

THE TROPHY CASE

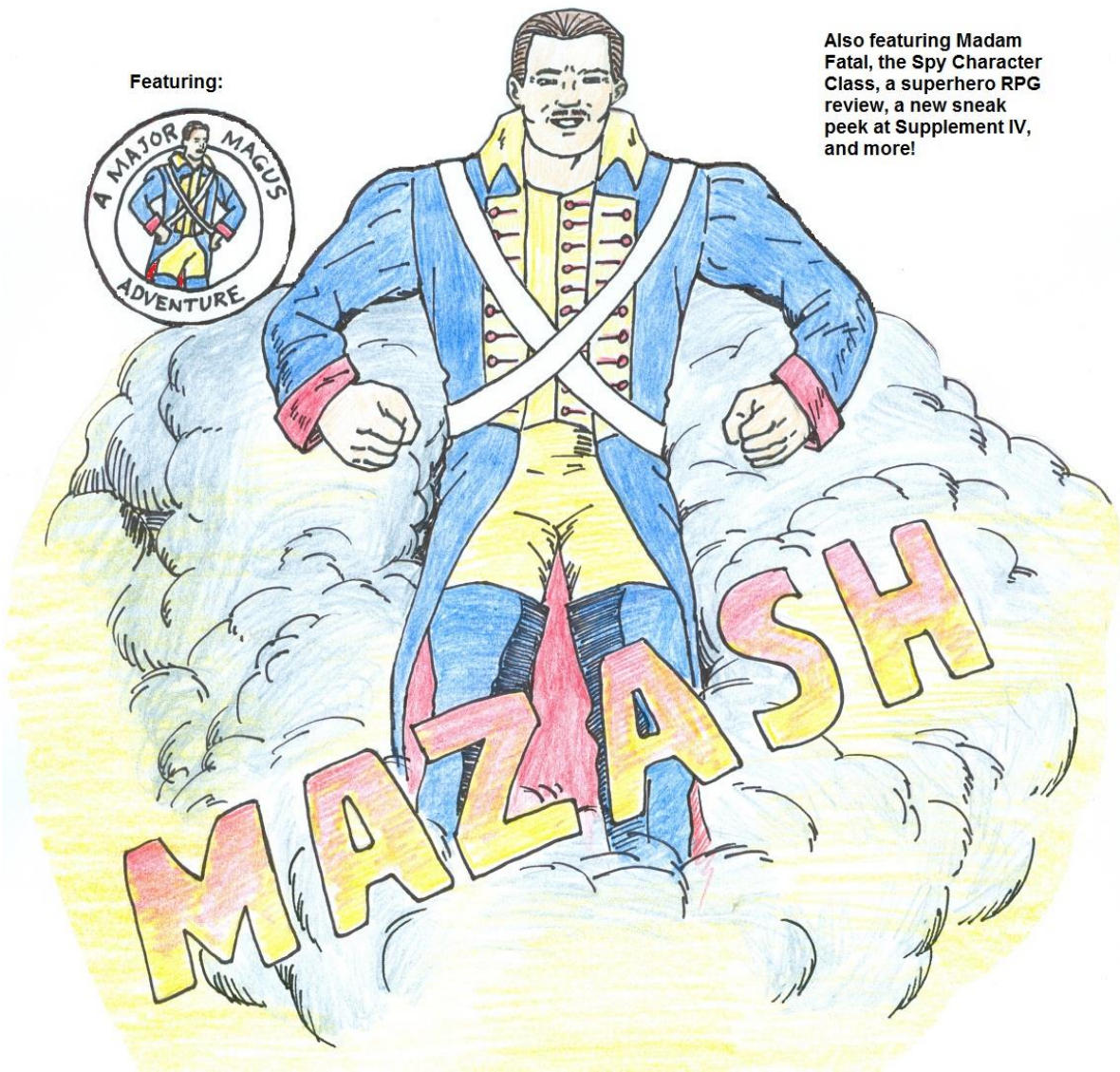
Vol. 2, No. 5
Summer
2013

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Featuring:



Also featuring Madam Fatal, the Spy Character Class, a superhero RPG review, a new sneak peek at Supplement IV, and more!



In the Hideout...

--Scott Casper--



So there I was, just lazily working on TTC, when I received an e-mail from DriveThruRPG. They were trying out a new Pay What You Want model (currently in beta) and were interested in publishers willing to test it. I was!

I have always tried to make H&H accessible. Rough drafts of the core

rules were available for free, finished products were modestly priced, and there was always the option of donating more. PWYW eliminates the middle steps and allows you to go straight to the donating step. It seemed ideal! In actual practice, it's looking like most people just make off with your product for free. Odd, that people will drop thousands of dollars into Kickstarter projects, just for the promise of a future product with no guarantees of ever getting it, but people don't want to pay for a product that's already finished. But that's not the real subject of this editorial.

No, the good news is that I decided it was high time I revisited the old rulebook files and polish them up! I certainly know my way around Microsoft Word more now than I did four years ago when I first started self-publishing and the early books now embarrass me a little. I had thought I could hold out another year or two until I was ready to try my hand at a second edition, but going back and changing the pay model seemed to be a good "starting over" point for everything.

This is not a new edition of H&H; the core rulebooks are not being overhauled. I'm tweaking some things that long-term play has shown need tweaking. I've rewritten text that could have been clearer. Every once in a while I'm tossing in something brand new. But mostly this is about format and layout and making sure the books look both more uniform and more like the rulebooks they were always meant to emulate.

And then there's the fiction. This issue is pretty special for fiction, having in it the last installment in David Brashear's Madam Fatal mini-series as well as a pretty special episode of Major Magus - an adventure so big it's going to spill over onto the H&H website. In the months to come, more fiction should be turning up on the H&H website and, somewhere down the road, I hope to do podcasts of the Major Magus stories as well!

With all this on my plate, it stands to reason that the deadline for this issue, the one currently in your possession, was a hard one for me to meet, or maybe didn't meet. I hope I came close and, of course, that the wait was worth it!

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"British News" image by the Newsreel Association of Gt. Britain and Ireland Ltd. (1941), taken from <http://timeimage.wikispaces.com/British+News+No.1>

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MAJOR MAGUS #3 "The Question of Hitler"

Story and art by Scott Casper

British Newsreel Transcript:

The Nazi Blitzkrieg may return, but England's Home Forces stand ready. See how our fighting men drill daily, remaining ever-alert, ever-vigilant. The best drill sergeants in the world have an added helping hand from visiting American dignitary, the famous superhero known as Major Magus. His goodwill tour of England will be wrapping up after two weeks in Aldershot, Hampshire.



Major Magus: I like what I see here. England's defenses are sound.

Hear that, Adolph? Even the Yanks can tell you haven't got a chance!

October 31, 1941

Aldershot Garrison, Hampshire, England

Major Magus looked at the table-sized map of England and then glanced up at his companions in the war room. The American espionage agent, Spyhunter, had come over with him to England. While the Major made showy appearances and boosted morale, it was Spyhunter who was negotiating behind the scenes for this meeting. Their meeting was with Lieutenant General Bernard Paget, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief South-Eastern Command, and General Alan Brooke, Commander of Home Forces.

"An invasion tunnel?" General Brooke asked. "Are you sure?"

The Major nodded. "I did a secret flyover of Normandy and confirmed Spyhunter's intelligence. They are definitely building a tunnel under the English Channel."

"That's incredible," Lt. General Paget said. "Can we estimate when it would be completed?"

Spyhunter stood there with his arms crossed, his red half-cape over his left shoulder and his goggles and mask still concealing his face. "It's being built by massive amounts of slave labor. It may be done in a month."

"So long as they don't know we know, I see no reason why they would fail to emerge south of the GHQ Line, which puts them no better off than if they had landed by ship," General Brooke said. He used a pointer to indicate on the map where that line of defense was.

"Think bigger, gentlemen," Major Magus said. "They could emerge from one big hole in the ground here..." he said, pointing generally to the south coast of England, "or they could push on to

where there are already a lot of holes to the surface, and gain the capital all in one stroke."

"Holes to the surface...?" Paget echoed.

"The London Underground," Spyhunter said, uncrossing his arms and leaning forward so he could put a finger right on London on the map.

"Good Lord," Brooke said.

