist or remove them altogether (PP values vary)

- Reduce the ranks of feats not directly related to his career as an illusionist or remove them altogether (PP values vary)

TEAM—UP IDEAS

The following may give Gamemasters ideas on how to incorporate the Cowl into their game.

THE BLACK COWL

Eyewitness and victim reports are circulating regarding the Cowl committing crimes. So far nothing too violent—robberies, burglaries and the like—but some minor injuries have been inflicted and the rogue hero's tactics seem to be getting more brutal with each act. Regardless of why the Cowl has suddenly turned “black hat” (or, more appropriately, “black cowl”) there is little refuting that if he keeps up at his current rate of escalation it's only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt or even killed. The player characters will have to stop him.

However, the Cowl has not actually turned over to the other side; he is totally innocent of the charges leveled against him and has been working tirelessly to uncover the truth about whoever is trying to frame him. This has the regrettable side-effect of preventing the Cowl from working the streets and putting criminals away, activities that would almost certainly made people question the truth of the “black” Cowl's identity.

Will the player characters encounter the real Cowl and try to bring him in, possibly revealing his true identity in the process before the mystery can be solved, or will they catch the imposter (whoever he may be) and put an end to his frame up in time?

ALL FOR CHARITY

The player character heroes are participating in a local charity event for a children's hospital, along with the Cowl and several other widely respected do-gooders. The Cowl's act will include a magic trick using a “magic cupboard,” chains included, once belonging to Harry Houdini and donated anonymously. As the trick gets underway, the Cowl enters the cupboard and assistants lock the chains and push it into a transparent tank of water, pointing out the Cowl has less than three minutes of air to escape. That's when things go terribly wrong.

About thirty seconds into the trick the cupboard and its chains begin to noticeably shake, stirring up the water. Soon after, the water begins to glow with a violet, iridescent light emitted by previously invisible arcane markings on the cupboard's exterior. Moments later, the chains tear themselves apart, shattering the glass tank and splashing the first few rows, also sending skyward a fountain of water as the cupboard bursts open, unleashing

a dark, purple vortex from which flies a horde of foul creatures and monsters.

Not only will the player characters have to protect the innocent bystanders from the unleashed monsters, but they'll also have to seal the vortex that continues to release more creatures, find out what happened to the Cowl, and then try and track down who donated the magician's cupboard and uncover their intentions lest there be worse things to come.

UNMASKING HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

Following a recent highly visible, daylight assassination of a peace ambassador between two foreign, warring factions being hosted on neutral soil (the city wherein the player characters operate) the Cowl has come to enlist the heroes in tracking down the killer, Bloodbath. The Cowl can take it no longer and has come to terms with the fact that every day

Bloodbath remains free due to the masked hero's fear of having his own identity revealed as a result is another day someone may die. As such, the Cowl has revealed both identities to the heroes (and even the authorities, if need be) so the proper steps may be taken to bring Bloodbath to justice.

If the Cowl is forced to reveal his identity to the public, not only will Bloodbath be easier to track but it shall also provide the unfortunate opportunity for the hero's many other enemies to come after Desmond and anyone he holds dear. The player characters will need to help track down Bloodbath help protect the

Cowl and anyone close to him long enough for the case to wrap up and for Desmond to disappear into a witness protection program or the like.



Real Name:
Bollan Jackman

Aliases:
The Amazing
Wizard of Swords

Threat Level: Beta

Age: 39

Height: 5 feet, 7 in.

Weight: 194 lbs

Native Language:
German

The elder brother of the Jackman twins (or, as they are better known these days, Major and Minor—see CORE's The Elite in **Better Mousetrap**, also by **Misfit Studios**, for details), Bollan was an entertainer in the same circus as his siblings. A sword swallower, knife thrower, and prestidigitator of other miraculous tricks with blades, Bollan had also operated as a masked crime fighter in his native Germany before rejoining his brothers on the circus circuit, but then came the day of a mysterious call for aid from one of Bollan's old super hero partners. Unable to refuse the plea for help, he left, promising his younger brothers he would meet them and the circus train at their next stop. But the train never got there.

Hearing of the wreck that killed the entire troop except for the twins, Bollan rushed to the scene only to discover that CORE had gotten to his brothers first and secreted them away to an unknown hospital for treatment. Considering both always had always possessed a cruel streak, it took very little encouragement for the terrorists to recruit the twins once they were released.

B Mortified that his own flesh and blood had become what he had spent several years of his life fighting against, Bollan nearly fell into despair but instead found a renewed sense of purpose. With the circus destroyed and his only family traitors to everything that he held dear, the master of blades saw no choice but to return to his old identity as the crime fighter, Damocles. The first order of business would be to track down and deal with his rebellious siblings.

Damocles, despite using swords to fight crime, tends to believe in non-violence as the first tool to resolving any situation, but this does not mean that he will not use force if necessary. He views all life as precious and so will resort to the extreme of killing only in the most desperate of necessities. His devotion to justice is unwavering, however, and he cannot easily be tempted or swayed off its path. This has allowed him to construct his own chivalric code of honor that often gets him in as much trouble as it saves him from.

Appearance: Bollan has a tightly cropped goatee and wispy, dark hair that is thinning and starting to turn gray. His costume is a mix of light green and black, a simple affair that increases the intimidating effect of the sword hanging behind his back.

Damocles, Master Of Blades

PL 14

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| +4 | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | +2 |
| 18 | 20 | 18 | 13 | 13 | 15 |

TOUGH

+4

Skills: Acrobatics 7 (+12), Bluff 5 (+7), Climb 4 (+8), Concentration 6 (+7), Craft (mechanical) 5 (+6), Disable Device 3 (+4), Drive 1 (+6), Escape Artist 3 (+8), Gather Information 2 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+6), Investigate 2 (+3), Knowledge (streetwise) 2 (+3), Knowledge (super-beings) 2 (+3) *, Language (English, French), Notice 4 (+5), Perform (dance) 5 (+7), Search 3 (+4), Sleight of Hand 1 (+6), Stealth 3 (+8)

FORT

+8

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, All-Out Attack, Ambidexterity, Assessment, Attractive 2, Blind-Fight, Breakfall *, Contacts (circus folk) *, Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus 3, Elusive Target, Endurance 2, Equipment 2, Evasion, Improved Block, Improved Critical (swords) 3, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Moment of Weakness (block, disarm, feint) 3 *, Quick Draw, Ranged Pin, Redirect, Reliable Attack (swords) *, Specialization (Craft [mechanical]: blades) *, Throwing Mastery 2, Uncanny Dodge (auditory, visual) 2, Weapon Bind, Weapon Break

REF

+11

Powers: Device 2 (sword; 8 PP; 3 PP/rank) ■ **Extra Attacks 2** ** (Power Feats: Combo [unarmed, sword], Mobility, Quickened Charge; Flaws: Declining) ■ **Leaping 1** ■ **Super-Movement 2** (Sure Footed 2) ■ **Super-Senses 5** (Danger sense [auditory; accurate, extended 2]) ■ **Weapon Master 8** * (Power Feats: Fine Touch, Swashbuckler 3; Flaws: Swords only)

WILL

+6

Equipment: Sword: **Strike 3** ‡ (blade; Power Feats: Improved Critical, Mighty, Alternate Powers—**Strike 2** ‡ [chain; Power Feats: Extended Reach 2, Mighty]), four knives

Combat: Attack +8 (+16 swords), Damage +12 (16-20, sword), +6 (chain), +5 (knife), +7 (thrown knife), Defense +8 (+11 dodge), Initiative +9

Abilities 37 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 40 + Powers 55 + Combat 32 + Saves 15 = 195

* See *Better Mousetrap*

** See *Misfits & Menaces: DOOM*

‡ Dynamic

Damocles is armed with an incredibly resilient scimitar he forged himself. Concealed within the sword's hilt is length of chain with a weight on the end. Typically, Damocles will use the scimitar in

one hand while whirling its extended chain with the other. He also hides a pair of throwing daggers in each boot.

