ORIGINS AWARD NOMINATED BEST RPG

SILVER AGE SENTINELS

THE SUPERHERO ROLE-PLAYING GAME



Foreword

You hold in your hands the product of well over a thousand man-hours of work and Guardians Of Order's most ambitious game release in our five-year history. We believe that *Silver Age Sentinels* marks a pinnacle achievement for superhero role-playing, representing the best in writing, design, innovation, and creativity. More than just a superhero RPG, the D10 Tri-Stat System is an ideal universal game engine for any genre, setting, and time period. Its only limits are the ones you impose upon it in your own campaign.

Since the D6 version of Tri-Stat hit the market in 1997 in *Big Eyes, Small Mouth,* gamers have used our system for a wide range of campaigns: science fiction, fantasy, cyberpunk, space opera, espionage, horror, comedy, and ... superheroes. While many players found the narrow dice result range of *BESM* perfect for their superhero campaigns, others felt that two six-sided dice could not adequately model the broad power levels found in comic books. We believed that substituting in ten-sided dice (thus increasing the range of task resolution results) and expanding the power options available to characters would lay the foundation for the creation of the perfect superhero RPG. With so much passion in the office towards comic books and heroic ideals, the many months of development required for a complete Tri-Stat revision and the creation of the Empire City setting would truly be a labour of love.

The question many industry colleagues have asked us is "What makes you so sure your game will succeed when so many superhero RPGs have failed in the past?" The answer, we believe, is twofold. First, many of the previous games featured a mechanics system that was tied too intricately to the world setting. A superhero RPG must provide for the entire milieu of comic book power levels and diversity, from the skilled street vigilante to the powerful spandex hero to the overwhelming galactic entity. An RPG that only allows characters to exist within a fraction of that spectrum will naturally only appeal to a select group of role-players. One of our primary goals for *Silver Age Sentinels* was the inclusion of rules and guidelines to accommodate any character imaginable. By giving players what they demanded — a scalable and easy-to-learn game system — we could give the game a chance to succeed in the marketplace.

The second reason role-players may not have embraced some of the other games is that the designers forgot to include the "hero" in superhero. The heroic ideals prevalent in the Silver Age of comics — duty, honour, responsibility, charity, hope, nobility, spirit, and others — are an integral part of *Silver Age Sentinels* (as reflected in the title). Our instinct told us that fans of the superhero genre didn't want to play angst-ridden, corrupted, battle-weary, tainted, morally deficient, jaded, or flawed characters in capes and masks. They wanted to play heroes. Perhaps the Sentinel said it best:

"Liberty. Justice. Security. Peace. These are the four pillars of a better world; a land of hope, freedom, and truth, where life is not a burden to endure but a joy to experience. There are threats you cannot conquer, tragedies you cannot avoid, and sins you cannot punish. We are here to help. We will support you when you stumble, keep watch when you sleep, and help you achieve the unreachable. We will show you how to touch Paradise. We are The Guard, and you are safe on our watch."

Enough talk. It's time to save the world....

Mark C. MacKinnon
June 2002

I Want to Get Started Right Now!

Anxious to put a character together and get a feel for the system as soon as possible? Follow these four steps:

1. Turn to page 322 and randomly generate one of 150 different starting characters.
2. Read the "Stripped to the Core" designer's note on page 172.
3. Read the example of combat on page 136.
4. Select one or more of the NPCs on page 329 as adversaries.

You arrive at the Empire City Bank where the NPCs are in the middle of a robbery. What do you do?

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Role-Playing Game Manifesto

These rules are written on paper, not etched in stone tablets.

Rules are suggested guidelines, not required edicts.

If the rules don't say you can't do something, you can.

There are no official answers, only official opinions.

When dice conflict with the story, the story always wins.

Min/Maxing and munchkinism aren't problems with the game; they're problems with the player.

The Game Master has full discretionary power over the game.

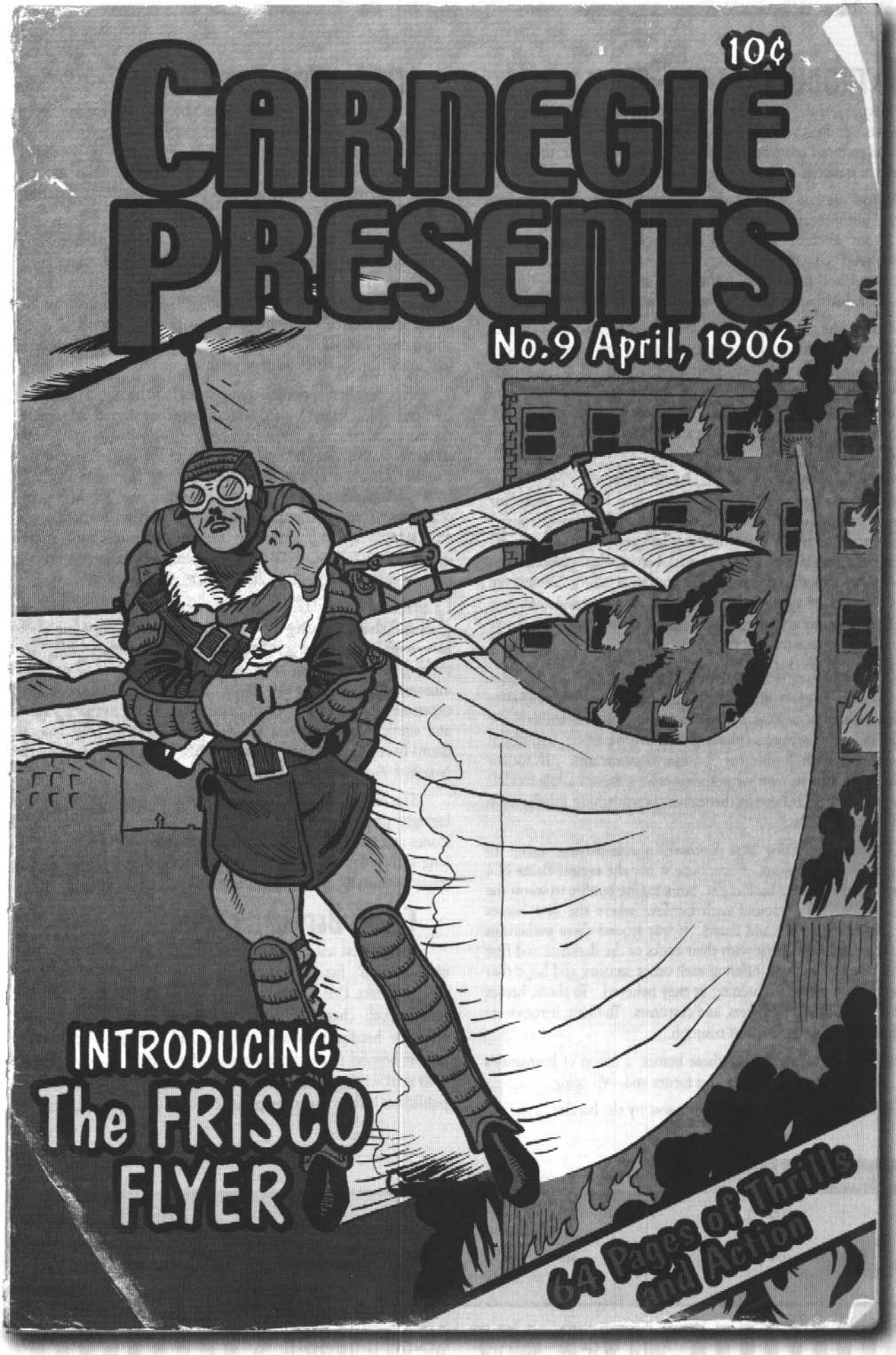
The Game Master always works with, not against, the players.

A game that is not fun is no longer a game — it's a chore.

This book contains the answers to all things.

When the above does not apply, make it up.

INTRODUCTION



Introduction to Heroism 101

Welcome, truly. These pages contain the culmination of a love for the near-endless vault of hope contained within a milieu known simply as comics. More specifically, it is a celebration of that most admired of qualities — heroism, and its avatars, superheroes.

Heroes are not products of 19th and 20th century principles. The notions of mortals endowed with powers and superior faculties stem from ancient times, in the mythological champions Bellerophone, Gilgamesh, King Arthur, Hercules, Nuada of the Silver Hand, and many more. They exist in religious texts, though these individuals were instead saints, martyrs, and prophets.

Despite the gap between the guardians of then and the knights of today, they all share one quality in common, one aspect that both unites and distinguishes them. They are all reflections of their times and societies. Thus, Hercules could fly into drunken rages and slaughter people, yet still remain heroic to the ancient Greeks. Nuada could lose his arm in a society that prizes physical perfection and still remain a champion to the Celts.

With this in mind, the vanguards of contemporary society exist within a mythological framework called comic books. Like their historical counterparts, superheroes are also reflections of today's societies and mores. If that's the case, however, one must wonder what society thinks of itself to generate heroes with a bloodlust to rival the Aztec deities, or heroes that are respected for falling from grace. Despite an appreciation for artistic license, many comics or heroic representations have shifted perspectives from the positive end of the spectrum to its negative extreme.

Why?

Is society so enamoured with its inadequacies that it wishes to topple its champions as well? Heroes are supposed to embody the best in society. They are something to which we aspire, a model of conduct and wish fulfillment for our best dreams. If society humbles and kills its own virtues, then who serves as a role model? Who helps people believe in themselves as something greater than a collection of foibles?

Welcome to *Silver Age Sentinels*, a role-playing game to champion the champions. Here, hope is not the ragged flame of a solitary candle holding back night, but a raging bonfire to warm the human tribe. It is around such bonfires where the first heroes appeared in the smoke and flame. It was around these gatherings when men and women sat with their backs to the darkness and first created their champions, offering each other security and hope that the world was not as frightening as they believed. To them, heroes were not about names, powers, and costumes. To them, heroes were all about righteous action and triumph.

Within these pages exist those heroes, a fusion of humanity's best, and the hope for its collective future and well being.

Welcome, truly. We saved you a seat by the bonfire....

The History of Comics

In the not-too-distant past, "comic books," as we know them, didn't exist. There were no "funny pages," no superheroes in colourful costumes fighting the forces of evil. Less than a century ago, comic books appeared on the scene and have created an entirely new genre of literature and storytelling that has entertained millions of readers, young and old.

Comic books debuted in an America under the weight of the Great Depression, when people were filled with uncertainty about the future. They offered fun, entertaining stories cheap enough for anyone to buy them, from kids to adults. They attracted writers and artists who created entire imaginary worlds and populated them with heroes and villains. They created a kind of new mythology, legendary stories of the deeds of great heroes and heroines.

Since they first appeared, comic books have become a part of our culture, not just in the United States where they started, but around the world. More comic books have been printed, sold, and read than all the *New York Times* best-selling novels of the past fifty years put together. Many people in the world are more familiar with comic book icons like Superman or Spider-Man than they are with many celebrities or political leaders. Children in foreign countries have often learned to read English from comic books; comics brought over by servicemen following World War II caught on in Japan, creating the vast *manga* and anime industries there, for example.

Hundreds of publishers have created thousands of different titles and characters over the years, although only a few publishers have remained at the top of the comic book industry. Still, even those giants were nearly displaced by the appearance of new and innovative publishers in the 1990s. Young writers and artists have experimented with the medium, finding new ways to express stories, and comic books (or "graphic literature," as some prefer to call them) have even won literary awards and found their way onto the *New York Times* Bestseller List.

The history of comics is told in the vast number of back issues lovingly preserved by collectors, showing the progression of the stories and art over the years. This chapter can only summarize that long and colourful history, touching on its high and low points. It offers an introduction to the wondrous world of the comics.

Comics Before the Comics

The nearest ancestors of the superhero comics were the stories of the "pulp" fiction magazines of the 1930s, which featured characters like Doc Savage, the Shadow, and the Spider, Master of Men. Such characters often maintained secret identities, had elaborate headquarters and gadgets, and even possessed strange powers beyond those of other men. Many comic book writers got their start writing for adventure and science-fiction pulps, and many publishers had produced pulp magazines at one time.

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1978	1979	1980
Superhero 2044, Gamescience	Villains and Vigilantes First Edition, Fantasy Games Unlimited	Supergame, DAG Productions

In the early 1930s, magazine and newspaper publishers experimented with collections of daily comic strips like *Funnies on Parade* and *Famous Funnies*. *New Fun Comics* featured the first work of two teenagers from Cleveland named Jerry Siegel and (Canadian-born) Joe Shuster: a mystic detective by the name of Dr. Occult. The collections of short strips and stories proved popular, and publishers began putting out more of them.

In 1937, Detective Comics, Inc. was started by publishers Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson and Harry Donenfeld. They put out *Detective Comics #1*, a collection of mystery and "private eye" stories, that year. Although the series would become the home of one of the most famous superheroes of all time, it was up to another comic book from the same company to start the phenomenon that would make comics a permanent part of American culture.



Detective Comics #1

The Golden Age

In 1938, comic creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were trying to sell a new comic strip to newspapers. With no luck, they turned to comic book publishers and found a home for the character with National Periodicals (also known as Detective Comics, Inc.). In June of 1938, *Action Comics #1* hit the newsstands. The cover showed a brightly costumed man in a red cape lifting a car over his head while criminals fled from him in terror. His name was Superman.



Action Comics #1

Shuster had moved to Cleveland at age 10, but his memories of Toronto were very vivid, especially those of working as a newspaper boy for the *Toronto Star*. According to a 1992 *Star* interview with Shuster, the inspiration for Metropolis came not from Cleveland, but from Toronto, which he considered more metropolitan, bigger, and more beautiful. Clark Kent was originally a reporter for the *Daily Star*, a clear tribute to the paper that was such a tremendous influence on Shuster's life, but a New York editor ordered them to rename it in 1940; it became the *Daily Planet*.

By its fourth issue, *Action Comics* had more than doubled its sales. Publisher Donenfeld ordered a survey to find out why the book was so successful. He found out that kids weren't asking for *Action Comics;* they wanted "the comic book with Superman in it!" The idea of a "superhero" was a hit. Three months after Superman's first appearance, Centaur Publishing featured a new costumed hero, the Arrow, in *Funny Pages*. The following month, *Detective Comics* gave the world its third superhero, the Crimson Avenger.

In 1939, almost a year after Superman's debut, *Detective Comics #27* featured another new hero, a "weird figure of the dark ... [t]his avenger of evil," called Batman. The comic was a hit and superheroes were around to stay. 1940 saw a tremendous boom in superhero comics, with the introduction of dozens of new characters. DC Comics (as Detective Comics, Inc. became known) introduced the Flash, "the Fastest Man Alive," in *Flash Comics* (January 1940), along with Hawkman, the Specter, Hourman, Green Lantern, and the Atom. Batman also got his own title and a kid sidekick: a boy named Robin (*Batman #1*, Spring, 1940). DC also launched *All-Star Comics* to spotlight their new heroes. By the third issue, they had banded together as the Justice Society of America, comics' first superhero team.

Other publishers were hopping on the superhero bandwagon. Fawcett Publications' first comic book, *Whiz Comics* (February 1940), featured a new hero called Captain Marvel, whose secret identity was Billy Batson, boy radio announcer. Just by saying the magic word "SHAZAM!" Billy could become the World's Mightiest Mortal. Fawcett introduced Master Man and Bulletman later that same year.

Comic publisher Timely Comics (later Marvel Comics) introduced over a dozen new superhero characters, including the Human Torch, the Sub-Mariner and Red Raven. But Marvel's most popular character in the 1940s was the patriotic Captain America, who first appeared in a series of Nazi-smashing adventures in 1941. He later teamed up with Marvel's other Golden Age heroes in *All-Winners* (with their kid sidekicks as the Young Allies).

That year also saw the first appearance of the third of DC Comics' greatest heroes: the Amazon princess known as Wonder Woman, in *All-Star Comics #8*. Psychologist Dr. William Marston, writing under the name Charles Moulton, created Wonder Woman with artist Harry Peter. Marston

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1981	1982	1983
Champions First Edition, Hero Games	Champions Second Edition, Hero Games	Superworld, Chaosium
	Villains and Vigilantes Second Edition, Fantasy Games Unlimited	

intended the character to embody his ideas about women's liberation and Wonder Woman proved a hit with girl readers (although Marston's work would be later criticized by some as sexist). Until Wonder Woman's appearance, superheroes were all male, and they generally remained so, reflecting the demographics of the (mostly male) comic book audience.

The World at War

The start of World War II saw a shift in the fledgling comic book industry. Patriotic heroes like Captain America became more popular even as wartime restrictions like paper rationing made comics more expensive to print. Although the total number of titles produced fell off, sales remained about the same, and the industry continued to grow. The number of American servicemen reading comics was one of the contributing factors to increased sales, along with the popularity of the books among kids.



Detective Comics #27

Following the war, the growth of the comic book industry remained steady and new genres of comics began to appear. As women assumed a more public role during and after the war, more heroines appeared in the comics, with names like Miss Liberty and Miss America, along with detectives like Miss Cairo Jones. Publishers also experimented with "career girl" comics that featured girls or young women out in the working world such as *Patsy Walker*, *Millie the Model*, and *Nellie the Nurse* .

The post-war years also saw an increase in crime comics like *Murder Incorporated* and *Crime Does Not Pay* with "true detective" stories, while superhero comics tapered off somewhat.

The 1950s saw the appearance of horror comics, led by EC Comics and their titles *Vault of Horror*, *Crypt of Terror*, and *Haunt of Fear*. For several years, EC set new standards for writing and art in comic books. Other companies imitated them with horror titles of their own.

The Code

Three things happened in 1954 that had a significant impact on the comics industry. First, Dr. Frederic Wertham published his book *Seduction of the Innocent*, a scathing criticism of comic books. The US Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency held public hearings on the effects of comic books on children, and comic book publishers responded by establishing the self-regulatory Comics Code Authority.



Flash Comics #1

Wertham, psychiatrist and long-time critic of comic books, claimed that comic books led to abnormal behaviour in the young people who read them. Wertham's argument was largely based on guilt by association. Since abnormal kids read comics, comic books must be the cause of abnormal behaviour. The fact that nearly ninety-percent of the children in the United States read comic books (making the actual percentage of comic readers who displayed abnormal behaviour quite small) was ignored. Wertham also asserted that comics promoted sexual deviancy, particularly homosexuality, which raised the fears of many parents.

The Senate's report on "Comic Books and Delinquency" likewise found that comics constituted "a concentrated diet of crime, horror, and violence" and that they could have "potentially detrimental effects" on children. The report called for a standard for comic books that would remove such dangerous elements in order to protect the nation's youth.

The comics industry responded by establishing the Code of the Comics Magazine Association of America on October 26, 1954. It was one of the strictest codes in the entertainment business and stated, among other things that "all scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism, masochism shall not be permitted." Any comic book company that wanted its titles distributed had to adhere to the code.

This crippled many publishers, like EC, who had to cancel their entire lines. Other publishers scrambled to comply with the new code, doctoring finished artwork to cover "objectionable" materials so books could still see print. Many publishers went out of

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1984

Champions Third Edition, Hero Games

Golden Heroes, Games Workshop

Heroes Unlimited First Edition, Palladium Books

Marvel Superheroes First Edition, TSR

1985

DC Heroes First Edition, Mayfair Games

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Other Strangeness, Palladium Books

1987

Enforcers, 21st Century Games

business, unable to meet the demands of the code and still make a profit, particularly publishers of horror comics. In the space of a year, the number of titles in the industry dropped by more than half, from six hundred-fifty to some three hundred books.

The Silver Age

Following the creation of the Comics Code, the number of publishers dwindled down to only a handful. For the first time in twenty years, no new comic book publishers entered the business and even the established companies struggled under the restrictions of the Code.

Then in autumn of 1956, DC Comics published an issue that revitalized the industry. In *Showcase #4*, they introduced the Flash, a revision of an original 1940s DC superhero. The story was a hit, and DC brought the new Flash back for an encore appearance in *Showcase #8*. It still took two more appearances in *Showcase* before DC decided the success was not a fluke and gave the Flash his own title.



Showcase #4

1959 saw some other new superhero titles from DC, including *Green Lantern* (also a revamped version of a 1940s character) and the introduction of Supergirl in *Action Comics #252*. In 1960, DC followed their initial successes by teaming their greatest heroes up as the Justice League of America in *Brave and the Bold #28*. The idea was tremendously popular and DC launched the *Justice League of America* title later that same year. The first couple of years of the new "Silver Age" of superheroes belonged solely to DC Comics, but that was about to change.

In 1961, Marvel Comics publisher Martin Goodman noticed the success of DC's *Justice League of America* title. He assigned writer Stan Lee to create a similar team of superheroes for Marvel. Lee worked with artist Jack Kirby to create the Fantastic Four, who appeared in the first issue of their own magazine in the fall of that year. Although they were also a team, the Fantastic Four were quite different from DC's Justice League. They bickered among themselves and had human foibles and problems. It was a style that would mark Stan Lee's work with Marvel and create an entirely new approach to superhero comics.

Of course, DC Comics were not resting on their laurels. That same year, they re-introduced Silver Age versions of Hawkman and the Atom. They also published the acclaimed story "Flash of Two Worlds" in *Flash #123*, which teamed up the Silver Age Flash with his Golden Age counterpart. It revealed that the DC superheroes of the 1940s lived on an alternate Earth that became known as "Earth-2," a facet of an expanding DC universe that would remain a staple for over twenty years, and later become part of one of the biggest comic book stories ever.

The Mighty Marvel Explosion

With the success of *Fantastic Four*, Marvel Comics took the industry by storm in 1962. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created the monstrous, rampaging, green monster known as the Hulk (*Incredible Hulk #1*) and introduced Dr. Donald Blake, a crippled physician able to transform into the Norse thunder-god Thor (*Journey into Mystery #83*). They also created Ant-Man in *Tales to Astonish #35*.

Lee's most important creation that year was in collaboration with artist Steve Ditko. In *Amazing Fantasy #15*, Marvel Comics introduced the Amazing Spider-Man. Spider-Man was the embodiment of Lee's approach to writing superheroes: a mild-mannered teenager named Peter Parker gets bitten by a radioactive spider and gains superhuman powers. At first he uses them solely to make money as a professional wrestler (decades before the popularity of the World Wrestling Federation/Entertainment and its spin-offs). But the tragic death of his Uncle Ben teaches Peter that "with great power comes great responsibility!" Spider-Man's everyday problems and wisecracking attitude made him a hit with young readers, and he quickly became Marvel's most popular hero.



Amazing Fantasy #15

Other books created by Lee, in conjunction with Kirby or Ditko, followed the success of Spider-Man. The armoured hero, Iron Man, appeared in *Tales of Suspense #39* (March 1963). Dr. Strange, Master of the Mystic Arts, made his first appearance in *Strange Tales #110* (July 1963). Some of Marvel's heroes banded together as the Avengers

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1988	1989	1991
Batman RPG, Mayfair Games	Champions Fourth Edition, Hero Games	Guardians, StarChilde
Marvel Superheroes Second Edition, TSR	DC Heroes Second Edition, Mayfair Games	

(*Avengers #1*, September, 1963). The *Avengers* series featured the return of Captain America to Marvel Comics, when the Avengers discovered the Living Legend of World War II frozen in suspended animation in *Avengers #4*. Jack Kirby drew the return of the hero he created some twenty-three years earlier.

The Marvel hero Daredevil, "The Man Without Fear," appeared in *Daredevil #1* (May 1964). Lee's twist on this acrobatic hero was that he was actually blind, but possessed enhanced senses (including a "radar sense") that compensated for his lack of sight. Lee's sleeper creation was another super-team, however. Called "the Strangest Teens of All," *Uncanny X-Men #1* presented a group of five young people, mutants, born with the potential for strange abilities and brought together by their mentor, the mutant telepath Professor Charles Xavier. Although it suffered some false starts and poor sales at first, *X-Men* would go on to become Marvel's most popular title ever.



X-Men #1

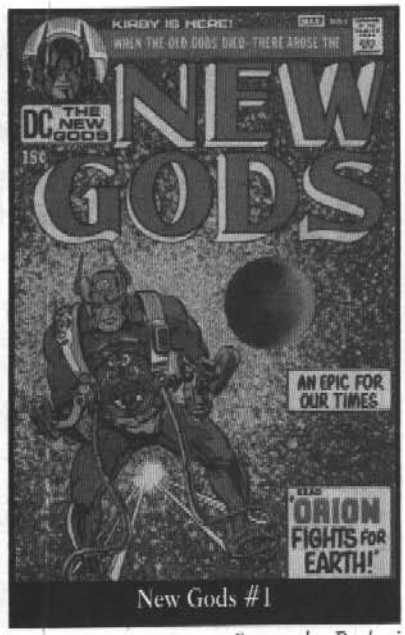
Super Teams

In the early '60s, DC Comics was busy expanding their roster of superheroes, re-introducing many Golden Age characters (often updated versions). They also had success with superhero teams, following in the footsteps of the Justice League.

Justice League of America #23 re-introduced the team's predecessors, the Justice Society of America, to modern readers when the two teams banded together. The story was so popular that team-ups between the two groups became an annual event in *Justice League* for many years.

DC also gave a regular spot in *Adventure Comics* to the Legion of Super-Heroes, a team of super-powered teenagers from the 30th century that included a time-travelling Superboy among their numbers. The Legion developed a devoted fan following and a unique and rich history of its own that lasted up through the book's peak in the late 1980s.

Finally, DC premiered the Doom Patrol, a team of strange misfits led by the wheelchair-bound Professor Niles Caulder, known as "the Chief." Robotman, Negative Man, and Elasti-Girl embarked on their first adventure in *My Greatest Adventure #80*.



New Gods #1

Bat-Mania

In the beginning of 1966, the *Batman* television show premiered, staring Adam West as Batman, and Burt Ward as Robin, the Boy Wonder. The show was a tremendous hit, and sales of all comic books (particularly the Batman titles) soared. DC Comics began featuring Batman prominently on all of their covers to cash-in on the show's popularity and sales of some of their books reached all-time highs.

Still, the boost that Batman gave to the industry was short-lived. The show only ran until 1968, and even after the first year sales on all comic titles began to slump. DC Comics was firmly in control of the superhero business, with nine out of the ten best selling titles in 1967 (the other being *Archie Comics* from Gold Key).

While the major comic book publishers were neatly dividing the market between them, the first "underground comix" were beginning to appear. These books did not subscribe to the Comics Code and they were a far cry from the simple superhero adventures of DC and Marvel or the teenaged misadventures of *Archie*. They explored topics like sex, drugs, and the counter-culture of the late 1960s. Although underground comix remained a fringe genre for a long time, the freedom they offered to various writers and artists would bring considerable new blood into the industry and change the approach many took to creating comics.

The Start of the '70s

By the start of the '70s, the comic book business was in decline again. Jack Kirby left his long-time association with Marvel Comics and went over to DC, where he created an entire milieu known as "The Forth World," based around three titles: *New Gods*, *The Forever People*, and *Mr. Miracle*. Among the characters Kirby created for the titles was Darkseid, the godlike ruler of the planet Apokolips, who later become one of DC's staple villains.

Marvel Comics was having considerable success with sword & sorcery comic books like *Conan the Barbarian*, *Kull the Conqueror*, and *Savage Tales*, which spawned numerous imitators.

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1993

DC Heroes Third Edition, Mayfair Games

Heroes and Heroines, Excel Marketing

Underground, Mayfair

1994

Avengers of Justice, Better Games

1995

Cosmic Enforcers, Myrmidon Press

Project A-Ko, Ianus Publications

Both DC and Marvel Comics began touching upon more serious issues as well. Best known among these stories is the work of Denny O'Neil and artist Neil Adams on *Green Lantern*. It featured various stories targeting issues like pollution, overpopulation, racial prejudice, and drug abuse, including a story where Green Arrow's kid sidekick, Speedy, was revealed to be a heroin addict (*Green Lantern #85-86*). Although critically acclaimed, the stories didn't improve the book's flagging sales.

Stories such as these did cause the Comics Code Authority to review its standards so that comic book companies could present things like anti-drug messages. The Code also relaxed the restrictions on the presentation of horror, an opportunity the publishers quickly seized.

Return of the Monster Comics

Horror comics returned in the early 1970s with the changes to the Comics Code. One of Marvel's most popular horror titles was *Tomb of Dracula*, which ran for seven years. It was accompanied by such titles as "Werewolf by Night" in *Marvel Spotlight*, *Chamber of Chills*, and *Supernatural Thrillers*. Vampires, werewolves, zombies, and mummies spilled from the pages of many Marvel comics.

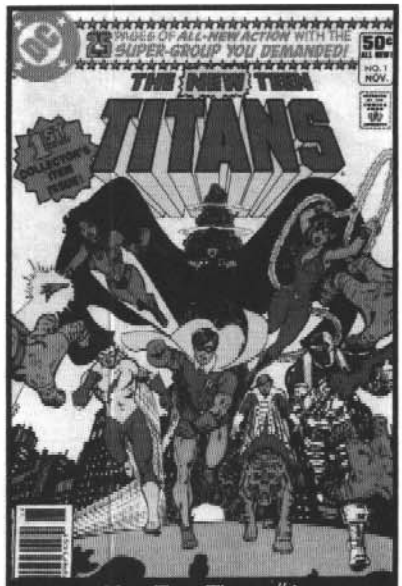
DC's only real foray into horror comics at the time was the acclaimed *Swamp Thing* by Len Wein and Berni Wrightson, although DC did later add horror titles like *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*. These titles would later influence some of DC's most popular books.