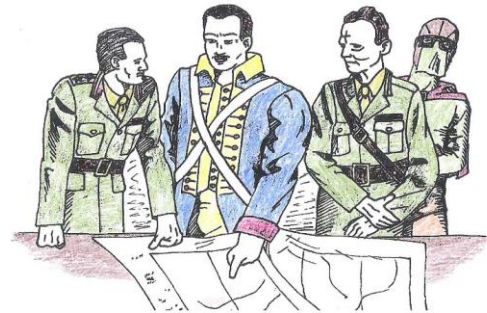
"Two hundred-seventy stations on the London Underground. Two hundred-seventy access points to London from underground," Spyhunter added for emphasis.

"The whole thing seems so preposterous," Paget said. "I can't believe it's even possible."

"We are in an Age of the Impossible, gentlemen," Major Magus said. "You have both seen me fly, and that should have been impossible too."

"What actions would you propose?" Paget asked.

This time it was Spyhunter who looked to Major Magus. They shared a secret nod before Major Magus spoke. "You don't have to worry about it, if you don't want to. A covert operation manned solely by American superheroes can take care of the tunnel."



"We want permission to do so, of course," Spyhunter added. "We won't risk hurting our diplomatic ties to England if you think we'd be stepping on your toes. This is the highest-ranking meeting I was able to arrange, so we ask you, General, to contact the Prime Minister, brief him on our proposal for us, and get back to us."

"I see..." Brooke said. He paused, took off his cap, and ran his fingers through his short, slicked back hair. "So this was the real reason of your visit."

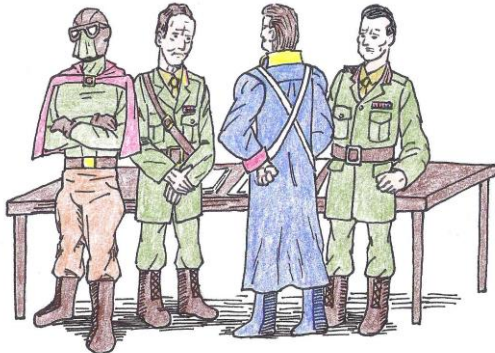
"Not entirely..." Spyhunter said.

The Major leaned forward and rested his hands on the edge of the map table. He watched the two officers for their immediate reactions.

"We want you to also ask the Prime Minister if he would be opposed to Hitler disappearing."

Neither officer reacted quickly, as if the statement needed time to sink in. "What exactly are you proposing?" Brooke asked a long moment later.

"I can fly into Berlin, snatch Hitler, and fly him out of Germany before anyone could stop me," the Major said. "I can bring him here or to any country that wants him to stand trial for his crimes."



"You can imagine what a blow like that would do to German morale," Spyhunter said.

"What it would do to every country's morale..." Brooke said slowly. "Leaders spirited off in the night by international vigilantes? A precedent like that could lead to worldwide chaos."

"And we're not there now?" the Major countered. "I'm not offering to do this on a regular basis; this is a one-time offer being extended to all of the U.S.'s allies."

"Does your President endorse this?" Paget asked.

"Officially, the President knows nothing about it," Spyhunter said. "The State Dept. is interested in hearing from England what its reaction to this hypothetical situation would be, though."

"And if England should say no, but another country should say yes to this offer?" Brooke asked.

"That is another answer we will need to take back to the States," Spyhunter said.

Brooke and Paget exchanged glances, but could not find words to say. Paget stiffened and folded his arms behind his back while looking off into space. Brooke turned his back on them and slowly stepped away from the table.

"....It's really too much, you know," Brooke said after a long pause. "It wasn't that long ago we had to adjust to the idea that cavalry was an

outdated concept. Now even tanks and planes cannot do what you claim you can do."

"It's not just a claim," the Major said, stiffening up as straight as Paget. "If we can simulate the scenario here I can stay and do a practice run. Then you'll know I can do it. And then maybe I can end this war before anyone else dies. Before another British citizen is killed."

Brooke held his pointer in both hands and fingered it nervously. Never looking up, he said, "Paget...see what you can arrange here about such a simulation. Of course, a proposal such as you've made has to be kept top secret, so we will have to say it is a morale-boosting exercise. And it is too sensitive to risk radioing to Whitehall, even over a secure channel. I'll have to leave at once for London to discuss this with the Prime Minister." Brooke looked up at the two American heroes. "Does that sound acceptable to you?"

It did and the Major and Spyhunter both said so. They were then escorted from the room and transported by truck out of the garrison and into the nearby town of Aldershot. The Major remained in his uniform, though Spyhunter had by now changed his clothes and wore a disguise.

"I'd say this calls for a celebration!" Spyhunter said as they exited the back of the truck. "Want to change out of that garb and join me for a drink in the pub?"

The Major smiled, wondering what Spyhunter's thoughts on underage drinking would be. "Go ahead without me," Major Magus said. "I'll be doing some sight-seeing."

It was a small white lie; the Major was not interested in sight-seeing, but he figured his young alter ego might enjoy it. He stepped into an empty alley and said "Mazash!" A bolt of



lightning came down and the Major was transformed back into Bobby Bauer, 14-year old boy, dressed in his yellow dress shirt and navy blue slacks.

"Wish you'd found me a tourist's guidebook first," Bobby grumbled to no one in particular. "Oh well..." Had the Major dropped him off in London,

Bobby was sure he would have had a great time sight-seeing, but Aldershot was a drab, dull-looking little town and Bobby wondered what he would find to do around here. He had been dropped off on Victoria Road and saw shops both ways that held no interest for him. The street was not overly crowded, with a half-dozen cars motoring past and maybe that many pedestrians

moving about. It was one pedestrian in particular, though, who caught Bobby's eye.

A man in a long trench coat and a tall, wide-brimmed hat was approaching Bobby. The hat and the shadow it cast completely obscured the man's face, except for a glint from the man's eyes. But Bobby did not need to see the man's face; he knew in an instant it was his phantom companion from the magic subway train that had taken him, a couple years back, to where the wizard Mazash gave him his powers.

"Gosh, what are you doing here?" Bobby asked as the Phantom Companion drew nearer.



The Phantom Companion pointed in the direction he wanted them to walk. Then he just started walking away in that direction.

"Do you want me or the Major?" Bobby asked as he kept pace. They crossed Victoria Road and followed it east to Station Road. Station Road was busier, which made sense since it led straight to the Aldershot Railway Station.

"I need to have a talk with you, as you," the Phantom Companion said. "Others are waiting for us."

"Others? Who else?" Bobby asked.

"Wait and see."

They were almost to the train station when the Phantom Companion turned another corner. Here, around the side of the building by them, then down one of them without hesitating. The alley came out on another busy street, but to the left hand side of where they came out were stairs leading down to what looked like a shop door below street level. The Phantom Companion walked down the stairs, opened the door, and left it open behind him for Bobby to follow.

Bobby did and, instead of finding a shop inside, he found they had emerged on a ledge on the side of a long, dark tunnel that looked an awful lot like a subway tunnel. Bobby's feeling of *déjà vu* was complete when they heard the roar of a subway train approaching. It was an unnatural roar, almost more like a giant animal roaring than a subway train, but Bobby was not afraid because he had heard it before. A moment later, the magic subway train came into view. Its headlights gleamed like giant eyes and filled the

tunnel with blinding light. The train pulled up beside them and came to a stop with the subway doors right in front of Bobby and his Phantom Companion.

"Are we heading to Mazash's Hall?" Bobby asked as he boarded the empty train.

"No," the Phantom Companion said. Here in the well-lit subway car, the Phantom Companion was still as shadowy-looking as ever. "We will be using the train, though, for utmost privacy. The people you need to meet are in the next car."

Bobby followed the Phantom Companion into the next car, where two men in dark suits, wearing turbans on their heads, were waiting. The man in a black suit appeared to be a native Egyptian, while the man in a dark blue suit wore a red cape and appeared to be as Caucasian as Bobby.

"Bobby Bauer," the Phantom Companion said, "allow me to introduce you to Prince Inaros I of Egypt and, from your country, Yarko the Great."

"This is who we have waited for?" Yarko asked with a curious and not dismissive tone. "There must be more to the boy than meets the eye."

"The boy is just as powerful as each of you," the Phantom Companion said. "In this car, held by the three of you, is enough magic to level an entire country, or change human destiny. But, more specifically, all three of you have expressed a desire to intervene in affairs now occurring in Germany."