PLAYING A 150 PP DAMOCLES

Using Damocles as a PL 10 player character requires cutting his expended PP back to 150. Here are some suggestions on doing so:

- Reduce his **Extra Attacks** to one rank (–4 PP) or remove entirely (–11 PP)
- Reduce his **Weapons Master** power by several ranks (–3 PP per rank)
- Reduce his **Attack** (which will need to be done to reach player character PL restrictions anyway) (–2 PP per +1)
- Reduce his **feats** (–1 PP per feat rank)
- Remove his **danger sense** (–5 PP per rank)

TEAM—UP IDEAS

The following may give Gamemasters ideas on how to incorporate Damocles into their game.

BLADE IN THE BACK

Damocles has gone missing and none of his super heroic friends or acquaintances (including the player characters) have seen or heard from him in weeks. Pounding the streets and roughing up or tailing every assassin and known enemy of Damocles will turn up nothing until they start looking into the missing hero's personal communications. There will be an electronic trail (partially deleted voice mail, text messages, email, etc.) revealing the villains, Major and Minor, had contacted him immediately before his disappearance. (Obviously this adds a new dimension to things if the player characters do not know these members of CORE are Damocles' brothers.) Somehow the player characters will have to find the duo and learn what they know and rescue the latter (if necessary) in the process.

DUEL OF MASTERS

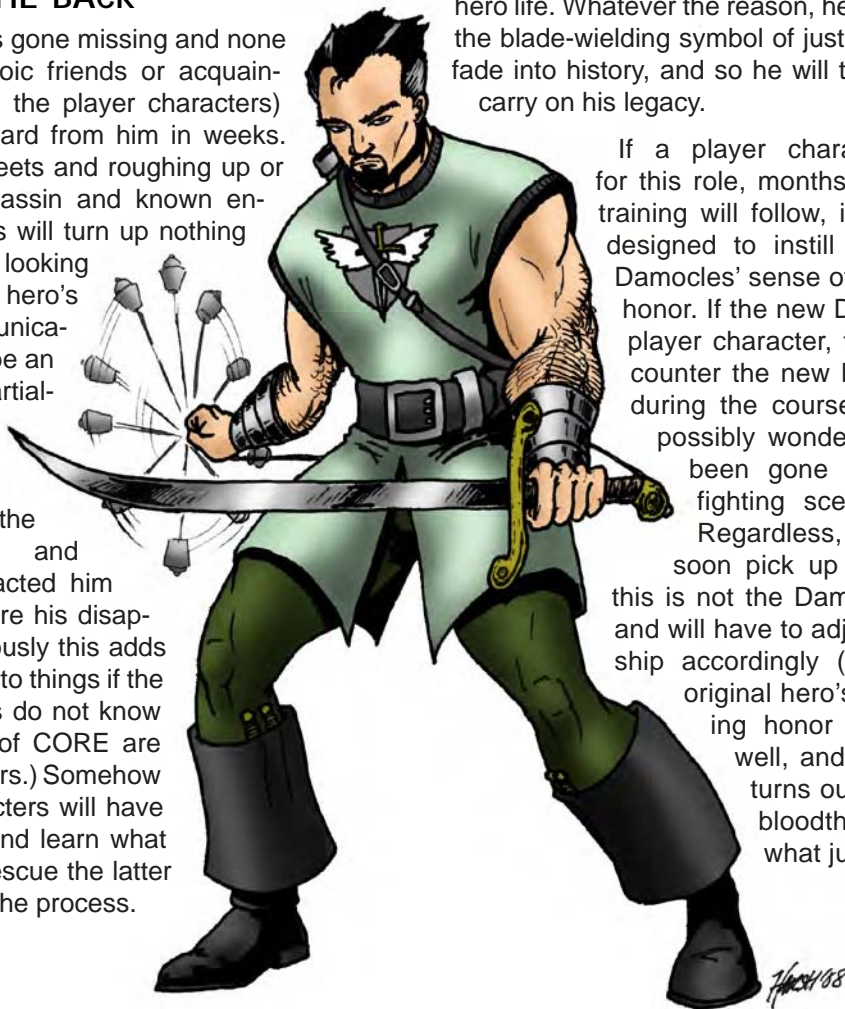
A villain known for his deadly use of a sword has taken it upon himself to challenge Damocles for the title of the one and only, true master of the sword. Too bad for this villain, but Damocles has better things to do than address a bad guy's ego issues, and so the hero leaves the challenge unanswered. This only serves to fuel the villain's conceit further and he begins striking throughout the area at random, killing people at a whim, claiming he shall continue to do so until Damocles meets him for a duel to the death.

As it turns out, one of those things that Damocles was busy doing has unavoidably made it impossible for him to attend the duel. If Damocles fails to come, sword in hand and on his own, the villain is threatening to begin detonating some deadly surprises he's hidden around the city. Will the heroes be able to step in and undo the villain's plans, possibly by disguising one of their number as Damocles and fighting in his stead, or perhaps by finding the villain's contingencies and disarming them?

PASSING ON THE BLADE

Damocles has decided to retire, perhaps because he was injured or maybe he's just tired of the super hero life. Whatever the reason, he has decided that the blade-wielding symbol of justice cannot simply fade into history, and so he will take on a pupil to carry on his legacy.

If a player character is chosen for this role, months (if not years) of training will follow, including lessons designed to instill the initiate with Damocles' sense of both justice and honor. If the new Damocles is not a player character, the latter will encounter the new Master of Blades during the course of their duties, possibly wondering why he has been gone from the crime-fighting scene for so long. Regardless, the heroes will soon pick up on the fact that this is not the Damocles they know and will have to adjust their relationship accordingly (especially if the original hero's lessons regarding honor didn't take very well, and his replacement turns out to have a more bloodthirsty opinion of what justice entails.)



THE PACK

Engineered and created by the corrupt A.E.G.I.S. corporation (see **Misfits & Menaces: Mixed Villains**, also by **Misfit Studios**) by means of a series of shadowy experiments for the American military, the prototypes of Project Kennel escaped from the company's laboratories and now seek a new life. Dogs were chosen for this project because of their innate loyalty to man and instinctive understanding and acceptance of a rigid command hierarchy, factors that were expected to make them perfect soldiers. Understandably, your average American citizen would consider such mutations to be abominations against the natural and divine order, and so A.E.G.I.S. and the military both agreed to shroud the experiments in complete secrecy, which is why it is so important to retrieve their fugitive prototypes.

When the first of Project Kennel's successes, Alpha, learned of A.E.G.I.S.' intentions for him and his fellows, the mutant German Shepherd began to plot their escape. Thanks to his military training it did not take long for him to gain access to facility's floor plans, nor was it difficult for him to "convince" a lab assistant to leave his cage door unlocked one night. Having freed the other prototype mutants, Alpha and the other escapees fled into the countryside, using their training to vanish with barely a trace to follow.

During the years that followed, the Pack (as these mutant canines now call themselves) has used everything they know to stay out of A.E.G.I.S.'s long reach. Many times they have been run to ground and forced to fight off agents working for either their creator or the military, some of which also possessed metahuman abilities bestowed by A.E.G.I.S. Each time, though, the Pack's unified spirit and indomitable desire to remain free has provided them with the edge they needed to escape. At a high cost, the Pack's pursuers have learned the fugitives fight much more viciously and desperately when cornered. Of all A.E.G.I.S.' agents, the vicious killer Catspaw has come the closest to successfully snaring the escaped mutants.