Comics Grow Up

By the mid- to late-1970s, comic books were adopting a more mature attitude and tackling some of the social issues of the time. Feminist superheroines like Ms. Marvel and Spider-Woman made their appearances (*Ms. Marvel* carried the subtitle "This Female Fights Back!"). Black superheroes were also featured with titles like Marvel's *Black Panther* and *Hero for Hire*, and DC's *Black Lightning*.



Giant Sized X-Men #1



New Teen Titans #1

Outside the major publishers, things were getting even more grown-up. *Heavy Metal* made its appearance in 1977, the first "adult" American comic magazine featuring mature artwork and stories. The same year also saw the publication of *Cerebus the Aardvark*, the first truly independently published and distributed comic book outside the industry. Its success inspired numerous other independent and small-press publishers over the years.

The New Heroes

In the early '70s, Marvel allowed their *Uncanny X-Men* title to lapse into reprints of stories from the '60s. Then in 1975, they decided to revive the book with an entirely new team of X-Men. Created by Len Wein and Dave Cockrum and featuring characters from different nations around the world, the New X-Men premiered in *Giant Size X-Men #1* and were an almost immediate hit. Writer Chris Claremont quickly took over the book and, with artists Cockrum and John Byrne, made *Uncanny X-Men* Marvel's most popular title, and one of the best selling comic books in the world.

Uncanny X-Men featured many of Marvel's signature elements, including a team that didn't always get along and faced real-world problems in their personal lives. The characters also had a measure of mortality. X-Man Thunderbird died in his second appearance in the book while fan-favourite Wolverine was willing to use deadly force in some situations. The "Dark Phoenix" storyline, where X-Man Jean Grey loses control of her cosmic powers and chooses suicide in order to protect the universe, is considered by many to be a classic and the book's high-water mark.

DC quickly took notice of the success of *Uncanny X-Men* and responded by reviving their '60s teen heroes, the Teen Titans. *New Teen Titans* by Marv Wolfman and George Perez featured many of the same elements that made *Uncanny X-Men* so popular: younger heroes with soap-opera personal lives often tackling serious issues (such as drug abuse and teenage runaways).

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1996

Superbabes: The Fem Force RPG, Tri-City Games

Bubblegum Crisis RPG, R Talsorian Games

1997

Champions: The New Millennium, R Talsorian Games

Providence RPG, XID Creative

Stuperpowers, Unstoppable

Trinity, White Wolf

1998

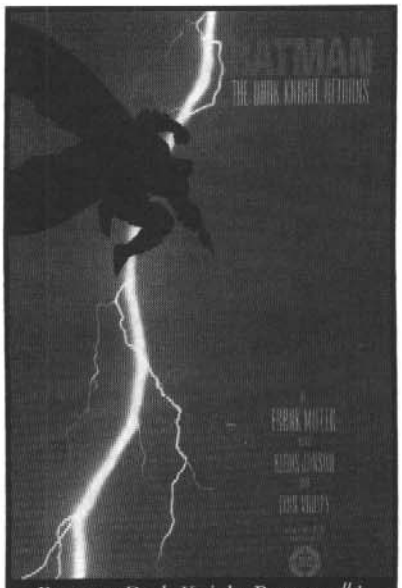
Blood of Heroes, Pulsar Games

Marvel Superheroes Adventure Game, TSR

Sailor Moon RPG, Guardians Of Order

Meanwhile, the new heroes of Marvel and DC created an opportunity for independent comics to move into the "teen hero" arena, the most successful of which was a black and white, adult satire entitled *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, published by Mirage Studios. *TMNT* was gritty and violent, yet intelligent and witty; all of these qualities were lost when it was sanitized for children's television and movies in the late '80s and early '90s. *TMNT*'s success opened up opportunities to tell different kinds of stories than were being told at Marvel and DC, free of rigid editorial systems and the Comics Code. A number of small, independent companies published superhero books that ran the gamut of themes, including comedy, politics, satire, social parody, and moral ambiguity, often liberally spiced with violence and sex.

DC's *New Teen Titans* was a hit, although it still didn't allow DC to catch up to Marvel, which was starting to outstrip them in sales. Creators at DC felt that something needed to be done to bring in new readers, and they came up with a daring plan.

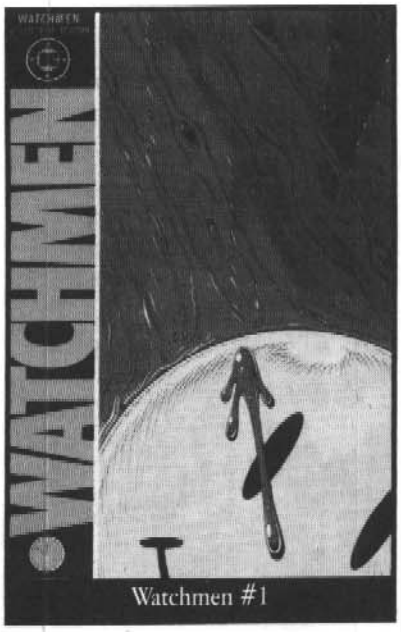


Batman: Dark Knight Returns #1

New Universes

In 1985, DC Comics published *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, a 12-issue series intended to reorganize and simplify the DC universe and make it accessible to newer, younger readers. DC abolished the various parallel Earths that sprang up (starting with Earth-2 in the 1960s) and integrated various characters they had acquired from defunct companies like Fawcett (Captain Marvel) and Charlton (the Blue Beetle, Captain Atom, and others). They also killed off several characters, including Supergirl and the Flash.

While DC was cutting back on its real estate, Marvel was looking to expand. The following year, Marvel celebrated its 25th anniversary by launching its New Universe line, intended to be the creation of a second superhero universe, with events happening in "real time" (that is, passing at the same rate of time as in the real world). Unfortunately, none of the New Universe titles caught on, and the line was phased out.



Watchmen #1

DC re-launched their flagship characters with new series, including John Byrne's *Man of Steel*, which redefined Superman's origin and history, and Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*. Miller's work would be one of two titles that would substantially impact the industry.

Who Watches the Watchmen?

In 1986, DC released Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, a significant revisionist treatment of Batman, which turned him away from 1960s camp and into a complex and mature character. Batman emerges from retirement, now an embittered and cynical man driven by inner demons, to confront the Joker one last time. Frank Miller described the new Batman as "a moral force, a judge, plainly bigger and greater than normal men, and perfectly willing to pass judgement and make things right." [Frank Miller, in *The Comics Journal*, No. 10, August 1985] While not every fan was comfortable with this dark and violent story, it received critical acclaim both within and without the comic industry as a groundbreaking method for storytelling.

The second significant comic book event of the time was the release of *Watchmen* (1986) by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons — a dark, tightly-written mystery set in a world where superheroes were anything but role-models and paragons of virtue. The book was a major success and helped set the tone for comics to come in the following decade. Like Miller's work, it explored superheroes through new angles, illustrating how much potential the genre contained for storytelling. Both books also pushed forward the medium of "graphic novels;" while they were far from the first such works (Will Eisner's *A Contract With God* appeared in 1978, and other examples stretch back much farther), they popularized this "new wave" of literature. Graphic novels appeared in high-end bookstores, public libraries, and were reviewed in the mainstream press.

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

1999	2000	2001
Aberrant, White Wolf	The Foundation, Nightshift Games	Supermegatopia, Nightshift Games
Brave New World, Pinnacle Entertainment	Heroes Unlimited Second Edition, Palladium Books	Nemesis, Maximum CNG
DC Universe Roleplaying Game, West End	UNSanctioned, Nightshift Games	Cyber Age Adventures, Cyber Age Press
Living Legends, Unigames		

"Dark" and "realistic" stories and titles became increasingly popular as the collectors' market and comic book speciality stores continued to account for more and more sales. Both DC and Marvel published titles catering to the collectors' market, with variant covers and special editions. The desire for grim stories, and the companies' desire for repeat success, put titles like *Wolverine* and *The Punisher* in the Top Ten lists. In response to a phone-in poll from fans, DC decided to kill off Batman's partner Robin (the second to carry that name, the first Robin having taken on the costumed identity of Nightwing in *New Teen Titans*).



Spawn #1

Marvel set new sales records in the early '90s with the release of popular titles: *Spider-Man* (1990), the first #1 issue for the web-slinger in over twenty years (it broke all records, selling over 3 million copies); *X-Force* (1991), which broke an even higher sales record, estimated at 3.5 million (and packaged with five different trading cards); and *X-Men* (1991), with five variant covers that sold an estimated 7.5 million copies. All of these marketing gimmicks — variant covers, metallic ink, gatefolds, die cuts, embossed titles, holograms, poly-bags, trading cards, etc. — inflated sales tremendously. DC responded with their biggest marketing scheme ever: they decided to kill Superman. The "Death of Superman" issue (1993) was the single most publicized event in comic book history, appearing on the national news in the United States. The comic sold out of its initial print run of 2.5 million copies almost immediately, and was reprinted three times. Comic readers were not particularly shocked when DC brought the Man of Steel back to life a year later, although many collectors ended up disappointed.



WildC.A.T.S #1

Comics' New Image

Much of the success of the Marvel titles in the late '80s and early '90s came from big name artists like Rob Liefield, Todd McFarlane, and Jim Lee. This inspired them to leave Marvel Comics and form their own company, Image Comics, which offered full ownership rights (a long and hotly debated topic) and more royalties to creators. Image burst onto the scene with titles like *Spawn*, *WildC.A.T.S*, and *Youngblood*, which were instant hits. Liefield's *Youngblood #1* (1992) was packed with trading cards, and broke the record for the best-selling independent comic; McFarlane's *Spawn #1* (1992) broke the new record, and Lee's *WildC.A.T.S #1* did the same again. The titles had a hip, younger feel that appealed to many readers, while also offering the violence and "special effects" of an action film. Image lured a number of well-known artists away from DC and Marvel and quickly become a force to be reckoned within the industry.

Not everyone was taken with these new motifs, however. Darcy Sullivan wrote: "At stake is the continued status of superheroes as bona fide American myth — they risk their essence by mythologizing the Reagan era's precepts ... If publishers keep pandering to ... bloodlust, superheroes will lose the glamour and the glory readers associate with the red, white and blue ... and retain only the guilty thrill induced by the grisly, gory red." [Darcy Sullivan, "The Politics of Superheroes," *The Comics Journal*, No. 142, June 1991]

DC Gets Vertigo

With its traditional superhero titles not doing so well, DC turned to its success with more adult books like *Watchmen*. British writer Neil Gaiman created a title called *Sandman* (which debuted in 1989) that proved to be a major success for the company, so DC created a new imprint in 1993, called Vertigo, to publish "mature readers" titles. Some of the company's most critically acclaimed work has come out of the Vertigo imprint, including *Doom Patrol*, *Hellblazer*, *Preacher*, and *The Invisibles*, among others. *Sandman* went on to win numerous awards, including: the Eisner Award for Best Writer four times in a row; the Harvey Award for Best Writer two years in a row; and *Sandman #19*, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," won the

Publication History of Superhero RPGs

2002

Godsend Agenda (February)
Khepera Publishing

Godlike (March)
Pagan Publishing

Hero System Fifth Edition (April)
Hero Games

Silver Age Sentinels (Tri-Stat Edition) (July)
Guardians Of Order

Silver Age Sentinels (d20 Edition) (August)
Guardians Of Order

Mutants and Masterminds (November)
Green Ronin Publishing

1991 World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story — the first monthly comic to ever win a literary award. *Sandman* has been reprinted in numerous graphic novel collections. Among other things, Vertigo proved that comic books created and marketed toward an adult audience could be successful.

DC also experimented with a new line called Millennium, aimed at titles with greater ethnic and cultural diversity. Books like *Icon*, *Static*, and *Shadow Cabinet* did only moderately well, and the line was eventually cancelled.



Sandman #1

Cassandra

In 1993, Neil Gaiman gave a speech at the Diamond Comic Distributors 10th Annual Retailers Seminar. Comic sales had never been so high, but were a year away from a staggering crash. In his speech he claimed, "I'm not here to play Cassandra. I do not have the figure and I do not have the legs." He compared the speculation craze that was gripping the comic industry to a 17th century tulip craze in Holland, which destroyed the country's economy. In Good Comics and "Why You Should Sell Them," published in *Gods & Tulips*, August 1999, Gaiman said:

> Personally, I think any comic shop that sells multiple copies of the same comic to any child under, say, sixteen, because that child has somehow been given the impression that he or she has been handed a license to print money, should, if nothing else, get the child to read a form explaining that comic values can go down as well as up and require it to be signed by a parent or guardian.
>
> I think any organization or store that pushes comics as investment items is at best short-sighted and foolish, and, at worst, immoral and dumb. You can sell lots of the same comic to the same person — especially if you tell them they're investing money for high guaranteed returns. But you're selling bubbles and tulips. One day the bubbles will burst and the tulips will rot in the warehouse.



Ultimate Spiderman #1

Although lines like Vertigo were doing well, mainstream superhero comics were running out of steam. Hugely popular books like *X-Men* were plagued with disgruntled fans, and readers began to tire of the style-over-substance approach taken by publishers. Even Image Comics began to lag in popularity. Some critics called the comic book genre "impoverished" and claimed that there were no more stories for it to tell.

Comics Look Back

The revitalization of the comic book industry came from writers and artists who combined solid storytelling abilities with a love of the medium and the characters with which they worked. Many grew up on the comic books of the Silver Age, and harkened back to them in a style some called "retro," combining the energy and sense of wonder of those earlier superhero adventures with innovations in art and storytelling from the past 30 years. These writers found an audience eager for their new vision in both older readers familiar with the stories and style of the Silver Age and younger readers interested in something different.

Many popular mainstream writers made their success in independent and small-press titles. Books like Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* and Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles* earned them critical acclaim. The larger publishers hired these creators to revamp and revive their major titles.

Marvel experimented with their "Heroes Reborn" line, in which many of their major characters were "re-booted," their stories retold from the beginning by popular writers and artists (many of whom were associated with the success of Image Comics). The line didn't do as well as expected, so it was cancelled, and Marvel eventually launched their "Ultimate" line, which sought to do much the same thing — re-tell the stories of iconic characters, but updated for the modern world without the 30-plus years of history behind them. This time it was a success; books like *Ultimate Spider-Man*, *Ultimate X-Men*, and *Ultimates* (a revision of the *Avengers*) soared to the top of the sales charts. Meanwhile, Marvel sought to revitalize interest in flagging titles like *Avengers*, and *Fantastic Four* by reorganizing creative teams, and in some cases, bringing in outside talent to the comic industry. J. Michael Straczynski (of *Babylon 5* fame) brought new and old fans to look at *Amazing Spider-Man* for the first time in years, while Bruce Jones, an almost complete unknown in the field, has been brought on-board to make *Incredible Hulk* as exciting as possible.

DC did much the same, with writer Grant Morrison restoring the Justice League to the top with a new book simply titled *JLA*. Following its success, DC also revived the Justice Society of America (comics' first superhero team) in *JSA*, which soon rivalled its sister title in popularity. They also brought Kevin Smith (of *Clerks* and *Chasing Amy* fame) to rework *Green Arrow;* Smith's touch took the comic to the top of the charts. Many Silver Age elements and characters returned to their titles, to the joy of many fans.

New Techniques

Hiring fresh talent was but one of the ways the big two companies have tried to reinvigorate the industry. In fall of 2001, Marvel abandoned the Comics Code Authority, choosing to replace the "outdated" rules with its own guidelines and rating system. Marvel introduced three major categories: all-ages titles, parental advisory; and mature comics, under its MAX imprint. They also created the Marvel Mangaverse, initially suggested by Ben Dunn of Antarctic Press, an alternate-universe series drawn in Japanese *manga*-style, where Spider-Man was a ninja, the Hulk a Godzilla-like monster, and the Punisher a sexy school principal.

Meanwhile, Stan Lee did a series called *Just Imagine Stan Lee...* for DC, wherein he retold the origins of DC's major characters from his unique angle. DC also introduced "The Ten-Cent Adventure," a full 32-page issue of Batman for only a dime. It was designed as a jumping-on point for new readers, and was even ordered by some newspapers that included it as a bonus in their papers. More than 670,000 copies were ordered. Marvel will release a nine-cent *Fantastic Four* comic in August 2002, which Marvel COO Bill Jemas admits was DC's idea first.

Marvel, DC, Image, and Dark Horse all worked together to promote Free Comic Book Day on May 4, 2002, the day after the long-awaited *Spider-Man* movie finally debuted. The idea was originally proposed by retailer Joe Field of Flying Colors Comics, and was heavily supported by all four publishers, and by Diamond Comic Distributors. More than 2,000 stores participated in over 29 countries to give away 2 million free issues (1.46 million were provided by the top four companies). A number of smaller presses also contributed, including Oni Press, Cyberosia Publishing, TokyoPop, Antarctic Press, Keenspot, Chaos!, El Capitan, and Sirius.

Tomorrow and Tomorrow...

Although still dominated by DC and Marvel Comics, the industry continues to see new publishers and independent projects, particularly creator-owned imprints. Although sales have shifted almost entirely away from news-stands to comic book speciality stores, graphic novels and other secondary-market comic books are found in major bookstores and have even hit best-seller lists. And once again, comic sales have finally started to rise. "Good comics," as Neil Gaiman calls them, are being produced regularly. Books like *Origin* (finally revealing Wolverine's history), *The Dark Knight Strikes Again*, (the sequel to Frank Miller's acclaimed story), and *Heroes* (a tribute to the victims of September 11, 2001) made 2001 the first year of positive sales growth since 1993, according to Diamond Comics Distributors.

Through wars and recessions, changing social trends and generations, comic books have provided fun and entertainment for millions of people. They make up a unique mythology of the 20th century, stories of heroes and villains and the struggle and triumph of good over evil. Comic characters are icons of modern culture and, although the medium will no doubt continue to evolve in the 21st century, everything suggests that comic books are here to stay.

Silver Age: Being on the Same Page

Before launching into the heart of the matter, it's important to distinguish the differences between *Silver Age Sentinels* and the actual **Silver Age** of comics. While *Silver Age Sentinels* aspires to the spirit of the Silver Age, it does so understanding the nuances of the modern world. Guardians Of Order does not advocate turning a blind eye to the problems extant across the globe, be they devastating earthquakes in Turkey and India, famines in Africa, racial tensions in the West, terrorism across the globe, or any other misfortunes that grace the front pages of today's newspapers. Problems exist in the world, certainly, but *Silver Age Sentinels* is about a place where foreseeable and practical solutions exist to help elevate society. While heroes are a part of that solution, they can never replace the everyday heroes either. Firemen and police officers put their lives on the line to save people on a daily basis. Parents, counsellors, and teachers give of themselves emotionally to educate and guide their successors to better lives. It's a place where, when disasters strike, more people are apt to co-ordinate rescue efforts than loot the unfortunate. It's a place where people willingly stand against tyranny and injustice, and where heroes would still be heroes ... even without their powers. It's all about saying, "Yes, problems still exist," but at the end of the day, when all is said and done, each hero has somehow contributed to the world, making it a better place for one person, one community, one culture, or one nation.

Silver Age comics promoted an innocence, a monochromatic look at the world that was intended to entertain children. Unfortunately, the world no longer supports such naïvety, nor does *Silver Age Sentinels* seek to put those blinders back on. Bearing that in mind, there is a significant difference between acknowledging certain issues exist and allowing them to exist. These pages are about playing heroes in a proactive society rather than a reactive one.

The difference?

A reactive society deals only with the symptoms while a proactive society tackles the illness.

Yes, there are drugs on the street and kids are dealing. Silver Age comics would rarely have exposed such issues, or at the very least, they might have promoted smug (and naïve) stopgap campaigns like "Just Say No." *Silver Age Sentinels* is about tackling the drug problem (by surrogate example) by dealing with the real issues: poverty and the few prospects available to men, women, and children in those affected communities.

In short, *Silver Age Sentinels* draws from an era in Silver Age comics that promoted the ideology of liberty and the struggle for humanity. It touches upon the spirit that made these men and women the best of society; they were the best of hopes; the best of intentions; the best of actions. While Silver Age pioneers like Jack Kirby and Stan Lee left their indelible mark of comics to come, *Silver Age Sentinels* touches upon the dusk of that era, when social concerns and adult sensibilities propelled the industry from children's fancy to a twenty-something market. It is the point when comics grew up, but the sense of moral obligation remained firm.

Role-Playing the Mantle of Heroism

Silver Age Sentinels focuses on what heroes do best — being heroes. The four-colour palette isn't an excuse to ignore life's rainbow of greys; rather, it deliberately focuses on what makes folks better men and women without belittling the soul or trivializing the human spirit. Heroism isn't a matter of cosmic abilities or cool costumes; heroism is strength of character and the power of compassion. Heroism exists in that solitary atom, that final 1% of someone's tattered strength when he or she surrenders ego for the well-being of others, regardless of the cost, and become a beacon.

Many superhero fans enjoy reading comics if only because they empathize with the character and often place themselves in the hero's boots. What would they do with those powers? How would they deal with certain situations? Within each hero is a quality everyone wishes for themselves. That is what role-playing is all about. It's about capturing that aspect and portraying it as a personal quality. It's about embodying ideals that are often larger than ourselves.

Heroes from the Go

Heroism and power (or at least ability) are synonymous with one another, but the fact is, most heroes were already good men and women before the advent of their powers (or training, etc.). Put another way, is it only ability that fuels the desire to improve the world? It can't be. Ordinary people who do nothing to better others in their lifetime are not likely to change their habits just because they can suddenly fly. If someone can't bother to help folks in everyday situations, whether through volunteering, donating money, or pursuing careers that help improve lives, why would they in any other circumstance?

Powers should not be a character's sole *raison d'être* to do right by others. Heroes existed well before the inception of their abilities, and their lives should reflect that need to help improve other people. Stated simply, what makes someone a hero? Certainly, some may arise from circumstance, but the point is to create someone who is currently more than just the sum of his or her abilities and costume.

Humility

Not all champions are humble, and not all of them share the same kind of humility. An aspect of a hero's persona is a nobility to their actions, a nobility that exists through the quiet determination of doing the right thing. While some heroes can be glory hounds, the noblest heroes are often those who simply "do their job." Their humility lies not in recognizing their own abilities, for understanding one's limits and potential is what makes good champions great; their humility is in their own accomplishments. They saved the children from the burning building because it was the right thing to do. They fought an impossible battle because someone had to stop the villain.

It's never about personal triumph or vainglory ... it's about taking responsibility.

Doing What's Hardest

Heroes are more important now than ever. The Silver Age created heroes with strong virtues who existed in a society that shared their beliefs. *Silver Age Sentinels* heroes have it much harder; they must maintain their strong virtues in a world that may not share their optimism or courage. The public expects today's heroes to fall to the same failings dragging them down. Society has forgotten how to idolize somebody without looking for that chink in the armour. They have seen their sports and movie stars fall to drugs, and their presidents and great statesmen stumble to scandal; they expect it of everyone now. In fact, they encourage it, because it's far easier to promote one's failings in others than improve one's self.

The point of *Silver Age Sentinels* is to create heroes who are human, and who still do the right thing, despite expectations to the contrary. It's all about doing what's hardest, and succeeding; saving instead of destroying; leading instead of taking control; listening instead of judging; sacrificing everything to save something. It's also about failing, and getting back up no matter how much it hurts. Being a hero means doing the hardest thing of all ... being the best person you can be.

Hope

Hope is that ephemeral quality that appears in the strangest places. It manifests where nothing else germinates and grows. The darker the circumstances, the more it shines like a burning beacon, propelling the individual upward or forward like some great juggernaut.

Heroes are avatars of hope. More than embodying its qualities, they live it in their daily lives and they guide others by its light. It is their eternal fuel, their infinite catalyst driving them with each heartbeat. Without hope, the hero cannot envision a better tomorrow, or a reason for his or her actions. Without hope, one cannot believe in the best of people, or find a reason to save them. Without hope, no one will be left to follow in his or her steps, or continue to bear the torch.

There must be hope, for it is the spiritual fuel of the universe and the heart of *Silver Age Sentinels*.

Without hope, these pages would remain dusty and ignored on the shelves.

Without hope, we would stop dreaming.

Without hope, we wouldn't be....

Enough preaching. It's time to be the hero.

What is a Role-Playing Game?

For many people a **role-playing** game (RPG) is the "mature" or "advanced" version of the games we used to play as children such as "House", "Cops and Robbers" and "Superheroes". Each **player** creates a **character** that he or she wishes to play (appropriately called a **Player Character**), and endeavours to view the unfolding events of the game through the eyes of that character. The character's outlook on life is separate and distinct from that of the player, though at times they may be similar. RPGs are not table-top board games — the games take place in the imagination of the players, occasionally assisted by visual aids such as pictures, figures, maps and other props. Role-playing can also be likened to improvisational theatre where everyone involved in the game must respond to the actions or decisions of the other players, but must do so from their character's perspective (called playing "in character"). These character-character interactions are often the primary focus of the entire game, capturing the heart of the role-playing experience.

To help answer the question "What are the limitations on my character's abilities and talents?" RPGs employ a set of rules to help settle character conflicts and resolve character actions. The system mechanic usually outlines the use of a random generator (dice for random numbers, cards for random events, etc.) to add an unpredictable element to the game. A typical role-playing scenario requires a handful of players and one person to run the game, known as the **Game Master** (**GM**). The players tell the GM what their respective characters would like to do throughout the course of the adventure scenario and the GM describes the results of their actions. When the GM works closely with each and every player, the game adventure remains exciting and fun for all.

The characters created will depend on the type of adventures the GM intends to run and the number of players involved. The game system helps players assign some strengths and weaknesses to their characters, using number rankings to indicate relative ability. Much of the remaining elements of a character's background, family, hobbies, and interests are not covered by the rules but rather are described by each player according to his or her view of the character. Players may use information and **statistics** that this book presents on some of the characters in the Empire City setting (see pages 290-314), but can also choose to recreate the characters according to their own unique outlook on the characters' backgrounds.

The *Silver Age Sentinels RPG* can be played in sessions, episodes and/or campaigns. A session is the period of time in which the players gather to play the game. Sessions are often 2 to 8 hours in length, and are frequently held on a weekly or biweekly schedule. The players work their way through the immediate plot, picking up where the last session ended and proceeding until the current session is over. Over a period of time of usually one to four sessions, the players will have completed a number of tasks to achieve at least partial closure of the game plot. This closure does not answer all the questions or eliminate all of the characters' problems, but rather is similar to the closure seen at the end of a comic story arc. The resolved arc is called a game episode. An episode that only takes a single isolated session is referred to as a "one-shot" adventure, which are the scenarios primarily used at role-playing conventions. Finally, a number of episodes which use the same characters can be linked together to form a *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign. Campaigns require more commitment from everyone involved, but watching the characters develop and gain new abilities and talents as the greater plot unfolds makes the effort worthwhile. The most engaging role-playing campaigns can last upwards of 5-10 years, but keeping a campaign running for 8 months to a few years is considered to be tremendously successful.

As a player, you will control your character's actions in the game as he or she works through the unexpected twists and turns of the plot, with assistance provided by the other player characters. Your character's actions can greatly affect the outcome of the adventure, but you must keep in mind that every action has a consequence that may return to haunt your character in a future session. Role-playing is a group effort, however, and positive interactions between your character and the characters of the other players are vital to everyone's enjoyment of the game.

As a GM, your contribution to the game will be much greater than that from any one player. You must establish the setting, villains, conflicts, and plot of the adventure, as well as all of the other **non-player characters** (NPCs) your gaming group will meet during the game. NPCs are similar to the background characters in a comic, ranging from the obscure and unimportant to frequently seen and very important. The enemies of the player characters are also NPCs, but because of their recurring importance to the plot they need to be better developed before game play begins.

If you plan to be a GM, you must also be able to project your imagination to the players by describing the world in which they live in vivid detail. Use of visual aids such as maps and diagrams can help make your players' world more tangible. Finally, your plot must remain sufficiently flexible to allow the characters' actions to make a definite impact on the adventure. A plot that is too rigid or "scripted" may leave players feeling that their characters have lost the free will to affect their own destiny. Should you assume the role of GM, you must possess creativity, sound judgment, and the ability to improvise in unexpected situations. Game Mastering takes extra time and effort, but the reward of watching the players revel in the game setting and plot that you have created makes it all worthwhile.

Example of Play

The following dialogue is an example of how a typical role-playing session might progress. The game involves four players — John (Atlas), Michelle (Feng-Shui), Robin (Rune), and Jerry (Penumbra) — and the Game Master (or GM), Eric.

In the previous session, the heroes received a videotape from an anonymous source showing Alessia and Katja Jacob (of the Ascension Institute) bound and gagged in a large laboratory. They suspect that the culprit is Janus. His face is never shown in the videotape but there is a sequence in which a man holds the face of each of the women and says in a British accent, "Yes, you'll do nicely. Quite nicely." The team also learned that Janus owns C. Moore Biochem Labs, which they believe is a good place to start looking for the women.

The scene opens outside the building at night.

Robin: Judging by the building plans we got from city records, I think we should try to get in through the basement storage area.

Jerry: I think the roof is better. Feng-Shui, do you sense them?

Michelle: (to GM) I want to use my Sixth Sense ability to detect fear, to see if I can locate the women.

GM: (to Michelle) Roll a Soul Stat check then.

Michelle: (rolls two dice) I got a 12. That matches my Soul exactly.

GM: (to Michelle) You sense fear nearby ... close ... almost beneath your feet.

Michelle: They're in the basement! Atlas, you're up.

John: I'll use my Tunnelling power to dig straight down about 7 metres, then I'll turn towards the building. Any guards would probably expect us to come through a window, and not through a wall.

Jerry: That will make a lot of noise

Robin: I can take care of that. (to GM) I want to use Dynamic Powers to cast a silence spell around us. An Area PMV of 2 can create a bubble with a 1-metre radius, right? What do I roll?