"This is true, though it troubles me how you know of it," Inaros said. "I was just now in Germany, battling the sorcerer called Half-Man, and saw firsthand the atrocities of the Nazis."



"And while I have yet to visit Nazi Germany," Yarko said, "I have long been troubled by their crimes, both against neighboring states and against the Jewish people. I feel a reckoning should be at hand and have said so. You must have been monitoring all of us..." he added, giving the Phantom Companion a suspicious eye.

"Not so. You misunderstand; I knew nothing of any of your activities until I became aware of potential futures unfolding. Future events during which each of you was seen to be responsible for assassinating the man Adolph Hitler."

"That can't be," Bobby said. "It's true, I was just talking to Spyhunter not long ago about wanting to do something about Hitler, but I never said I would kill him."

"That might not have been your intention," the Phantom Companion said, "but I have foreseen that, should you or your alter ego go to Germany with this intention, that you would put into motion a terrible chain of events."

"And could we not then right this chain of events and be responsible for two victories?" Inaros interjected. He gestured with a wooden stick, the head of which was carved to resemble a bird's. "I know not of Bobby, but Yarko and I have both acted, not just as vigilantes, but to bring about justice on a large scale. And I speak not just of recent times, but in the long past as well. I led the rebellion against the Assyrian Empire. You knew of this, and did not move to thwart me then."



"And I have challenged Death himself and won," Yarko added. "Yet you ask us to believe that the death of one man is more than any one of us can handle?"

"There is a time and place for all things," the Phantom Companion answered. "I am not opposed to the death of Adolph Hitler...but certain men have to die at certain times, in a special way. So that, in this case, the world will profit by his destruction. If this happens as I can foresee, then perhaps, this time...there will be peace."

"A noble sentiment, Companion," Yarko said, folding his arms in a defiant stance, "but I am not so certain even you can foresee such ends. Are you not trying to protect a future that *might* happen instead of a future that *must* happen?"

"This is more than an admonishment for caution, but a warning for all three of you," the Phantom Companion continued, pointing a finger at each of them in turn. "I can only strongly advise you to alter your current plans. But beyond that, I cannot act to thwart any one of you."

Bobby, meanwhile, had been moving in closer, slowly, hoping his proximity was not noticed. The shadows under the Phantom Companion's hat were impossibly deep, but Bobby was hoping his eyes would adjust enough that he could make out some details of the man's face. But all Bobby

could see were the Phantom Companion's eyes looking back down into his.

"Believe me," the Phantom Companion said, as if just to him. "Events will be happening soon in the United States that will require your full attention. You will not wish to be too deeply involved in the War."

"Enough with innuendo and minced words," Prince Inaros said hotly. "Whatever future knowledge you have that would be of value to us, share it now!"

At that, the three older men, or beings, present began to debate ethics, predestination, and subjects Bobby did not even recognize by name. He had half a mind to transform into Major Magus just to understand what was being said!

Then it occurred to him...what if the Phantom Companion had asked him to come only as Bobby so that he *wouldn't* understand what was being said? To keep from being outnumbered three to one if a debate happened? The thought made Bobby feel hurt and angry. Angry enough for a rash act and a spoken magic word.

But just as Bobby was saying "Mazash!", the Phantom Companion raised a hand of warning against him and spoke a word of power that boomed even louder than Bobby's magic thunder. Bobby was transformed into Major Magus, but felt himself being pushed away by what he now recognized as powerful abjuration magic. There was a flash of bright light while the Major stumbled back, off-balance.

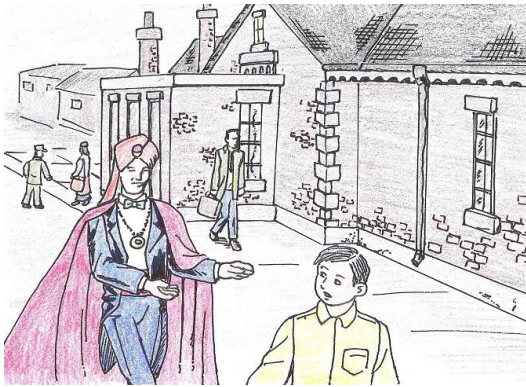


As he recovered, the light dimmed into ordinary sunlight and the Major could see he was standing back on Station Road in Aldershot. People walking past him looked at him funny, but in a "why is he dressed like an 18th century colonist?" way more than a "where did you just come from?" way. Whatever magic clouded their perception, he did not feel it would last long and he still wished to keep a low profile in town. He moved quickly to the nearest alley and said his magic word again.

Bobby stepped out of the alley and was looking around, wondering what to do next when a familiar voice called out to him.

"Bobby! Wait!" said Yarko the Great as he approached on the sidewalk. "I've been looking for you." Yarko looked grossly overdressed in his tuxedo, but - again - no one seemed to notice.

Bobby was momentarily taken aback before remembering that this wizard knew him better as himself than as Major Magus. Yarko might not have even seen the transformation had the Phantom Companion kicked him off the train fast enough. "You want *me*?" Bobby asked, just to be sure.



"Just to talk to you, and to tell you that you missed nothing. We tried for some time, but our Companion remained obstinate."

"Some time...?"

Yarko nodded and motioned for them to walk and talk. "I imagine time passed differently where the Companion had us," Yarko said nonchalantly. "I do not know how you came to know him, but I can guess. You must be the youngest apprentice he's ever taken. He was one of *my* mentors, when I was a younger man."

"He taught you magic?"

"I learned more about magic during my three months with him that I did at any other time before or since. That was 17 years ago now. But, Bobby..." and here Yarko stopped and turned Bobby to face him. Yarko looked down with a serious gaze to emphasize the following: "I learned no more about the Companion himself during that time than I had until just now in that...conference, when I learned that Prince Inaros learned magic from our same Companion hundreds of years ago. And it makes me worry, particularly the sternness of his warning and what he wishes us not to do...it makes me worry if we know enough to know he is on the right side."

"Gosh, Yarko..." Bobby said. He gulped, feeling a little overwhelmed by magical intrigue. They resumed walking and had cleared a whole city block already. Then Bobby thought to ask,

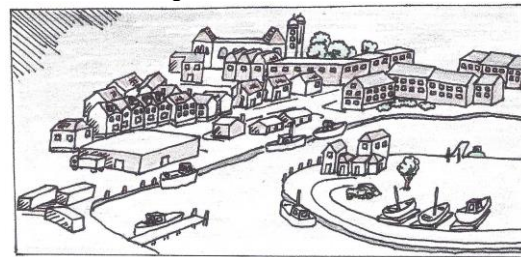
"What are *you* going to do? I mean about...you-know-who?"

Yarko smiled. "What will I do? Nothing...for now. The Companion will have his way. But I will be watching Adolph *and* the Companion very closely from now on."

"Is that what you think I should do?" Bobby asked, looking up. "Gosh, how did this ever get so complicated? I mean, we're good guys. He's the bad guy. This seemed so simple this morning."

Yarko smiled. "Maybe that was why the Companion brought you today, for a simpler perspective. Maybe it is the rest of us just overthinking things. I think it will be interesting to see what you choose. But it *is* you who must choose, Bobby. And I wish you good fortune in whatever your choice happens to be." With that, Yarko turned and - literally - disappeared into a crowd.

November 1, 1941
Portsmouth, England



The island port, one of the furthest south on this side of the English Channel, was both nearly deserted and nearly inky black in the night. Both conditions, the lack of boaters and dock lights, were the result of the war. There was, however, a singular mini-sub docked on an otherwise deserted pier and, standing near it, was Major Magus and Spyhunter.

"At 0100 hours, I'll be reaching the rendezvous point here," Spyhunter was saying as he pointed to a map of Normandy he held in one hand. "If you're not there, I'll be looking for your marker. If it's there, I'll know you pushed on to Berlin already. If not, I'll assume there was trouble at the tunnel and I'll come there to look for you. Is there anything else we should go over?"

"No. I'm not worried about the tunnel. But I have been thinking a lot about the second part of the mission. I've been...of two minds on the subject since yesterday, sort of debating myself."

"Really," Spyhunter said flatly. "And should I see this as cause for concern...?"