As is to be expected of any intelligent creature, mere survival alone has not been enough to sustain the Pack's five members and so, when they are not running from their would-be-masters, they

are looking to discover what their role in the "grand scheme" may be. While some among the Pack seek their answers through spirituality and examining the philosophical and theological ramifications of what it means to be artificially created, others have instead chosen to search outwards. This has lead the Pack into many adventures as they seek to prove to themselves (and, indeed, all humanity) that they are not monsters.

Alpha has lead his brethren across the country in their search for someone to champion their cause before the American courts of both law and public opinion, but so far something or other has always stood in their way. Luckily, during their search the Pack's natural desire to help mankind and do what is right has gained them some recognition as heroic souls. Most of the people the Pack have helped, and all of the reporters that have managed to photograph or video tape them, have assumed the canines are actually hideously mutated humans, a belief that has helped A.E.G.I.S. maintain its secret so far, but if the Pack ever gains a voice with the public this lie will be exposed.

Scattered about the country there are already men and women who owe the Pack their lives and have believed what they learned of their saviors' origins. These grateful individuals have begun a small movement on the Internet that hopes to expose the truth regarding A.E.G.I.S. and see the outlaw Pack vindicated. Whether this effort will work appears unlikely at the moment, but who knows what may happen or how the movement may grow if the Pack continues to help people?

Although each of their heroic endeavors risks exposing them to their pursuers, the Pack will continue to do what they feel is right until they are captured or achieve the freedom they seek so fervently. Were the truth about the Pack to come to light, A.E.G.I.S. would certainly have a lot of explaining to do (as would the military), and so the corporation will do whatever it takes to ensure their privacy in this matter, including the destruction of their valuable prototypes if no other solution presents itself.



Real Name: **ALPHA**
Specimen 3

Aliases: George

Threat Level:
Beta-P

Age: 11

Height: 5 feet, 3 in.

Weight: 138 lbs

Native Language:
English

The first of Project Kennel's successes, Specimen 3 was designed to be a field commander and was already six years old before the second success was created. Having already received his full training, and with so much time to piece together the bits of information his creators inadvertently let slip when they though he wasn't listening, it was Alpha who realized that he and the other experiments had been designed to harm humans and not to help them, as he had been lead to believe. Shocked to his very core that everything he held dear was a lie meant to humble his free will and make him a good soldier, Specimen 3 began to set his gifted genius to the task of finding a way out for himself and the rest of Project Kennel's prototypes.

Since successfully escaping and assuming the pseudonym Alpha, Specimen 3 has slipped naturally into the role of the Pack's leader, a position that has been encoded into his very genes. And while he will always prefer to try and think or talk his way out of a fight, Alpha will give an admirable showing if forced into combat. Alpha cares deeply for the rest of the Pack and views them as family. He also cares deeply for human innocence and would willingly risk his own life if it meant saving his kin or a human from danger.

In a fight, Alpha will use his computer-like mind to formulate a plan, while hanging back to both direct the battle and provide covering fire to his allies. He will also use his ability to influence others to calm and evacuate innocent bystanders and to confuse opponents, putting them off guard long enough for one of the other Pack members to step in and handle things.

Alpha is truly a noble creature, possessing a need to do what is right and to see life protected that few other beings can match. Despite the computer-like way his mind was designed, he remains somewhat slaved to his bestial origins and so endeavors to maintain a constant hold over his animal rage upon witnessing a horrific and evil act, but he is not always successful (to his private shame.)

Appearance: Alpha is a well-groomed, mutant German shepherd who stands as erect as any man. A scar runs down and across the left side of his face and through his lips, a reminder of the cost of failing to sufficiently impress A.E.G.I.S.'s taskmasters. He wears jeans, a beaten leather jacket, and a simple t-shirt with a large "A" centered upon the chest. He's also taken to smoking cheap cigars.



| Alpha | | | | PL 9 | |
|--|--|-----|-------|------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +2 | +1 | +3 | +4/+8 | +6 | +4 |
| 15 | 13 | 16 | 18/26 | 22 | 19 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+5), Bluff 6 (+10), Computers 2 (+6/+10), Concentration 2 (+8), Craft (chemical) 2 (+6/+10), Craft (mechanical) 2 (+6/+10), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Disable Device 2 (+6/+10), Drive 2 (+3), Gather Information 2 (+6), Handle Animal 4 (+8), Intimidate 1 (+5), Knowledge (history) 2 (+6/+10), Knowledge (physical sciences) 2 (+6/+10), Knowledge (tactics) 1/9 (+5/+13), Medicine 1 (+7), Notice 4 (+10), Sense Motive 4 (+10), Stealth 3 (+4), Survival 1 (+7), Swim 1 (+3) | | | | |
| | +3/+6 | | | | |
| FORT | Feats: Animal Empathy, Assessment, Attack Focus (ranged) 2, Defensive Roll, Endurance, Equipment 4, Fascinate (Bluff, Diplomacy) 2, Fearless, Improved Master Plan *, Inspire, Master Plan, Seize Initiative, Set-Up, Specialization (Craft [chemical]: explosives, Craft [mechanical]: explosives, Disable Device: explosives) 3 *, Teamwork, Track, Trainer * | | | | |
| | +7 | | | | |
| REF | Powers: Comprehend 1 (animals; <i>Flaws:</i> Dogs only) ■ Emotion Control 9 (<i>psychic; Power Feats:</i> Progression [area] 4; <i>Extras:</i> Burst; <i>Flaws:</i> Auditory-Dependent, Calm only, Touch) ■ Enhanced Eidetic Memory 1 * (<i>psychic</i>) ■ Enhanced Fearsome Presence 4 * (<i>psychic</i>) ■ Enhanced Intelligence 8 (<i>strategic mind; Extras:</i> Linked [Enhanced Knowledge (tactics)]) ■ Enhanced Knowledge (tactics) 2 * (<i>strategic mind; Power Feats:</i> Critical Skill; <i>Extras:</i> Linked [Enhanced Intelligence], Take 20) ■ Enhanced Rage 4 * (2 ranks of increased duration; <i>Power Feats:</i> Innate; <i>Flaws:</i> Uncontrollable [witnessing terrible/evil acts]) ■ Leaping 1 ■ Mind Shield 4 ■ Speed 1 ■ Super-Senses 3 (scent, tracking, ultra-hearing) | | | | |
| | +6 | | | | |
| WILL | Equipment: Sub-machine gun, leather jacket, undercover shirt | | | | |
| | Combat: Attack +5 (+7 ranged), Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (sub-machine gun), Defense +5, Initiative +1 | | | | |
| +10 Abilities 43 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 24 + Powers 37 + Combat 20 + Saves 13 = 150 | | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*