GM: (to Robin) No need. You can cast the spell without difficulty.

John: Great! I plunge my hands into the concrete walkway and start ripping though the earth.

GM: After about 5 minutes you finish the tunnel to the wall. The dig was fast and silent. Now what?

Jerry: I'll scout on the other side. (to GM) I'll use my Mass Decrease to phase through the wall.

GM: (to Jerry) Are you just walking right in?

Jerry: (to GM) Yeah, sure. (rethinks decision) No, wait. I'll just stick my head part way through first to see what's there.

GM: (chuckles at Jerry) It's your call. (rolls two dice, just to keep the players guessing) Your head emerges in a short hallway that ends on the left in a metal door. There's no one around.

Jerry: (to GM) What was the dice roll for? Did I notice anything?

GM: (to Jerry) Oh, it's nothing. What now?

Jerry: Okay everyone, the coast is clear ... I think. There's a hall on the other side leading to a door on the left.

Robin: I'll teleport all of us to the hallway.

Michelle: Not yet! (to GM) Where do I sense the fear coming from?

John: From Rune!

Robin: Ha, ha; real funny.

GM: (to Michelle) The fear is closer now ... to the left.

Michelle: The women are in that room. Okay Rune, teleport away.

GM: You all arrive in an empty hall. I presume you approach the door?

John: Right. I'll be in the lead. What does the door look like?

GM: When you get up close, you can see it's a thick steel door without any hinges or handle. There is a numerical keypad to the right of the door, though. There's also some type of inscription etched into the door frame.

Jerry: What does it say?

GM: None of you can read it. (to Robin) Make a Soul Stat check for Rune.

Robin: (rolls two dice) I rolled a 12 — make it by 2.

GM: (to Robin) You feel magical powers emanating from the inscription. It appears to be a warding spell.

Robin: Damn. Is the entire door warded?

GM: You think so. The keypad is not, however. You think it might be the only safe way through the door, if you can unlock it.

Michelle: Can't you just teleport us into the room from here? Can't Penumbra just phase through the door?

Robin: It's risky. Protective magic can be extremely powerful. We don't know what to expect.

Jerry: I can try to hotwire the electronic lock with my computer. That'll get us around the ward.

John: It looks like our only option. Do it.

Jerry: (to GM) I use my portable computer and Level 4 Electronics Skill to hack the machine.

GM: (to Jerry) Roll a Mind-based Skill check then. Your Specialization does not apply. You also get a -4 penalty due to the difficulty.

Jerry: (rolls two dice) I rolled an 8. My Mind Stat is 9, plus 4 for the Skill, and -4 for the penalty makes 9. Made it by 1.

GM: With a marginal success it takes you 15 minutes to crack the code. With a satisfying click, the door slides open.

John: What's inside? What do we see?

GM: Alessia and Katja are hanging from the ceiling, wrapped in chains and quickly descending towards vats of an unknown liquid. Standing on a walkway above them is Janus, smiling and looking right at you. Suddenly, a dozen men armed with machine guns step out from behind the vats. "Welcome to my party," Janus says. Roll for Initiative....



CHARACTER CREATION

Character Creation

The design of a new character for the *Silver Age Sentinels Role-Playing Game* should involve a thoughtful collaboration between the player and the GM. Your objective is to create a character who is fun to play, has plenty of reason to be a superhero, and who fits into the GM's campaign. In *Silver Age Sentinels*, you can choose to spend as little as ten minutes or upwards of an hour designing a character. The difference lies in the amount of detail and individuality given to your character. At no time during an RPG campaign do you have more control over the destiny of your character than during the creation process. If you have any questions about game mechanics or specific character abilities, talk to the GM before you begin character creation.

Example

Throughout this character creation process, you will follow the development of two Empire City setting characters from start to finish: Slipstream (page 296; created by Mark, the player), and Alice, Queen of Hearts (page 302; created by Jesse, the Game Master).

Step 1: GM Discussion

You and the other players should discuss the nature of the upcoming game with the GM. Before any characters are created, the GM should outline such details as genre, setting, campaign duration, story boundaries, and expected time commitment. As a player, you should listen closely to the GM's descriptions since it will directly influence the character you wish to create.

Ask for clarification of any rule modifications the GM plans to use as well as any background restrictions on your character. If you have any game preferences involving issues such as combat intensity, maturity level, or drama versus comedy ratio, let the GM know about them. Help the GM create the game that you all want to play.

One of the most important things that the Game Master should discuss with his or her players is the Character Point total. **Character Points** are a measure of the relative power and capability of characters. The GM decides how many Character Points will be available to each player. He or she will usually assign the same number of Character Points to each player for the creation of their character while the NPCs may be given widely varying Character

Table 2-1: Character Point Levels

Power Level	Character Point Value
Extremely low-powered game	up to 50 Points
Very low-powered game	50-100 Points
Low-powered game	100-150 Points
Average-powered game	150-175 Points
High-powered game	175-200 Points
Very high-powered game	200-250 Points
Extremely high-powered game	250+ Points

Character Creation Summary

Step 1: GM Discussion

Talk to the GM about the nature of the upcoming game. Issues that should be addressed include the duration of the game, scheduled playtime, the setting and related timeline, and the thematic intensity level. Based on this, the GM should set the power level of the campaign, which will determine the number of Character Points that you may use to design you character. See page 20.

Step 2: Character Outline

Use the game boundaries established through your talk with the GM to sketch a rough character outline. See page 21.

Step 3: Assign Stats

Use Character Points to give your character Body, Mind, and Soul Stats, making sure each Stat is not lower than 1 nor higher than 20. See page 23.

Step 4: Character Attributes

Any remaining Character Points may be used to acquire Character Attributes (either Characteristics or Powers), which are rated in Levels from 1 to 10. See page 24.

Step 5: Select Skills

Your character receives 30 starting Skill Points plus additional Points if you assigned the Highly Skilled Attribute or fewer if you will assign the Unskilled Defect (Step 6). Use the Skill Points to acquire Skills and Specializations relevant to your character outline. Skill Levels range from 1 to 5. See page 82.

Step 6: Character Defects

You are encouraged to take Defects appropriate to your character outline. These Defects will provide you with more role-playing opportunities and give you Bonus Points you can use to raise Stats or acquire additional Character Attributes. See page 90.

Step 7: Derived Values

After you have modified your character's Stats through Attributes and Defects, you can calculate his or her derived values — Combat Value (both Attack and Defense) and Health Points. Additionally, if the GM is using rules for Energy Points, this Derived Value is also calculated now. See page 102.

Step 8: Background Points

You can earn 1-3 extra Character Points by giving the GM a background history of your character, an important character story, or a character drawing. See page 103.

Power Level Scaling

Silver Age Sentinels is capable of handling virtually any power level of superheroic role-playing, covering the entire range from normal human to cosmic entity. The number of Points provided in Table 2-1: Character Point Levels assumes a superhero campaign using moderately powerful characters. GMs may wish to run a street-level campaign (very low-powered game; 100 Character Points) with gun-toting vigilantes, martial artists, and special agents in which the player characters never encounter superhumans. In this situation, players may discover that their characters have difficulty accomplishing most tasks. Conversely, the GM might run a cosmic-level campaign (extremely high-powered game; 250+ Character Points) in which characters only interact with other cosmic-level characters; accomplishing almost any task becomes easy in these games.

We suggest using one of the three methods outlined below to avoid these task resolution problems:

Scale the Average Stat

The base system uses a Stat of 4 to reflect the capabilities of an average human adult, but GMs can adjust this definition to better suit the power level of their games. If the game focuses on cosmic-level characters, a Stat of 4 should reflect the Stat of an average god while a low-powered, street-level campaign should have a Stat of 4 reflect the average street thug. All of the other Stat values would then adjust accordingly as well.

Another way to approach this method involves moving the "Adult human average = 4" to "Adult human average = 8" (or 2, or 6, or 12, or whatever). The value of 4 can be moved to any other value along the scale to suit the power level of the campaign.

Doubling and Halving

GM's can double or halve the character's Stats (and recalculate Derived Values accordingly) as appropriate. The values are doubled in street-level campaigns to reflect the character's capabilities only when interacting with other street-level characters. Should a powerful superhero character, however, make an appearance in the game, the GM would use the character's normal Stats, reflecting how the superhuman overpowers the characters.

Conversely, if running a cosmic-level campaign where characters only interact with other cosmic-level characters, GMs could simply halve the characters' Stats to avoid a collection of player characters with Stats of 15+. When a god interacts with other gods, their Stats are at the reduced values. Should the characters interact with normal humans, their Stats return to their normal values indicating their incredible superiority over the mere humans.

Change the Dice

By using dice other than 10-siders in *Silver Age Sentinels* (dice with fewer faces for less-powerful characters; dice with more faces for more-powerful characters), the probabilities of making successful Stat and Skill checks increase or decrease as desired. We recommend using the following dice for all rolls, depending on the game's power level: 4-sided dice for extremely low-powered; 6-sided dice for very low-powered; 8-sided dice for low-powered games; 10-sided for average-powered and high-powered; 12-sided for very high-powered and extremely high-powered.

Point totals depending on their role in the game. The number of Character Points the GM assigns will depend on the game's intended power level.

Example

Jesse, the GM, sits down with a handful of his friends to gauge their interest in playing in a new superhero campaign set in Empire City. After he explains that the campaign will have a four-colour, Silver Age feel, the players are all on board. Since the players either work day jobs or attend university, they decide that playing every second Sunday for six-hour sessions would be best. They'd like to commit to playing more frequently, but realistically they are simply too busy.

Together, Jesse and the players decide that the campaign will be open-ended, but story arcs should wrap up every four months to coincide with the university semesters. Mature themes will be explored in this drama series, but overtly cruel, violent, or sexual imagery will not be used. Additionally, combat will take second place to quality role-playing and character development.

Since the game will feature player character heroes of average power levels, Jesse assigns 175 Character Points (and the normal 30 Skill Points) to each player, and suggests a maximum of 5 Defects for each hero.

Step 2: Character Outline

A character outline is a broad concept that provides you with a frame on which to build your character. It is not fully detailed; there is no need for you to concern yourself with the character's specific skills, powers, or background details at this stage. Use the game boundaries established in your discussion with the GM as the starting point for your character and build your outline on that foundation. Discuss your character ideas with the GM to ensure your character will work with those of the other players and with the overall themes and focus of the campaign. Here are some issues to consider:

Is the character human?

In most superhero settings, non-human or part-human characters may exist. Examples of non-human and part-human characters include: aliens, androids, cyborgs, fantasy races (for example, elves, ogres, or centaurs), genetic constructs (clones, genetically-enhanced people, or human-animal hybrids), ghosts and spirits, gods and goddesses, monsters (for example, demons, shapechangers, or vampires), and robots.

What are the character's strengths?

In some campaigns, the players may want to create complimentary characters with unique sets of abilities. A degree of specialization helps players enjoy their characters by giving them a



Slipstream

unique identity. At the same time, it is equally important that the characters are not too specialized, or the group will lack cohesion and other players will sit around bored while each specialist has his or her own little adventure within the game.

What are the character's weaknesses?

Superhero characters may be larger than life — figures of myth and legend — but they may still have weaknesses. Is the character vulnerable to magic? Does it take a while for the character's powers to activate or can they be negated by some special substance? Does the character have an Achilles Heel? Providing weaknesses to a character adds greater depth and potential for role-playing.

What helps define the character?

You should decide on the character's age and sex, determine a broad archetype for his or her personality, and sketch an idea of ethnic and social background. On the other hand, it is equally important that a character have room to grow beyond your initial concept. A character that you have spent hours perfecting and detailing may quickly become stagnant and uninteresting once play begins. A good character outline usually focuses on one or two main personality traits and leaves plenty of room for you to explore and develop the character into a fully rounded personality over time. Although the starting archetype should be an integral part of the character, it should not rule all of his or her actions. At some point during the game, your pacifistic martial artist may be driven to an act of vengeance, or your angst-ridden vigilante may finally discover a cause in which to believe. As long as these developments proceed naturally from events in the game, they should be a welcome part of the role-playing experience.

Example

Slipstream — Mark has always liked comic books featuring speedsters, and thus takes this opportunity to play one in the campaign — a character known as Slipstream. To explain Slipstream's superspeed, Mark decides that he is actually a being from a distant planet (where citizens have exceptional natural agility), who crashed on Earth a long time ago. He is part of a race oppressed by a conquering alien force, and fled to escape slavery and persecution. Of course, Slipstream still looks human, so many people will not know he's an alien.

Although speed is Slipstream's main focus, Mark decides he also knows a lot about science (specifically physics); he's thus both athletic and smart. It's important to Mark that Slipstream also suffers from a few weaknesses, and decides to have an enemy, a secret identity, and something not yet defined related to his speed. At this point, Mark isn't too sure about Slipstream's other strengths or weaknesses, but knows this is a good start.

Alice — After talking to Mark about his character's outline, Jesse decides to create the perfect NPC nemesis for Slipstream: the wild and seductive assassin, Alice, Queen of Hearts. Jesse envisions Alice as an athletic, persuasive, and capable warrior who also has a few arcane tricks up her sleeve, such as limited telepathy and telekinesis. In fact, those superpowers are what makes her such an effective mercenary. Some of these powers will be very useful against a speedster like Slipstream.

Unfortunately Alice will also carry a lot of baggage. Alice is famous across the world and wanted by the law for numerous crimes. She is also a little high-strung, and obsessive about defeating Slipstream. Jesse figures the rest of the character will fall into place once he sees how Mark constructs Slipstream.

Step 3: Assign Stats

Stats (or Statistics) are numerical assignments that reflect your character's basic capabilities. Higher Stat values indicate an advanced level of accomplishment or achievement. *Silver Age Sentinels* uses three Stats to represent your character's abilities: **Body**, **Mind**, and **Soul**.

Body Stat

This Stat measures the physical aspects of your character. This includes overall health, strength, endurance, quickness, rate of healing, manual dexterity, and ability to withstand trauma. A character with a high Body is in good physical shape.

Mind Stat

The Mind Stat represents a character's mental abilities. High values indicate intelligent, witty, and quick-learning characters.

Soul Stat

The Soul Stat represents luck, willpower, determination, and spirit and can sometimes represent psychic ability, empathy, and unity with nature. A high rating in the Soul Stat helps a character focus his or her personal energies or life force to go beyond his or her normal limits and to fuel special abilities.

Maximum Human Potential

A Stat Value of 12 is regarded as the maximum human potential. So why does Mister Matthews (page 310) have a 15 Mind Stat and Mother Raven (page 292) have a 15 Soul Stat? Both characters are certainly human, and Mister Matthews does not have any supernatural abilities at all without the use of genetic enhancers. Can a normal human have Stats higher than 12? Yes, when "maximum human potential" is defined as the greatest achievement possible using currently living humans as the standard.

Consider the events surrounding the four-minute mile. Since ancient Greece, athletes have tried to run a mile in under four minutes. For millennia, it was an impossible task. Experts claimed it was physiologically impossible for a human to run a mile that quickly. It could never be done.

In May of 1954, Sir Roger Bannister of Britain proved millions of people wrong by running a mile in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds. The impossible became possible. In 1955, a total of 37 runners across the world broke the four-minute mile. In 1956, over 300 athletes did the same. "Maximum human potential" had changed.

Presently, there are probably a dozen or so people on Earth that have a 12 Mind Stat; they represent the brightest minds the world has to offer — "maximum human potential." Mister Matthews is better than all of them by a wide margin; in essence, he represents what humanity may eventually achieve. What might have been considered a Stat of 12 in the early 20th century, for example, may only be a Stat of 10 or 11 in the early 21st century.

In short, a Stat of 12 represents the greatest possible achievement for a real human being. Comic book characters can surpass this limit and remain quite human.

Stat Cost

Raising a Stat by one value costs 2 Character Points.

Stat Values

Each Stat is rated on a scale of 1 to 20. A value of 4 in a Stat is the **adult human average** with ratings under 4 indicating decreasing competency while numbers over 4 designate increasing superiority. For more details, see Table 2-2: Stat Value Descriptions, below. Thus, a person of average build, high intelligence, and above average determination might have Body 4, Mind 7, and Soul 5.

Your starting Character Points (page 20) are used to purchase Stats. You must decide how many of them you will spend on Stats and then divide these Points among the character's Body, Mind, and Soul. At least 2 and no more than 40 Character Points must be assigned to each Stat, giving it a value between 1 and 20.

You may only give your character one Stat with a rating of 20. Additionally, GMs are encouraged to require a solid character concept before allowing **superhuman Stats** (Stats of 13 or higher) since these represent values beyond the normal human capacity. Otherwise, it is up to you to decide how many Character Points you will use for Stats and what each Stat's value will be. Any Character Points not spent on Stats will be used to acquire various useful talents and abilities called Character **Attributes** (page 24). The GM may set an absolute ceiling or floor on the number of Character Points that can be allocated to Stats to ensure characters have a balance between Stats and Attributes.

Table 2-2: Stat Value Descriptions

Stat Value	Description
1	Inept; infant
2	Significantly below adult human average; child
3	Below adult human average; teenager
4	Adult human average
5	Above adult human average
6	Significantly above human average
7	Highly capable
8	Extremely capable
9	Best in the region
10	Best in the country
11	World-class ability
12	Maximum human potential
13	Above human achievement
14	Significantly above human achievement
15	Moderately powerful superhuman ability
16	Powerful superhuman ability
17	Extremely powerful superhuman ability
18	Legendary ability
19	Maximum achievement in the galaxy
20	Maximum achievement in the universe

Less Capable [Stat] Defect

With only three Stats, the D10 Tri-Stat System is obviously slanted towards well-rounded, balanced characters. But what if your character is weak in a particular area of a Stat? For example, your character might be strong, healthy, and durable, but not dextrous. Similarly, he or she could be intelligent and witty, but forgetful, or strong-willed and composed, but unlucky. On page 95, you will find the **Less Capable** [Stat] Defect, which was designed specifically to further divide the Stats. Although you do not normally assign **Defects** until Step 6, become familiar with Less Capable [Stat] at this point if you need to define your character with more precision.

Designer's Note

Why Not Have More Stats?

Since the Tri-Stat System first appeared in our Big Eyes, Small Mouth anime RPG in 1997, people have asked us why we only have three Stats. The simple answer is design philosophy: we only needed three Stats to create the game we desired. Yes, Body, Mind, and Soul could each be subdivided into smaller categories, but this begs the question: where do we stop the division? Body could be divided into strength and agility ... but what about endurance, dexterity, constitution, damage resistance, running speed, immune system, etc., etc., etc. Where do we stop? Every player has his or her own preference and we still couldn't please everyone no matter how the Stats were divided. Since we want the Tri-Stat System to put equal emphasis on the physical, mental, and spiritual development of a character, we need to maintain balance among the Stats as well; if we subdivide Body into five sub-Stats, then Mind and Soul each require five as well.

One solution that will please everyone is the Less Capable [Stat] Defect (page 95), which allows you to subdivide each Stat into the categories that you believe best suit your character. We don't tell you what physical Stat aspects you must use to create your character – that decision is yours to make. If you want a well-rounded hero, just use the three Stats as provided. If you want to define your creation more specifically, assign as many Less Capable [Stat] Defects as you require. Agile but weak? No problem. Perceptive but unintelligent? Easy. Charismatic but unlucky? Again, Silver Age Sentinels can handle it.

We have given you the tools, but you decide how to use them.

Step 4: Character Attributes

Your character's basic abilities are represented by the three Stats, but his or her more specific acquired or innate talents and abilities are known as Character Attributes. Any Character Points remaining after you have purchased Stats are available to acquire Attributes.

There are many different Character Attributes, each representing a particular talent or special ability. Each Attribute is rated with a Level from 1-10, though Attributes can be extended beyond Level 10 with the GM's permission. Acquiring an Attribute or increasing it in Level requires the expenditure of one or more Character Points depending on the Attribute's Character Point cost per Level.

Superhuman Stats

A Stat of 13 or higher is considered superhuman. Stats within this range should be very rare and, more importantly, it should be much rarer for a character to possess multiple superhuman Stats. Few comic book characters possess Stats above the human maximum, and those who do are truly exceptional. The supreme sorcerer of the Earth dimension will have a superhuman Soul, but his or her Mind and Body are well within the human range. The paralyzed psionic will have a superhuman Mind, and possibly a high Soul, but not a superhuman Soul. A superhuman Body Stat is often a tricky decision since, in actuality, few comic book characters possess a superhuman Body Stat — most possess Attributes that raise various aspects of their Body into the superhuman range. Often the decision on whether to assign a superhuman Body Stat or select Attributes is one of interpretation, which is why discussing your character concept with the GM is so important. By assigning a character a Body of 13 or higher, you are saying that he or she is faster, stronger, tougher, healthier, more dextrous, and heals faster than the healthiest human being — all of those elements must be true. If each of those facets of the Body Stat are not superhuman, then consider instead assigning the character a human-level Body and raising the individual elements that are superhuman with Attributes such as Speed, Superstrength, Tough, and other physical Attributes. Alternatively, you can keep the superhuman Stat and reduce specific Aspects of the Stat with the Less Capable [Sat] Defect.

GMs should carefully monitor the Stat Values that players assign to their characters. In most games, GMs should allow characters to only possess one superhuman Stat unless the player is able to justify a second Stat of 13 or higher. For most character concepts, it is unnecessary to have more than one superhuman Stat.

Example

Slipstream — Since Mark wants Slipstream to be a capable, well-rounded character, the three Stats should be very close together near the peak of human perfection. To best represent Slipstream's aptitude for science, Mark decides Mind will be the highest Stat. He sets this to 10, making Slipstream one of the top minds in the entire country. Body and Soul follow closely behind at 9 each.

The total of the three Stats is 28, which costs 56 Character Points. Slipstream has 119 Character Points remaining.

***Alice** — Jesse believes that the most important Stat for an assassin is Soul, representing the willpower, fortitude, spirit, and luck necessary to take down an opponent. Since Alice is one of the best in the world, he assigns her a 10. Alice is also exceptionally strong, fast, and athletic ... good enough for a 9 Body. Finally, Alice's mental acuity is above human average, but not much; Jesse assigns a 5 Mind. Slipstream's base capabilities might be a little better on average, but Alice will make up the difference with her combat prowess and special powers.*

The total of the three Stats is 24, which costs 48 Character Points. Alice has 127 Character Points remaining.

The selection of Attributes is one of the most important steps during character creation. Through Attributes, you define your character's unique capabilities compared to other individuals. Think carefully about the balance between a few high-Level Attributes and a large number of low-Level Attributes.

If you find yourself needing more Character Points than you have been assigned, consider burdening your character with one or more Character Defects (Step 6: Character Defects, page 90). Each Defect can provide you with additional Character Points, which can be used to acquire more Character Attributes or higher Stats.

All Attributes are sub-categorized as either **Powers** or **Characteristics**. A Power is a **supernatural** or metahuman ability (such as Speed, Flight, or Teleportation), acquired through abnormal means, that extends beyond the limits of human potential or possibility. A Characteristic is a talent, descriptive element, or resource (such as Extra Attacks, Organizational Ties, or Wealth) to which the character has access, but is normally not superhuman in origin. With GM permission, any Attribute can be reclassified as either a Power or Characteristic to best suit the character concept and campaign outline. For example, while Armour is normally a Power, the Haud race (including Jade Naga) have tough scales on their body. For them, Armour is a Characteristic instead. The distinction between Powers and Characteristics is important since some Attributes can negate or otherwise affect a character's superhuman Power Attributes.

Superhuman Characteristic Attributes

Although Characteristic Attributes typically represent a talent or resource, high Levels in some Characteristics might be considered a superhuman phenomenon in your campaign. For example, a character with Extra Attacks at Level 8 could easily be considered inhumanly fast in combat. Similarly, the damage inflicted by a character with Massive Damage at Level 5 could be seen as superhuman. In most campaigns, Attribute Levels 1-4 are considered attainable for normal humans, while Levels 5 and greater might be viewed as superhuman achievement.

Power Modifier Values (PMVs)

Several Power Attributes can be modified by a variety of factors known as **PMVs**, referring to Table 2-3: Power Modifier Values. These modifiers allow players to customize their characters' Attributes, making each Attribute unique to the character. The description for each Attribute lists which PMVs, if any, are available for the Power (Characteristics do not have PMVs).

PMV Cost

Each Rank in a PMV costs 1 Character Point.

Area

Area modifies the radius of influence of the Power, centred on either the character (for Powers with a Range of zero) or on a specific location (for Range Rank 1 or higher).



Alice, Queen of Hearts

Duration

Duration determines the maximum period of time that the Power's effect will influence a target. In most cases (with the exception of Mimic, see page 55), this only applies when the character is using a Power to affect someone or something else. Duration does not apply when using the Power to affect him or herself, since the character can simply reactivate the Power at will. At the end of a Power's Duration, its effects will cease.

Range

Range determines the distance at which the Power may be used. Range is a measure of how far away the centre of a Power can be manifested; it does not determine the number of targets or the area effected by the Power (see Area and Targets). Attributes with the Range PMV at Rank 0 can only be used through contact with the target. Alternatively, if the Power has the **Area PMV** above Rank 0, characters may centre the Power's effect upon themselves.

Targets

Targets determines the maximum **mass** of objects and/or number of people, as is appropriate, that the Attribute can affect. A Rank of zero indicates that only the character can be affected; a Rank of 1 means that any single individual (including the character) or appropriate mass can be targeted. It should be noted that the target objects or people must still be within the Attribute's Range and Area for the Power to have an affect. For rules on using a Power against unwilling targets, see Using Powers Against Opponents, page 133.

Designer's Note

Required PMVs

While the PMVs are primarily optional additions that create a variety of Power applications, some Attributes require certain PMV assignments to make them useful:

The Area PMV must be assigned to: Force Field, Illusion, Projection, Sensory Block, and Sixth Sense.

The Duration PMV must be assigned to: Animal Summon/Control, Creation, Environmental Influence, Force Field, Illusion, Metamorphosis, Plant Control, and Transmutation.

The Targets PMV must be assigned to: Contamination, Healing, Illusion, Metamorphosis, Mind Control, Nullify, and Telepathy.

Zero Rank PMVs

What does it mean when a Power requires a specific PMV but has it at Rank zero? Can the Power still work? How does it function?

For Area, it means the Power affects a pinpoint area even smaller than a grain of sand. Unless the character is using the Power on him or herself or on an incredibly small target, the Power's effect is virtually insignificant, unnoticed to almost everyone. It is appropriate to take the Area PMV at Rank zero if the character will only use the power to affect him or herself.

Duration of zero means the power has an instantaneous effect. Since the effect of the Power vanishes instantly, nobody but the most perceptive people will be aware that anything happened. Consequently, most Powers that list Duration as a PMV require it to be assigned, or the Power is virtually useless. Some exceptions are: Block Power (without Duration, a character can still Block instantaneous Powers); Mimic Powers (without Duration, a character can still Mimic instantaneous Powers); Shrink (Duration only necessary to affect others); and Pocket Dimension (Duration only necessary to use Power offensively).

A Range of zero means that the Power can only be used when touching a target, or upon the character him or herself. This restriction is appropriate for many Powers that require contact to activate.

Table 2-3: Power Modifier Values (PMVs)

Rank	Area	Duration	Range	Targets
0	pinpoint	instantaneous	touch	self
1	10 cm	1 round	10 m	1 Person/50 kg
2	1 m	5 rounds	100 m	5 People/100 kg
3	10 m	1 min	1 km	10 People/500 kg
4	100 m	10 min	10 km	50 People/1 tonne
5	1 km	1 hr	100 km	100 People/5 tonne
6	10 km	12 hr	1,000 km	1,000 People/10 tonne
7	100 km	1 day	10k km	10k People/100 tonne
8	1,000 km	1 week	100k km	100k People/1,000 tonne
9	10k km	1 month	1M km	1M People/10k tonne
10	100k km	6 month	10M km	10M People/100k tonne

How Do PMVs Work?

The Power Modifier Value Chart allows players to create distinct Powers using the same Attribute. By assigning a certain Rank in a PMV to an Attribute, you will create different variations of the base Power. Take Teleport, for example. Each Level of Teleport dictates how far your character can teleport, ranging from 10 metres at Level 1 up to 10 million km at Level 10. This is the base Power and any character taking Teleport will function the exact same as another character with Teleport. By using the PMVs for Area, Range, and Targets, however, you can create a specific version of the Power that works very differently than another character's. If one character possessed Teleport at Level 4, he could Teleport himself up to 10 km away. Another character, however, takes Teleport (also at Level 4) but assigns Area Rank 3, Range Rank 2, and Targets Rank 4. She is able to teleport herself up to 10 km away, but she is also capable of teleporting up to 50 people or 1 tonne in mass (Targets Rank 4) within a 10-metre radius (Area Rank 3) that is 100 metres away from herself (Range Rank 2), up to 10 km away. Thus, she could teleport a car (under 1 tonne in mass and under 10-metres in radius) located at the other end of a football field (under 100 metres away) to the other side of the city (within 10 km teleport). The first character can only use his Power to teleport himself while the second character can use her Power to teleport people and objects around her as well.

In short, the PMVs allow you to push Power Attributes beyond their base, standard mechanics and use them in new and innovative ways.

Targets at Rank zero means that the character can only affect him or herself with the Power — it cannot be used on other targets. Many superheroic Powers have Rank zero Targets that only affect the character directly.

Consequently, if the character wishes to use his or her Power to affect other people than just him or herself, assigning PMVs at Ranks 1 or higher is necessary. If, however, the character simply wishes to affect him or herself with the power, PMVs may not be required for the Power at all.