"One half of me," the Major continued, "is still confident that this is the right thing. I can do this. Take an evil man out of power. Capture him, without killing him. But the other half of me has

some doubt now. There's still a margin of error for a worst case scenario."

"I don't believe they can capture you, Major."

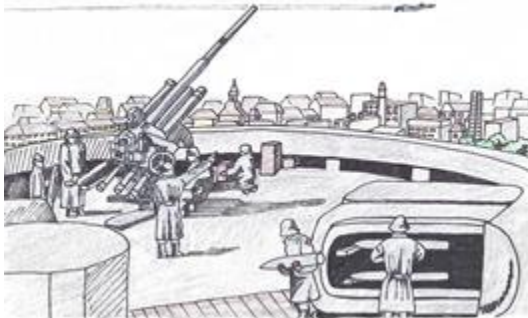
"No, I mean a worse scenario, where Hitler decides to take his own life before I can capture him and it looks like I killed him. The world will think the United States sent a superhuman to assassinate him. There are other superhumans out there besides me, you know, and no one would trust any of them anymore."

Spyhunter sighed, stepped away for a half-minute to think it over, and then stepped back. "Espionage is my specialty," he said at last. "If you needed to know when Hitler eats his breakfast, I can get you that information. But what you're asking for, what I think you're asking for...well, I figured you were the expert there. Major, I didn't want you on this mission just because you're the most powerful man in existence. I wanted you because you're the best man I've ever known. Whatever you decide to do is going to be the right thing to do. Maybe... maybe you're just thinking about this too hard. Maybe this isn't an either-or situation. Maybe we can be flexible enough for a third option."

"A third option..." the Major echoed, mulling it over. "Like just flying in and warning him or....picking a different target..." Major Magus perked up. "That's it. I know what I have to do now."

[Editor's Note: For the Tunnel Adventure, keep watching the H&H website at <http://sites.google.com/site/hideoutsandhoodlums/Home/hideouts-hoodlums-stories>.]

November 2, 1941
Berlin, Germany



In the broad light of day, Major Magus was plainly visible in the sky, like a blue and gold missile. The German Air Force had been tracking his movements since he was first sighted over the High Fens of Belgium over an hour earlier. Planes had been scrambled to intercept, but Major Magus was rocketing into Berlin now at 300 miles per hour and no plane was fast enough to catch him. No heavy artillery could be aimed fast enough to hit him. And he flew in high at long range to small arms fire.

All of Berlin was blaring with sirens. Guns of all sizes pounded the air, hoping for a lucky hit to take him down. But the Major had no intention of remaining in the air. He had spotted the Spree River and knew he could follow his way to his destination from there. He dropped into a power dive and, less than a second later, was under the city's skyline, safe from heavy guns, but with the ground coming up awful fast. He put on his mental "brakes", willing himself to stop, and swerving at the last moment so that he skidded to a halt only after dragging himself a half-block through the asphalt of Wilhelmstrasse Street, leaving a trail of broken asphalt behind him.

Even then he did not pause long, except to reorient himself, the Major was soon back in the air again. This time a mere 30 feet off the ground, the Major maintained a cruising speed of 50 MPH as he was now looking for a specific building. He passed trucks loaded with soldiers on the street below him. They were clearly watching for him and trying to stay mobile, so they could quickly reach wherever he landed.

Major Magus soon sighted his goal - the Ministry of Aviation building. Spyhunter's intelligence had told him that *Reichmarshall* Hermann Göring's office was here. The Major was going to follow the letter, if not the spirit, of the Phantom Companion's intentions and bring back Hitler's number two man instead.

The Major barely slowed down as he crashed through the reinforced wall of the building. Timing was the challenge here; the Major had to find Göring, if he was even here, and get out before the building could be surrounded by weapons strong enough to hurt him or chemical weapons used against him, to which he was more vulnerable. Worse, from what Prince Inaros had said, the Major now knew the Nazis had magicians with true magic working for them and magic was always a variable very hard to be prepared against.



The interior walls crumbled easily as Major Magus flew through them, checking room after room. In his tenth room, he stopped, grabbed a clerk by the shirt front, and asked menacingly, "*Wo ist Göring?*"

The trembling clerk claimed the *Reich-marshall* was not there, but the direction he had glanced when speaking told the Major where to look. He threw the clerk against a wall and broke through the next interior wall. And the next.

Three offices later, Major Magus found himself in the largest and most sumptuous office and felt he had found his goal. A quick check of the desk confirmed it when he saw paperwork addressed to Göring sitting out. But unless Göring was hiding under the desk, he was not here, and the Major even flipped the desk just to be sure.

With the clock ticking, Major Magus decided he would go to Plan C - grab the highest-ranking officer he could find and get out with him. Plan C was made infinitely easier when the door to Göring's office opened and a single, unarmed man rushed in. From Spyhunter's files, the Major recognized this as Erhard Milch, head of the *Luftschutzamt* department.

Milch looked surprised and terrified. He fumbled with a Luger still holstered at his side, but the Major pounced and was on him well before Milch could draw. He pushed Milch back out into the corridor outside the office, in sight of four soldiers coming at him from either side. The Major held Milch tight to him, making his intentions of using Milch as a hostage obvious.

"Erzähl Hitler dass er sich aufpassen soll. Sonst ich wegen ihm zurück käme," Major Magus boomed at the guards. The message was clear to them -- "Tell Hitler to watch himself, or I'll be back for him."

With that, Major Magus held onto Milch and fell backwards into Göring's office just as the corridor erupted with gunfire. The Major rocketed into the outside wall of the office with one fist extended and smashed a hole out for them. Still clutching a flailing Erhard Milch under one arm, Major Magus gained altitude quickly, rocketing straight up into the sky and away from Berlin.

Next Issue: Pearl Harbor has been attacked. Where was Major Magus? And can he protect America from an even worse disaster? Find out in "The Volcano King"!



CAPTAINS, MAGICIANS, AND INCREDIBLE MEN: THE OBSCURE HEROES

By Steve Lopez and Scott Casper

The following are outtakes from Supplement IV - both deemed too obscure for that book, but still worth sharing here.

BLACKOUT

Armor Class: 6 [13]	Level: 1
Move: 60	Class: Superhero
Hit Points: 19	Align: Chaotic

First appearance: Captain Battle #1 (Summer 1941)

Appearances to date: Captain Battle #1

Caught in a hospital lab when the Germans bombed Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Dr. Brusiloff was enveloped in a dense black smoke from the burning chemicals. When the smoke cleared, Brusiloff discovered that his body had become jet black and that he'd developed superhuman abilities (flight and the ability to generated thick clouds of smoke) granted to him by the reactive chemicals and "the command of a million souls who have perished from oppression in the struggle to keep democracy alive". Calling himself Blackout, the doctor takes the fight straight to the Nazis. Blackout's armor bonus is a function of his bizarre appearance plus the mask he wears. The character was not one of writer/artist Don Rico's better efforts; consequently Blackout's career was limited to a single appearance (which was later reprinted in Captain Battle #5 in 1943).

CAPTAIN FEARLESS

Armor Class: 9 [10]	Level: 1
Move: 60	Class: Fighter
Hit Points: 7	Align: Lawful

First appearance: Captain Fearless Comics #1 (August 1941)

Appearances to date: Captain Fearless Comics #1-2

According to ComicVine, "While strolling through a cemetery in Boston, young soldier John meets the spirit of his ancestor, John Fearless, who had fought in the American Revolutionary War. The elder Fearless instructs him not to fight overseas, but to devote himself to defending his homeland against Axis agents. Giving John a costume and his magic horn, the ghost promises to come to his aide whenever it is blown."

[Blackout write-up only, Copyright 2013 shared by Steve Lopez and Scott Casper. All rights reserved.]

MADAME FATAL
Ch. 4: "Endgame"
By David Brashear

Moments ago...

"They're getting closer!" Boomerang Jones warned as anti-aircraft fire bracketed the *Blue Tracer*. Lady Luck looked concerned from her seat while the Clock seemed relaxed, but his hand gripped the armrest of his seat tightly.

William Dunn smiled from the controls. "Then it's time for Plan B," he said. "Hang on!" A shell exploded near enough to the Tracer to make the Clock jump. Boomerang was grinning widely as he fastened his seatbelt. Dunn flipped a switch on the control board and the *Tracer* lost all power before beginning a plunge to the sea.