| Bloodhound | | | | PL 9 | |
|--|--|-----|-----|------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +4 | +4 | +4 | +2 | +0 | +0 |
| 18 | 19 | 18 | 14 | 11 | 10 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Drive 1 (+5), Climb 2 (+6), Concentration 7 (+7), Craft (electronic) 2 (+4), Disable Device 2 (+4), Disguise 4 (+4), Investigate 4 (+6), Knowledge (earth sciences) 2 (+4), Knowledge (tactics) 1 (+3), Notice 12 (+12), Profession (soldier) 4 (+4), Ride 1 (+5), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 3 (+3), Stealth 6 (+10), Survival 8 (+8), Swim 1 (+5) | | | | |
| | +4/+8 | | | | |
| FORT | Feats: Accurate Attack, Ambidexterity, Assessment, Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Attack Specialization (anti-materiel and sniper rifles) 2, Dodge Focus 2, Elusive Target, Endurance 2, Equipment 10, Evasion, Favored Environment (woodlands, swamp) 2, Fearless, Hide In Plain Sight, Improved Aim, Improved Critical (anti-materiel rifle 2, sniper rifle 2) 4, Master Trap Maker 7 *, Precise Shot, Reliable Attack (ranged) *, Sneak Attack, Teamwork, Track, Ultimate Skill (stealth, survival) 2, Uncanny Dodge (olfactory) | | | | |
| | +8 | | | | |
| REF | Powers: Leaping 1 ■ Speed 1 ■ Super-Movement 2 (sure-footed 2) ■ Super-Senses 17 (danger sense [olfactory], direction sense, distance sense, psychic awareness [extended 2], scent [accurate, analytical, counters concealment, extended], tracking 3, ultra-hearing) | | | | |
| | +6 | | | | |
| WILL | Equipment: Camo clothing, heavy pistol, knife, basic anti-materiel rifle (Damage +7; Crit 17-20; Ballistic, Bulky *, Encumbering −2 *, Heavy Recoil (very common, moderate) −4 *, Knockback 4 *, Penetrating 2; Range Inc. 200 ft.; Size Large; EP 22) *, tactical vest | | | | |
| | Combat: Attack +5 (+9 ranged, +11 anti-materiel & sniper rifles), Damage +4 (unarmed), +5 (19-20, knife), +4 (heavy pistol), +7 (15-20, anti-materiel rifle), Defense +6 (+8 dodge), Initiative +4 | | | | |
| +4 | | | | | |
| Abilities 30 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 49 + Powers 23 + Combat 22 + Saves 10 = 150 | | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*

BLOODHOUND

Specimen 26, the second success of Project Kennel, seemed to be tailor fit to become a scout, sniper and spy. Bloodhound (named for his breed as well as his talents) mostly keeps to himself and tends to say very little, but when he does speak his calm sensibility carries a lot of weight with the rest of the Pack.

It is mostly thanks to the combination of Alpha's genius and Bloodhound's tracking and counter-tracking aptitudes that the five mutants have remained free from A.E.G.I.S. and the psychotic Catspaw for so long. Whenever the Pack is forced to move on to a new area, Bloodhound will scout it first and choose a defensible spot to set-up camp until they are (inevitably) found and need to pull up stakes yet again. It is a cycle that won't end until A.E.G.I.S.' activities are brought to light and the Pack are recognized as sentient beings with rights to their own destinies.

Bloodhound possesses a gentle tenderness towards all living things and it is only with intense regret that he will kill or even harm another. When forced into a fight, Bloodhound must suppress his natural gentleness and, with great sadness, will do everything in his power to protect his friends, even if that means killing. He will first try to find any concealed opponents and will then point them out to his allies to be dealt with. Having done that, he will attempt to find an optimal position from which to snipe with his .50 caliber anti-materiel rifle.

Appearance: A much more successful mix of human and canine DNA than Alpha, Bloodhound's face has round, human-like eyes, very short fur, a small nose that only slightly resembles a snout and drooping cheeks that are a holdover from his canine dewlaps. If he has a hood drawn up or is in shadows or darkness, Bloodhound can pass for a human but his true nature will be revealed in good light. He usually wears clothing that allows him to remain camouflaged in his environment, whatever that may be.

Real Name:
Specimen 26

Aliases: Samuel, Silent Sam

Threat Level:
Beta-T

Age: 10

Height: 5 feet, 4 in.

Weight: 160 lbs

Native Language:
English



Real Name:
Specimen 52

Aliases: Bernie,
Burner

Threat Level:
Gamma-T

Age: 7

Height: 5 feet, 7 in.

Weight: 180 lbs

Native Language:
English

| Hotdog | | | | PL 8 | |
|--------------------|--|-----|-----|------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +2 | +5 | +3 | +0 | -1 | +3 |
| 15 | 21 | 16 | 10 | 8 | 16 |
| TOUGH +3 | Skills: Bluff 8 (+11), Diplomacy 1 (+4), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+2), Knowledge (super-beings) 2 (+2) *, Knowledge (streetwise) 3 (+3), Language (Spanish), Notice 4 (+3), Profession (soldier) 1 (+0), Stealth 2 (+7) | | | | |
| FORT +7 | Feats: Attack Specialization (plasma blast) 2, Banter, Dodge Focus 2, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Taunt | | | | |
| REF +10 | Powers: Alternate Form 10 (<i>fiery plasma</i> ; Blast 8 [Extras: Contagious], Energy Aura 3 , Flight 4 , Immunity 6 [heat, fire damage]) ■ Regeneration 23 (bruised/unconscious no action, injured/staggered/disabled 1 round, ability 20 minutes) ■ Strike 1 (<i>bite</i> ; <i>Power Feats</i> : Mighty) ■ Super-Senses 2 (scent, ultra-hearing) | | | | |
| WILL +3 | Combat: Attack +4 (+8 fire blast), Damage +3/+6 (19-20, bite), +2/+5 (unarmed), +8 (plasma blast), Defense +6 (+9 dodge), Initiative +9 | | | | |
| | Abilities 26 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 77 + Combat 20 + Saves 13 = 150 | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*



HOTDOG

Specimen 52 and his batch sister, Specimen 53, were the last of the five fugitives grown in A.E.G.I.S.' cloning vats, and thus only possessed a few months of training and social indoctrination when the Pack escaped. This left Specimen 52 and his sister (both mutated Dobermans) at the same intellectual and emotional level as young children during the first years of their flight from their creators, causing them both to cling to Alpha like pups to a parent. Although Hotdog still sees Alpha as a father and the rest of the Pack as family, he has since learned to act and think independently (for the most part), but he still has a tendency to defer to Alpha and Howl instead of trusting his own judgment.

In a fight Hotdog will take to the air and attempt to cover his family's backs with his impressive ranged attacks. He is a brave warrior who has learned most of what he knows while on the run, trying desperately to survive. This has built a desire to remain free that is as blazing as his powers—becoming a captive again would likely break his spirit utterly.

Hotdog is the Pack's token joker and he also considers himself to be quite the ladies' man (despite the way most women react when a dog-man flirts with them.) However, he is actually using his flip comments and witticisms to cover up his lack of confidence in himself and his powers. Hotdog is often afraid to speak his mind or voice his honest opinion, having found that agreeing with Alpha or Howl is much simpler and is less likely to reveal his own (believed) stupidity.