Attribute Progression

The effects of each Attribute improve as its Level increases. Most Attribute description indicates which column of Table 2-4: Progression Charts you should reference when determining the game effect of the Attribute. For example, Animal Summon/Control (see page 32) has a Progression of "Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 animal (Level 1) increasing to 50,000 animals (Level 10)." When determining the game effect of Animal Summon/Control, the player looks at the Medium column of Table 2-4: Progression Charts and cross-references it with the Rank equal to his or her character's Level in the Attribute. Thus, if his or her character had Animal Summon/Control at Level 6, the character would be able to affect up to 500 animals with the Attribute.

Some Attributes begin the progression at a higher Rank on the Chart. For example, Flight (see page 44) has a Progression of "Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 kph (Level 1) increasing to 500,000 kph (Level 10)." Thus, the Level 1 effect of Flight (10 kph) is equal to Rank 3, or two ranks higher than the Level of the Attribute. Therefore, if a character had Flight at Level 6, the player would reference Rank 8 on the Medium Progression Chart and see that his or her character could fly at speeds up to 5,000 kph.

Descriptive or Special Progression

If the Attribute indicates a **descriptive progression**, read the Attribute entry for more information.

Linear Progression

If an Attribute follows a **linear progression**, check the values for Level 1 and Level 10 and interpolate the values for intermediate Levels. For example, the entry for Tough reads, "Linear, starting at +20 Health Points (Level 1) increasing to +200 Health Points (Level 10)." The progression is therefore +20 Health Points for each Level.

Reversed Progression

A few rare Attributes require a **reversed progression** as the Level of the Attribute increases. Contamination, for instance, has a Progression of "Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months (Level 1) decreasing to 1 round (Level 10)." Thus, the Level 1 effect for Contamination is equal to Rank 11 on the Time Progression Chart. For each additional Level of the Attribute, the Rank decreases by one until it reaches Rank 2 (1 round) at Level 10.

Table 2-4: Progression Charts

Rank	Fast	Medium	Slow	Time
1	1	1	1	10 Initiative
2	10	5	2	1 round
3	100	10	4	5 rounds
4	1 k	50	8	1 min
5	10 k	100	15	10 min
6	100 k	500	30	1 hr
7	1 M	1 k	60	12 hr
8	10 M	5 k	125	1 day
9	100 M	10 k	250	1 week
10	1 B	50 k	500	1 month
11	10 B	100 k	1,000	6 month
12	100 B	500 k	2,000	1 year
13	1 T	1 M	4,000	10 year
14	10 T	5 M	8,000	100 years
15	100 T	10 M	15,000	1 k years
16	1 Q	50 M	30,000	10 k years
17	10 Q	100 M	60,000	100 k years
18	100 Q	500 M	125,000	1 M years
19	1 Quint	1 B	250,000	10 M years
20	10 Quint	5 B	500,000	100 M years

k = Thousand M = Million B = Billion T = Trillion Q = Quadrillion Quint = Quintillion

Attribute Restrictions

Players may wish to assign the **Restriction** Defect (see page 98) to one or more of their characters' Characteristic or Power Attributes, thereby reducing the Attribute's total cost by 1 to 3 Points. The description of each Attribute lists some example Restrictions that are appropriate for the Attribute. GMs, however, are always the final arbiter of whether or not a Restriction is acceptable for an Attribute.

Attribute Reductions

In addition, players can assign the **Reduction** Defect (see page 98). Reductions decrease the Attribute's cost per Level by a number of Character Points, determined by the severity of the Reduction.

Changing Relevant Stats

Although each Attribute lists its most relevant Stat, the Game Master may allow you to use an alternate Stat if you have a good reason. For example, if your character specializes in psionics, you may want to base the Alternate Form, Damage Absorption, and Heightened Senses Attributes on his or her Mind Stat rather than Body Stat. This option also applies to Skills.

In rare cases, your GM may change an Attribute's relevant Stat to fit the situation rather than the character concept. For example, Sixth Sense is usually based on Soul, but the detection could require a Body or Mind Stat check, depending on the source (such as Body for magnetics; Mind for magic; Soul for emotions).

Table 2-5: Silver Age Sentinels Attribute Name Equivalents

If You Are Looking For ...	See the Attribute ...
Absorption	Damage Absorption
Affliction	Contamination
Aid	Healing
Alchemy	Transmutation
Analytic Taste/Touch	Heightened Senses
Animal Form	Alternate Form
Animation	Telekinesis
Astral Projection	Special Movement
Bioluminescence	Environmental Influence
Blending	Alternate Form
Blind Fighting	Combat Technique
Body Modification	Alternate Form
Bodymorph	Alternate Form
Boost	Power Flux
Change Environment	Environmental Influence
Clairsentience	Sixth Sense
Claws	Natural Weapons
Clinging	Special Movement
Clone	Duplicate
Cosmic Awareness	Sixth Sense
Cyberkinesis	Computer Scanning
Damage Reduction	Special Defense
Damage Resistance	Special Defense
Danger Sense	Sixth Sense
Darkness	Environmental Influence
Density Increase	Mass Increase
Desolidification	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)
Detection	Heightened Awareness
Digging	Tunnelling
Dimensional Travel	Special Movement
Disintegration	Special Attack
Disorient	Mind Control
Dispel	Nullify
Disrupt	Nullify
Domination	Mind Control
Drain	Nullify
Duplication	Duplicate
Electronic Countermeasures	Invisibility
Elemental Control	Dynamic Powers
Elongation	Elasticity
Emotion Control	Mind Control
Empathy	Sixth Sense
Energy Blast	Special Attack
Energy Conversion	Damage Conversion
Enhanced Senses	Heightened Senses
Entangle	Special Attack
Entropy Control	Dynamic Powers
ESP	Sixth Sense
Extra Limbs	Extra Arms
Extra-Dimensional Movement	Special Movement
Flash Defense	Special Defense
Flunkies	Henchmen
Focused Damage	Massive Damage
Force Wall	Force Field
FTL Travel	Hyperflight
Gliding	Flight
Gravity Control	Dynamic Powers
Gun Bunny	Combat Technique
Hand-to-Hand Attack	Massive Damage
Holo	Projection
Homunculus	Swarm
Horn	Natural Weapons
Hypnosis	Mind Control
Images	Projection
Imitation	Dynamic Powers
Immortality	Special Defense
Instant Change	Transmutation
Insubstantial	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)
Invulnerability	Special Defense
Kensei	Combat Technique
Killing Attack	Special Attack
Knockback Resistance	Immovable
Life Support	Adaptation
Luck	Divine Relationship
Magic	Dynamic Powers
Magnetic Mastery	Dynamic Powers
Matter Chameleon	Alternate Form
Matter Creation	Creation
Meld	Alternate Form
Mental Defense	Mind Shield
Mental Illusions	Illusion
Mind Link	Telepathy
Mind Scan	Telepathy
Mirage	Projection
Missile Deflection	Combat Technique
Multiform	Alternate Form
Multipower	Power Flux
Own a Big Mecha	Item of Power
Personal Gear	Gadgets
Phasing	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)
Plasticity	Elasticity
Power Defense	Special Defense
Precognition	Sixth Sense
Premonition	Sixth Sense
Psionics	Dynamic Powers
Psychic Shield	Mind Shield
Quantum Imprint	Mimic
Radar Sense	Heightened Senses
Reality Warping	Dynamic Powers
Running	Speed
Sensors	Heightened Senses
Servant	Sidekick
Shapeshift	Alternate Form
Shield	Armour
Shroud	Environmental Influence
Silence	Invisibility
Sorcery	Dynamic Powers
Space Flight	Hyperflight
Spirit Travel	Special Movement
Star Flight	Hyperflight
Sticky	Contamination
Stretching	Elasticity
Summon	Animal Summon/Control
Superleap	Jumping
Suppress	Nullify
Swimming	Water Speed
Swinging	Special Movement
Teeth	Natural Weapons
Temporal Manipulation	Dynamic Powers
Time Travel	Dynamic Powers
Transform	Metamorphosis
Two Dimensional	Alternate Form
Usable By Others	Transfer
Variable Power Pools	Power Flux
Wall-Crawling	Special Movement
Water-Breathing	Adaptation
Weather Control	Dynamic Powers
Web-Slinging	Special Movement
Wings	Flight

Table 2-6: Character Attributes

Attribute Name	Cost per Level	Progression	PMVs	Relevant Stat	Type
Adaptation	1	Linear	None	Body	Power
Alternate Form	3 or 9	Linear	None	Body	Power
Animal Summon/Control	1, 3, 5	Medium	A,D	Soul	Power
Armour	1 or 3	Linear	None	Body	Power
Attack Combat Mastery	3	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Block Power	1 or 6	Linear	A,D,T	Soul	Power
Combat Technique	1	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Computer Scanning	2	Fast	None	Mind	Power
Contamination	2 or 4	Time Rev	A,R,T	Body	Power
Creation	2 or 3	Medium	D,R	Mind/Soul	Power
Damage Absorption	8 or 10	Linear	None	Body	Power
Damage Conversion	6 or 8	Linear	None	Body	Power
Defense Combat Mastery	2	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Divine Relationship	1	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Duplicate	6 or 8	Linear	None	Body	Power
Dynamic Powers	10, 15, 20	Linear	A,D,R,T	Variable	Power
Elasticity	2	Descriptive	None	Body	Power
Energy Bonus	2	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Enhanced [Stat]	2	Linear	None	None	Power
Environmental Influence	1	Linear	A,D,R	Soul	Power
Extra Arms	1	Slow	None	None	Characteristic
Extra Attacks	8	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Extra Defenses	3	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Features	1	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Flight	2, 3, 4	Medium	None	Body	Power
Force Field	4	Linear	A,D,R	Mind	Power
Gadgeteer	2	Slow	None	Mind	Characteristic
Gadgets	2	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Grow	10	Variable	None	Body	Power
Healing	4	Linear	A,R,T	Body/Soul	Power
Heightened Awareness	1	Linear	None	Body/Mind	Characteristic
Heightened Senses	1	Linear	None	Body/Mind	Power
Henchmen	1 or 2	Slow	None	Soul	Characteristic
Highly Skilled	1	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Hyperflight	2	Fast	None	Body	Power
Illusion	1, 2, 3, 4	Fast	A,D,R,T	Mind	Power
Immovable	1	Linear	None	Body	Power
Invisibility	2 or 3	Linear	A,T	Body	Power
Item of Power	3 or 4	Linear	None	Soul	Characteristic
Jumping	1	Medium	None	Body	Power
Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)	3	Variable	None	Body	Power
Mass Increase	8	Variable	None	Body	Power
Massive Damage	2 or 5	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Metamorphosis	5	Linear	A,D,R,T	Mind/Soul	Power
Mimic Powers	7 or 10	Linear	D,R	Mind	Power
Mind Control	2, 3, 4, 5	Variable	A,R,T	Mind	Power
Mind Shield	1	Linear	A,R,T	Mind/Soul	Power
Natural Weapons	1	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Nullify	7 or 12	Linear	A,D,R,T	Soul	Power
Organizational Ties	1, 2, 3	Descriptive	None	Soul	Characteristic
Plant Control	2	Fast	D	Mind/Soul	Power
Pocket Dimension	2, 3, 4	Fast	A,D,R,T	Mind/Soul	Power
Power Flux	5, 10, 15, 20	Linear	Special	Variable	Power
Projection	3	Medium	A,D,R	Mind	Power
Regeneration	6	Linear	None	Body	Power
Reincarnation	2 or 4	Time Rev	None	Soul	Power
Sensory Block	1	Linear	A,R	Mind	Power
Shrink	1	Variable	A,D,R,T	Body	Power
Sidekick	1 or 3	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Sixth Sense	1	Linear	A	Soul	Power
Special Attack	1 or 4	Linear	None	None	Power
Special Defense	1	Linear	None	Variable	Power
Special Movement	1	Linear	None	Body	Power
Speed	6	Medium	None	Body	Power
Superstrength	4	Slow	None	Body	Power
Swarm	2	Linear	None	Body	Power
Telekinesis	2 or 4	Fast	A,R	Mind	Power
Telepathy	1, 2, 3	Descriptive	A,R,T	Mind	Power
Teleport	5	Fast	A,R,T	Mind	Power
Tough	2	Linear	None	None	Characteristic
Transfer	5 or 10	Linear	D,R	Soul	Power
Transmutation	3, 4, 5	Medium	D,R	Mind/Soul	Power
Tunnelling	2	Medium	None	Body	Power
Unique Attribute	1-10	Variable	Variable	Variable	Either
Unknown Superhuman Power	Variable	Special	Variable	Variable	Either
Water Speed	2	Medium	None	Body	Power
Wealth	3	Medium	None	None	Characteristic

Attribute Entries

The Attribute entries in the following section indicate: the Character Point cost; whether the Attribute is a Power or Characteristic; the Stat most relevant to the Attribute's use should a check be needed (see page 107); the associated Power Modifier Values; the Attribute's Level progression; several suggested limitations to the Attribute (for the Restriction and Reduction Defects); and finally the Attribute's game effects.

Adaptation

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 environment (Level 1) increasing to 10 environments (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limit; no Armour; naked form only

The character can adapt to survive in a number of environments hostile to ordinary humans equal to his or her Adaptation Level. Examples of hostile environments include: acidic/basic liquids, extra dimensional, extreme pressure, intense cold, intense heat, noxious gases, radiation, underwater (the ability to "breathe" water), and vacuum (low pressure, not the absence of air). Adaptation does not apply to non-human characters whose natural environment is not the Earth's atmosphere (such as a mermaid living in the ocean). In these cases, the character must assign Adaptation (Earth Atmosphere) to survive in normal human environments. Surviving in low- or no-oxygen environments is a Special Defense Attribute (page 74), not Adaptation.

The Attribute also provides 5 points of Armour against environmental conditions and attacks similar to the adapted environment. For example, Adaptation (Heat) provides Armour while in the desert heat and against fiery blasts, while Adaptation (Pressure) provides Armour while deep-sea diving and against a crushing gravity attack. In most natural Earth environments, this Armour provides complete protection against the elements. Adaptation can thus be viewed as a very limited form of the Armour Attribute in many situations. A character with even Level 1 Armour gains the benefits of Adaptation against environmental conditions. Armour does not protect against specific hostile environments that have less tangible damaging effects, such as extra dimensional, noxious gases, and underwater.



Jade Naga, Haud Lord

Example

Jade Naga has Adaptation Level 1 (Noxious Gases). This allows him to pass through most environments with noxious gas unharmed (gaining 5 points of Armour against any harmful effects due to the gases). This would allow him to breathe the poisonous fumes expelled near a volcano, for example, though he may still suffer from the heat/lava if he is not careful.

Alternate Form

Costs: 3 or 9 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 10 Character Points for the Alternate Form (Level 1) increasing to 100 Character Points for the Alternate Form (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, requires special equipment

A character with Alternate Form can instantaneously transform into one other specific form that is determined during character creation and approved by the Game Master. Once selected, the form cannot be altered. Alternate Form allows the character to possess a radically different body shape than his or her normal human form, and exhibit exotic physical features as well.

If a character only has a single, permanent, non-human form, this Attribute should not be applied. Instead, the character must acquire the relevant Attributes and Defects that best represent the form's capabilities. A character with several different Alternate Forms should assign this Attribute multiple times. The Attributes gained in the character's Alternate Form obviously cannot be Dependent (see page 94) upon the Alternate Form Attribute. Different Alternate Forms can be built with different Attribute Levels as well. To create a character with unlimited additional forms, see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 40) with a Shapeshifting speciality.

Partial-Powered Form (3 Points/Level)

The form is built from 10 Character Points for each Alternate Form Level, which can be used to acquire Stats, Characteristic or Power Attributes, and Defects. The character's Stats all drop to zero and thus must be raised with the Alternate Form's new Character Points; **Derived Values** also must be recalculated. Additionally, the character's regular Attributes, Skills, and Defects no longer function in the Alternate Form, though the GM may decide that some Characteristic Attributes (such as Gadgets, Henchmen, Organizational Ties, Wealth, and others) and some Defects (such as Achilles Heel, Bane, and others) still retain their effects. Defects can also be assigned to the new Form to provide additional Character Points. Unless the GM indicates otherwise, normal clothing becomes part of the Alternate Form as well.

Full-Powered Form (9 Points/Level)

The form is built from 10 Character Points for each Alternate Form Level, which can be used to acquire Characteristic or Power Attributes, and Defects. The character retains all the Stat Values, Attribute Levels, Skill Levels, and Defect **Bonus Points** associated with his or her regular form. The newly acquired Attributes and Defects add to the character's normal form. If the character's Stats are modified by the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute or Less Capable [Stat] Defect, the Derived Values should be recalculated as necessary. Unless the GM indicates otherwise, normal clothing becomes part of the Alternate Form as well.

Cosmetic Changes (2 Points)

A "Level 0" option of the Alternate Form Attribute is also available at the cost of 2 Character Points. This Level allows a character to undergo cosmetic changes that confer no additional abilities on the target. This includes: a 10% size increase or decrease, change of gender, 50% age increase or decrease, colour changes (eye, skin, or hair), and minor physical changes (shape of ears, facial features, or bodily proportions). This can also add the Features (Appearance) Attribute or Physically Unappealing Defect.

Sample Alternate Forms

The examples given below suggest some Attributes that may be appropriate for the Alternate Forms, but the GM can modify them if desired. Other types of alternate forms can include electricity, radiation, light, emotion, data, dream, sound, and many others.

Animal Forms

Many nature-based shapeshifters have one or more Partial-Powered animal forms. Suggested Attributes: any that are relevant to the specific animal form, such as Armour, Attack Combat Mastery, Features, Flight, Heightened Senses, Jumping, Natural Weapons, Special Movement, Tough, Tunnelling, etc.

Elemental/Chemical Forms

This option covers a wide range of possible forms, including: acid, base, gold, granite, ice, mercury, water, sulphur, synthetic drugs, etc. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Armour, Duplicate, Elasticity, Enhanced [Stat], Extra Arms, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Mass Increase, Massive Damage, Regeneration, Special Attack, Special Defense, Special Movement, Superstrength, Swarm, Tough, Water Speed.

Flame Form

The character is composed of fire, and can ignite flammable objects on contact. Any person near the character may suffer burn damage as well. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation (Heat), Armour (Optimized to heat), Damage Conversion (Heat), Environmental Influence (Heat), Flight, Force Field, Special Attack (Aura).

Gaseous Form

This form is less substantial than a liquid form. The character cannot pick up solid objects and can only exert the pushing force of a gentle wind. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Creation, Extra Attacks, Flight, Heightened Awareness, Invisibility, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial; Level 2), Projection, Regeneration, Shrink, Sixth Sense, Special Attack, Special Defense, Speed.

Incorporeal Form

An Incorporeal form is without physical substance (for example, a ghost or living shadow). The character can pass through walls, walk on air or water, and perform similar ghost-like feats. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Flight, Invisibility, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial; Level 10), Special Defense.

Melding Form

The character can meld into any inanimate object, and still perceive nearby events as though he or she is still human. Once merged, the character cannot be harmed unless the object is damaged. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial, to meld), Teleport (Within melded object), Tunnelling.

Superhuman Form

Some characters maintain dual human/super identities and do not have access to all of their Powers until transformed into superheroes or supervillains. Suggested Attributes: any that are relevant to character's superhuman form.

Example

Example 1: Bloody Mary has several partial-powered Alternate Forms, including a supernatural "Crow" form at Level 3. She pays 9 Points and receives 30 Points to design the Crow. The Crow form starts with 0 in all Stats, and has no Attributes, Defects, or Skills. Mary buys the Crow's Stats up to 4 Body, 4 Mind, and 1 Soul for 18 Points. She then assigns the Attributes: Features (Feathers) Level 1 (1 Point); Flight (Cannot Hover) Level 4 (12 Points); Animal Summoning/Control (Crows; Supernatural; Duration 5) Level 2 (11 Points), with the Activation Time Defect (4 BP); and Special Movement (Balance, Dimension Hop: Dreamlands) Level 2 (2 Points). For Defects, Mary assigns: Diminutive (2 BP), Less Capable (Strength; 1 BP), Marked (White crow; 3 BP), Physical Impairment (Mute, no hands; 3 BP), and Physically Unappealing (Appears bewitched and dangerous; 1 BP). Mary cannot use any of her normal Powers in her Crow form. The GM decides she will still suffer from her Achilles Heel (Holy/Blessed objects; 2 BP), and her Bane (Sacred ground; 2 BP) Defects, although she gets no extra Points from this.

Example 2: Livewire is a character capable of transforming from a human body into a being made of electricity. He has the full-powered version of Alternate Form (Electric) at Level 9. He spent 81 Points, and now has 90 Points to make his electric body. As a being of pure electricity, Livewire is immune to most physical attacks, although energy attacks still affect him normally. When he transforms, he gains Armour (Optimized vs. Electricity) Level 2 (6 Points), Dynamic Powers (Electricity; Area 3; Duration 2; Range 3; Targets 3) Level 1 (21 Points), Heightened Senses (Electric Current Detection) Level 1 (1 Point), Mass Decrease (Insubstantial) Level 8 (24 Points), Special Attack "Lightning Burst" Level 2 (8 Points), Special Attack "Electric Aura" Level 2 (2 Points), Special Defense (Oxygen x2) Level 2 (2 Points), Speed Level 3 (18 Points), and Teleportation Level 6 (18 Points; Reduction of 2 Points/Level — Through Wires Only). He also gains the Defects: Achilles Heel (Grounded Attacks; 2 BP), Bane (Water; 1 BP), Marked (3 BP), Physical Impairment (Mute; 2 BP), Restriction (Cannot travel through insulated materials; 2 BP). Laird Keeley keeps his human Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Defects, and adds the new abilities his Alternate Form gives him.

Example 3: Stone Angel is a human woman who transforms into a winged angel, with skin of marble. In her stone form, she is much stronger, and more resilient to damage. Stone Angel has full-powered Alternate Form (Stone) at Level 5. She spent 45 Character Points, but has 50 Points for her marble body. In her angel form she gains Armour Level 4 (12 Points), Flight Level 1 (4 Points), Immovable Level 4 (4 Points), Special Attack "Stone Sword" Level 2 (8 Points), Special Defense (Oxygen x2, Pain x2, Poison x2) Level 6 (6 Points), Superstrength Level 4 (16 Points), Tough Level 3 (6 Points). She also suffers from the Defects: Awkward Size (1 BP), Marked (3 BP), Sensory Impairment (Lost Taste and Smell; 2 BP). When Jessica Stone changes into the Stone Angel, she keeps her Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Defects, and adds everything gained from the Alternate Form.

Two Dimensional Form

A 2-D character has height and width, but not depth. He or she can squeeze through the spaces between atoms, and is completely invisible when viewed from the side. An entire new two-dimensional universe may be waiting to be explored by such a character. Suggested Attributes: Adaptation, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial, Level 10), Pocket Dimension, Special Defense, Special Movement, Speed.

Animal Summon/Control

Cost: 1, 3, or 5 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 animal (Level 1) increasing to 50,000 animals (Level 10)
Reduction: Can only give limited commands
Restrictions: Check needed to maintain control; animals aggressive towards Summoner once released; demons require gift/offering

Characters with this Attribute (at 1 Point/Level) can summon animals from the surrounding area (as determined by the Area PMV Rank), and command them to perform a variety of simple activities: attack, confuse, hunt, defend, track, etc. Human control is covered by the Mind Control Attribute (page 55). The Attribute Level determines the maximum number of animals that can be summoned. If fewer animals are in the area of effect, only those will obey the summons. Additionally, the animals do not appear magically; they must find a way to travel to the character. After the Duration PMV has expired, the animals will return to their normal activities and habitats. Any animals still travelling to the summoning character will cease their journeys at that time.

If the character limits the Summon/Control to a single broad group of animals, the Attribute functions at one Level higher. Broad animal groups include: mammals, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, avians, etc. If limited to a single specific group, the Attribute functions at two Levels higher. Specific animal groups include: dogs, cats, rodents, ants, bees, large reptiles, frogs, sharks, birds of prey, etc. If limited to a specific type of animal, the Attribute functions

Example

Mister Matthews knows several secrets about mammals and is able to use that knowledge to summon and control them. He has the Attribute at Level 2, which enables him to normally summon up to five mammals from within his area of influence (Area 4, or 100 metres). Restricting the Attribute to a broad group of animals (mammals), however, increases the effective Level by one to Level 3 — he can thus summon up to 10 mammals. Since he has the 1 Point/Level version of the Attribute, the animals will come under their own power and thus will arrive as quickly as the animals can, based on the terrain and other conditions. Additionally, there must be mammals within his area of influence for him to summon them — if there are no mammals nearby, obviously none will arrive.

at three Levels higher. Examples of animal types include: poodles, tigers, rats, fire ants, crocodiles, tree frogs, hammerhead sharks, eagles, etc.

For 3 Points/Level, the animals are summoned through supernatural means. The character can always summon the maximum number of allowable animals (as determined by Level), and the animals arrive within a single round. When the Duration expires, the animals instantly return to their original location.

An alternate 5 Points/Level version of this Attribute — Demonic Summon/Control — allows the character to summon creatures from other dimensions or planes of existence. The creatures arrive within a single round. The creatures are built using 5 Character Points for each Level of Area PMV assigned. When the Duration expires, the creatures instantly return to their original location.

Armour

Cost: 1 or 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 10 point damage reduction (Level 1) increasing to 100 point damage reduction (Level 10)
Reduction: Reduced Armour values
Restrictions: Needs repairs; cumbersome and restricts movement; under certain conditions

The Armour Attribute represents actual armoured plates, or simply skin or clothing that is superresistant to damage. It is most often found on combat vehicles, cyborgs, androids, giant monsters, and, of course, superbeings.

Armour reduces the damage that is inflicted on the character or structure (see Chapter 3: Game Mechanics for how damage works). Armour reduces the damage of each attack by 10 points per Level (20/Level for Shield). The base cost for Armour is 3 Points/Level.

A number of options are available for the Armour Attribute, which alter the Attribute's Point cost or modify the Armour's effectiveness. The minimum Point cost of Armour, regardless of options, is 1 Character Point.

Partial

The Armour has a small thin area (half Armour value, -1 to Point cost) or an unarmoured area (no Armour value, -2 to Point cost) that can be targeted using a Called Shot (see page 116). Point cost reductions apply to the total cost of Armour, not the cost per Level.

Optimized Armour

The Armour is focused against a particular uncommon attack form. Eligible attack forms include electricity, cold, laser beams, fire/heat, energy blasts, etc. Armour cannot be optimized against broad categories such as blunt impacts or piercing weapons, however. Optimized Armour provides doubled protection against the chosen attack form only, and no protection against other forms. A character can acquire both Optimized Armour and ordinary Armour by assigning the Armour Attribute twice.

Shield Only

The Armour does not cover the character's entire body. Instead, it is a shield that the user must deliberately interpose in front of a **melee** or unarmed attack using a Block Defense (see page 124). The character must also possess the Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks) Attribute to use the shield in a Block Defense against ranged attacks. If the character successfully defends, the shield's Armour can protect against 20 points of damage each Level (rather than 10). This option reduces the cost of Armour to 1 Point/Level (rather than 3 Points/Level).

Attack Combat Mastery

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +1 ACV (Level 1) increasing to +10 ACV (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Attack Combat Mastery denotes either an innate "killer instinct" or the character's intimate knowledge of a wide range of offensive combat techniques covering all aspects of armed and unarmed encounters (including Special Attacks and ranged weapons). Individual Combat Skills (page 89) let a character specialize with particular weapons or specific styles, but Attack Combat Mastery allows a character to pick up any weapon (or use none at all) and be dangerously proficient. See page 102 of Step 7: Derived Values for more information on the **Attack Combat Value**.

Block Power

Cost: 1 or 6 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at -1 Check Value penalty to effect character using 1 specific Power Attribute (Level 1) increasing to -10 Check Value penalty to effect character using up to 10 Power Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against broad or specific group of people; weak against a Power

Opponents have difficulty affecting the character with **specific** Powers because the Attributes' effects are blocked. For 1 Point/Level the character can block one Power at each Level, which must be determined during character creation (or when Block Power is assigned as advancement). In the case of the Special Attack Attribute, only another character's single, specific attack is blocked (which reduces an enemies chance to hit the character). For 6 Points/Level, the character can block all Powers, including all Special Attacks (they suffer a penalty to hit the character but if they do hit, they have full effect). The Duration PMV only applies when the character is using Block Power to stop specific Attributes from affecting a willing or

unwilling target, rather than him or herself. Targets cannot be blocked from the effects of their own Attributes, however.

When an opponent targets the character, he or she must make a successful Stat check at a -1 penalty for every Level of the target character's Block Power Attribute. If the check fails, the Power does not affect the character (although a multi-target Power may still affect the other targets). The base Check Value is determined by the "Relevant Stat" of the Power used. If no Stat is indicated, the Soul Stat is used as a default. If the check succeeds, the target character is affected by the Power as normal.

Example

Pan possesses Block Power at Level 2 (12 Points). This means that anyone attempting to affect the glittery gal with a Power incurs a -2 penalty to any Check Values. Thus, a character attempting to teleport her, for example, will suffer a -2 penalty to his or her Mind Stat check.

Combat Technique

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 technique (Level 1) increasing to 10 techniques (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against broad or specific group of opponents; with specific weapons or weapon groups

The Combat Technique Attribute allows a character to perform astounding feats with a wide variety of melee or ranged weapons, or special attacks. For a listing of penalties associated with some special combat manoeuvres, see page 123. Each Level gives the character one combat technique; the Game Master will determine if a specific manoeuvre can be assigned multiple times. The GM and players are encouraged to develop their own combat techniques as well.