Lady Luck couldn't fight back a scream as the Tracer plunged into the sea of blue. All four people jerked as the *Tracer* slammed into the water and swiftly began its plunge to the bottom.

Once the waves above had covered the Tracer, Dunn quickly began working controls again. Motors whirled in the walls and the craft stabilized. "Submarine mode engaged," he said as lights snapped on, illuminating the sea ahead.

"Can we still maneuver to our rendezvous point?" the Clock asked.

Dunn smiled. "Of course," he said. "We've suffered no damage and, now that we're 'dead', they're not even looking for us." He turned away from the control panel. "I've got our automatic pilot engaged. Don't touch anything while Boomerang and I reload."

Madam Fatal glared as John Carver pulled a chair in front of her and sat down. "Now," he said, "let's see why you're after me. You've gone to a great deal of trouble finding me."

"Where is Mary Stanton?" Fatal demanded. Behind her back, she slid a small blade out of her sleeve and began sawing at the ropes that bound her.

Carver smirked. "The kid?" he asked. "Why are you so concerned about..." He leaned forward and the smirk faded as he studied Fatal's face. He jumped to his feet and walked out of the room. Fatal sawed faster.

Carver returned with a bucket. He threw the water it contained into Fatal's face and watched as the makeup smeared. He grabbed a rag off the floor and scrubbed Fatal's face, revealing the features of Richard Stanton.

"Stanton," Carver said. "You gave yourself away with demanding to know where the kid

was." He threw the rag down in disgust and sat down again.

"Where is she?" Stanton demanded.

Carver just smiled. "You brought this on yourself, you know." He laughed a cruel laugh. "Why don't I tell you the whole story? After all, it'll buy you a few more minutes of life."

The *Blue Tracer* climbed onto the sand of the beach, once more in its tank-ish form. "Where's Fatal?" Dunn asked.

"I don't see her!" Boomerang called from the *Tracer's* upper compartment. "There's nobody around!"

"Then we have no choice," the Clock said. "Carver must be brought to justice. We proceed without her."

"Agreed," Lady Luck said. "After we nab Carver, hopefully we'll be able to free her."

"If she's still alive," the Clock said.

As the crew sat silently, the *Tracer* moved forward and began chewing its way through the jungle toward Carver's hideout.

Stanton continued to saw at the ropes binding him as Carver began his story.

"You really don't understand what this is all about, do you?" Carver asked. "It all started back in high school. I was walking through the hall one day and saw the most beautiful woman I've seen before or since. Edith. I swore she'd be mine one day, but then she found somebody else."

"That's what this is all about?" Stanton asked. "You were carrying a torch for my wife?"

Carver jumped up so quickly his chair skidded away. "Because she should have been mine!" he hissed. "It was fate! And then you stole her from me!"

"Because we were in Romeo and Juliet together?" an incredulous Stanton asked. "Because I was Romeo and you played Count Paris in a high school play?"

"Yes!" Carver yelled. "I saw the look in her eyes when you kissed her. She should have looked at me like that!"

"Edith didn't die in a mugging, did she," Stanton said. It wasn't a question.

"I met her one day for lunch," Carver explained. "I tried to persuade her to come here

with me and be the queen you could never make her. She wouldn't! She left the restaurant and one of my guards got a little trigger-happy." Carver leaned against the wall a moment. "I dealt with him quite severely, so she was avenged, but he stole my true love from me forever."

"So you decided to kidnap my daughter?" Stanton asked. The ropes were nearly severed.

"Yes," Carver said as he leaned over Stanton with a sick smile on his face. "And you'll never see her again. As a matter of fact, after I kill you, maybe I'll raise her as my own."

Stanton had heard enough. He pulled free of the ropes and exploded up out of the chair, slamming into Carver. The two skidded across the room and began trading blows.

"Looks like we're here," Dunn announced to the others as the *Blue Tracer* emerged from the jungle and discovered the volcano's wall before them.

"Now what?" Lady Luck asked. "Are you going to try and climb this?"

"Not at all," Dunn said as he worked his control board resulting in a slight whirring noise. "Might want to cover your ears. This is going to be loud."

The nose of the *Tracer* finished opening, revealing a massive cannon behind it. A push of Dunn's finger caused the cannon to fire, blasting a hole into the volcano wall.

"Well, we've knocked," Dunn said. "Shall we?" The *Tracer* rolled forward into Carver's headquarters.

Thugs' heads jerked around to gape as the *Tracer* crashed through the wall. They almost instantaneously opened fire and soon the *Tracer's* metal hide was ringing with deflected gunshots. Boomerang cocked his machine gun and began spraying the cavern with automatic fire. The surviving thugs scattered and took cover.

"Time to go, I think," the Clock said as the gunfire diminished.

"I quite agree," Lady Luck said. She pulled two pistols from holsters at her hips and waited for the *Tracer's* door to cycle open. The Clock pulled his tie pin free and threw it across the room like a grenade. It landed behind a barricade protecting some of the gunmen and detonated, spraying

tear gas. As they staggered free, they were easy prey for Lady Luck, who took them down with shots to their arms and legs.

With the room clearing, the Clock pulled a pistol from under his suit jacket and fell into step beside Lady Luck as they ran deeper into the hideout.

In the makeshift holding cell, Carver had gotten the advantage on Stanton. With one eye swelling closed and blood trickling from his nose, he sat on Stanton and pulled a gun from his jacket. "I've waited a long time for this," he said as he aimed the pistol at Stanton's head.

Stanton's hand frantically reached out and closed on the smooth wood of his cane. He swung it upward with all the force he could muster and it cracked against the side of Carver's head. Carver fell backward and the gun fell free. Stanton pushed Carver off him and started toward the gun.

Carver shook his head to clear the cobwebs and saw what Stanton was up to. He dove and both men's hands closed on the pistol at the same time. As they wrestled for control of the gun, one of their fingers pulled the trigger and the gun went off.

Carver's face showed shock as he slid to the ground while a red stain spread on his shirt. Stanton dropped the pistol and turned to him as Carver started laughing softly.

"Idiot," Carver gasped. "You'll never find her. She's not here and you'll never find who has her." He laughed softly as he died.

Stanton stared helplessly at his body a moment before he snapped out of his shock and quickly searched Carver's pockets only to come up empty. He looked up as he heard a commotion outside the room. He grabbed his purse and used a filthy mirror in the room to apply his Madam Fatal makeup.



Soon the door burst open. "She's in here!" the

Clock called as Lady Luck fired down the corridor.

"Good to see you, dearie," Madam Fatal said as she picked her cane up from the floor. "I was just preparing to come looking for you."

The Clock looked down. "Carver," he said softly. "Dead?"

"Yes," Madam Fatal replied.

The Clock nodded. "We need to go. There seems to be no end to his thugs and we're running low on ammunition."

"Then let's," Madam Fatal said.

The two emerged into the hall where Lady Luck was firing down the hall. "Time to go," she said. She fired to allow Fatal and the Clock to get across the hall, and then ran after them back to the Tracer and safety.

The next night, Madam Fatal accompanied Lady Luck past a security fence. Lady Luck had requested the meeting and Fatal still didn't know what was going on.

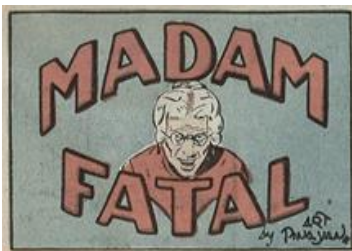
Lady Luck led the way into a small cabin and flipped a switch, turning the lights on. "It's small, but I thought you could use somewhere to hang your hat," Lady Luck said.

"Why do you think I need somewhere to live?" Fatal asked.

"Woman's intuition," Lady Luck said with a wink.

"Won't the owners mind me being here?" Fatal asked.

"This is an old mining site that Banks Mining owns," Lady Luck explained. "Brenda Banks owed me a favor or two." She pointed at a ladder in the corner of the room. "That'll lead you down into the old mine, just in case you ever need to make a quick exit."



"Thank you," Fatal said.

"Don't worry about it," Lady Luck said. "It was fun. And maybe we can do it again sometime."

With a laugh, she was gone.

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Spies Like Us! The Spy Character Class for H&H

By Scott Casper

Black X, Spy Smasher, multiple characters with random letter-number combinations like D13 - they have up until now all been labeled as belonging to the Fighter class in H&H products. Yet there are elements of the spy genre, both in terms of their skill set and their organizations, that could set them apart. Hence, the introduction of the Spy as a "sub-class" of Fighter.