Appearance: Otherwise appearing as a humanoid cross between a Doberman and man, Hotdog's plasma form switches colors to suit his moods: bluish-green for normal and calm, greenish-yellow for excited or anxious, and reddish-purple for angry or frightened. He wears a body suit of loose molecules that is proof against being destroyed by this burning, alternate form.

| Howl | | | | PL 8 | |
|--------------|---|-----|-----|------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +2 | +6 | +3 | +0 | +2 | +3 |
| 15 | 22 | 16 | 11 | 14 | 16 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+8), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Escape Artist 1 (+7), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+2), Knowledge (streetwise) 1 (+1), Medicine 1 (+3), Notice 3 (+5), Perform (oratory) 4 (+7), Perform (singing) 8 (+11), Pilot 1 (+7), Profession (soldier) 1 (+3), Swim 4 (+6) | | | | |
| +3 | Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Attack Specialization (sonic scream) 2, Attractive 2, Defensive Roll, Dodge Focus 2, Fast Overrun, Favored Environment (airborne), Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Interpose, Move-By Action, Reliable Attack (sonics) *, Second Chance (falling), Stunning Attack, Teamwork | | | | |
| FORT | Powers: Blast 7 ** (<i>sonic scream</i> ; Power Feats: Knockback 3 *, Alternate Powers— Blast 7 ** [<i>sonic scream line</i> ; Power Feats: Knockback 3 *; Extras: Concentration, Line; Flaws: Touch], Dazzle 8 ** [auditory, 1 PP/rank; Power Feats: Affects Insubstantial; Extras: Affects Objects +1, Cone, Knockback; Flaws: Touch], Force Field 8 ** [<i>sonic shield</i> ; Power Feats: Selective; Extras: Affect Others (+1), Impervious]; Extras: Concentration, Cone; Flaws: Touch) ■ Flight 5 (Power Feats: High-Speed Dodge *) ■ Super-Senses 7 (darkvision, scent, ultra-hearing [extended 2], ultravision) | | | | |
| REF | | | | | |
| +12 | | | | | |
| WILL | Combat: Attack +5 (+9 sonic scream), Damage +2 (unarmed), +7 (sonic scream), Defense +8 (+10 dodge), Initiative +10 | | | | |
| +6 | Abilities 34 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 19 + Powers 49 + Combat 26 + Saves 14 = 150 | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*

** Dynamic

HOWL

Created from the same genetic stock as Specimen 52, Specimen 53 is the only female manufactured by Project Kennel thus far. Originally intended to be a tool for breeding the mutant dogs rather than having to grow them in vats (a very expensive process), Specimen 53 showed far too much independence and free will to ever be relegated to such a menial task. Besides, the prototype exhibited many useful abilities that were too intriguing and potentially useful to use her as nothing more than a puppy factory.

After being freed with the rest of the Pack, Howl has promised herself she would never be caged again and would do anything to remain free. Similarly, she can't abide seeing others have their freedom removed unjustly and she will leap (often blindly) to stop this from happening. Even though she has often used her sonic scream to keep A.E.G.I.S.' agents at bay long enough for the others to escape, she has also shown reluctance to put herself in a position where she may be recaptured, even if it means her teammates may be caught instead.

Howl has accepted Alpha as a father but recently, as she begins to mature, these feelings have been changing into something else. It has become apparent that some of A.E.G.I.S.' genetic

programming had been intended to make Howl inclined to be a breeder and this is now beginning to surface with her rise to adulthood. This has made her very ... amorous ... of late and is causing some friction between Maul and Bloodhound, both of whom have shown an interest in her.

Although Howl puts on a strong front (especially around Alpha), in truth she is almost as terrified of the unfamiliar world of man as she is of being recaptured by her creators. Kind, compassionate and courageous though she may be, Howl fears her dedication to her teammates may be less than total if she is ever forced to choose between their imprisonment and her own because her previous experience with A.E.G.I.S. left her with a crippling case of claustrophobic she dreads more than just about anything else.

Appearance: Howl could almost pass for a human female but her small snout, short, dark hair and pointed, elf-like ears betray her if she is not at least partially concealed by darkness. Despite her obviously non-human nature, Howl is still attractive and has earned the attentions of both Bloodhound (silent though they may be in his case) and Maul.

Real Name:
Specimen 53

Aliases: Joanne

Threat Level:
Gamma-T

Age: 7

Height: 5 feet,
9 in.

Weight: 120 lbs

Native Language:
English



Real Name:
Specimen 35

MAUL

Aliases: Rip

Threat Level:
Gamma-P

Age: 9

Height: 5 feet, 11 in.

Weight: 191 lbs

Native Language:
English

Of all the Pack's members, Specimen 35 has had the hardest time adjusting to freedom. It didn't take A.E.G.I.S. very long after this mutant wolf was created to learn how best to harness his natural penchant for aggression and violence by brainwashing him into being a heartless killer. Thankfully, Alpha broke Specimen 35 out with the other three fugitives and fled before the programming could run its full course. Still, Maul is constantly fighting with himself to keep his temper and desire to do violence in check, making him the most dangerous and volatile of the Pack. Thankfully, Alpha is often able to use his powers to keep Maul calm, a situation the latter appreciates and resents at the same time.

In a fight, Maul is almost always in the center of things as his bloodlust overtakes him. He will use his over-sized, psychic claws and brute strength to savage his opponents but, given the chance and the strength of will to maintain control of himself, Maul can also put his skills to more precise, delicate uses like sabotage. Not even Howl, Hotdog or Bloodhound ever feel wholly comfortable around this predator but each appreciates the struggle Maul must face every day thanks to A.E.G.I.S. and so they still treat him like a brother.

Maul is very argumentative and aggressive and it is only because of his age, constant displays of tactical genius, and a willingness to lay down his life for his friends that Alpha can assert his leadership over the stubborn wolf.

Appearance: Possessing dark gray fur with white highlights, Maul wears a SWAT-style jumpsuit, including the armored vest. His face and arms reveal the many scars of Maul's numerous battles, enhancing his already intimidating countenance. He is able to project incredibly long claws of psychic energy from his fingertips, allowing him to slice through steel or flesh with almost equal ease.

TEAM-UP IDEAS

The following may give Gamemasters ideas on how to incorporate the Pack into their game.

| Maul | | | | PL 10 | |
|-------|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +5 | +4 | +5 | +0 | +1 | +1 |
| 20 | 18 | 20 | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+9), Drive 2 (+6), Disable Device 2 (+2), Escape Artist 3 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+9), Knowledge (history) 2 (+2), Knowledge (tactics) 2 (+2), Notice 8 (+9), Profession (soldier) 8 (+9), Search 2 (+2), Stealth 4 (+8), Survival 6 (+7) | | | | |
| | Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 4, Equipment 1, Improved Critical (psychic claws) 3, Improved Initiative, Strongarm *, Track | | | | |
| FORT | Powers: Extra Attacks 1 ** (<i>Power Feats:</i> Combo [unarmed, psychic claws]) ■ Enhanced Rage 8 * (4 ranks of increased duration; <i>Power Feats:</i> Innate; <i>Flaws:</i> Uncontrollable [involved in battle]) ■ Leaping 4 ■ Regeneration 18 (bruised/unconscious/injured/staggered 1 round, disabled/ability 5 minutes) ■ Speed 2 ■ Strike 9 (<i>psychic claws</i> ; <i>Power Feats:</i> Extended Reach; <i>Extras:</i> Penetrating) ■ Super-Senses 3 (scent, tracking, ultra-hearing) ■ Super-Strength 2 | | | | |
| | Equipment: Tactical vest | | | | |
| REF | Drawbacks: Bad Luck * (uncommon, minor) -1, Damage Restriction * (psychic claws; lethal only) -1, Disability (color blindness; common, minor) -2 | | | | |
| | Combat: Attack +6 (+10 melee), Damage +9 (unarmed), +9 (17-20, psychic claws), Defense +6, Initiative +8 | | | | |
| WILL | Abilities 32 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 60 + Combat 24 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 4 = 150 | | | | |
| | +3 | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*

** See *Misfits & Menaces: DOOM*

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

The player characters meet the Pack shortly after the latter's initial breakout from the A.E.G.I.S. facility, most likely because an excitable (soon to be fired) employee alerts the local police to help catching the "dangerous, escaped experimental animals." How the player characters react when they catch up to the confused and scared fugitives will likely set the pace for how the Pack will react to humanity for a long while, especially if the former close their ears to the mutants' pleas and instead choose to believe A.E.G.I.S.' line that the escapees are little more than animals, and thus the company's property.