Accuracy

The character suffers reduced dice penalties when attempting an accurate attack, such as striking at partial Armour, weak points, or vital spots, or shooting at longer-than-usual ranges. Accuracy is also used when attempting a special feat or trick shot, such as carving an initial on someone's body or ricocheting an arrow off a wall to shoot a target around a corner. Each difficulty penalty is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). For example, attacking a vital spot (-8 penalty) would become a -6 penalty, while firing at double range (-4 penalty) would receive a -2 penalty. For more information on ricochet attacks, see page 119.

ACV Knockback

The character is proficient at maximizing the distance that he or she knocks opponents back after a successful hit (see **Knockback**, page 128). The character adds his Attack Combat Value, in metres, to the knockback distance inflicted upon the target of a successful hit.

Blind Fighting

The character does not suffer penalties associated with attacking or defending with melee weapons or while unarmed in poor light, absolute darkness, or against an invisible opponent.

Blind Shooting

The character suffers half penalties associated with attacking with ranged weapons in poor light, absolute darkness, or against an invisible opponent. This technique can be assigned twice to reduce the penalty to zero. The character must be capable of detecting the general presence of the target, however, through one of his or her senses (smell, hearing, sixth sense, etc.).

Block Ranged Attacks

Under normal circumstances, a character cannot use a Block Defense (page 124) against a ranged attack. With this technique, a character gains this defensive option.

Concealment

The character has an unearthly ability to conceal weapons about his or her person. As long as the character has something to hide the weapons (even if it only long hair or a light robe) the character's weapons will not be noticed by anything short of an actual physical search, and such a search is conducted at a -4 Check Value penalty. A Special Attack weapon with the Concealable Ability is even harder to find: searches suffer a -12 Check Value penalty.

Judge Opponent

The character can judge his or her opponent's approximate Combat Value and weapon Skill Level from the foe's attitude and posture even without actually seeing him or her fight. Additionally, the character can accurately estimate the opponent's remaining Health Points. For both of these advantages, the GM may decide to provide descriptive indications such as "your enemy is much better than you with a sword, but if you connect a few times with your eye blast, it will drop him", rather than saying "the enemy's ACV is 12, with a Melee Attack (Sword) Skill of 2, and he has 60 Health Points remaining."

Leap Attack

The character can make leaping attacks with his or her melee weapon, delivering additional damage due to momentum. Any time the character has a higher Initiative than his or her opponent, he or she may attempt a leaping attack. If the strike is successful (it hits and the target fails a defense) the character gets an extra +5 bonus to damage and may additionally add his or her Acrobatics Skill Level (if any) to the damage. If the character fails to hit, however, or the opponent succeeds with his or her defense, the character is off balance and receives a -2 penalty to any further Defense checks until his or her turn to act in the following round.

Lightning Reflexes

The character reacts quickly in combat and frequently outmanoeuvres opponents. Each time this technique is selected, the character gains +5 to all his or her Initiative rolls.

One Shot Left

The character will always have at least one projectile remaining for his or her ranged weapon, even after an extended combat. This

might be a final bullet in a gun, arrow in a quiver, plasma unit in a wrist blaster, or stone in a sling. This option does not remove the need to reload weapons in a game that uses realistic ammunition rules, but rather assures that the character will not be forced to reload at a critical moment. One Shot Left does not affect weapons or attacks built using the Limited Shots Disability (page 73).

Portable Armoury

The character will always have easy access to any weapon required for a particular task, including illegal weapons and accessories not available to the general public. The actual weapons and accessories must still be acquired via the Gadgets Attribute (page 47), but remarkably, the character can access them whenever he or she needs them instead of being forced to return to where they are normally stored. Characters with Portable Armoury may also make field modifications on their weapons, switching options such as laser sights or scopes in a single round.

Steady Hand

This is the ability to use Attack Combat Skills with ease while the character is moving quickly (running at full speed, flying at speeds over 100 kph, riding in a vehicle, etc.) or otherwise engaged in complex stunts. This greatly reduces the penalties a character normally suffers for attacking while in motion. Each penalty is reduced by 4 (to a minimum of 0). A character with this ability may also use weapons in conjunction with the Acrobatics Skill, and may aim while they are moving.

Two Weapons

The character can effectively fight with two melee or ranged weapons at once against the same or different targets, provided both weapons are designed for one-handed use. When using two weapons, the character can attack twice using the normal Two Weapons rules (page 116), but the penalty for doing so is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0). Alternatively, the character can attack with one weapon and defend with another receiving a -2 penalty to Attack checks he or she makes but adding a +2 bonus to his or her Defense checks vs. melee or unarmed attacks. This bonus lasts until the character's turn in the following round.

Weapons Encyclopaedia

A character has the ability to recall the vital statistics and important quirks of practically all known commercially available weapons. This includes, but is not limited to, its general level of reliability as well as all vital statistics — material composition, manufacturer, ammunition capacity, calibre, model year, possible outfitted accessories, etc. Characters without this ability will only have such information on weapons they actually own or use regularly and will need to successfully roll a Mind-based Military Science (Hardware Recognition) Skill check to recall important details. In addition, Weapons Encyclopaedia also includes knowledge on acquiring weapons, so characters will have a +4 bonus on any Street Sense or Business Management Skill checks needed to locate or buy legal or illegal weapons.



White Banner battles Caliburn

Computer Scanning

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area (Level 1) increasing to 100,000 km radius area (Level 10)
Reduction: Access but cannot understand
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; in particular regions; specific types of computers or data

With a successful Mind Stat check, characters with this Attribute can access, read, and understand data from all computers or "Silicon Age" technology in the surrounding area. When attempting to access a computer built as an Item of Power, the character suffers a penalty to the Mind Stat check of -2 for each Level of the Item of Power. The Attribute Level determines the maximum area in which the computers can be scanned. To read multiple computers over a network, the area Level must be high enough to encompass the target computers. Since this Attribute can be a very powerful tool in a campaign, the GM and players should ensure it is used appropriately.

Characters who can control and manipulate computer data should acquire the Dynamic Powers Attribute with a computer data specialization. Alternatively, characters who can control machine technology such as automobiles and construction equipment might instead possess the Telekinesis Attribute (page 77), with a specific restriction.

Example

White Hat possesses Computer Scanning at Level 4, enabling her to read the information on any computer within 100 metres. She does not need to have direct data access to the computer — she is able to mentally scan the information stored in the computer's harddrives as well as in its memory. She can even read information stored on a disk or on other storage media. If she attempts to read the memory system of an Item of Power such as Rain Killer's armour (a Level 14 Item of Power), however, she suffers a -2 per Level of the item. Therefore, White Hat would suffer a -28 penalty to the attempt — the armour is heavily protected from this sort of invasion.

Contamination

Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months (Level 1) decreasing to 1 round (Level 10)
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific targets; temporary change

This Attribute represents the character's ability to transform other people (or animals, or objects) into entities like him or herself. Frequently, this victim can then contaminate even more people. The method should be specified when the character is created. It might be similar to myths behind the vampire legend — the character's blood carries a "plague" that, when ingested, mutates the person over a matter of hours or days. Alternatively, the character might lay an egg or seed (real or metaphorical) in the body of his or her prey, which will later hatch within the victim, killing him or her as a new monster is born. The character might even need to perform some special ritual that alters the victim. Whatever the case, the conditions under which the victim can become "contaminated" must be specified.

For 2 Points/Level, contamination is "difficult" — the victim must be willing, unconscious, or restrained for deliberate contagion to occur, or the target must perform an unusual activity (such as eating a morsel of the character's flesh).

For 4 Points/Level contamination is "easy" — the contagion might be similar to a traditional werewolf attack, where a scratch or bite results in a victim becoming a werewolf. The GM can add special conditions, limitations, or effects to ensure that becoming a monster is a curse and not a blessing.

The higher the Level of Contamination, the faster the transformation occurs. There should always be some means of curing or delaying the eventual mutation, however. Possible cures include the death of the creature that inflicted the contaminant, radical surgery, blood transfusion, or a successful mystical healing.

The GM will decide whether a player character who is turned into a monster remains in the player's control or is reclassified as an NPC. Any retention (dreams, memories, etc.) of the victim's former existence depends on the nature of the contamination and whether the victim has been "transformed," "devoured," or "reborn" in the process. A person who has been successfully contaminated will usually gain a certain number of Powers "paid for" with the Bonus Points acquired by assigning new character Defects (often including Cursed, Ism, Marked, Permanent, and Owned, the last one representing servitude to his or her new master). Usually the mutation will result in a monstrous form similar to that of the character responsible. Thus, a spider alien that laid an egg in its victim may produce another spider alien, the victim of a vampire will grow fangs, etc. The GM should be wary of potentially undesirable possibilities such as a werewolf character infecting the entire group of characters, thereby creating an entire group of werewolves.

The Contamination Attribute usually allows the creator or mother some measure of control over the newly transformed

Example

Example: Vampires, who periodically surface in superhero campaigns, have the Contamination Attribute at Level 3. In many cases, when a Vampire drains a target of his or her blood, the victim will become Contaminated and turn into a Vampire as well. This process usually takes a day or two. Since the Vampire must drain all of the victim's blood, which is difficult unless the target is willing, the Attribute costs 2 Points/Level. The Attributes and Defects gained by the contaminated victim are determined by the GM, but are usually the same as the master Vampire's Powers and supernatural Defects.

character. In these instances, the Level of Contamination is added as a favourable modifier to any Mind Control attempts performed against the subject.

A variation to Contamination inflicts the target with some sort of curse or disease, rather than transforming him or her into a different type of creature. Examples of these afflictions include rapid ageing, debilitating diseases, sensitivity to specific elements, etc.

Creation

Cost: 2 or 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Duration, Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg (Level 1) increasing to 50,000 kg (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; creation is visually flawed; limited control over actual object created

This Attribute allows a character to create a non-living object (or set of connected objects, like clothing or a gun and its ammunition). Creation costs 3 Points/Level if the character can create anything (within the limits of his or her Level). It costs 2 Points/Level if the creation is limited to a general class of objects such as "metal," "weapons," "clothing," or "food."

The character cannot create new objects outside his or her experience. The character could create a book, painting or videotape, but the content must be something with which he or she was already familiar. Likewise, a character who had no familiarity with guns could not create one using Creation. The GM may choose to require a Mind Stat check (or relevant Skill check) if the character attempts a particularly complex creation. Failure may indicate the created object does not function properly, or is otherwise flawed; this is especially applicable when creating complex technological devices. Unless the GM decides otherwise, Creation is only able to make objects that could be classified as Gadgets; it cannot create Items of Power.

The created object will remain in existence for a period of time indicated by the Duration PMV. The ability to change one object into another is covered by the Transmutation Attribute (see page 79).


General Winter

Example

General Winter has Creation (snow/ice) at Level 10. He is therefore able to create massive constructs made of snow or ice, massing up to 50,000 kg. These creations can take any shape or form, but must be made of snow and ice. Since he does not also possess the Transmutation Attribute, the General cannot transform objects into snow or ice. With a Duration of 7, anything created by General Winter remains for 1 day; beyond that point, the object disappears or melts.



Officer Prometheus

Damage Absorption

Cost: 8 or 10 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at up to 10 damage converted into Health Points (Level 1) increasing to 100 damage converted into Health Points (Level 10)
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific attack types; when battling specific opponents

A character with this Attribute can absorb up to 10 points of damage received from physical attacks (such as guns, swords, punches, or energy blasts) each Level, and change them into a corresponding number of Health Points before damage is inflicted. The new Health Points are added to the character's current total immediately, which may temporarily raise the total above its normal maximum. Damage that is blocked by the character's Armour or Force Field Attributes cannot be absorbed. For 8 Points/Level, the character's Health Point total can never rise above his or her normal maximum (extra points are lost). For 10 Points/Level, the character's Health Points total can be raised as high as twice their normal maximum value (for a duration of one hour). Damage can both be absorbed and converted (by the Damage Conversion Attribute, see page 39) at the same time.

Damage Absorption does not convert damage from non-physical or complex attacks, including Special Attacks with the following Abilities: Burning, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Mind or Soul Attack, Stun, Tangle.

Example

Prometheus has Damage Absorption (fire/heat attacks) at Level 7. He is able to absorb the first 70 points of damage from any fire or heat-based attack that strikes him. The absorbed damage is immediately added to his Health Points (up to his maximum Health Point value — he has the 8 Points/Level version of the Power). He is unable to absorb any damage above 70 and thus suffers it normally. Therefore, if his Health was reduced to 88 points in a battle and someone hit him with a flame blast for 82 points of damage, Prometheus would absorb 70 points of damage. His Health Points would increase to 120 (his maximum Health Points) and the remaining 38 points of absorbed damage are lost. Since the attack inflicted 82 points of damage, however, he would then suffer the remaining 12 points of damage, therefore reducing his Health Points to 108. Increasing his Health Points was probably not what the villain wanted to do....

Damage Conversion

Cost: 6 or 8 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at gaining 1 Character Point for every 20 points of damage received (Level 1) increasing to gaining 10 Character Points for every 20 points of damage received (Level 10)
Reduction: Partial effectiveness
Restrictions: Apply Character Points to specific Attributes; against specific attack types; when battling specific opponents

A character with this Attribute suffers damage from physical attacks (such as guns, swords, punches, or energy blasts) as normal, but receiving damage grants additional Character Points he or she can assign to Power Attributes temporarily. Points can be accumulated between attacks or combat rounds. Additionally, Character Points can only be assigned to Attributes the character already possesses at Level 1 or higher. Damage can both be converted and absorbed (by the Damage Absorption Attribute, see page 38) at the same time. Damage Conversion does not convert damage from non-physical or complex attacks, including Special Attacks with the following Abilities: Burning, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Mind or Soul Attack, Stun, Tangle. The extra Character Points gained through combat dissipate very shortly after the battle has finished, or before the next dramatic scene (GM's discretion).

For 6 Points/Level, damage that is blocked by the character's Armour Attribute cannot be converted. For 8 Points/Level, damage that is blocked by the character's Armour Attribute can be converted. Damage blocked by the Force Field Attribute can never be converted.

At each Level, the character gains 1 Character Point for every 20 points of damage received from each single attack (round down). Most often, characters use these Points to enhance the following Power Attributes: Armour, Regeneration, Special Attack, and Superstrength. Additionally, characters can also enhance the Extra Attacks, Extra Defenses, Massive Damage (focused option), and Massive Damage (all attacks) Characteristic Attributes. Damage Conversion cannot be used to increase Tough — to increase the character's Health Points see Damage Absorption, page 38.

For example, a character with Level 5 Damage Conversion gains 5 Character Points for every 20 points of damage received. If an enemy blasted the character with a weapon that inflicts 87 points of damage, the character's Health Point total would reduce by 87 points, but he or she would gain 20 temporary Character Points (87 ÷ 20 = 4.35, rounded down to 4; 4 x 5 = 20). If the character possessed Superstrength at a minimum of Level 1, he or she could raise it by 5 Levels immediately (since 20 Character Points ÷ 4 Points/Level = 5 Levels). Alternatively, the character could raise his or her Stats by a total of 10 Stat Values through the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute (since 20 Character Points ÷ 2 Points/Level = 10 Levels).

With GM permission, Damage Conversion may be designed to convert forms of energy into Character Points, rather than converting damage. Examples of energy include: sound, light, radiation, mass, heat, and others. The progression of the Attribute under these conditions must be discussed with the GM.

Example

Anasazi possesses Damage Conversion at Level 5. Whenever he suffers physical damage, he temporarily gains 5 Character Points per 20 points of damage inflicted which he can use to enhance his Immovable or Mass Increase Attributes. For example, if a villain hit Anasazi, inflicting 87 points of damage, Anasazi would suffer the damage normally, but would gain 20 Character Points (87 ÷ 20 = 4.35; rounded down = 4; times 5 due to the Level of the Attribute = 20). He could immediately increase his Immovable Attribute by 20 Levels (Immovable costs 1 Points/Level), increase his Mass Increase by 2 Levels (Mass Increase costs 8 Points/Level; 4 Points remain), or any combination totalling 20 Character Points.

Defense Combat Mastery

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None (uses Combat Value)
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +1 DCV (Level 1) increasing to +10 DCV (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Defense Combat Mastery denotes either an innate "danger instinct," or the character's intimate knowledge of a wide range of defensive combat techniques covering all aspects of armed and unarmed encounters (including Special Attacks and ranged weapons). Individual Defense Combat Skills (page 90) let a character specialize with particular weapons or specific styles, but Defense Combat Mastery allows a character to pick up any weapon (or use none at all) and still proficiently defend. See page 102 of Step 7: Derived Values for more information on the Combat Value.

Divine Relationship

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at re-rolling 1 dice roll (Level 1) increasing to re-rolling 10 dice rolls (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limitation; combat checks; Stat/Skill checks

A character possessing a Divine Relationship may have powerful forces acting as his or her guardian, which can beneficially influence the outcome of important events. Alternatively, the character may be really lucky, have great karma, or can subtly influence his or her surroundings with thought alone. This

relationship is represented through the re-rolling of undesirable dice rolls (this includes undesirable re-rolls as well). The player may choose to use the original roll, or any of the re-rolls, when determining the success of the action. The Level dictates the number of times dice can be re-rolled in a single role-playing session, though the GM can alter this time frame as desired.

Example

Mother Raven has Divine Relationship at Level 2. When Sam, a player using Mother Raven in a Silver Age Sentinels campaign, rolls a failure when Mother Raven is attempting to race after a fleeing villain, she may elect to re-roll the dice. On the second roll, Sam rolls a success but scores a Margin of Success of 3. Since the Margin of Success will be important in determining if Mother Raven has enough time to catch up to and stop the villain, Sam elects to roll again, hoping for a higher Margin of Success. On her next roll, she again rolls a failure. Frustrated at her unlucky rolls, Sam must hope that the Margin of Success of 3 (her best roll) is sufficient for the task.

Duplicate

Cost: 6 or 8 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at duplicates with 10 Character Points (Level 1) increasing to duplicates with 100 Character Points (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only certain Attributes are duplicated; shorter duration

A character with this ability can create one or more independent, self-aware duplicates of him or herself, each of which have a maximum number of Character Points dictated by the Attribute Level. The duplicate is not under the character's control, but will act in a manner consistent with the original character. Multiple duplicates can be in existence at any time, but creating a duplicate requires one non-combat action.

Duplicates only remain in existence for a limited time, usually for a single scene or long enough to complete a single task. Since this Attribute can have tremendous impact on a campaign if used too frequently, the GM should impose restrictions on its use as necessary. The player should consider what consequences, if any, will arise should an enemy kill the duplicate.

There are two different types of Duplicate: Customized (8 Points/Level) and Proportionate (6 Points/Level).

Customized Duplicate

The character can assign the duplicate's Character Points as desired when this Attribute is first acquired, provided the duplicate does not gain any Attributes or Defects the original character does not possess. Additionally, Attributes and Defects cannot be raised to Levels that would exceed the original character's Levels. The GM may waive this restriction if it seems appropriate. Once the Character Points are allocated to the duplicate in a specific pattern during character creation, the distribution cannot be changed; all duplicates ever made will be identical.

Proportionate Duplicate

If the Duplicate Level is not sufficiently high to create a duplicate with the exact same number of Character Points as the original, a less-powerful duplicate is created. In these cases, the reduced Character Points are distributed over the duplicate's Stats, Characteristic and Power Attributes, Skills, and Defects proportionately with the original character. The one exception to this rule involves the Duplicate Attribute; the character may decide that his or her twin does not have the Duplicate Attribute.

Example

A 130 Character Point character has the Duplicate (Proportional) Attribute at Level 5 (30 Points), which allows her to create duplicates with 50 Character Points. This means that any duplicate created would be scaled down to approximately 40% (50÷130=0.385 or about 40%) of the original character's values for all Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Defects (rounding appropriately). Thus, if the original character had 15 Body Stat, 5 Mind Stat, and 10 Soul Stat, the duplicate would have a 6 Body, 2 Mind, and 4 Soul — all 40% of the original's value. Similarly, if the character had the Teleportation Attribute at Level 5, her duplicate would only have it at Level 2 (5 x 40% = 2). In this situation, the twin would also have the Duplicate Attribute at Level 2. If, however, the character decided that her twin would not possess the Duplicate Attribute, any duplicates created would be scaled down to 50%, rather than 40%. This occurs because the 130 Character Points are first reduced by the 30 Points allocated to Duplicate, giving 100 Character Points; a 50 Point twin of a 100 Point original character means a 50% scale down.

Dynamic Powers

Cost: 10, 15, or 20 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Variable
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at weak control approximating Level 1 Attributes (Level 1) increasing to primal control approximating Level 10 Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: One aspect of category
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; use weakens character, specific targets

Dynamic Powers represents extensive control over an element, ideology, natural phenomenon, or sphere of influence. At low Levels, the character is an initiate, and can only effect minor changes in the Power. At high Levels, the character holds mastery over a Realm, and has an intimate understanding of all things relating to the Power. This is a very open-ended Attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations in his or her game. Proper use of Dynamic Powers will not unbalance the game, but rather can provide many opportunities

for character innovation. As an alternative option to Dynamic Powers, see the Power Flux Attribute (page 62).

Minor or small categories cost 10 Points/Level. Examples include: a classical element (water, fire, wind, earth), a limited concept or idea (lust, protection, charm, pride), a minor aspect of nature (temperature, friction, insects, sunlight, clouds, orbits, sea creatures), or a limited sphere of influence (silence, cats, writing, guns, a small locality, nutrition).

Major or large categories cost 15 Points/Level. Examples include: a broad concept or idea (love, communication, travel, strength), a major aspect of nature (weather, magnetism, gravity, electricity, animals), or a broad sphere of influence (cities, computer data, health, truth, manufacturing, fertility, weapons, drugs, shapeshifting).

Primal or universal categories cost 20 Points/Level. Examples include core concepts and primary spheres of influence: Time, War, Death, Life, Earth, Stars, Thought, Magic, Force, Math, Self, Law, Chaos, Creation, Heaven, Hell, Dimensions, Dreams, and others.

If the character makes a successful Stat check (the relevant Stat is determined by the GM), he or she can manipulate aspects of the chosen area of influence (see Chapter 3: Game Mechanics). The extent of control is determined by the Dynamic Powers Attribute Level and any relevant PMVs. Since this is a story-driven Attribute, there are few definitive rules regarding what a character can and cannot do with a particular Attribute Level. For those players and Game Masters who desire a more rigid outline, the recommended guideline is as follows: characters can influence their area with maximum control approximating the abilities listed for other Attributes, with total Levels corresponding to twice the Dynamic Powers Level. No single effect can exceed a Level equal to the Dynamic Powers Level, however. The PMVs available to the character while creating effects is limited by the Dynamic Power PMV Ranks. Under normal circumstances, Dynamic Powers cannot imitate the Transfer Attribute;



additionally, the GM may wish to restrict some Characteristic Attributes such as Organizational Ties, Sidekick, and Wealth.

For example, a character with Level 4 Dynamic Powers (Weather) can initiate effects similar in scope to a total of 8 Levels of other Attributes at once; the maximum single effect is limited to Level 4 abilities, though. This means that the character could activate weather-associated abilities approximating: 8 Level 1 Attributes; or 2 Level 4 Attributes; or 1 Level 4, and 2 Level 2 Attributes; or 1 Level 3, 2 Level 2, and 1 Level 1 Attributes; or any other combination of Levels that adds to 8 Levels total, provided no effect exceeds a Level 4 ability. Likewise, a character with Level 10 Dynamic Powers can initiate effects similar in scope to a total of 20 Levels of other Attributes at once, provided no effect exceeds a Level 10 ability. Each ability must operate within the PMV Ranks assigned to Dynamic Powers.

In addition, any effect that is an attack on another entity (one that is best represented by the Special Attacks Attribute, page 67) also requires a successful Attack check to hit; the target will normally be allowed a Defense check to avoid it. If the controlled area produces something that has a more indirect effect, the target should be allowed to attempt an appropriate Stat Check to resist its influence.

Example

Kreuzritter's magical armour grants him Dynamic Powers (Elemental Control) at Level 5. In a battle against an upstart group of heroes who are hoping to bring the mighty tyrant down, Kreuzritter decides to flex his magical muscles. With Level 5 Dynamic Powers, he is able to envoke up to 10 Levels of Powers with the maximum Level for any individual Power at Level 5. As the heroes rush in, hot for a fight, Kreuzritter commands the elements of air to swirl in a wicked vortex around him, picking up dust and debris and hampering movement — he is attempting to duplicate the effects of Block Power to hinder the heroes efforts to use their Powers against him. He assigns 4 Levels to this Power, thus imposing a -4 penalty on all his opponent's attempts to affect him with Powers and Special Attacks. He also uses the winds to mimic Nullify (Drain; Flight) at Level 5, in an effort to ground his opponents and take away their advantage of mobility. With the last, remaining Level, he generates a Force Field — the swirling debris creates a 20 point Force Field around Kreuzritter, protecting him from attacks. With his defenses set in place, he proceeds to dismantle the young upstarts and show them what true Power really is. As the battle unfolds, Kreuzritter recognizes that the team's fliers are now all disabled so he no longer requires the 5 Levels of Nullify (Drain; Flight). He decides that it is now time to go on the offensive and put these upstarts down for good. He is happy with the winds hindering his foes ability to affect him so he keeps the Block Power in effect, but reduces it to Level 3. He decides to start bashing the puny heroes with Telekinesis (Earth) at Level 4 which will allow him to toss around 1,000 kg of earth and rock — more than enough. With the remaining 3 Levels, he creates a Level 3 Special Attack to cast gouts of magma at the heroes. He uses the Telekinesis to encase the heroes in rock, slowly crushing them and making it easier to bury them in magma. The heroes learn, too late, why Kreuzritter is the most feared villain in the world.

Elasticity

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Power always used in same way
Restrictions: Time limit; naked form only; stretching inflicts pain

The character can stretch or contort his or her limbs and/or body to a superhuman degree. Increased Levels not only provide greater flexibility, but also the control over fine manipulation (such as using a stretched finger to move specific tumbling mechanisms on a key lock). At high Levels, characters can squeeze under doors and through small holes, as well as mimic crude shapes. While stretched, the character receives +1 Unarmed Attack/Defense (Grappling) Skill bonuses for each Level of Elasticity. Extremely malleable characters — who can contort their bodies into a virtually unlimited number of shapes to gain the benefits of other Attributes — should acquire the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 40), rather than Elasticity.

Level 1-3 The character can stretch 1 (L1), 2 (L2), or 3 (L3) body parts up to 5x their regular dimensions.
Level 4-10 The character can stretch his or her entire body up to 5x (L4), 10x (L5), 20x (L6), 50x (L7), 100x (L8), 500x (L9), or 1,000x (L10) its regular dimensions.

Energy Bonus

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +20 Energy Points (Level 1) increasing to +200 Energy Points (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

This Attribute is only available in campaigns where Energy Points are used. Possessing this Attribute increases the Energy Points of the character, allowing him or her to draw on a greater pool of energy reserves in times of need. See page 102 of Step 7: Derived Values for information on Energy Points and their uses.

Enhanced [Stat]

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +1 Stat Value (Level 1) increasing to +10 Stat Value (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Only under certain conditions, time limit, does not apply to all dice rolls

This Attribute is useful when a character should have one or more high Stat Values, but the player wants to indicate that the elevated Stats were gained after a supernatural event occurred. For most instances, assigning Character Points to the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute or to the Stat directly results in the same benefit: a character with a Body of 15 or a Body of 7 with Enhanced [Body] at Level 8 both have a Body of 15. Since Enhanced [Stat] is a Power Attribute, however, it can be subject to the effects of other Attributes such as Mimic Powers (page 55) and Nullify (page 58).

Environmental Influence

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at influence over 1 environment (Level 1) increasing to influence over 10 environments (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Very specific influence effect, only under certain conditions, easy to counteract

The character can initiate minor influence over environmental conditions such as light, darkness, heat, cold, sound, specific weather conditions, etc., as determined by the GM. The control is not sufficient to inflict significant damage on individuals or objects within the Area PMV of influence unless the target is particularly susceptible to damage from that environment (such as delicate plants dying from cold air, or a vampire with a Bane Defect to bright light). For damaging environmental effects, the character should acquire the Special Attack Attribute (page 67) with the Dependent Defect (page 94). For enhanced influence over the environment (such as weather control), see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 40).

Extra Arms

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 1 extra arm (Level 1) increasing to 500 extra arms (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Extra arms are cumbersome; arms only function sometimes; arms are awkwardly placed

Unless indicated otherwise, all characters possess two arms and hands. By assigning this Characteristic Attribute, the character can acquire more. An "arm" is defined loosely as an appendage that can reach out and manipulate objects. A trunk, tentacle, or prehensile tail is an arm; an appendage that simply ends in a gun-barrel, melee weapon, stump, or tool mount is not. Legs with paws or feet are not usually considered to be "arms" unless the character has good manipulation ability when using them (such as the way chimpanzees can use their feet to grasp objects). Extra arms are useful for holding onto several things at once, but do not give extra attacks (for that ability, see Extra Attacks Attribute, below).

Possessing only one arm or no arms is reflected by the Physical Impairment Defect (page 97).

Extra Attacks

Cost: 8 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 extra attack each round (Level 1) increasing to 10 extra attacks each round (Level 10)
Reduction: Less often than each round
Restrictions: Extra attacks must all be similar in nature; only extra melee attacks; only extra ranged attacks

This Attribute reflects the character's ability to use every offensive combat situation to his or her benefit. Each round, the character may make one or more additional offensive or non-combat actions. In addition, unless two or more opponents are very close together, armed or unarmed hand-to-hand attacks must target the same person.