The Prime requisite for this class is Charisma, which the player can boost at the time of character creation by trading INT for CHA at 2:1 or WIS for CHA at 3:1).

Weapon/Armor Restrictions: Spies are trained in all modern weapons and can fight with firearms, as well as knives and clubs. They are -1 to hit with more archaic weapons, like bows or swords, but can still use them. Spies can use bulletproof vests, but no other armor, though they can still benefit from cover.

Alignment: For Spies, Alignment is usually synonymous with which country they serve. Even for a pre-WWII campaign, use the war's alliances as your Alignment guide, with all countries that would become the Allies as Lawful countries, all countries that would become the Axis as Chaotic, and all other countries Neutral (with the exception of the Soviet Union, which would remain Chaotic).

Disguise: Starting at 1st level, Spies gain a disguise ability almost identical to the Villain class (see [Supplement II: All-American](#)). In addition to specific impersonations, Spies can attempt to appear to belong to a different Alignment, to avoid suspicion while infiltrating hideouts. A Lawful spy, for example, might wear a monocle or a fake scar to appear Chaotic, while a Neutral spy might shower and shave to appear more Lawful.

The chance of successfully disguising an Alignment is rolled for on the same table as any disguise, but as two levels higher. Check each time the Spy encounters a mobster of equal or higher levels/HD to the Spy.

Forgery: Starting at 1st level, Spies can forge documents. Whether it's passports, contracts, or secret plans, there is no class that values

(nonmagical) documents as trophies more (and see below). Sometimes, though, a Spy just has to fake having the right documents.

The player is not expected to keep track of all the tools necessary for forging documents, but it is assumed that the Spy is in an environment, like a city, where he could acquire what he needed and has time to do so. If the Spy was in the middle of combat, locked up in a cell, or other situations at the Editor's discretion, there would be no chance to roll, or one at a substantial penalty.

Forgery Skill Progression

Level	Chance*
1	15%
2	20%
3	30%
4	35%
5	40%
6	45%
7	50%
8	55%

*+5% per level after level 8, up to 95%.

Identify Other Spies: Starting at 2nd level, Spies are allowed to contact their HQ and ask to have enemy spies identified. A Spy able to give a physical description has a 2 in 6 chance of HQ being able to correctly identify the spy's home country and spy code letter designation (see level titles below). This chance goes up to 4 in 6 from a photograph or 5 in 6 from fingerprinting, but at longer turnaround times.

A Spy able to give a physical description over the phone or send one by telegram can be contacted back the same way within 1d20 minutes. A spy mailing a photograph or set of fingerprints to HQ will have to wait 1d4 days for the response.

License to Kill: Starting at 4th level, Spies have a license to kill and, like the Fighter class, can shoot firearms at sentient opponents without having to save against plot each turn to do so.



Free Healing: Starting at 7th level, Spies are entitled to return to HQ for free healing of all lost hp, as well as any (nonmagical) diseases cured, between missions.

Saving Throws: Spies enjoy a +3 bonus to saves against plot and poison and a +1 bonus to saves against missiles and science.

Spy Progression Table

Level	XP*	HD	BHB	ST	Code
1	0	1d8	+0	16	B
2	1,750	2d8	+1	16	D
3	3,500	3d8	+2	15	E
4	7,500	4d8	+2	15	G
5	15,000	5d8	+3	14	I
6	30,000	6d8	+4	14	M
7	66,000	7d8	+4	13	N
8	110,000	8d8	+5	12	O
9	167,000	9d8	+6	11	Q
10	242,000	9d8+2	+6	10	R
11	435,000	9d8+4	+7	9	S
12	707,000	9d8+6	+8	8	T

*Every level past 12 requires an additional 272,000 xp. Other progressions can be extrapolated from the table.

A Spies code letter designation, plus the result of a d100 roll, determines their spy code. A 1st-level Spy, for example, could be B51. Each country might have its own Agent B51.

HQ: The Editor is encouraged to develop a spy agency, its administrative officers, and some of its top agents. In a U.S.-based campaign, the spy agency would be the Secret Service, the FBI, or a fictitious branch of the federal government. After 1942, it could be the Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner to the CIA).

If the Editor wishes, he can alter the hierarchy of his spy agency. The entire spy code system above can be replaced. The Black X entry in Supplement IV Part II will discuss an implied hierarchical structure in those stories that can be used instead, for example.

Documents as Trophies: No trophies are so exclusively valuable to Spies as documents. An Editor will have to assign xp value to important documents recovered on a mission. Some guidelines include awarding 1 xp per \$20 of monetary value associated with the documents (like in a contract), 50 xp per level of non-Heroes involved in the documents (like compromising photos), 100 xp per level for hideout maps, or 1 xp per 2 xp value of a trophy for plans or blueprints for building said trophy.

Spies and Trophies: The greatest disadvantage of the Spy is that they are not allowed to keep any trophies recovered during a mission. A Spy can, however, requisition trophies before each mission, including trophies that had previously been in the Spy's possession. Due to the vagaries of red tape and administrative oversight, the Editor should choose the trophies instead of the player, either from the requisition list submitted to the Editor, a

random table of the Editor's creation, or capricious whim.

FAN ART

Fan Supreme-in-Training Allen Trembone again graces our pages with his fifth art submission. His art can also be found at the H&H Fan Club on Yahoo!Groups. How appropriate that he sent me the Target, a hero that I then had to write up for the fourth H&H Supplement!

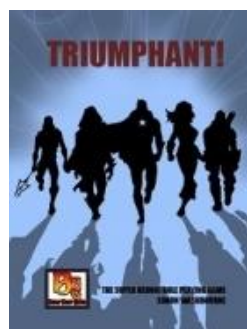


Triumphant! Reviewing another Alternative to H&H

By Scott Casper

Simon Washbourne was kind enough to send me a review copy of his new superhero RPG, Triumphant. The review copy is 57 incomplete pages long, minimal formatting, and with no artwork. I'm sure the finished product looks much different.

When I first saw Simon advertising Triumphant, it was on the OD&D Discussion message boards. Why, I wondered, was this relevant in a forum dedicated strictly to Old School games? That was cleared up for me on page 1, where Simon wrote, "The rules of TRIUMPHANT are intentionally



simple and there will not be a rule for everything. However, what rules there are should be readily adapted to most situations." This is clearly an Old School model of game design; H&H embraced the same model as well.

What audience is the game intended for? The introduction says "The game assumes the players and Game Master (GM) already have some rudimentary experience with roleplaying," but then goes on to explain what roleplaying games are and even defines terms any gamers would already know, like what a "D20" is. A curious decision was to substitute "DD8" for the more familiar "2d8".

Triumphant wisely allows for both allocation and random methods of character creation, for players who prefer either method. The system eschews character classes, but retains something of the idea in "archetypes". There are 24 archetypes, but they are game mechanics-less and only listed to help players come up with character concepts (assumedly, in case the player does not have a favorite hero already).

Instead of assigning ranks or levels or even specific numbers to define a character's attributes, the player assigns dice. The number of dice the player is given to distribute depends on the power level of the campaign. There are five power levels, from "street vigilantes" to "cosmic defenders". The power level determines not just the number of dice, but the die types. A street vigilante might have a power with a D6 attached to it, while a cosmic defender might have the same power with two eight-sided dice attached.

Players can assign dice to things other than powers, like fighting ability or skills, but will have to wait. Page 3 hints that some attributes will already have a default die that is "bumped up" by adding more dice to it, but the topic is set aside for lists and examples and not picked up again until page 17 (for skills) and page 33 (for fighting).

One thing Triumphant is very good at is lists.

There are 21 skills, which feels to me like a nice, easy-to-manage range, compared to more skill-heavy systems like Call of Cthulu or "3E" D&D)

There are 63 powers which, like most superhero games, are distinguished from each other not only what they do but how they work. There is a list of 8 enhancements and a list of 13 limitations that affect powers. I like how using these two in tandem allows you to mold distinctive variations on what would otherwise be stock powers - like adding an area effect to the power of

healing, but it has the limitation of coming from an item

There is a list of 12 benefits and a list of 20 drawbacks. These later two work more to develop your character -- like being rich, but having a dark secret -- though some of them are tied to game mechanics as well.