UNDER A FULL MOON

Hunters of all things supernatural and evil, the player characters have received word there is a pack of werewolves stalking the area. Depending on how the heroes gather their information (the tabloids, Internet rumors, etc.) the validity of the information may be speculative until one of the monsters is briefly caught on video. The fleeting camera phone movie is sketchy at best, but shows enough to make investigating the situation worthwhile.

The “werewolves” are, of course, actually the Pack. The mutant canines were hoping to hide in the area, but with the camera phone video’s release on the Internet they know it will only be a matter of time before Catspaw makes an appearance. The player characters will come upon them as they are packing up their lair to move, giving the initial impression that they are disorganized man-beasts. What happens next depends on how open-minded the heroes are and just what their shoot-first-ask-questions-later policy may be.

BEWARE OF DOG

Unknown to the Pack, they really were meant to be prototypes—A.E.G.I.S. only ever intended to use them as initial tests to determine the viability of long-term creations. As such, a genetic marker was put into their DNA that, when exposed to an otherwise harmless form of radiation, would cause

them to degenerate and eventually die. Frustrated with their attempts to reclaim their creations, A.E.G.I.S. has now decided it would be less costly to kill them and start over from scratch rather than keep chasing them. As such, for weeks radiation emitters hidden in unmarked vans, planes, helicopters and the like have been sweeping areas the Pack is suspected of hiding in.

One of these recent sweeps got lucky and the Pack has been irradiated, slowly causing their minds to become more feral as their deaths draw nearer. On top of the horrifying implications for the Pack members’ lives, this process has also made them dangerous to themselves and the general public, leading them to take on a true pack structure (with Alpha and Maul banging heads for control), including an instinctive desire to defend and expand their territory. At the point when the heroes arrive on the scene, such behavior will have already resulted in several innocent civilians being hurt for invading the Pack’s territory.

Not only will the heroes need to protect the citizenry from the animalistic mutants, but they will almost certainly also want to find a way to arrest (if not outright reverse) the process of deterioration. Doing so may mean returning the mutant animals to A.E.G.I.S., however, a fact that may make enemies of the Pack should they be cured and escape again.

Real Name: Captain Martin Rencliff
Aliases: None
Threat Level: Delta
Age: 29
Height: 5 feet, 10 in.
Weight: 194 lbs
Native Language: English

Captain Martin Rencliff was one of the nation's best fighter pilots and an aspiring astronaut who volunteered to participate in a joint project between the Air Force, the independent research company A.E.G.I.S., and NASA. The project's intention was to genetically alter a human by mixing his DNA with that of an unknown alien (part of A.E.G.I.S.'s contribution) so he could survive in space without need for a space suit. To this end, Rencliff was taken to a Florida compound where he would be subjected to what the scientists called "the process."

When he awoke after the experiment, Rencliff found himself tightly strapped to a metal table, surrounded by dozens of fully armed government agents wearing jumpsuits without any sort of identifying patches or the like. He learned the experiment had succeeded—only too well. His DNA had indeed meshed with that of the alien, creating the desired effect, but the process had not stopped there and continued mutating out of control until Rencliff had transformed into an immense, carapace-covered creature that looked none to friendly. Then the creature woke up, a rampaging beast totally devoid of Rencliff's morals and intelligence.

The intervention of a local superhero team and a large compliment of National Guard managed to subdue the wildly destructive creature that had destroyed most of the research complex before terrorizing the surrounding area. Thankfully, the few scientists that had escaped the carnage managed to stabilize the creature's DNA into something more human after its recapture. As part of the cover-up, A.E.G.I.S. and NASA offered Martin a substantial compensation package while the Air Force gave him an honorable discharge.

Assuming a new name, Starbound, Rencliff has left his old life behind and now lives out his dream of flying among the stars. Starbound is a world-renowned (if reluctant) hero that has helped save the planet on several occasions. More than anything, Starbound just wants to be left alone to fly the heavens in peace, exploring new star systems and civilizations, and only when he is certain that his help is absolutely required will he intervene in the woes of man.

| Starbound | | | | PL 11 | |
|-----------|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +8 | +3 | +5 | +2 | +4 | +1 |
| 26 | 16 | 20 | 15 | 19 | 12 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Computers 2 (+4), Concentration 2 (+6), Craft (electronic) 4 (+6), Craft 4 (mechanical) (+6), Drive 1 (+4), Knowledge (history) 2 (+4), Knowledge (life sciences) 4 (+6), Knowledge (physical sciences) 7 (+9), Knowledge (super-beings) 3 (+5) *, Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+6), Knowledge (technology) 4 (+6), Notice 4 (+8), Pilot 8 (+11), Profession (Air Force officer) 5 (+9), Survival 2 (+6) | | | | |
| | Feats: Ace (fighter jet, space shuttle/transport) 2 *, Attack Specialization (star energy blast) 2, Evasion, Favored Environment (space) 4, Skill Mastery (Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical], Pilot, Survival), Specialization (Knowledge [physical sciences]: astronomy, Knowledge [super-beings]: aliens) 2 * | | | | |
| FORT | Powers: Cosmic Energy Control 12 ** (star energy, Power Feats: Improved Range 4 [3,000-ft increments], Alternate Powers—Teleport 13 ** [space warp; Power Feats: Change Direction; Extras: Accurate, Standard Action; Flaws: Long-Range]; Extras: Penetrating) ■ Flight 10 ■ Immunity 11 (life support, solar/stellar-based powers) ■ Impervious Toughness 5 ■ Protection 5 (Extras: Impervious) ■ Regeneration 22 (all conditions 1 round; Power Feats: Diehard, Persistent, Regrowth) ■ Space Travel 10 (hyperspace travel) ■ Super-Senses 18 (darkvision [extended 8], normal sight extended 8) ■ Super-Strength 4 | | | | |
| | Drawbacks: Involuntary Change (to monstrous form under unknown conditions; uncommon, cannot resist) -4, One Way Transformation (monstrous form; uncommon, moderate [unconscious]) -2, Weakness (denied star/solar energy; 1 hour onset; uncommon, moderate) -1 | | | | |
| WILL | Combat: Attack +5 (+9 star energy blasts), Damage +8 (unarmed), +12 (star energy blast), Defense +7, Initiative +3 | | | | |
| | Abilities 48 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 150 + Combat 24 + Saves 18 - Drawbacks 7 = 259 | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*
 ** Dynamic

He does not remember anything that happened during his monstrous rampage, but he sometimes awakens in terror with quickly fading images of

violence and death in his mind's eye. Every time this happens, no matter how hard he tries to concentrate on them, the images quickly fade away until the next time they return in his sleep. Starbound is very worried by what these dreams may mean.

Starbound is much more distant and aloof than he was before the experiment, possibly as a side-effect of the genetic manipulation or just an unavoidable result of the near god-like power he now possesses. Still, when it comes down to it Starbound remains as heroic as ever he was and cannot abide the suffering of others.

Appearance: Once ruggedly handsome, Starbound's eyes now lack pupils and constantly glow with a soft red light that intensifies when he is emotional or uses his powers. His skin is a pale blue with dark markings around the eyes. He is entirely hairless and the top of his head is now covered by a ridge of stubby, star-like, dark blue bone.

Should he ever change into his monstrous form again, the bony ridge over his head will seem to slide across Starbound's body as it pops, shifts, and cracks into its new form.



Threat Level: Delta
Height: 6 feet, 4 in.
Weight: 194 lbs
Native Language: None

Not even the A.E.G.I.S. scientists that created Starbound can explain why the DNA melding initially caused such a grossly unexpected and inhuman change, nor do they know if they would be able to reverse the process again were the hero to once more somehow revert to that state.