The GM must decide when the character can use his or her extra attacks. The suggested method spreads the actions roughly evenly over the character's Initiative range. For example, if a character had three attacks and rolled an Initiative of 24, he or she would attack on Initiative numbers 24, 16, and 8. If the enemy rolls an Initiative of 35 and has 5 attacks (Extra Attacks Level 4), he or she can attack on Initiative numbers 35, 28, 21, 14, and 7. This option has the advantage that it spreads actions over the entire combat round, but it involves the player paying closer attention to the Initiative numbers. Alternatively, the attacks may be carried out at the same time during the character's single Initiative.

Extra Defenses

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 extra defense each round (Level 1) increasing to 10 extra defenses each round (Level 10)
Reduction: Less often than each round
Restrictions: Extra defenses must all be similar in nature; only extra melee defenses; only extra ranged defenses

This Attribute reflects the character's ability to use every defensive combat situation to his or her benefit. Each round, the character may make one or more additional defensive or non-combat actions. Additionally, penalties for performing more than one defensive action each round (see page 123) only apply after the extra defenses are used. For example, a -4 penalty is applied to the fifth defense for a character with Level 3 Extra Defenses.

Features

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 feature (Level 1) increasing to 10 features (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

The character possesses various secondary abilities that grant useful, but minor, advantages. Features are typically possessed by non-humans and reflect various, minor biological or technological advantages. Examples of racial features include homing instinct, secondary eyelids, longevity, a pouch, feathers, soft fur, moulting ability, scent glands, etc. A wide range of other Attributes covers other more useful features such as gills, wings, fangs, and enhanced senses.

One additional Feature is appearance, representing beauty, cuteness, or good looks. Assigning appearance multiple times indicates heightened levels of extreme beauty.

Example

Lady Starbright had Level 3 Features (Appearance x 3) indicating that she was one of the most beautiful women in the world.

Flight

Cost: 2, 3, or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 kph (Level 1) increasing to 500,000 kph (Level 10)
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; Stat/Skill check required to fly safely

A character with Flight can fly through an atmosphere or in space. The method used to achieve flight can vary greatly: wings, paranormal power, rotors, rockets, anti-gravity, psionic levitation, magic, or some other technique.

Depending on the speed at which the character is moving, opponents may suffer a penalty to hit the character (see Speed Modifiers, page 123).

Flight costs 4 Points/Level if the character can hover and fly at variable speeds, take off and land vertically, or stop in mid-air. This is the most common type of flight possessed by characters.

Flight costs 3 Points/Level if the flyer cannot hover, but instead flies like a normal airplane. Thus, the character needs a smooth surface or running start for landing and take off, and must maintain a minimum speed (at least 1/10 of his or her maximum speed) once airborne to avoid crashing.



Lady Starbright

Flight costs 2 Points/Level if the flyer is either a Skimmer/Hovercraft or a Glider:

Skimmer / Hovercraft

The character is limited to skimming no more than a metre or two off the ground or water. He or she may be riding on a cushion of air, magnetic lines of force, or even travelling along a magical weave.

Glider

The flyer can only become airborne if he or she launches from a high place (like a tree or rooftop) or from a fast-moving vehicle. Additionally, he or she can only gain speed by diving, or gain altitude by riding thermals.

Force Field

Cost: 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at 20 point damage reduction (Level 1) increasing to 200 point damage reduction (Level 10)
Reduction: Lower damage reduction
Restrictions: None (see Limited Disability, below)

A Force Field is an energy field around the character that protects against incoming attacks. Force Fields can represent magical barriers, telekinetic shields, or technological "screens." The Area PMV is essential for the Force Field; Area Level 2 is required to make it a form-fitting Force Field for a character. Additionally, Duration is only required if the character wishes to create a Force Field that remains unattended. In this case, the Duration indicates how long the Force Field will remain in place before vanishing. Force Fields created in this way cannot move — they are static structures.

A typical Force Field is different from Armour, since it can be battered down by a sufficiently powerful attack. A Force Field can be "up" or "down." When down, it does not stop any damage. Unless the Detectable Defect (page 94) is assigned, an up Force Field is invisible. Force Field status must be determined at the start of the character's actions for the round and cannot be changed until his or her turn to act in the next round.

Attack damage is first applied to the Force Field, with any additional penetrating damage applied against Armour (if any). Thus, if a weapon hit successfully penetrates a Force Field, the Armour Attribute can still protect against it. A Force Field can be reduced or even knocked down by a sufficiently powerful attack. If an attack does more damage than the Force Field prevents (even if the rest of the damage is absorbed by Armour), the Force Field temporarily loses one Level of effectiveness. The character can only regain Levels if the field is down and regenerating, unless the Regenerating Ability is assigned. A Force Field recovers one Level every round it is turned off and not in operation ("down"). A Force Field that is knocked down to zero Levels automatically shuts off to regenerate.

A Force Field can be given additional customized Abilities or Disabilities. Each Ability taken reduces the protection provided by the Field by 20 points, but gives it some special capability. Each Disability taken increases the protection of the Field by 20 points but adds some sort of weakness.

Force Field Abilities

Air-Tight

The field prevents the passage of gas molecules. While this is a beneficial defense against toxic gas attacks, a character in the field will eventually deplete all breathable oxygen.

Blocks Incorporeal

The field prevents the passage of astral, ethereal, or otherwise incorporeal characters through it.

Blocks Teleport

A character cannot teleport into or out of the field. This Ability cannot be used with the Shield Only Disability.

Field-Penetrating

The Force Field can be used to interpenetrate other Force Fields while making attacks (or moving through them). If the character's Force Field is in direct contact with an enemy Force Field, and can stop more damage than the foe's, the enemy's field offers no protection against the character's attack, but it is still up. In this case, the character may actually move through the neutralized field.

Offensive

The field delivers a powerful electric or energy shock to anyone who touches it. The damage equal 10 points for every 20 points of damage that the Force Field currently stops. Consequently, the damage delivered by an Offensive Force Field decreases as the Field becomes damaged and is knocked down in levels of effectiveness.

Regenerating

If the character uses one non-combat action to regenerate the Force Field, it regains one lost Level of effectiveness. A character with the Extra Attacks Attribute (page 43) can regenerate multiples Levels each round.

Force Field Disabilities

Both Directions

The Force Field blocks attacks moving in any direction, both inwards and outwards, thereby virtually preventing the user from attacking when the Force Field is up. This means that when the Force Field is active and the user makes an attack, the Force Field will affect their attack as it would an outside attacker's (reducing the damage inflicted and going down in Level if its protection value is exceeded). This Disability cannot be used with the Shield Only Disability.

Full Impact

Whenever the character is hit with an impacting physical attack, he or she can feel the force of the attack though he or she may not receive any damage. Consequently, the character is affected by the attack's full Knockback value (see page 128), before the damage is reduced by the Force Field.

Internal

The field is only usable inside a specific building or other structure. This can be used to represent a Force Field that protects a vital part of a building's interior such as the power plant or



Red Phoenix

dungeon cells, or a character who draws personal Force Field energy from some sort of power source inside his or her headquarters.

Limited

The field has a major or minor limitation. An example of a minor limitation would be a Force Field that is effective against ranged attacks but not melee or one that offers full-strength frontal and rear protection but only half-strength protection from above. An example of a major limitation would be a Force Field that prevents the character from making any attacks during operation, one that is unstable in certain types of environments (such as sub-zero temperatures or near water), or one that only works against a very specific type of weapon (such as lasers). A minor limitation counts as one Disability, a major limitation as two Disabilities.

Shield Only

This option is only available for Force Fields with Area PMV of Level 1 or 2. The Field does not entirely surround the character's body. Instead, it is a shield that the user must deliberately interpose in front of an attack using a Block Defense (see page 124). The character must also possess the Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks) Attribute to use the force shield in a Block Defense against ranged attacks. If the character successfully defends, the Force Shield can protect against damage associated with the Attribute Level. This Disability cannot be used with the Block Teleport Ability or Both Directions Disability. It counts as three Disabilities.

Static

The character cannot move when generating the field. He or she may still attack or otherwise act, but must stay in one place (or continue to drift if floating through space, continue to fall if falling, etc.).

Example

Red Phoenix's magical armour not only provides inherent protection as armour, but also generates a magical Force Field that further protects her from harm. Her Force Field provides 40 points of protection from attacks as well as blocking incorporeal attacks. If an attack inflicts less that 40 points of damage upon Red Phoenix, the Force Field protects her from all damage. If an attack inflicts more than 40 points of damage, it is reduced by 40 due to the protection the Force Field provides. The remaining damage hits Red Phoenix (though her Armour will further reduce the damage). When an attack gets past her Force Field, its protective ability is reduced by 20 points. Thus, when an attack inflicting more than 40 points of damage hits her, the Force Field drops to 20 points of protection against subsequent attacks. Therefore, an attack now only needs to inflict over 20 points of damage to affect her and further drop the effectiveness of the Force Field by 20 (dropping it to zero). To "recharge" the Force Field, Red Phoenix must "turn it off" for 1 round per 20 points of protection recovered.

Gadgeteer

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 2x normal building rate (Level 1) increasing to 1,000x normal building rate (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific types of machines; requires expensive/consumable equipment

The character has an innate knack for creating, modifying, and working with complex machines. Unlike someone who is merely well trained in a particular technical skill, a Gadgeteer is a natural and is able to flip through a tech manual for an advanced technology in 30 seconds and figure out a way to repair the machine in an hour or so. Most Gadgeteers have high Levels in Electronics and Mechanical Skills as well.

A character with this Attribute can also build new and modify existing Gadgets at an astonishing rate, provided he or she has appropriate parts and facilities. In game terms, this means he or she can modify existing Gadgets or technology-based Items of Power by exchanging Attributes and Defects, as long as the overall Point total is unchanged. A Gadgeteer can also build Gadgets and Items of Power, but their creation requires the character to allocate the appropriate number of Character Points.

Alternatively, the GM may describe this Attribute as "Magical Gadgeteer," that allows a character to modify magical Items of Power by exchanging Attributes and Defects.

Example

The Artificer is a master Gadgeteer, possessing the Attribute at Level 8. He is thus able to manufacture, repair, or alter machinery 250 times faster than a normal person. Therefore, if the Artificer is building a vehicle that the GM determines would take an average person 12 months (approximately 360 days) to build, the Artificer is able to complete construction in a mere one-and-a-half days.

Gadgets

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 major Gadget and 4 minor Gadgets (Level 1) increasing to 10 major Gadgets and 40 minor Gadgets (Level 10)
Reduction: Only major or minor Gadgets
Restrictions: Limited functioning; poor workmanship; consumable

The Gadgets Attribute represents a character's access to useful equipment. Characters do not need to spend Character Points for items that are legal, inexpensive, and mundane in the campaign setting (such as clothing, a backpack, a knife, or consumer goods), unless taken in quantity (GM's option). For example, "a complete tool box" would be a single minor Gadget; a single wrench is mundane. GMs may ask players to allot Points to this Attribute, however, if their characters will begin the game with numerous pieces of equipment to which the average person might not have easy access such as weapons, body armour, or specialized professional equipment.

Gadgets cannot include magic items, secret prototypes, or equipment that is significantly more technologically advanced than what is standard in the setting (instead, see Item of Power Attribute, page 52). It can include common civilian vehicles appropriate to the setting (for example, a car, truck, light airplane, or motorbike in the present day). Less common or more expensive vehicles should count as several items of gear. The GM always has the final say on whether or not an item is available to the characters. Some examples of Gadgets can be found in Chapter 4; the GM can create the statistics of other items. Costumes for superhumans that are merely designed to withstand the effects of the character's Attributes and Defects (such as an outfit that stretches with a character possessing the Elasticity Attribute) are simply mundane Gadgets without Character Point cost. At the Game Master's discretion, such a costume may fill one minor or major Gadget slot, however.

Although characters may have items that are owned by the organizations to which they belong, they still must acquire these items as Gadgets if they will make regular use of them (though the Conditional Ownership Defect may apply, see page 93). Thus, a police officer would use Gadgets for a pistol, police car, or handcuffs, although these items are property of the police department. This rule is intended mainly for play balance and, naturally, the GM has final say on this issue.

Each Level in this Attribute permits the character to take one major and four minor Gadgets. Alternatively, the character can exchange one major Gadget with an extra four minor Gadgets (or vice-versa). Use the guidelines below to differentiate between major and minor Gadgets:

Minor

The item is somewhat hard to get, or rather expensive. It is something available in a shop or store or from a skilled craftsman, but it costs as much as an average person's weekly or monthly wage. Alternatively, the item can be less expensive but needs a license or black market contact to acquire. Non-standard items that modify or improve other items of gear, but are not functional by themselves (for example, a scope for a rifle, silencer for a pistol, or a supercharged engine for an automobile) are also minor Gadgets; for more information, see page 143 and 149.

Modern examples of minor Gadgets include: weapon and vehicle modifications, handguns, premium medical kits, night vision goggles, full camping gear, burglary tools, expensive tool kits, and personal computers. Ancient or medieval examples include quality weapons, light-weight armour (such as leather or a light mail shirt), lock picks, poisons, or a mule. Gadgets must be appropriate to the world setting — a pistol is a minor Gadget in a modern-day or future setting, but an Item of Power in a medieval superhero game!

Major

The gear is usually illegal for civilians, but it may be issued to an elite law enforcement agency, an average soldier, licensed superhero, or a government spy. Modern-day examples of major Gadgets include machine guns, tactical armour, and grenade launchers. Major gear can also include quite expensive but commercially available equipment such as a workshop, car, or motorbike. Very expensive items (such as an airplane, big rig truck, science lab, or medical facility) counts as two or more items (GM's discretion). Ancient or medieval examples of major Gadgets include a full suit of plate armour, a cavalry horse, a smith's forge, an alchemist's lab, or a wagon and team of draft animals.

Grow

Cost: 10 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: Associated Attributes not gained, or gained more slowly
Restrictions: Time limit on growth; naked form only, growth inflicts pain

This Attribute reflects the ability to increase the stature and mass of the character, giving him or her access to several other Attributes and effects (see chart). In addition to increased height and mass, the character gains a corresponding Level of the Armour, Immovable, and Superstrength Attributes. Also, the character's running speed, weapon range, and damage inflicted by physical attacks and Special Attacks (physical, not energy-based) increase as the character grows. The damage bonus of +5 per Grow Level is in addition to those bonuses gained by Superstrength for muscle-powered weapons (see Superstrength, page 75). Finally, opponents attacking the character gain a bonus to their Attack checks equal to the character's current Grow Level size.

Table 2-7: Grow

Current Grow Level	Height/Speed Range Multiplier	Mass Multiplier	Armour/Immovable/Superstrength Level	Damage Bonus	Enemy's Attack Bonus
1	2	10	1	+5	+1
2	3	30	2	+10	+2
3	4	60	3	+15	+3
4	5	100	4	+20	+4
5	6	200	5	+25	+5
6	7	400	6	+30	+6
7	10	1,000	7	+35	+7
8	20	10,000	8	+40	+8
9	40	50,000	9	+45	+9
10	80	500,000	10	+50	+10
Each Extra Level	x2	x10	+1	+5	+1

Example

General Winter possesses Grow at Level 8. Since he stands at an immense 10' tall normally, when he grows he can increase his height to a maximum of 200' (about 60 metres; 10' x 20). His running speed similarly increases by a factor of 20. Thus, while at normal size, his running speed is 56 metres per round (his Body: Speed Stat of 9 times 6 metres per round), it increases to 1,120 metres per round at his maximum height. His mass increases from a hefty 1,300 kg to an overwhelming 13,000 tonnes which easily explains him gaining Immovable at Level 8. He gains both Superstrength and Armour at Level 8 as well. In addition to the damage increase of +80 from Superstrength, General Winter's attacks inflict an additional 40 points of damage at full size. Enemies attacking him, however, have a +8 bonus on their Attack checks because of his size. General Winter truly is a moving mountain.

Healing

Cost: 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at 20 restored Health Points (Level 1) increasing to 200 restored Health Points (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Health Points restored
Restrictions: Specific targets; specific wound types; character suffers damage when Healing others

This Attribute allows a character to heal a target's injuries (including him or herself; for continuous healing, see the Regeneration Attribute, page 64). At higher Healing Levels, the character can also revive someone who is "clinically" dead but not actually brain-dead (Level 3+), repair massive trauma such as lost limbs or organs (Level 5+), or restore a character who was cut in two (Level 7+). No healer can repair someone who was blown to bits, disintegrated, or dead for more than a few minutes, however.

The Attribute Level dictates the maximum number of Health Points that healers can restore to a particular target in a single day. This cannot be exceeded, even if multiple healers work on a subject; the combined Health Points restored cannot exceed the maximum Health Points that the character with the highest Level of Healing could restore. The subject must have at least a full day's rest before he or she can benefit from any additional healing.

Heightened Awareness

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +2 Check Value bonus (Level 1) increasing to +20 Check Value bonus (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; situations detected by only one sense; specific situations

The character possesses a high degree of situational awareness. He or she is usually very alert and receives a Check Value bonus to notice nearby hidden things, such as concealed objects, ambushes, or anything else related to sensory awareness. The bonuses of Heightened Awareness are cumulative with those of Heightened Senses (page 49).

Heightened Senses

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 sense or technique (Level 1) increasing to 10 senses or techniques (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; weakened technique; adverse effects upon detection

A character with Heightened Senses has one or more senses that have been sharpened to a superhuman level of acuity. It can represent either the preternatural sharpening of a specific sense honed by special training (such as a blind person's trained sense of touch) or the enhanced senses of a paranormal or technologically augmented character. Additionally, several Levels of Heightened Senses reflect the capabilities of sensors built into spaceships and other commercial or military vehicles. For each Level of the Heightened Senses Attribute, the character will either gain one enhanced sense (Type I), one sense technique (Type II), or a combination of Type I and Type II senses. The character must make a successful Body Stat check to detect and pinpoint a specific target within a large area (for example, to listen to a specific conversation thought the background noise of the city).

Type I

One of the character's five senses — hearing, smell, vision, taste, or touch — is enhanced, and can operate over an area of several city blocks. The character may take the same sense twice, which doubles the effect and extends the area of detection. A character using a Heightened Sense has a +4 bonus (+8 if the sense was heightened twice) on Stat checks that relate to using that sense to perceive things that someone with human-level senses might conceivably notice.

Type II

The character has one Heightened Sense technique, which extends beyond human capabilities. Examples of techniques include: electric current detection; infravision; magnetic field detection; microscopic vision; radar sense; radio reception; sonar detection; ultrasonic hearing; ultravision; vibration detection; X-ray vision. Most techniques only work at short range, often requiring line of sight.

The Heightened Awareness Attribute (page 48) allows for a lower Level of enhancement for all of a character's senses.

Henchmen

Cost: 1 or 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 1 henchman (Level 1) increasing to 500 henchmen (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer henchmen available
Restrictions: Limited to specific type of henchmen; henchmen consume the character's resources; henchmen have further limited Stats/Attributes/Defects/Skills

The Henchmen Attribute represents the extent of a character's loyal and dedicated human resources. Henchmen — sometimes known as groupies, stooges, toadies, or flunkies — are always eager to carry out the character's commands, and ask for very little in return. They always aim to please, even at their own expense.

For 1 Point/Level, the Henchmen are not warriors; they may get in the way of an enemy, or fight in self-defense, but will not attack. For 2 Points/Level, the Henchmen will take up arms at the request of their master. For specific talented and loyal battle-ready followers, see the Sidekick Attribute (page 66). Mercenaries who the character hires for specific tasks are not Henchmen, since they have an agenda and expect compensation.

Individual Henchmen are NPCs. All of the character's Henchmen normally have identical Stats and Attributes, although Skills may vary. A character may have followers with varied Stats or Attributes, but each one counts as two Henchmen. Each Henchman should be built on 30 Character Points (plus any Defects) and zero Skill Points. The 1 Point/Level Henchmen should not possess the Attack Combat Mastery, Massive Damage, or Special Attack Attributes, nor should they have Combat Skills. Henchmen are not usually superpowered characters, either; players should use the Sidekick Attribute if they wish to create exotic companions for their characters.

Highly Skilled

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +10 Skill Points (Level 1) increasing to +100 Skill Points (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

A character with this Attribute is more experienced or better trained than an ordinary person, and as a result has more **Skill Points** (see page 82) than an average adult. Extending this Attribute beyond Level 10 provides 10 additional Skill Points per Level (for example, Level 15 would provide a total of 150 Skill Points). Acquiring several Levels of the Highly Skilled Attribute is the ideal method for creating a versatile character who may lack superhuman Powers.

Hyperflight

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 1x the speed of light (Level 1) increasing to 1 billion times the speed of light (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Restricted area of flight; character may suffer damage during flight; unpredictable relativistic time effects (GM's control)

This Attribute is intended for use in star-spanning campaigns, involving travel between solar systems or galaxies. A character with Hyperflight can fly in the vacuum of space (not in an atmosphere) between planets, stars, asteroids, solar systems, and galaxies, at speeds equal to or exceeding the speed of light. The player can determine whether this Power represents warp technology, jump point formation, or the breaking of known physical laws. The Flight Attribute (page 44) is required to escape from the atmosphere and gravity of a planet similar to Earth. Without Flight, the character can only achieve Hyperflight speeds by taking off when already in space.


Mother Raven

Illusion

Cost: 1-4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area (Level 1) increasing to 100,000 km radius area (Level 10)
Reduction: Illusion always the same
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; illusions are flawed in some way; usage inflicts pain

The character can create mental Illusions that fool one or more senses. An Illusion appears to be real to the targeted observers but is not really there; it has no physical substance at all, and characters who are not the target of the Illusion are unaffected. Comic book characters that can create Illusions are often sorcerers, demons, or people with psionic abilities. See the

Projection Attribute (page 63) for the ability to create real images that anyone can detect, rather than mental illusions that target specific people.

An Illusion may be of a particular object or entity, or of a complete scene (such as a furnished room or crowd). It may also be created over an existing person, scene, or object to make it appear different than it really is. An Illusion that is untended is normally static, either remaining in one place or (if created over something) moving as the underlying object or entity moves. To give an Illusion the semblance of independent activity (such as an illusionary person or crowd that moves and speaks) the character must actively concentrate on manipulating the Illusion, and perform no other actions. The maximum amount of time an Illusion will remain in existence is dictated by the Duration PMV.

For 1 Point/Level the character can create Illusions that deceive one sense, usually sight (sense must be determined during character creation). For 2 Points/Level the Illusions can deceive two senses, usually sight and hearing. For 3 Points/Level they can deceive three senses, usually sight, hearing, and smell. For 4 Points/Level they can deceive all senses. No matter how realistic the Illusions, however, they can never cause physical sensations intense enough to inflict damage. An illusionary fire may feel hot, and a character may believe that he or she is burning, but the fire cannot actually deliver damage. To create Illusions capable of injuring targets, the character should possess a Special Attacks Attribute (page 67) which is tied to the Illusion Attribute through the Dependent Defect (page 94).

A character can normally maintain only a single Illusion at a time. The ability to maintain multiple Illusions at once costs the character an extra 1 Point for every distinct Illusion the character can sustain simultaneously after the first. Thus, "Illusion Level 3 (sight only, four Illusions)" would cost six Points: three Points for Level 3 (one sense) and three more Points for being able to sustain four Illusions at a time. A group of objects or entities within the Area PMV, such as a furnished room, a swarm of insects, or a horde of charging warriors, counts as a single Illusion rather than several. If a character is already sustaining his or her maximum number of Illusions and wishes to create another one, an existing Illusion must first be dispelled.

An Illusion may have two types of areas: the Area PMV, and the area determined by the Attribute Level. The Area PMV reflects the maximum area in which the Illusion may be created, while the Level-related area dictates the actual size of the Illusionary image. Thus, an Area PMV of Rank 6 (10 km) with Attribute Level 3 (10 metres) means that any image up to 10 metres in radius (such as a school bus) can be created, and moved around within a location that has a 10 km radius (such as a city's downtown core).

In order for the character to create a convincing Illusion of something complex, the GM may require a Mind Stat check. The GM can add modifiers depending on how familiar or unfamiliar the character is with the scene that is being simulated. The GM may also give the character a +1 bonus for every Level he or she has in excess of the minimum Level needed to create an Illusion. For example, if a character with Illusion Level 5 decides to create an image with an area radius of one metre (a Level 2 effect), a +3 Check Value bonus applies (Level 5 - Level 2 = +3). If the check fails, the character's Illusion has some subtle flaw in it; the character creating it may not be aware of this until someone else points it out, however.

Whether or not an observer recognizes an Illusion for what it actually is depends on the circumstances and should be adjudicated by the GM. For example, if a character creates a visual-only Illusion of a tiger, it may easily fool everyone if it is a few hundred metres away, but if it comes close to the characters, the fact that it is not making any sounds will be obvious. Its lack of a tiger's scent will probably only be a clue to someone who deliberately attempts to detect an odour, or who has Heightened Senses (Smell). The audio-only Illusion of a tiger roaring from behind a closed door, however, should fool just about anyone ... at least until they open the door and see that there is nothing actually there. If appropriate, the GM can require Body or Mind checks to "see through" an Illusion; if successful, the Illusion disappears.

Example

Mother Raven has Illusion at Level 4 (4 Points/Level), with Area 5, Duration 4, and Targets 4. She is therefore able to create an illusion that fools all of a target's senses within the minds of up to 50 people. The illusion can encompass a maximum area of 100 metres radius (dictated by the Level of the Power) and the targets must all be within 1 km of each other (dictate by the Power's Area PMV). Each illusion created can last for up to 10 minutes before it fades from the targets' minds.

Immovable

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 20 metre Knockback reduction (Level 1) increasing to 200 metre Knockback reduction (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific opponents; against one type of attack

Characters with this Attribute absorb physical impacts better than the average person, reducing the distance by which they are knocked back from impact attacks and forceful blows. If a Special Attack's or melee attack's Knockback distance is reduced to zero or below, the target has successfully absorbed the impact of the entire attack (but the attack still inflicts damage). For more information on Knockback, see page 128 (or page 71 for the Special Attack Knockback Ability).

Example

Sentinel possesses the Immovable Attribute at Level 3. This means that his Knockback distance is reduced by 60 metres. If Iron Duke landed a crushing blow, inflicting 100 points of damage (and thus 100 metres of knockback) Sentinel would only be knocked back 40 metres (less his Body Stat).

Invisibility

Cost: 2 or 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: Area, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at invisibility to 1 sense or technique (Level 1) increasing to invisibility to 10 senses or techniques (Level 10)
Reduction: Partial effectivenss
Restrictions: Time limit; invisible to certain types of characters; naked form only

This Attribute, at 3 Points/Level, will completely hide the character from one or more senses or detection methods. The character may possess a supernatural concealment ability or a technological cloaking device, or have a psychic or magical talent that causes observers to overlook him or her. Alternatively, Invisibility costs 2 Points/Level for a character who is only partially obscured. Opponents attempting to pinpoint/identify a partially invisible character suffer a -4 detection Check Value penalty, which is cumulative with modifiers for Heightened Awareness (page 48) and Heightened Senses (page 49).

For each Invisibility Level, the player selects one sense or technique to which the character is "invisible." Senses include the human range for sight, hearing, taste, touch, or smell. Detection techniques include: astral; ethereal; infrared; mental; radar; radiation; sonar; spiritual; ultraviolet; vibration.

While the character may not be detected using specific methods, indirect evidence can still reveal the character's presence. For example, a character who is invisible to sight will still leave footprints in muddy ground. Similarly, a vase that is knocked from a table by a character who is invisible to sound will still make noise as it smashes on the floor.

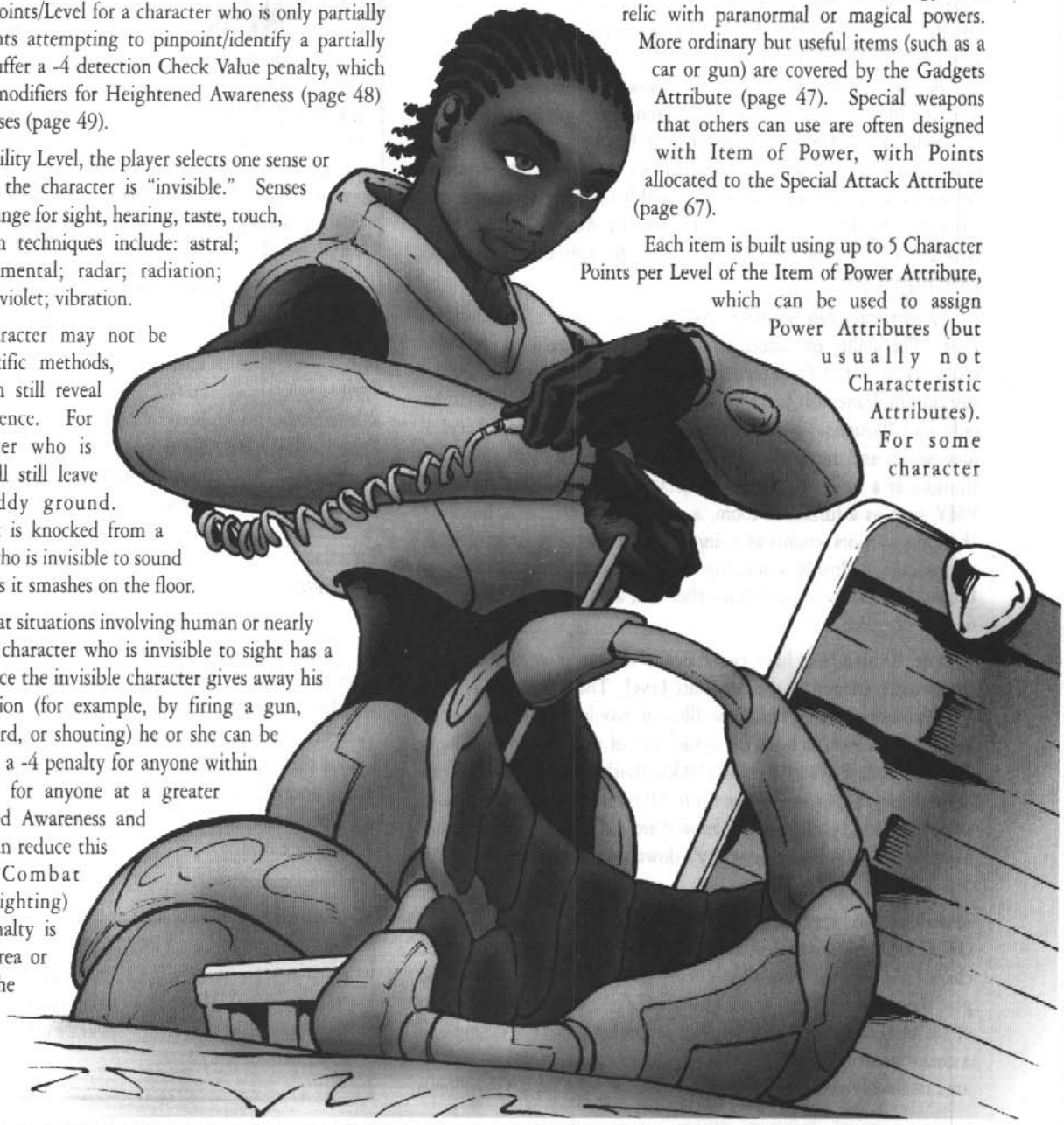
In normal combat situations involving human or nearly human opponents, a character who is invisible to sight has a great advantage. Once the invisible character gives away his or her general position (for example, by firing a gun, attacking with a sword, or shouting) he or she can be attacked, but there is a -4 penalty for anyone within melee range and -8 for anyone at a greater distance. Heightened Awareness and Heightened Senses can reduce this penalty, as can Combat Technique (Blind Fighting) (page 34). This penalty is halved if using an Area or Spreading attack on the invisible character.