There are two examples of character creation, one walking you through the steps of point allocation and the other walking you through random rolling. These examples make the process look relatively clear and simple, though it takes longer to explain the random process.

One way the mechanics of Triumphant really stand out is in avoiding the notion of hit points. Combats are still won by attrition, but instead of losing points off a mechanic all its own, your dice drop in one of three conditions - ego, health, or mobility. If you normally rolled a D6 for a health-related skill, but took 1 point of damage to health, you would roll D4 for those same skills until healed. If one of the conditions drops below D4 to D3, then you take more serious repercussions. In theory, I like the idea of the repercussions, like if your ego drops too low you might go temporarily insane, or if your health drops too low, you are stunned.

This is sensible, realistic, but - coming from someone accustomed to a separate hit point mechanic - it seems like it would get really frustrating to have your character become less and less capable in combat just as you're getting closer to losing. The separate hit point mechanic allows for a random, but heroic-looking last-moment save that would be rarer in this system. Luckily, healing happens quickly, with conditions recovering one die type for every 10 minutes of rest (all my H&H players who complained about slow healing would love that!).

Skills work much like conditions, so much so that they cannot rise above the die type of their associated condition. There must be some game balance issue requiring this that I don't see. If you really wanted to stay realistic, then the world's greatest expert on history shouldn't need a DD8 Ego just to have a DD8 in history.

Powers work the same as skills, but without the default die type (if you have no die type, you simply don't have the power). Some powers are creatively named, such as *audiokinesis* (really, any of the -kinesis powers), but most are rather too-familiar and generic-sounding. More disturbingly, all powers are equally accessible, so a superhero is just as likely to have *chronokinesis* and affect the flow of time as have *burrowing* and dig holes. It would be nice if the more game balance-busting powers like time control came with a die type penalty, like requiring you to sink a D6 into the power to get a D4. Maybe the most broken power is *magic*, which allows you to

simulate any other power and only gets harder if you have more than one spell going at a time.

Time travel is the only power that comes with a warning that its availability is left solely to the GM's discretion.

Triumphant deliberately avoids using synergy to cumulate better dice. You can use skills and powers in tandem, but instead of giving you a bonus, you can roll under which is most advantageous (so it would never benefit you to have the same die type in both). I imagine one example of this synergy would be having the illusion power and the artist skill, to make more realistic illusions, but there are no examples, so the GM is left to imagine them on his own.

As mentioned earlier, one of the highlights for me here is the ability to custom design powers by adding enhancements and limitations. There is wisely a limit of one limitation per power to avoid min-maxing, though it would be fun to see a superhero who has to activate his powers, only at night, wait for them to charge up, risk them burning out, require his full concentration during use, but exhaust him afterwards. The rules do say you can take extra limitations without getting the die type bump from them, for players who want them for "flavour only" This is the first appeal to flavor text I saw in the rule, something that factors so much stronger into H&H.

The power enhancements have the shortest list, but include some very tempting ones. For me, as unlucky as my dice rolls tend to be, I would definitely want *power minimum*, that ignores low rolls. There is a mention of some enhancements costing an extra die type bump down. This would be a rare place in the rules where they acknowledge not all options being equal, yet I failed to see in any of the enhancement descriptions which ones required an extra bump down.

Benefits and drawbacks both affect a mechanic explained a little later called *triumph dice*. You could, in theory, take all the benefits, as you can't actually benefit from a benefit, like using your contacts, without surrendering a triumph die from a pool of them you've accumulated in the game. And, while that makes a certain amount of sense to me, particularly if you chose *contacts* for your benefit at the time of character creation, I wonder if it is not unfair to charge you for it if you gained the contacts through role-playing in the course of the game. Quite a few of the benefits, like *companion*, *contacts*, and *famous*, seem like they could be rewards for good role-playing, but the rules seem to say nothing about this.

So, the character creation rules are pretty strong. The weakest part of the rules, for me, is how the game's basic mechanics are presented. I personally dislike game systems where the GM has to set an arbitrary target number that the

players have to roll or roll above. We're told that a *hard* task requires a 5 or better and a *challenging* task requires a 6 or better, but what is the difference between something hard and something challenging? Likewise, conflict resolution is explained as two opponents rolling against each other, with the defender's roll becoming the target number for the aggressor; which seems fine, but what exactly am I rolling for? Is a basket-weaving contest a battle of *ego* rolls, with victory going to the side with the higher will to win? Or is it about *mobility* and the ability to weave faster? Or is it resolved by one's basket-weaving skill alone (which everyone has, since all skills default at D4)? From the combat section, it seems players are allowed to choose what they want to roll under, but I still would have liked at least a page of examples for both general task resolution and conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution is, deservedly, more complicated for combat. Any combatants with surprise go first, but the rules do not spell out how surprise is achieved. After surprise combatants, everyone else goes in order of an Athleticism skill roll, from highest to lowest, and this is their *priority* in combat (what other systems call initiative). As important as Athleticism is to combat, I wish there had been a stronger note about it in the character creation section.

The example of combat is disturbing, or rather the quick deaths of five minions in the example combat are disturbing. The hero is distraught about it, but would the hero's player be? Most players don't regret having their characters kill anyone unless the game mechanics force them to - like how Marvel Super Heroes took away all your Karma, or H&H may (depending on Alignment) take away your XP award. As far as I saw, Triumphant doesn't penalize heroes for killing.

A two-page section on Special Hazards and Natural Disasters could have been a real stand-out here, but instead serves only to inspire the GM. It would have been nicer to have game mechanics for handling each example. What damage die type should a tornado have? Is resisting disease a general task or a conflict, opposed by the die type of the disease?

One of the best features of Triumphant - indeed, the one of which I am most envious - is the attention it pays to Downtime. While other games will focus solely on adventures, this game tells you what your characters could be doing between adventures and - more importantly - gives it the weight and importance of game mechanics. It can be personal improvement, such as seeing a psychiatrist (which will allow you to ignore a psychological drawback on your next adventure). You can train - this, as opposed to leveling - is how your stats improve in Triumphant. In this regard, downtime is actually more critical than the adventures themselves! You can

upgrade your headquarters. My review copy has incomplete rules on headquarters, but I hope they're impressive. I have not seen great HQ-creating rules since the Marvel Super Heroes supplement Avengers Coast to Coast - and that was back in 1986! I even like the rules for inventing things. Most game mechanics for inventing only take time and money away from the characters and clever players can usually get around one or both of these, but Triumphant makes you spend your Triumph Dice from your next adventure to invent something (in addition to your time and money).

Other game systems might devote a whole book or more to this, but Triumphant has about two and a half pages on minions - adversarial Non-Player Characters to encounter like alligators, goons, and zombies, but also friendly NPCs like bankers and nurses. They are all stat-lite, each having no more than five stats to distinguish them.

The difference between H&H and Triumphant is perhaps most clearly spelled out by the closing Designing Adventures section. In it, the GM's role is described as "creating a story where you need to have a plot, some important scenes, and some well-thought out NPCs to interact with or to oppose the character's goals. You could even go further; maybe some floor plans or maps...." Here Simon is describing the typical superhero RPG, but at the expense of the Old School aesthetic he claimed he was going for in the beginning. H&H takes the exact opposite approach, downplaying the importance of plot and emphasizing the need for floor plans, maps - places for the Heroes to go and do things, as opposed to moving the Heroes from scene to scene as a plot required. Other than that, his advice is decent, particularly the emphasis on flexibility.

Triumphant, while in many ways incompatible with H&H in both mechanics and purpose, does have a lot of ideas to offer and is worth picking up a copy.

Random Heroes! How to Roll Up an Entire Character History from Published Comics

This article begins with a confession - I was addicted to playing the online game, Avengers Alliance. After a string of disappointments with the game, I decided I needed something else to occupy my online free time with, something else simple enough to do with mainly mouse clicking; something else that would allow me to build up a character from scratch, but without becoming addicted to another video game. The idea I came up with was creating character histories by randomly rolling for one feature from a published comic each month and then trying to think up a narrative that strings them all together.