If A.E.G.I.S., NASA or the U.S. Air Force were to learn of Starbound's dreams or were given any other reason to think he might return to his monstrous form, they would send all that they could to destroy him. Starbound's creators have no delusions about how lucky they were to restrain the monster the first time, while it was still weak, and doubt that they could do so again without a much higher cost of property and lives. Powerful as he is as Starbound, Rencliff would be infinitely deadlier as an out of control monster at full strength.

Destruction and death are what this creature craves, and its appetite for both can never be sated.

Appearance: This slightly hunched brute has glowing red eyes, with blue scales and bony ridges covering its entire body. The head resembles a cross between a lizard and an insect, mandibles, forked tongue and all, and it doesn't look at all happy. The creature can also create claws of focused cosmic energy from its talon tips, greatly increasing its deadliness.



PLAYING A 150 PP STARBOUND

Using Starbound as a PL 10 player character requires cutting his expended PP back to 150. Here are some suggestions on doing so:

- Reduce his **Cosmic Control** power by several ranks (–3 PP per rank)
- Remove his **Cosmic Control** power's dynamic ability (–3 PP)
- Reduce his **Flight** power by several ranks (–2 PP per rank)
- Remove his **Space Travel** power or reduce it by several ranks (–10 PP or –1 PP per rank)
- Reduce his **Impervious Toughness** power by several ranks (–1 PP per rank)
- Reduce his **Protection** power by several ranks (–2 PP per rank)

| Starbound, Monstrous Form | | | | | PL 14 |
|------------------------------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +12 | +3 | +9 | –2 | +4 | –2 |
| 34 | 16 | 28 | 6 | 19 | 6 |
| Skills: Intimidate 12 (+10) | | | | | |
| TOUGH | Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 5, Dodge Focus 2, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 7, Improved Critical (cosmic energy claws) 4, Improved Grab, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative | | | | |
| | Powers: Flight 4 ■ Immovable 7 (<i>Extras:</i> Unstoppable) ■ Immunity 11 (life support, solar/stellar-based powers) ■ Impervious Toughness 9 ■ Mind Shield 10 ■ Nemesis 4 (<i>Power Feats:</i> Affects Insubstantial) ■ Penetrating Strength 24 (<i>Flaws:</i> Only with cosmic energy claws) ■ Protection 5 (<i>Extras:</i> Impervious) ■ Regeneration 22 (all conditions 1 round; <i>Power Feats:</i> Diehard, Persistent, Regrowth) ■ Speed 2 ■ Strike 2 (<i>cosmic energy claws; Power Feats:</i> Mighty; <i>Extras:</i> Penetrating) ■ Super-Senses 8 (darkvision [extended 3], normal sight extended 3) ■ Super-Strength 10 | | | | |
| FORT | Drawbacks: Weakness (denied star/solar energy; 1 hour onset; uncommon, moderate) –1 | | | | |
| | Combat: Attack +5 (+10 melee), Damage +12 (unarmed), +14 (16–20, cosmic energy claws), Defense +6 (+8 dodge), Initiative +7 | | | | |
| REF | Abilities 49 + Skills 3 (12 ranks) + Feats 22 + Powers 167 + Combat 22 + Saves 12 – Drawbacks 1 = 274 | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| WILL | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

TEAM—UP IDEAS

The following may give Gamemasters ideas on how to incorporate Starbound into their game.

THEY CAME FROM OUTER SPACE!

A meteor crashes in the city's heart, tearing through buildings and traffic. When the player characters arrive they learn that it's not a meteor at all, but an unconscious Starbound! When the space-faring hero awakens, he warns of an alien armada approaching, one that is too powerful for him to deal with on his own (as illustrated by his crash to Earth after fighting with one of their advance cruisers.)

Starbound will try rallying Earth's military and super-heroes (and possibly even its villains) against the rapidly approaching enemy, but will there be enough time? **Your World No Longer**, also by **Misfit Studios**, contains a ready-to-go scenario outline concerning just such an alien invasion if you're looking for a time saver.

LAB RATS

The player characters awaken in high-tech cells, sealed behind walls of tough, alien alloy and energy fields that restrict their abilities. In a nearby cell is Starbound, who had been missing for several months prior. It turns out the alien race that “donated” the DNA that transformed Rencliff into Starbound has heard of the latter’s cosmic exploits and have come looking for those who would dare sully their racial purity. However, upon studying Earth for a little while they’ve since realized there’s an untapped potential to be found in the planet’s metahumans.

Using Starbound as a foundation for their experiments, the aliens are capturing metahumans to further A.E.G.I.S.’ experiments with the hope of creating a brainwashed super-soldier they can unleash upon their intergalactic enemies. The heroes must escape before the experiments go too far, doing them irreparable harm or killing them (or worse yet, succeed), but if they do flee will they be stuck in a distant galaxy where only Starbound can see them safely home, or did the aliens stick around Earth to make snatching more test subjects easier?

DEGENERATION

Starbound’s darkest dreams have come true and he’s begun reverting to his monstrous form. Why and when are matters for the Gamemaster to decide; perhaps the hero has been exposed to a catalytic radiation similar to that used during the initial experiment, or maybe the stress of his lifestyle has slowly been eroding away at his subconscious’ control over this suppressed other self. Whatever the cause, the result does not bode well for anyone around Starbound when the change overcomes him.

The reversions began recently while Starbound was in space, and he attributed his “black out” to a clash with an alien foe. But now that he’s returned to Earth, his latest reversion has resulted in massive property damage and loss of life. The player characters are among the heroes called in by the government (or who come on their own) to subdue Starbound’s monster form—permanently, if need be.



Real Name:
Daniel Sinister

Aliases:
The Select of the
Divine Cosmos

Threat Level:
Delta-A

Age: 24

Height: 6 feet

Weight: 175 lbs

Native Language:
English

Dan was just an orphaned teenager on the cusp of adulthood before his life was turned upside down. It seems that young Daniel really wanted to show the local gang that he was worthy of joining their little fraternity (more so they'd stop beating him than anything else), and so he bragged that he would steal something from the neighborhood curios shop. That night, with the full moon high over head, Daniel broke into the store as the gang of toughs looked on. Too bad for Daniel that the elderly storeowner was a wizard of substantial power who didn't take too kindly to having his shop robbed. What was worse was that Daniel had been expected.

The storeowner turned out to be a reclusive member of a global sect of magi whose goal since time immemorial has been to protect Earth and its dimension of reality from arcane threats. The storeowner revealed to the shocked would-be thief that Daniel was himself the son of two of the sect's more potent spell casters, a married couple that had died in the line of duty fighting dark forces from beyond. Furthermore, related the scholarly codger, Daniel had inherited his parents' mystical strength. Understandably, Daniel was skeptical at first but when the old man explained how he had been assigned to watch the youth and take him on as an apprentice when the time was right, the young man agreed to become the sorcerer's pupil.

Years would pass as Daniel learned all the old man was able to teach, eventually forcing the student to travel the world to learn from other members of the sect. As his power grew, his colleagues bestowed several gifts upon him. At first Daniel believed this was done out of a sense of appreciation for his growing power, but he was later told his teachers believed their young apprentice had been chosen to defend Earth from an incomparable, indescribable evil,

the coming of which had been prophesied for many thousands of years. The prophecy also stated that the evil would be coming soon.