Item of Power

Cost: 3 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at an item built using 5 Character Points (Level 1) increasing to an item built using 50 Character Points (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; limited functioning; item's Powers are only partially conferred

This Attribute describes any exotic, usually portable item that directly enhances a character in some way (perhaps by conferring Attributes), or one that serves as a useful tool or weapon. An Item of Power represents advanced technology or a relic with paranormal or magical powers. More ordinary but useful items (such as a car or gun) are covered by the Gadgets Attribute (page 47). Special weapons that others can use are often designed with Item of Power, with Points allocated to the Special Attack Attribute (page 67).

Each item is built using up to 5 Character Points per Level of the Item of Power Attribute, which can be used to assign Power Attributes (but usually not Characteristic Attributes). For some character



Rain Killer dons her armour

concepts, Items of Power above Level 10 are not unreasonable. Assigning Defects to the item earns Bonus Points, which are used to acquire additional Attributes for the item. Defects that cannot usually be assigned include: Conditional Ownership, Famous, Ism, Marked, Nemesis, Owned, Red Tape, Significant Other, Skeleton in the Closet, and Wanted. Players selecting this Attribute must have a discussion with the GM to determine what abilities the Item of Power possesses and how it works. The player, with GM approval, may also create specific abilities for Items of Power using the Unique Attribute (page 80). An Item of Power may be combined with a mundane, minor, or major Gadget (such as a car that can fly, or a sword that can teleport people).

The item costs 4 Points/Level if it is difficult for the character to misplace or for an enemy to steal/knock away, or it is almost always with the character. Examples include jewellery, frequently worn clothing, or equipment the character carries with them always. The item costs 3 Points/Level if it is easier for the character to misplace or for an enemy to steal/knock away, or it is often distant from the character. Examples include thrown weapons, armour that is stored when not in use, and vehicles or equipment that stay at the character's home until needed.

Additionally, the total Point cost (not cost per Level) for the Item is increased by 1 if it can only be used by a small subset of individuals (Restricted Use). For example: only characters with a superhuman Body Stat, only magicians, only members of a specific native tribe, or only gods. The total Point cost is increased by 2 if the Item can only be used by the character (Personal Use); this restriction cannot be reconfigured by someone with the Gadgeteer Attribute.

Items that cannot be lost or stolen, such as objects that are implanted in or fused to the character's body, are not Items of Power. In these cases, the items are considered part of the character and thus the player should use Character Points to acquire the relevant Attributes directly. If a character requires a specific object, or group of objects, to act as a focus when using one or more of his or her innate Attributes, Item of Power does not apply; see the Special Requirement Defect (page 99).

Example

Rain Killer possesses a suit of powerful, technological armour. It is a Level 14 Item of Power. Since it is exceptionally difficult to remove the armour from Gillian in combat and it is effectively always with her (she carries it in an attaché casee with her at all times), it costs 4 Points/Level. Additionally, since it can only be used by those for whom it is configured, but can be reconfigured with effort and skill, it has a +1 Point Cost modifier for a total Point Cost of 57 Character Points. The Item of Power is built using 70 Character Points. With those Points, she selects Armour at Level 2 (6 Points), Flight Level 4 (16 points) with the Detectable Defect (1 BP) and a Restriction (30 minutes of flight time before the fuel cell needs refueling; 2 BP), a Level 7 Force Field (Area 3, 31 Points) with Detectable (1 BP) and a Restriction (Unstable under water and in extreme cold; 2 BP), Power Flux at Level 1 (Duration 10, 15 Points), and Level 2 Superstrength (8 Points).

Jumping

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 5 times normal distance (Level 1) increasing to 100,000 times normal distance (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; need running start; damage inflicted upon landing

With this Attribute, the character can jump great distances (and land without injury) but cannot actually fly. Jumping does not enable a character to exceed the character's normal maximum running speed (or swimming speed for aquatic characters capable of leaping). Consequently, unless the character also has the appropriate Level of the Speed Attribute (page 75), long-distance jumps may require several round, minutes, or hours to complete. For example, a character with a Body Stat of 10 can sprint approximately 60 metres/round (see page 121). If the character jumps a distance of 120 metres, he or she will be airborne for two rounds rather than finishing the jump in just one (120÷60=2). The advantage to jumping, rather than running, however, is the character can ignore terrain and is not fatigued as the character would be if he or she had to run the same distance. See Jumping (page 121) in Chapter 3 for additional jumping rules.

Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: "Can Pass Through" entry at lower Level
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, naked form only

This Attribute reflects the ability to decrease the mass — and thus density — of the character.

Each Level reduces a character's density so much that he or she can pass through certain types of objects (including weapons) as though insubstantial. If a specific substance is not listed in the chart below, the GM should use the entry that it most closely resembles. The density of water, and thus the human body, for example, falls between Level 4 (Wood) and Level 6 (Concrete/Earth); consequently, a punch from an enemy would harmlessly pass through a character

Table 2-8: Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)

Attribute Level	New Mass	Can Pass Through	Knockback Multiplier
2	1 kg	Paper/Cloth	4
4	1 g	Wood	8
6	1 mg	Concrete/Earth	12
8	1 µg	Steel/Lead	16
10	1 ng	Energy	20

with Level 6 Mass Decrease. Characters with Level 10 Mass Decrease are effectively incorporeal and can pass through virtually anything, including most forms of energy.

Additionally, a character with decreased density will suffer additional Knockback should he or she be struck in an attack. The Knockback multiplier is equal to double the Level of the Mass Decrease.

Though only five Attribute Levels are described, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Mass Increase

Cost: 8 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: Associated Attributes not gained, or gained more slowly
Restrictions: Under certain conditions, time limit, naked form only

This Attribute reflects the ability to increase the mass — and thus density — of the character.

In addition to increased mass, the character gains a corresponding Level of the Armour, Immovable, and Superstrength Attributes. The chart entry indicates two columns (realistic and perceived) of substances that have a similar density to a character with increased mass. The realistic column matches the character's density (also know as specific gravity) with a close counterpart in the natural world. The perceived column matches the character's density with a substance that is commonly believed in comic books to have a corresponding strength. For example, the gemstone, diamond, has an actual density close to four times that of the human body (3.3 to 3.7, to be specific). Because it is one of the strongest substances on Earth, however, it is also perceived as one of the densest. GMs and players may use either column when determining density/strength values in their games.

Table 2-9: Mass Increase

Attribute Level	Mass Multiplier	Similar Density (Realistic)	Similar Density (Perceived)	Armour Immovable Superstrength Level
1	2	Brick/Concrete/Rock	Hardwood	1
2	4	Gemstones	Aluminium	2
3	6	Iron	Concrete	3
4	8	Steel	Granite	4
5	10	Copper	Lead	5
6	12	Lead	Iron	6
7	14	Mercury	Steel	7
8	16	Uranium	Titanium	8
9	18	Gold	Diamond	9
10	20	Platinum	Adamantine	10

Massive Damage

Cost: 2 or 5 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +10 damage (Level 1) increasing to +100 damage (Level 10)
Reduction: Less damage delivered
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific opponents; one attack type is excluded

A character with the Massive Damage Attribute knows precisely how and where to hit any opponent in order to inflict incredible amounts of damage.

For 2 Points/Level, additional damage is only inflicted when the character uses one specific weapon type, Special Attack (see page 67), or method of attack; this attack is defined during character creation. For example, it might represent a special talent with a weapon (such as guns, blades, blunt weapons), knowledge of a particular martial arts technique, or ability with a **specific Special Attack**.

For 5 Points/Level, this knowledge can be applied to all forms of physical combat including armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons, as well as Special Attacks such as energy blasts, magical spells that inflict damage, or vehicle weapons.

Naturally, the character's attack must be successful to inflict any damage. Physical strength is not the key to delivering massive damage in an attack; the ability to sense a weakness is far more important. The capacity of Massive Damage to augment any kind of attack makes it a very useful Attribute for a combat-oriented character. For more information on physical combat and damage, see page 124.

Metamorphosis

Cost: 5 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at adding 1 Character Point or adding/removing 3 Bonus Points (Level 1) increasing to adding 10 Character Points or adding/removing 30 Bonus Points (Level 10)
Reduction: Change fewer Character Points and/or Bonus Points
Restrictions: Specific targets; limitations on Attributes/Defects that can be changed; limited to several distinct changes

The Metamorphosis Attribute allows a character to transform others into alternate forms by adding Attributes to, or adding/removing Defects from, the target character. The maximum duration of this change is dictated by the Duration PMV. Additionally, this Attribute requires a Targets PMV at Rank 1 minimum. If the target character successfully makes a Body or Soul Stat check (whichever is higher), the Metamorphosis attempt does not work. The GM may rule that Metamorphosis automatically fails

if the subject's new form could not survive in the present environment. Consequently, a character could turn an enemy into a goldfish, but the attempt would only work if the target was currently in water. This prevents this ability from being used as a quick way to instantly kill an opponent. Again, GMs may waive this restriction where appropriate (such as for a villain in a supernatural horror campaign). In order to transform him or herself, the character needs the Alternate Form Attribute (page 31).

For each Level of Metamorphosis, the character can assign 1 Character Point to a target's Attributes (or PMV Rank). This can either raise the target's current Attribute Level, or result in the target gaining a new Power. Alternatively, for each Level the character can add 3 Defect Bonus Points to, or remove 3 Defect Bonus Points from, a target. To negare Attributes, see the Nullify Attribute (page 58). Cosmetic changes that confer no additional abilities on the target, but do not fall under the Marked Defect, are considered a 1 Bonus Point change total (for all changes). This includes: change of sex, 50% apparent age increase or decrease, colour changes (eye, skin, or hair), and minor physical changes (shape of ears, facial features, or bodily proportions).

Unless the GM indicates otherwise, Character Points gained through Metamorphosis can only be used to add Levels to the following Attributes: Adaptation, Armour, Elasticity, Extra Arms, Features, Flight, Heightened Senses, Jumping, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Mass Increase, Natural Weapons, Regeneration, Special Defense, Special Movement, Speed, Superstrength, Tunnelling, and Water Speed. Additionally, only the following Defects can be changed: Awkward Size, Diminutive, Ism, Less Capable, Marked, Not So Tough, Physical Impairment, Sensory Impairment, and Unappealing. Metamorphosis is not intended for transforming people into stone or other forms where they would be effectively immobilized. In order to do that, use the Special Attack Attribute (page 67) with the Incapacitating Ability (page 70).

Mimic Powers

Cost: 7 or 10 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Duration, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at Level 1 Power Attributes (Level 1) increasing to Level 10 Power Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Trade Attribute with target; specific targets; limitation on Attributes/Defects that can be mimicked

Upon a successful Stat check, the character can temporarily mimic any Power Attribute (not Characteristic Attribute), Stat, or Skill Level of any single target character within the Range PMV distance. The Mimic Powers Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute or Skill Level that can be mimicked. Stats Values (2 through 20) can be imitated when Mimic Powers reaches Level 5 or higher. The Level of a mimicked Attribute/Stat/Skill only replaces the character's corresponding Level (if applicable) if it is higher; the character's Attribute/Stat/Skill Level cannot decrease through Mimic unless a specific Restriction is assigned. The character gains the benefits of a mimicked Power as long as indicated by the Duration PMV; it is recommended that GMs not allow Duration past Level 6 for Mimic Powers.

For 7 Points/Level the character can only mimic one Attribute/Stat/Skill at any single time. For 10 Points/Level, the character can mimic all Attributes/Stats/Skills simultaneously at the appropriate Levels (as indicated above), from one character or many. To create a character that steals a target's Powers for his or her own use, assign both the Mimic and Nullify (page 58) Attributes, linked through the Dependent Defect (page 94).

Example

Herr Cryptic, the former deceptively powerful WWII villain, possessed the unique ability to mimic the Powers of anyone who died in his vicinity. He possessed Mimic at Level 10, allowing him to Mimic all but the most potent Powers. The Power also had the Reduction Defect of Target Must be Recently Deceased, otherwise he could not Mimic a character's Powers. Normally, Herr Cryptic would also have been capable of Mimicking Skill Levels of his targets, gaining their knowledge as well as their Powers. Additionally, with Mimic above Level 5, Herr Cryptic should have been able to Mimic Stat Levels. He, however, had a further Reduction preventing him from copying Skills and Stats (though not the Enhanced Stat Power). Therefore, his base abilities and knowledge remained the same while his Powers changed several times over the course of the war.

Mind Control

Cost: 2-5 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Variable; see below
Reduction: One aspect of thought only
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; usage inflicts pain; target remembers the control

This Attribute allows the character to mentally dominate other individuals. Sorcerers, some psionic adepts, and creatures with hypnotic Powers (such as many demons or vampires) are among those likely to have Mind Control. The Duration PMV Rank is automatically equal to the Attribute Level; the character does not spend Points on Duration.

Mind Control costs 5 Points/Level if it can be used on any human or alien with a Mind Stat of 2 or higher (animals are excluded). It costs 4 Points/Level if it works on broad categories of humans ("any American" or "any male," for example). It costs 3 Points/Level if the category is more specific and less useful ("priests" or "people obsessed with beauty"). Finally, it costs 2 Points/Level if the category is very specific (members of the character's family, or mutants with a specific gene). The effects of Mind Control should be role-played. If necessary, the GM can take over the character, although it is more fun if the player (with GM guidance) continues to play the character.



Initiating Mind Control requires a non-combat action (see page 122). Rather than making an Attack check, however, the character must successfully make a Mind Stat check (if attacking multiple targets, roll only once). If the Mind Stat check is successful, the target gets a Defense check, but, instead of using **Defense Combat Value** (page 102), the base Check Value is his or her Mind or Soul Stat (whichever is greater). When controlling a large number of people, an estimated Mind and Soul Stat average for the entire group could be used. At Levels 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, the character receives a +1 bonus to his or her Check Value when attempting to Mind Control a target. At Levels 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, the target also receives a -1 penalty to his or her Check Value when attempting to defend against Mind Control (or when trying to break established contact; see below). At Level 7, for instance, the character gains a +4 bonus while the target suffers a -3 penalty. A character needs to defeat an opponent in Mind Combat (page 131) to toy with his or her emotions (for example, giving the opponent new fears or a prejudice).

Once Mind Control is established, it remains in effect until either the Duration PMV expires, or until the target breaks free from the control. A target may attempt to break control under two circumstances: whenever he or she is given a command that conflicts with the nature of the character, and whenever the GM deems it appropriate for dramatic effect. To break control, the target must make a successful Mind or Soul Stat check (whichever is higher), modified appropriately by the Mind Control Level of the initiating character.

Against Target's Nature

If a Mind Controlled target is commanded to perform an action that he or she would not willingly do under normal circumstances, the target can attempt to break control. Additionally, the target may receive a bonus if the action goes against his or her nature. The more distasteful the target finds the command, the greater the Check Value bonus. For mildly distasteful actions (such as licking an enemy's boots), no bonus is given. For highly distasteful or undesirable actions (such as stealing from an ally), a +4 bonus is given. Finally, for exceptionally distasteful or undesirable actions (such as attacking an ally), a +8 bonus is given. Note that these bonuses are cumulative with penalties associated with the controlling character's Mind Control Level.

When the GM Deems Appropriate

If the character commands his or her target to perform a number of mundane activities (clean the house, fetching a drink of water, etc.), the GM may decide the target does not receive an opportunity to break established control. Even a seemingly inoffensive command such as "sit in the closet" or "go to sleep," however, may have a drastic impact on the lives of others if a bomb is about to explode in the train station or the target is piloting an airplane at the time. In these instances, the GM may give the target a chance to break free of the Mind Control even if the target does not regard a command as dangerous or distasteful (which would present an opportunity to end the control). This option puts the GM in direct control of the situation, which will benefit the

campaign. Naturally, the GM can also apply modifiers to the Stat check that are cumulative with penalties associated with the controlling character's Mind Control Level.

A character need not control every thought and action of his or her victims but can allow them to live normal lives until they are needed; these targets are known as "sleepers." Additionally, people who have been Mind Controlled will not remember events that occurred during the time period they are controlled and will have a gap in their memories (unless a Restriction is assigned).

The GM may allow a character to temporarily boost his or her Mind Control Attribute by one or two Levels against a single individual who is his or her captive by "working" on the subject for a day or more. This bonus can represent concentrated brainwashing techniques or dedicated study of a subject.

Player Characters should only be placed under Mind Control for extended periods of time in exceptional circumstances.

Example

Doc Cimitière, the terrifying and potent Voodoo priest, has Mind Control at Level 9 (the 5 Points/Level version, thereby allowing him to control any being with a mind). He is therefore able to exert considerable control over anyone he encounters, forcing them to conform to his will. Whenever he attempts to control a target's mind, he gains a +5 bonus to his Mind Control Check. The target suffers a -4 penalty to his or her Check Value when attempting to resist his commands. With Level 9, he is able to maintain control over a target's mind for 1 month before his control fades. The target, however, may break the control before the month has lapsed if he or she is ordered to do something against the character's nature or if the GM deems a resistance check appropriate. Otherwise, the character will attempt to accomplish any task ordered by Doc Cimitière. If Doc Cimitière ordered a target to leap in front of a moving bus, the character (who presumably does not want to leap in front of the bus) would make a resistance Check (Mind or Soul, whichever is higher) with a +4 bonus: a -4 penalty for Doc Cimitière's Level, plus a +8 bonus for an exceptionally undesirable action. If the Check fails, the unlucky victim would leap in front of the bus.

Mind Shield

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at an effective increase of 1 to the Mind and Soul Stat (Level 1) increasing to an effective increase of 10 to the Mind and Soul Stat (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Time limit; against specific characters; against one type of intrusion

A character with Mind Shield is protected against psychic intrusion. This may be a reflection of his or her own psychic abilities, a protective spell, special training, or some innate ability. A character with Mind Shield can detect and gain Check Value bonuses to block attempts to read or control his or her mind by a character with the Telepathy or Mind Control Attributes (see page 78 and 55). The bonuses also apply during telepathic mind combat (page 131), and against a Special Attack with the Mind or Soul Attack Ability (page 71). Additionally, each Mind Shield Level provides 10 points of "Mind Armour" that are used for defense during mind combat or against attacks with the Mind or Soul Attack Special Attack Ability.

Designer's Note

Mind Control and Duration PMV

You will notice that the Duration PMV for the Mind Control Attribute functions differently than all other entries: the Duration is automatically equal to the Mind Control Level, and thus does not require you to allocate Character Points to it. We designed Mind Control this way for two reasons. First, since the Attribute progression simply provides bonuses and penalties to Mind Stat checks, we wanted to reflect a specific comic reality: talented individuals can maintain Mind Control for long periods. Thus, the higher the Mind Control Level, the higher the Duration PMV.

Second, we were contending with play balance issues. Since increasing the Duration PMV requires far fewer Character Points than increasing the Mind Control Level (particularly the 5 Points/Level version), we wanted to prevent low-powered Mind Controllers from inexpensively dominating their enemies for weeks or months. By connecting Duration to the Attribute Level, we ensured that maintaining Mind Control for long periods of time would require many Character Points.

As a Game Master, you can make Duration for Mind Control a normal PMV if changing the rules suits your campaign better.

Natural Weapons

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 natural weapon (Level 1) increasing to 10 natural weapons (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Against specific targets; less damage; slow to use (Initiative penalty)

The character has one or more relatively mundane natural weapons, such as sharp teeth, claws, tentacles, etc. Natural weapons are normally possessed by animals, monsters, and similar characters, but could also represent technological capabilities that mimic such abilities, such as an android or cyborg with retractable claws. More powerful Natural Weapons can be designed using the Special Attacks Attribute (page 67), with the Melee Disability.

The character possesses one Natural Weapon per Level. Possessing more than one such natural weapon gives the character a wider variety of attack forms. Normal damage inflicted by a successful attack is outlined in Chapter 3 (page 124).

Hands, feet, a heavy tail, ordinary teeth, or hooves are not normally counted as Natural Weapons since they are (relatively) blunt, and thus only inflict normal unarmed damage (equal to the character's Attack Combat Value).

Claws or Spikes

The character possesses sharp talons or spikes on his or her fingers, paws, or feet. In addition to regular damage, the claws inflict 10 additional damage points when used in melee combat. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Fangs, Beak, or Mandibles

The character has very sharp teeth, or alternatively, a beak or insect-like mandibles. This natural weapon inflicts only 5 points of damage above normal damage in melee combat, but a successful strike that penetrates Armour gives the character the option to maintain a biting grip and continue to inflict equivalent damage in subsequent rounds. These additional attacks are automatically successful, but the opponent can break the hold with a successful Defense check. While the attacker is maintaining a biting grip, his or her own ability to defend is impeded: the attacker cannot use weapons to defend, and suffers a -4 Defense check penalty against all attacks. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Bites) Skill.

Horns

These are large horns on the head, used for butting or stabbing. Horns add 5 extra points of damage to normal damage in melee combat but are exceptionally effective if the character charges into battle. If the character wins Initiative against an opponent and has room for a running start, he or she can lower his or her head and charge. A successful attack will deliver normal attack damage, plus 20 (rather than 5) points damage. If a charge fails to connect (the character fails the Attack check or the opponent makes a successful Defense check), the charging character will be off balance and suffers a -2 penalty on Defense checks for the remainder of the round and a -4 Initiative roll penalty on the following combat round. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Spines

The character is covered in nasty spikes, quills, or sharp scales. Anyone who wrestles with the character automatically takes damage equal to the character's Attack Combat Value each round. This damage is in addition to any attack damage delivered. During these struggles, the opponent's clothes will also be ripped and shredded unless they are armoured.

Tail Striker

If the character has a combat-ready tail it can be equipped with spikes, a stinger, or other similarly nasty weapon. It is difficult to strike with a swinging tail (-2 Attack check penalty), but, since it is flexible, it is usually harder to dodge (opponent suffers a -4 Defense check penalty). The attack inflicts normal unarmed damage. This attack uses the Unarmed Attack (Strikes) Skill.

Tentacles

One or more of the character's limbs — or possibly his or her hair — are actually tentacles. A character with tentacles gains a +2 bonus to his or her Unarmed Attack and Unarmed Defense Skill Level when engaged in a grappling attack or defending against one. Tentacles are also difficult to avoid in combat (opponent suffers a -2 Defense check penalty).

Nullify

Cost: 7 or 12 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Linear, starting at Level 1 Power Attributes (Level 1) increasing to Level 10 Power Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific targets; against specific Attributes

With a successful Soul Stat check, the character can temporarily render the Power Attributes (not Characteristic Attributes) of other characters unusable within the Area PMV. The Nullify Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute Level that can be nullified. The character can nullify an Attribute as long as indicated by the Duration PMV; it is recommended that Duration not extend past Level 6 for Nullify.

For 7 Points/Level the character can only nullify one Attribute each combat action. Thus, a character with Extra Attacks Level 3 can Nullify four Attributes each round. For 12 Points/Level, the character can nullify all Attributes simultaneously at the appropriate Levels (as indicated above).

Nullify (Drain)

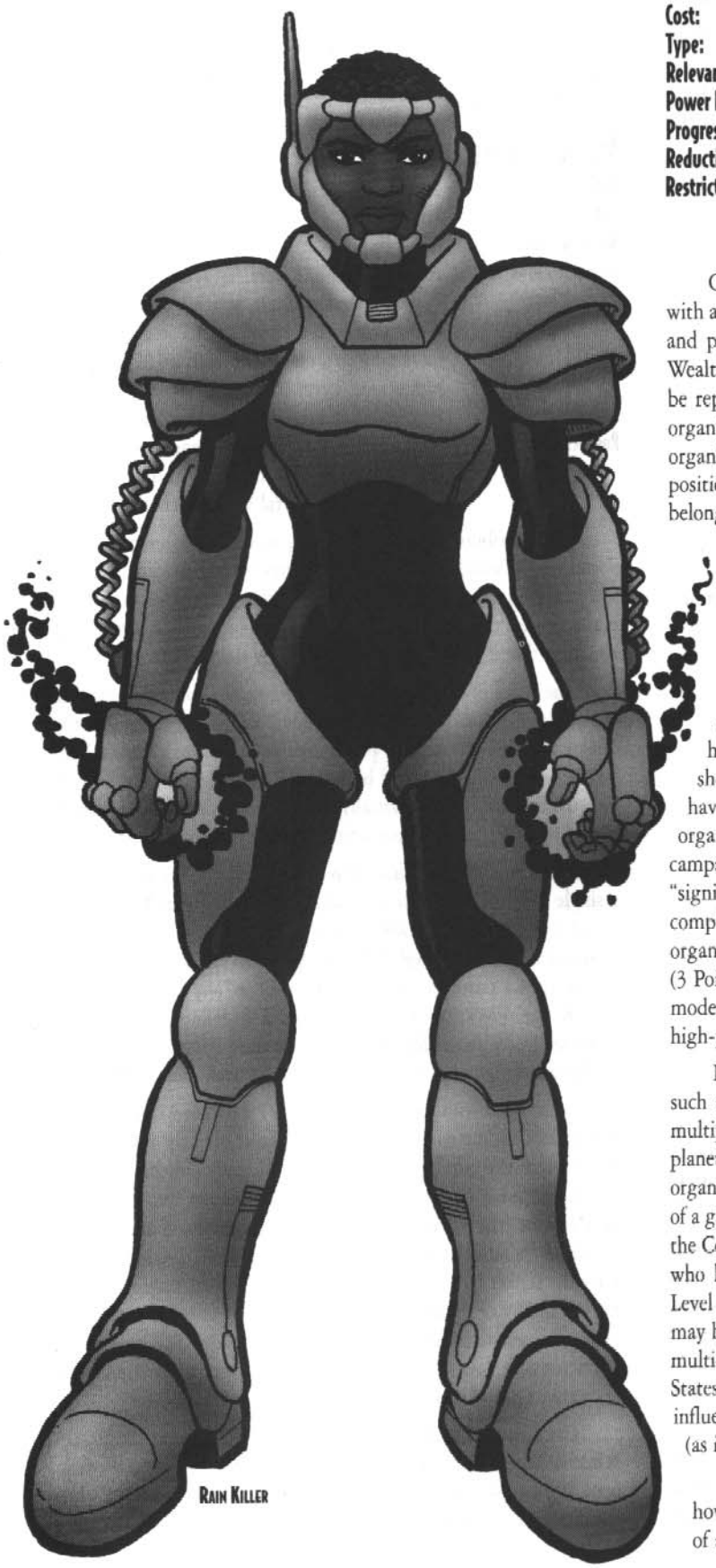
For an additional 3 Points/Level, this Attribute can be specified as a Nullify (Drain). At each Attribute Level, the target's single Attribute (at 10 Points/Level) or multiple Attributes (at 15 Points/Level) are reduced by one Level, to a minimum of Level 0. For example, if a character with Level 5 Nullify (Drain) at 15 Points/Level targets a character who has Level 3 Armour, Level 8 Flight, and Level 10 Teleport, the target is reduced to Level 0 Armour (3-5=0), Level 3 Flight (8-5=3), and Level 5 Teleport (10-5=5). If, instead, the character only had regular Nullify, the Flight and Teleport Attributes would be unaffected since they are above Level 5 Attributes.

If the character uses Nullify (Drain) on the Special Attack Attribute, only damage is reduced (-20 damage for each Nullify Level). None of the Attack Abilities are affected directly, though the effectiveness of Abilities that depend on the amount of damage delivered will be reduced.

To create a character that steals a target's Powers for his or her own use, assign both the Nullify and Mimic (page 55) Attributes, linked through the Dependent Defect (page 94).