For characters with early enough starts, the game begins easily enough at Mike's Amazing World of Comics, the "newsstand" feature (<http://www.dcindexes.com/features/timemachine.php?site>). If, for example, I wanted to start a character in July 1938, I would view that month and see that there were 20 issues with that cover date. I can now easily roll 1d20 (if there was a different number of issues, like 18, I might ignore a 19 or 20 and re-roll, or just use an online dice roller that allows me to choose my ranges). Let's assume I did so and rolled a 10 - my starting issue would be Feature Funnies #10. My next step would be to go to GCD, the Grand Comics Database (www.comics.org). There, I can look up that issue and see it was an anthology of 18 features. Rolling randomly again, I might get a 2. The second feature in that issue was "The Big Top". I could go then to the Digital Comic Museum (www.digitalcomicmuseum.com) and actually read that feature to see what happened, or use what little I know of it so far to say my starting point is the circus and some circus performers. As I roll the next month's feature, more details will surface that will help me flesh out the first month's feature.

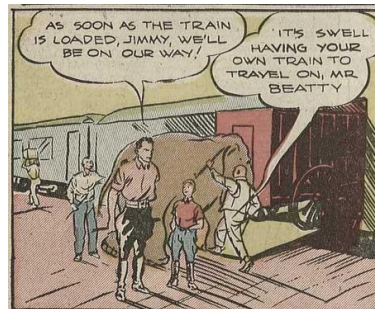
Mike's Amazing World of Comics works fine up until the end of 1939. After that, it is missing several major publishers who started appearing from the end of 1939 through 1941. Another site with a "newsstand" feature is Comic Book Plus (http://comicbookplus.com/?cbplus=yms_home). Neither site is truly comprehensive, but between the two of them hardly anything is missed. One could even roll randomly between the two sites (with a 50/50 chance for both).

Or one could try this more complex method that only uses the Digital Comic Museum. There, after some scrolling and clicking around, one can find which publishers were publishing during a given month. Or plot a list for the whole year, re-rolling only when the rolled publisher did not publish something during that month. For example, a table of 1940 publishers would look like:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Ace | 10. Fox |
| 2. Better | 11. Hillman |
| 3. Centaur | 12. Holyoke |
| 4. Columbia | 13. Lev Gleason |
| 5. Dell | 14. MLJ |
| 6. DC | 15. Novelty |
| 7. Eastern | 16. Prize |
| 8. Fawcett | 17. Quality |
| 9. Fiction House | 18. Timely |

In addition to building a narrative around this random string of features, I will also try to build H&H stats around it as I go. From the first few stories, I should have some idea what character class and race fit this character. The default is always going to be human fighter. Indeed, in two trial runs at building two years' worth of Golden Age character histories for each new character, I

have not rolled a single superhero or magic-user adventure, though I have landed on mysterymen and explorer adventures. For each feature, I try to assign earned experience points to it. Like the character histories in Supplement IV, I will assign 10 xp per page of the story, but I might add 100 xp for every good deed or Supporting Cast Member I can work into the narrative later, or more for trophies the story needs for my character to acquire (like a plane). Sometimes I have fudged results, if the next feature over would be a much better fit, but usually I try to conform to the challenge of making each feature fit the narrative.



For my first trial at this process, I started with June 1938 and rolled up the "Clyde Beatty, Daredevil Lion Tamer" feature from Crackjack Funnies #1. Because this was an obscure character I felt comfortable remaking, I stuck with the name and occupation, though future rolls soon turned him into an aviator and globe-trotting adventurer. Most of the time, I substituted my character for the main character in the rolled-up feature, and other times I retained the real main character as a "guest star". Sometimes I did not feel comfortable making too obvious a swipe. When I rolled a Crimson Avenger story that required me to have a chauffeur sidekick, I decided to rename him rather than have Crimson Avenger's Wing show up. For extra historical detail, I often did more clicking around on Wikipedia.

My first character's first six months looked like this:

#1- June 1938 -- ("Clyde Beatty" feature in Crackjack Funnies #1) - Clyde Beatty, Daredevil Lion Tamer, is approached by recently orphaned Jimmy Brooder who wants to run away from the circus. Jimmy's uncle, Bull, initially is fine with handing custody of Jimmy over to Clyde until he learns Jimmy came with money (130 xp in Fighter).

#2- July 1938 -- ("Barney Baxter in the Air" feature in Feature Book #15) - Jimmy shares his money with Clyde and makes his dream of owning a plane come true. They fix up an old 1909 Blériot XI monoplane, but Bull Brooder seeks to discredit Clyde and win Jimmy back for Jimmy's money. Bull gets Clyde fired from the circus (and, in truth, his new passion for aviation was making him

negligent), but his schemes backfire and make Jimmy more loyal to Clyde than ever (940 xp in Fighter).

#3 - August 1938 - ("Lyn' Lou" feature in Cowboy Comics #14) - Lyn' Lou, a conman, tricks Clyde out of their plane (960 xp in Fighter).

#4 - September 1938 -- ("Hawks of the Seas" feature in Feature Funnies #12) - Clyde and Jimmy take to sailing the Caribbean in a sailboat, only to run afoul of white slavers and have to fight their way to freedom off a freighter (1,200 xp in Fighter).

#5 - October 1938 -- ("Hall of Fame of the Air" in King Comics #31) - Clyde and Jimmy return to the states long enough to see Barney Baxter's admission into the Hall of Fame of the Air and make his acquaintance and then team-up to give Lyn' Lou some payback (1,320 xp in Fighter).

#6 - November 1938 -- ("Crimson Avenger" feature in Detective Comics #21) - Clyde and Jimmy decide to tour the country by car, so they hire an Asian chauffeur named Tung. When Clyde decides to investigate rumors of grave robbers nearby, both Jimmy and Tung show up to aid him in fighting the robbers (1,680 xp in Fighter).

My second character was harder because the first feature I rolled up was the Phantom in Feature Book #20. I didn't want to recreate the Phantom's adventures randomly. I considered having Phantom be his last name, like Bob Phantom. His first name became Sam after the third feature rolled was the "Salesman Sam" feature in The Funnies #29. A later story required him to be related to someone named O'Shea, so that was when my character retroactively became Sam O'Shea. This character took a lot more retrofitting details than the first one to build a narrative and revolved much more around less adventurous episodes than the first, but eventually I was pleased with the result.

My second character's first six months looked like this:

#1 -- December 1938 - ("Phantom" in Feature Book #20) - Sam O'Shea is vacationing from college in Qatar when he spies pearl pirates and jumps right in to thwart them. While fighting the pirates in their lair, Sam finds a magic crystal that transports him back in time (710 xp in Fighter).

#2 -- January 1939 - ("Magic Crystal of History" feature in More Fun Comics #39) - Sam finds himself in Qatar in 1588, then under the control of the Ottoman Empire. After one month of adjusting to his new life, the magic expires and Sam is returned to the present (730 xp in Fighter).

#3 -- February 1939 - ("Salesman Sam" feature in The Funnies #29) - Sam tries to readjust to life in the present, getting a job in a store to help make ends meet, but still craves adventure (740 xp in Fighter).

#4 -- March 1939 - ("Slim and Tubby" feature in Feature Funnies #18) - With graduation

approaching, Sam helps a guy nicknamed "Tubby" on his research paper and Tubby becomes his sidekick (860 xp in Fighter)

#5 -- April 1939 - ("Apple Mary and Dennie" feature in Crackajack Funnies #10) - Emboldened by his lack of chances after they graduate, Sam asks out Mary Dennie, who says yes and becomes his girlfriend (1,000 xp in Fighter)

#6 -- May 1939 - ("Abbie and Slats" feature in Comics on Parade #14) - Tubby makes a joke about too-serious cop O'Kelly and winds up with a huge fine. Sam and Mary manage to smooth things over with O'Kelly and convince him to drop the charge (1,250 xp in Fighter).

This process has some practical application in H&H. For Editors, it is a way to build long, complex histories for Supporting Cast Members or even antagonists (with judicious changes to the narrative to make the main character the villain). The narrative could even become the plot outline for an entire campaign. For players, this process allows a way to sort of play H&H solo. It also, in a campaign where the Heroes are allowed to start above 1st level, would be a good way of building a backstory for how the Heroes reached their starting level.

The full results of both experiments are on my Scottenkainenland blog at:

<http://scottenkainenland.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-clyde-beatty-project.html>

and

<http://scottenkainenland.blogspot.com/2013/06/the-sam-oshea-project.html>

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