While awaiting the arrival of the malevolent power that he has been groomed to fight, the young mage has chosen to fight whatever other evils may cross his path. For a man who can walk between realities, this has meant waging war on powers of darkness from other realms of existence as well as combating more worldly servants of evil. Daniel, known publicly as Warlock, believes (as do his teachers) that he can best fight his war from the shadows and so he endeavors to stay out of the spotlight as much as possible. While this may have caused most of the media and many other super-heroes to view the enigmatic sorcerer with suspicion and doubt, this secretive approach has allowed Warlock to operate more freely, giving him the time he needs to prepare for the coming doom.

Many years of quiet study have made Warlock somewhat introverted and soft spoken. He does not flaunt his surprising wisdom nor is he quick to challenge the authority of others, instead believing that others should be allowed to choose their own fate.

Appearance: Daniel, a young African-American, keeps his head cleanly shaven and wears a finely trimmed moustache and goatee that truly suits his name. He is usually extremely well dressed, wearing finely pleated, black slacks, a black dress shirt and a dark blue, gray or black vest or blazer beneath his midnight cloak filled with stars.

PLAYING A 150 PP WARLOCK

Using Warlock as a PL 10 player character requires cutting his expended PP back to 150. Here are some suggestions on doing so:

- Reduce his **Magic** power by several ranks (-2 PP per rank)
- Reduce the amount of his **Magic** power's spells (-2 PP per spell)

A SHADOWY BEING STEPPED THROUGH A PORTAL AND PROMISED TO DRAIN EVERY LIFE FORCE ON EARTH, YOU SAY? NOT ON MY WATCH.

| Warlock | | | | PL 12 | |
|---------|--|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
| +0 | +1 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +2 |
| 11 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 20 | 14 |
| TOUGH | Skills: Bluff 2 (+4), Computers 1 (+3), Concentration 5 (+10), Craft (chemical) 1 (+3), Drive 2 (+3), Investigate 1 (+3), Knowledge (arcane lore) 9 (+11), Knowledge (history) 4 (+6), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+6), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 3 (+5), Language (Aramaic, Latin, Sumerian), Notice 1 (+6), Sense Motive 1 (+6), Sleight of Hand 2 (+3), Stealth 1 (+2) | | | | |
| | Feats: Artificer, Defensive Roll 4, Eidetic Memory, Fascinate (Bluff), Improved Initiative, Ritualist, Specialization (Knowledge [arcane lore]: other dimensions, Knowledge [super-beings]: magic wielders) 2 *, Trance, Ultimate Save (Will), Ultimate Skill (Knowledge [arcane lore]) | | | | |
| +2/+6 | Powers: Astral Form 5 (<i>Power Feats:</i> Dimensional 3, Selective, Subtle; <i>Flaws:</i> Concentration) | | | | |
| FORT | ■ Device 10 (Cloak of Yibbal, 50 PP device; 3 PP/rank) ■ Device 1 (Earring of Babel, 3 PP device; 3 PP/rank) ■ Device 3 (Witchlight Gun, 15 PP device; 3 PP/rank) ■ Flight 3 ■ Immunity 9 (life support; <i>Flaws:</i> Sustained) ■ Magic 12 ‡ (<i>Power Feats:</i> 20 Additional Spells ** ‡) ■ Mind Shield 8 ■ Super-Senses 8 (<i>Mystic senses</i> ; mystic awareness [extended 2, acute], supernatural awareness [extended 2, acute]) | | | | |
| | Equipment: <i>Cloak of Yibbal:</i> Rumored to have been a gift to Warlock's benefactors thousands of years ago from a nigh-omnipotent being from another plane of existence, the Cloak of Yibbal is completely black on the outside while its inner lining is filled with a field of stars that seems to be forever shifting and twinkling against its dark background. By manipulating the cosmic gateway contained within the cloak objects may be pulled from within, bullets may be directed into its expanse, and one may walk into it to appear elsewhere. Dimensional Pocket 6 (<i>Flaws:</i> Knowledge [arcane lore] Check Required); Protection 4 (<i>Extras:</i> Impervious; <i>Flaws:</i> Move Action); Super-Movement 3 (Dimensional movement 3; <i>Flaws:</i> Knowledge [arcane lore] Check Required); Teleport 9 (<i>Power Feats:</i> Change Direction, Easy, Progression [weight]; <i>Extras:</i> Accurate, Portal; <i>Flaws:</i> Knowledge [arcane lore] Check Required) | | | | |
| +6 | | | | | |
| REF | <i>Earring of Babel:</i> Comprehend 3 (codes, languages, Spirits; <i>Flaws:</i> Knowledge [arcane lore] Check Required) | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| +5 | | | | | |
| WILL | <i>Witchlight Gun:</i> This looks like a normal flintlock pistol made from dark, ash wood and covered in strange, arcane symbols. It is, in reality, a powerful artifact that harms only supernaturally beings. It automatically reloads by feeding upon the cosmos' innate magic emanations. Blast 5 (Good magic; <i>Power Feats:</i> Knockback 5 *; <i>Extras:</i> Penetrating; <i>Flaws:</i> Only harms the supernatural/paranormal) | | | | |
| | Drawbacks: Power Loss (Flight, Immunity, Magic; when unable to speak and gesture to cast spells) -3, | | | | |
| +9 | Combat: Attack +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +5 (Witchlight Gun) +12 (magical blast), Defense +8, Initiative +5 | | | | |
| | Abilities 25 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 157 + Combat 26 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 3 = 241 | | | | |

* See *Better Mousetrap*

** See *Misfits & Menaces: DOOM* for a collection of ready-to-go spells

‡ Dynamic

- Remove the dynamic ability of his Magic power's spells (-1 PP per spell)
- Get rid of the Cloak of Yibbal (-30 PP)
- Get rid of the Earring of Babel (-3 PP)
- Get rid of the Witchlight Gun (-9 PP)

TEAM-UP IDEAS

The following may give Gamemasters ideas on how to incorporate Warlock into their game.

TEMPORARY GUARDIANS

Warlock is called away to another dimension to deal with something of the utmost importance. He

can't just leave Earth undefended, however, and so he enlists a fellow spellcrafter (one or more of the player characters) and his allies to fill the role while he's gone. Somehow one of Warlock's enemies from another dimension learn of his absence (or perhaps this villain engineered the reason for the magi's absence) and has launched an attack on Earth. Portals are now opening all over the city, disgorging inter-dimensional soldiers and/or monsters. The player characters will not only have to stop the invaders, but also find a way to close the portals to prevent any more from coming through.

STUDY BUDDIES

The player characters are accompanying one of their companions, a spell caster, to a remote location where he intends to learn more magic from a reclusive master of mysticism. This master could be sequestered at a hidden monastery or the member of a lost civilization, but wherever he is to be found getting there and being accepted as a student will count as an adventure in and of itself.

Once the heroes arrive and the spell caster has been accepted as a student, the characters will soon learn that Warlock is also at the site, similarly studying with the master. As time goes on, some seemingly minor events around the location will reveal themselves to be probes from a dark force looking to get at the master. Eventually these events will evolve into stealthy attacks, one of which manages to temporarily suppress the master and/or his powers, and thus protection over the site. Will the heroes, along with Warlock, be enough to fend off the outright assault that follows, looking to finish the job?

THE DOOM OF US ALL

One of Warlock's greatest foes, DOOM (see **Misfits & Menaces: DOOM**) is causing problems—the sort of trouble that puts the planet in danger of being sucked into a hell dimension. Warlock will need to find the source of the evil magic and spend the time needed to tear the spells apart, meaning he'll need some heroes to help him fight his way to the heavily guarded site of the ritual and then watch his back while he does his thing. The heroes are called upon to fill this role.

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