Example

Rain Killer naturally possesses Nullify (Drain) at Level 1 (10 Points/Level). This means that she can reduce one Power of an opponent by 1 Level for 5 rounds (Duration of 2). Her suit, however, is capable of redirecting energy away from its Force Field to boost her Nullify (Drain) Power; this increases its Level to 4 and the Duration PMV to 3. Therefore, with the suit's power systems adjusted, she can drain one Power of an opponent by 4 Levels for 1 minute (Duration 3). This often reduces an opponent's effectiveness substantially, making them an easier target for Rain Killer's war on crime.



Organizational Ties

Cost: 1-3 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Favourably connected with only part of the organization; character's connection results in conflict; high price to pay

Organizational Ties represents a character's close relationship with a hierarchy of some sort that grants him or her access to respect and privileges. Monetary advantages are usually covered by the Wealth Attribute (page 81), while access to special equipment may be represented by the Gadgets Attribute (page 47). Examples of organizations include superhero leagues, powerful corporations, organized crime rings, secret guilds and societies, governmental positions, and some religions. For campaigns in which all players belong to the same organized group, the GM may decide that Organizational Ties are not required. Consequently, this Attribute is optional; the GM may prefer to treat organization membership as a background detail instead.

The value of Organizational Ties depends on its importance in the setting. An organization that exerts moderate power within the setting is worth 1 Point/Level, one that has significant power costs 2 Points/Level, and one that has great power in the setting costs 3 Points/Level. Players should not assign this Attribute to represent organizations that have very little power. The GM determines the extent of the organization's influence. In a high school comedy superhero campaign, the school's autocratic Student Council might wield "significant power," while in most other settings it would be completely trivial and not worth any points. Similarly, a criminal organization like the Mafia or Yakuza might count as "great power" (3 Points/Level) in a traditional low-powered superhero game set in modern times, but merely as "moderate power" (1 Point/Level) in a high-powered villain game.

Normal organizations should be limited to a geopolitical area, such as a single country. Global organizations, or those that span multiple geopolitical areas, function at 2 Levels lower. Multi-planetary organizations function at 4 Levels lower, while multi-galaxy organizations function at 6 Levels lower. For example, the president of a global megacorporation needs to assign Level 12 to gain access to the Controlling Rank category (2 Levels lower). Similarly, a character who has Senior Rank in a universe-wide organization should have Level 14 Organizational Ties (6 Levels lower). Some organizations may be ostensibly limited to a single country, but still have global or multi-planetary influence. For example, the President of the United States is a Controlling Rank (Level 10). Since the US has great influence across the world, however, the position would be Level 12 (as if it was a global organization).

These far-ranging organization positions are only relevant, however, if the character can actually gain access to the resources of all branches of the group. If an Earth character is Connected

to a multi-planetary organization, for instance, but can only interact with and be influenced by the Earth chapter of the organization, the group is only considered to be a global organization (2 Levels lower) for that character. The group is not categorized as multi-planetary (4 Levels lower), since the extensive resource benefits normally associated with an organization that size are not available to the character.

Though only five Attribute Levels are described below, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Level 2 Connected. Examples include a powerful political supporter, an ally to a group, or a valued corporate employee.

Level 4 Respected Status. Examples include a Mafia "Wise Guy," a junior executive in a corporation, a city council member, a member on a medical Board of Directors, or an enlisted army soldier.

Level 6 Middle Rank. Examples include a Mafia "Captain," a departmental vice-president in a corporation, a junior congressman, or a low- to middle-ranking army officer.

Level 8 Senior Rank. Examples include a senior vice-president in a corporation, a US senator, or a high-ranking army officer.

Level 10 Controlling Rank. Examples include the boss of a crime syndicate, the president of a corporation, US state governor, president of a small nation, or leader of a superhero justice team.

Plant Control

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Duration
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area (Level 1) increasing to 100,000 km radius area (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; in particular regions; no or lower additional growth (1x through 4x)

Characters with this Attribute can control the growth and movement of all plants in the surrounding area. The Attribute Level determines the maximum area in which the plants can be controlled. After the Duration PMV Rank has expired, the plants will return to their normal state and size before the control.

If the character limits the Control to a single broad group of plants, the Attribute functions at one Level higher. Broad plant groups include trees, grasses, weeds, bushes, flowers, mosses, vegetables, ferns, vines, seaweeds, etc. If limited to a specific type of plant, the Attribute functions at two Levels higher. Examples of plant types include oak trees, wheat, dandelions, raspberry bushes, sunflowers, club moss, carrots, etc.

Controlled plants can grow to a maximum size of 5 times their normal mature state. For 10x growth, the Attribute functions at one Level lower when determining area. For 50x growth, two Levels lower; for 100x growth, three Levels lower; for 500x growth, four Levels lower; and for 1,000x growth, five Levels lower.

To cause significant damage with controlled plants, the character should acquire the Special Attack Attribute (page 67) with the Dependent Defect (page 94).

Pocket Dimension

Cost: 2, 3 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at a dimension with a 10 cm radius area (Level 1) increasing to a dimension with a 100,000 km radius area (Level 10)
Reduction: Power always used in same way
Restrictions: Limited to specific types of dimensions; damage inflicted when passing through portal; opening portal weakens character

This Attribute allows the opening of a hole or doorway — a portal — into another dimension. In comic books, invading aliens or sorcerers who create Pocket Dimensions leading from closets to other places possess this Power. A Pocket Dimension could also represent an object that is simply bigger on the inside than on the outside.

The Level of Pocket Dimension determines the maximum size of the dimension. The environment and furnishings of the dimension are up to the player within the GM's limitations; extensive furnishings should be acquired as Gadgets (page 47). A dimension could even be partially unexplored or dangerous territory, providing adventuring opportunities to the characters.

The cost of Pocket Dimension is 2 Points/Level if it is limited to a single fixed portal (such as a house closet), 3 Points/Level if the portal is in a mobile location (such as inside a vehicle, or attached to an item), or 4 Points/Level if the character can use a particular class of objects as a portal (such as "any mirror" or "any pool of water"). The Range PMV cannot apply to the 2 Points/Level option; additionally, the Area PMV only applies to the 4 Points/Level version, or characters who can use the Attribute offensively (see below).

A character with this ability at 2 or 3 Points/Level cannot create new portals leading out of the dimension; he or she may only leave by the one that was entered. A character can usually only have a single portal opened to his or her dimension at a time, but additional apertures to the same dimension may be possessed for 1 extra Character Point each. At the 4 Points/Level version, the character can leave the Pocket Dimension through any other appropriate exit within the Area PMV of the entrance portal; the character is not required to leave through the same one he or she entered. For example, a character with Area 6 can leave his or her Pocket Dimension by any appropriate portal within 10 km of the entry point.

Once opened, a portal can stay open for as long as the creator is in the dimension. The creator may also be able to "leave the door open" if he or she wishes to allow individuals to enter or leave while the creator is not present within the dimensional pocket.

Pocket Dimensions may optionally be designated as only one-way, restricting access in or out until the character or machine maintaining them is destroyed, or some other condition is fulfilled. This Attribute may be taken multiple times to give access to multiple different dimensions. If so, it may be taken at different Levels for each individual dimension.

Using Pocket Dimension Offensively

Some characters may have the exotic ability of being able to suck or warp unwilling targets into their alternate dimension (at the 3 or 4 Points/Level version only). To indicate this, assign the Area, Duration, Range, and Targets PMV. Duration only applies when the character uses Pocket Dimension to trap an opponent in this way — a character can be held in a pocket dimension for a maximum amount of time indicated by the Duration PMV Rank. The character is released from the dimension once the Power's Duration ceases. See Using Powers Against Opponents, page 133, for rules on affecting an unwilling opponent with a Pocket Dimension.

Characters who have an ability to travel between dimensions should possess either the Dimension Hop Special Movement ability (few dimensions; page 75) or the Dynamic Powers Attribute (many dimensions; page 40) with the Dimensions category, depending on his or her ability to travel through dimensions.



Bloody Mary

Example

Bloody Mary has a Level 4 Pocket Dimension that she can access via tinted glass or mirrors. Her dimensional pocket has a radius of 100 metres. With the Duration PMV at Rank 3, she is able to trap a target within her Pocket Dimension for a maximum of 1 minute before they are expelled from the dimension. With the Targets PMV at Rank 1, she is only able to attempt to trap one person at a time (though the dimensional pocket can hold multiple targets simultaneously). Thus, if she wishes to steal away three targets, she must make three separate attempts to capture the characters and they will remain trapped for a maximum of 1 minute. Before then, she will usually pull the characters out into a spot of her choosing, using another mirror or pane of tinted glass as the portal to her dimension.

Power Flux

Cost: 5, 10, 15, or 20 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Variable
Power Modifier Values: Special (Duration Reversed; see below)
Progression: Linear, starting at 5 Flux Points or 2 Power Attributes (Level 1) increasing to 50 Flux Points or 11 Power Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: One aspect of category
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only raise or lower existing Attributes, limitations on Levels exchanged

Power Flux represents extensive control over an element, ideology, natural phenomenon, or sphere of influence. This is a very open-ended Attribute and should be discussed with the GM at length to determine the effects and limitations in his or her game. Proper use of Power Flux will not unbalance the game, but rather can provide many opportunities for character innovation. As an alternative option to Power Flux, see the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 40).

A character with this Attribute has a pool of reserve Character Points (called Flux Points) that can be allocated to different Power Attributes (not Characteristic Attributes) as needed, within the thematic category chosen by the player. This often represents a magical or psionic ability, but it can also reflect a character who has several different powered forms, or a character who has little control over his or her range of Powers (in conjunction with the Unreliable Power Defect, page 100).

Power Flux uses a special PMV that follows the reverse of Duration, starting at 6 months (Rank 1) and decreasing to 1 round (Rank 10). The GM may limit the Duration PMV to Rank 8 (1 minute) to ensure that the flow of combat is not impeded by characters fluxing Powers too frequently. This PMV represents how frequently a character can change the allocation of Flux Points from one group of Attributes to a different group, and not how long a character can use Power Flux. At low Ranks, the character will be forced to use the same group of Attributes for extended periods of time before he or she can use the Flux Points for alternates. At high Ranks, the character can gain a complete new set of Attributes almost at will. Stats and Defects cannot be raised or lowered with Power Flux (though the Enhanced [Stat] Attribute may be altered); Characteristic Attributes cannot usually be assigned either without GM permission.

Minor or small thematic categories cost 10 Points/Level. Examples include a classical element (water, fire, wind, earth), a limited concept or idea (lust, protection, charm, pride), a minor aspect of nature (temperature, insects, sunlight, clouds, orbits, sea creatures), or a limited sphere of influence (silence, cats, writing, guns, a small locality, nutrition).

Major or large thematic categories cost 15 Points/Level. Examples include a broad concept or idea (love, travel, strength), a major aspect of nature (weather, magnetism, gravity, electricity, animals), or a broad sphere of influence (cities, computer data, health, truth, manufacturing, fertility, weapons, drugs).

Primal or universal thematic categories cost 20 Points/Level. Examples include core concepts and primary spheres of influence: Time, War, Death, Life, Earth, Thought, Magic, Force, Math, Self, Law, Chaos, Creation, Heaven, Hell, Dimensions, Dreams, and others.

If the character makes a successful Stat check (the relevant Stat is determined by the GM), he or she can assign Flux Points to one or more Attributes that grant Powers that fit within the thematic category. A Flux Point is equal to one Character Point, which can be assigned to the cost of the Attribute directly, or to the cost of raising an Attribute's PMV Rank. Under normal circumstances, Power Flux cannot imitate the Transfer Attribute or the Dynamic Powers Attribute.

For example, a character with Level 6 Power Flux with a "cat theme" and Reversed Duration PMV of Rank 5 (12 hours) has assigned a total of 65 Character Points to the Attribute (6 Levels x 10 Points/Level + 5 Points for the Duration PMV). In return, he or she gains 30 Power Flux Points. At a minimum interval of 12 hours, the character can allocate the 30 Power Flux Points to any combination of Attributes that fit the cat theme. Perhaps in the morning, the character needs to prowl around the city on patrol and assigns the following Attributes: Armour Level 3 (9 Flux Points); Heightened Awareness Level 9 (9 Flux Points); Heightened Senses (Hearing, Smell, Vision) Level 3 (3 Flux Points); Jumping Level 5 (5 Flux Points); and Superstrength Level 1 (4 Flux Points). Later in the evening (13 hours later), the character might need to track down and capture a specific target and thus reassigns all 30 Flux Points to

Example

Example 1: Rain Killer possesses an advanced suit of armour that has the 5 Points/Level version of Power Flux at Level 1. This enables her to flux Points between two Powers: Force Field and Nullify (Drain). She has 31 Points in Force Field (28 Points for Force Field plus 3 Points for the Area PMV) and 13 Points in Nullify (Drain) (10 Points for the Attribute, 2 Points for Duration and 1 Point for Targets). She can Flux her Powers once per round (Duration Rank 10). In one round, she could set her Force Field at "maximum power," transferring the available fluxable points (31 + 13) 44 into Force Field to gain a Level 10 Force Field with an Area Rank of 4. In the next round, she could transfer points back into Nullify (Drain) to deal with a supervillain threat. Since Nullify (Drain) costs 10 Points/Level, she could transfer up to 40 Points into the Power and assign the remaining 4 Points as she desired, either assigning them to the PMVs of Nullify (Drain) or keeping them in Force Field to maintain a Level 1 protective field.

Example 2: Doc Cimitière possesses the 15 Points/Level version of Power Flux at Level 5 with a Duration PMV Rank of 8. Once per minute, he can select a new group of Powers, granted under the auspices of Voodoo charms, totalling up to 25 Character Points. Therefore, he could call upon Ogoun, the loa of War, to gain the following Powers: Attack Combat Mastery Level 3 (9 Points), Extra Attacks Level 1 (8 Points), and Tough Level 4 (8 Points). Later in the battle, Cimitière realizes he needs a new mix of Powers to deal with his opponents but it has only been 40 seconds (approximately 8 rounds) since he dominated Ogoun to gain his combat Powers. He must wait an additional 20 seconds before he can select new Powers.

different Attributes as follows: Animal Summon/Control (Cats) Level 4 with Area PMV Rank 4 and Duration PMV Rank 6 (14 Flux Points); Extra Attacks Level 1 (8 Flux Points); Invisibility (Sound; Partial) Level 4 (8 Flux Points).

Limited Point Exchange

An alternate method of Power Flux only costs 5 Points/Level, but limits the character to a small assortment of Power Attributes among which Character Points can be exchanged. At Level 1, Character Points can be exchanged in any way between the Level cost and PMV cost of any two Attributes, which are determined during character creation. From Level 2 through 10, each Level adds one additional Attribute to the list of Powers that can be fluxed (extending to 11 Attributes at Level 10). For instance, if a character with this Level 3 Power Flux and Rank 4 Duration (1 day) has allocated 47 Character Points to four fluxable Attributes (Armour, Flight, Special Attack, and Teleport), he or she can redistribute the 47 Points in any way over the four Attributes and their PMVs once every 24 hours.

Projection

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 cm radius area (Level 1) increasing to 5 km radius area (Level 10)
Reduction: Projection always the same
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; projection is flawed in some way; usage inflicts pain

The character can create projected images that may have audible or visual components, or both. This Attribute may reflect holographic technology, magical ability, control over environmental conditions, or a completely different method of creation. The Projection cannot be touched because it is not substantial, nor does it have a taste or smell. Depending on the situation, and the nature of other individuals or animals viewing the Projection, the image may appear to be a real object. Closer inspection will usually reveal the Projection for what it is, but this will not cause the Projection to disappear as it would for an Illusion. If appropriate, the GM can require Body or Mind checks to "see through" a Projection. See the Illusion Attribute (page 50) for the ability to create mental illusions that target specific people, rather than real images that anyone (including technological devices, such as cameras) can detect.



Lady of the Lantern

A Projection may be of a particular object or entity, or of a complete scene (such as a furnished room or crowd). It may also be created over an existing person, scene, or object to make it appear different than it really is. A Projection that is untended is normally static, either remaining in one place or (if created over something) moving as the underlying object or entity moves. To give a Projection the semblance of independent activity (such as a projected image of a person who moves and speaks) the character must actively concentrate on manipulating the Projection, and perform no other actions.

A character can normally maintain only a single Projection at a time. The ability to maintain multiple Projections at once costs the character an extra 1 Point for every distinct Projection the character can sustain simultaneously after the first. Thus, "Projection Level 5 (six Projections)" would cost 20 Character Points: 15 Points for Level 5 and 5 more Points for being able to sustain six Projections at a time. A group of objects or entities within the Area PMV, such as a crowd of androids or a furnished office, counts as a single Projection rather than several. If a character is already sustaining his or her maximum number of Projections and wishes to create another one, an existing Projection must first be dispelled.

A Projection may have two types of areas: the Area PMV, and the area determined by the Attribute Level. The Area PMV reflects the maximum area in which the Projection may be created, while the Level-related area dictates the actual size of the projected image. Thus, an Area PMV of Rank 7 (100 km) with Attribute Level 7 (100 metres) means that any image up to 100 metres in radius (such as a huge advertising billboard) can be created, and moved around within a location that has a 100 km radius (such as a large county district).

In order for the character to create a convincing Projection of something complex, the GM may require a Mind Stat check. The GM can add modifiers depending on how familiar or unfamiliar the character is with the scene that is being simulated. The GM may also give the character a +1 bonus for every Level he or she has in excess of the minimum Level needed to create a Projection. For example, if a character with Projection Level 8 decides to create an image with an area radius of 50 metres (a Level 6 effect), a +2 Check Value bonus applies (Level 8 - Level 6 = +2). If the check fails, the character's Projection has some obvious flaw in it.

Example

Lady of the Lantern possesses Projection (Visual only) at Level 5, Area Rank 4, Duration Rank 3, and Range Rank 3. She is therefore able to create visual projections that are up to 10 metres in radius (dictated by the Level of the Attribute). These projections can exist in an area of up to 100 metres radius, up to 1 km away from her. The projections will last for 1 minute before they fade from sight. This means she could create the visual image of a pack of wolves (an image that is under 10 metres in radius) and have it run around a large warehouse (as long as it is under 100 metres in radius), scaring the crooks out of hiding. If she wanted to, she could create this projection from a safe distance (up to 1 km away), meaning she could help scare the bad guys out of hiding and allow the police to deal with the situation without anyone knowing of her involvement.

Regeneration

Cost: 6 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at restoring 5 Health Points each Round (Level 1) increasing to restoring 50 Health Points each Round (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Health Points restored
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; specific wound types; regeneration is not automatic

Characters with this Attribute automatically heal their own injuries, whether the characters are awake, asleep, or unconscious. The character's Health Points cannot exceed their original total. At higher Healing Levels, the character's body will revive itself if "clinically" dead but not actually brain-dead (Level 3+), repair massive trauma such as lost limbs or organs (Level 5+), or restore the character if cut into several pieces (Level 7+). The body cannot repair itself if it is blown to bits or disintegrated, however.

Reincarnation

Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Time Progression Chart Reversed, starting at 6 months (Level 1) decreasing to 1 round (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Reincarnate after injury from specific weapons; alive for a limited time; limited to a specific target group

If the character is destroyed, some of his or her essence may still survive. This may be in spiritual or digital form, or it may be something that must be retrieved from the corpse. A robot whose memory can be copied or uploaded, a creature that leaves an egg in its body upon death, or an undead monster that will reform a few minutes, hours, or days after its apparent death are all examples of this. If this remnant can be salvaged or otherwise recovered, in a matter of days or weeks and with proper care, it will develop a new body similar to the original. A reincarnated character usually starts with 1 Health Point.

Reincarnation can be prevented in some way. This may be as simple as burning, blowing up, or dismembering a body, or as obscure as requiring a special ritual. For 2 Points/Level, the Reincarnation is easy to stop; for 4 Points/Level, the Reincarnation is difficult to stop. The GM and player must work together to determine the parameters involved in preventing the rebirth.

Sensory Block

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 blocked sense or technique (Level 1) increasing to 10 blocked senses or techniques (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; against specific targets; time limit

A character with Sensory Block can cover an area with a field that blocks specific senses or detection techniques. This can represent a magical ability, technological enhancement, or paranormal effect. For each Level of the Sensory Block Attribute, the character can either block one sense or enhanced sense (Type I) or one detection technique (Type II), which is determined during character creation.

Type I

One of the five senses — hearing, smell, vision, taste, or touch — is partially blocked. This may mean that individuals within the Area PMV cannot see well (vision), cannot hear well (hearing), etc. Checks made by these individuals when pertaining to the specific senses suffer a -8 penalty, which is cumulative with any Heightened Senses bonus (see page 49).

Type II

A detection technique is partially blocked. Examples of techniques include: electric current detection; homing weapons; infravision; magnetic field detection; microscopic vision; radar detection; radio reception; sonar detection; a specific Sixth Sense technique; ultrasonic hearing; ultravision; vibration detection; X-ray vision. Stat checks relating to these detection techniques suffer a -8 penalty.

Shrink

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: Area, Duration, Range, Targets
Progression: Variable; see chart
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Suffer pain/damage while shrinking; naked form only, double damage penalties

This Attribute reflects the ability to decrease the stature and mass of the character; while this can certainly be an advantage, it also creates many potential problems (see chart). In addition to decreased height and mass, the character who shrinks has reduced running speed and weapon range, and inflicts less damage through physical attacks and Special Attacks (physical, not energy-based; minimum of 1 damage). Although the character also suffers additional damage from normal-sized opponents, the enemies have a harder time hitting him or her with ranged weapons. The Duration PMV is only relevant when affecting others; a character can Shrink him or herself for an indefinite period.

Unlike most Attributes, Shrink only has entries for Levels 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. If necessary, the GM can interpolate the intermediate Levels. At Level 10, the character has shrunk to the cellular range; at this size, normal combat rules cannot apply since the character is simply too small. At Levels exceeding 10, the character can shrink to the molecular, atomic, or sub-atomic scale — a size that requires GM guidance and permission. If the GM and players wish to make characters that can shrink to a "micro-verse" where they interact within an entirely new world, the Pocket Dimension Attribute (page 60) may be more suitable.

A character who is permanently shrunk should assign the Diminutive Defect (page 94), rather than Shrinking and the Permanent Defect.

Though only five Attribute Levels are described below, GMs can easily extrapolate intermediate or higher Levels as required.

Table 2-10: Shrink

Current Shrink Level	Rough Size	Height Range Speed Multiplier	Mass Lifting Multiplier	Damage Penalty	Enemy Damage Bonus	Enemy's Range Attack Penalty
2	Child/Dog	1/2	1/10	-5	+5	-2
4	Cat	1/5	1/100	-10	+10	-4
6	Rodent	1/20	1/10,000	-15	+15	-6
8	Bug	1/200	ten millionth	-20	+20	-8
10	Cellular	1/20,000	ten trillionth	???	???	???

Example

General Winter possesses Level 8 Shrink. He also possesses the Awkward Size Defect at 1 BP at his normal size (10 feet tall). He reduces to one two-hundredth (1/200th) his normal height so the smallest he can shrink is about 1.5 cm in height. His speed similarly reduces; since he can normally sprint at 90 metres per round (due to a Body of 15), when shrunk to the smallest size possible, he moves at a speed of 45 cm per round. His lifting capacity and damage inflicted by his attacks also goes down substantially. Attacks directed against him (by normal-sized opponents) inflict increased damage, though the opponents have a much harder time hitting the significantly smaller target.

Sidekick

Cost: 1 or 3 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at a sidekick built using 5 Character Points or 5% of the character's Point total (Level 1) increasing to a sidekick built using 50 Character Points or 50% of the character's Point total (Level 10)
Reduction: Fewer Character Points awarded
Restrictions: Sidekick leads active life and is not always available; sidekick has conflicting agenda; communication barriers



Pan and her sidekick Belle

The character has a sidekick or companion entity. It serves as a familiar, pet, companion, or bodyguard. Examples of Sidekicks could include: a talking animal companion, a pet robot, a sorcerer's apprentice, a fierce wolf, a bound demon or ghost, a dedicated and talented henchman, a mage's familiar cat, or a vampire's enslaved thrall. Sidekicks are NPCs controlled by the GM, but they will normally work toward the character's best interests. Nevertheless, they should have their own personalities and may occasionally get into trouble of their own. Low Levels of this Attribute best represent animal or mechanical Sidekicks; high Levels, including those above Level 10, are required to create competent human Sidekicks.

This Attribute costs 1 Point/Level if the character is limited to one particular Sidekick. If the character can dismiss the Sidekick and replace him or her with a different one between adventures or during an adventure with suitable effort (GM's option, such as casting a summoning spell, training a new recruit, or taming a new animal), then the Attribute costs 3 Points/Level. A character can take the Attribute several times to have multiple Sidekicks.

Each Level of the Sidekick Attribute gives the player up to 5 Character Points with which to design the Sidekick; extending the Attribute beyond Level 10 is not uncommon. Alternatively, the Game Master may change the progression to 5% of the character's Point total for each Level (round up). Using this alternate progression, a 150 Point character, for example, would have a Sidekick with the following number of Character Points: 8 (L1), 15 (L2), 23 (L3), 20 (L3), 38 (L5), 45 (L6), 53 (L7), 60 (L8), 68 (L9), 75 (L10).

The Sidekick is created exactly as a character (see page 20) with two exceptions. First, it may not possess the Sidekick Attribute. Second, some relationship-based Defects should not be assigned due to the Sidekick's innate role as a character's assistant. Thus, it is usually inappropriate for a Sidekick to have the following Defects: Famous, Involuntary Change, Owned, or Red Tape.

Sixth Sense

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Area
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 sixth sense (Level 1) increasing to 10 sixth senses (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; must actively use Sixth Sense; vague or partial detection

Some characters have the ability to detect things that may be hidden to normal senses or technological sensors, while others have affinities for specific objects or people. Sixth Sense typically represents psychic or magical ability, but can also reflect trained and acute senses or divine intervention.

The character may sense one particular category of phenomenon per Level. The player should define the category with the GM's approval (Sixth Sense is very much a GM-defined ability).

As a guideline, the character is automatically alerted when something his or her Sixth Sense detects is in close proximity (10 cm radius area, unless higher Levels of the Area PMV were assigned). The GM may require a Soul Stat check to do this, with difficulty modifiers depending on the strength of the source of whatever emanations the character can sense. The GM should give a bonus (+2 modifier or more) if the character is touching the source.

A character who specifically concentrates on using his or her Sixth Sense may gain more precise information on a successful Soul Stat check. The exact content of this information is up to the GM. If the check succeeds, the GM may provide the character with a few extra clues about the source such as "the magic is coming from those buildings over there" or "you sense the evil presence feels otherworldly ... and hungry." If the check fails, the character will not gain any additional information unless something happens, such as the phenomena becoming stronger, or coming much closer. The GM should always try to use Sixth Sense to plant clues that make a story more exciting, but not allow it to circumvent the process of discovery in a mystery plot.

Examples of phenomena to which the character may be sensitive include astral/ethereal beings, danger, Pocket Dimensions, electricity, elements, emotions, evil, illusions, interpersonal dynamics, magic, magnetics, paranormal nexus points, particular objects, places of power, psionics, spirits, telepathy, truth, virtue, or the use of specific Attributes or Defects.

Precognition and Postcognition

Alternatively, Sixth Sense can be assigned to represent precognition and postcognition — the ability to access visions of past and future events. This option is a GM-defined Attribute, however, which allows him or her limit its application and scope within the campaign. For precognition, the Attribute's Level reflects the difference in time between the present situation and the future event follow the Time Progression Chart from one round (Level 1) through six months (Level 10). For postcognition, the character can see back an amount of time equal to double the Attribute's Level in Rank on the Time Progression Chart, ranging from 1 round (Level 1) to 100 million years (Level 10).

Special Attack

Cost: 1 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at an attack that delivers 20 damage (Level 1) increasing to an attack that delivers 200 damage (Level 10)
Reduction: Less damage delivered
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; usage inflicts pain; against specific opponents

Many superhuman characters wield powerful offensive energies, such as electric zaps, magical fireballs, *ki*-powered martial arts strikes, or energy swords. Additionally, some characters, such as cyborgs or robots, may have guns, missiles, or beam weapons built into their bodies.

Special Attacks deliver a maximum of 20 points of damage per Level; actual damage inflicted is determined by a roll on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage (see page 125). Assigning one or more attack Abilities from the list on pages 68-72 further customizes a character's Special Attack. Each attack Ability taken reduces the damage by 20 points but adds an additional capability. Attacks may also be assigned one or more attack Disabilities from the list on pages 72-74. Each attack Disability increases the damage by 20 points but reduces the attack's utility by imposing some form of limitation.

The player must assign the Abilities and Disabilities when the Special Attack is designed. He or she may assign a combination of Abilities and Disabilities that reduces the attack's damage to a minimum of 20. For example, suppose a character has a special Attack at Level 2. He or she would only be able to purchase one Ability, which would reduce the attack's damage from 40 to 20. If the character wanted to purchase a second Ability, he or she must first assign a Disability, which would raise the attack's damage back to 40. The character could then purchase a second Ability, reducing the damage back to 20.

When designing a Special Attack, the player (with GM input) should determine what Skill and Specialization is appropriate for its use. For most magical or superpowered ranged attacks, it will be Special Ranged Attacks. Any weapon with the Melee Disability uses the Melee Attack or Unarmed Attack Skills, depending on its description. For example, Melee Attack (Sword) is appropriate for an energy sword, while Unarmed Attack (Striking) would be suitable for a character that drained energy by touch or used a *ki*-energized martial arts strike.

Alternate Attacks

Although a character often uses his or her highest Level "primary" weapon, alternate or backup ones may also be possessed. The Point cost of these additional "secondary" attacks are one quarter the cost of the primary attack at 1 Point/Level. The primary attack is the only one that costs the standard 4 Points/Level. Secondary attacks may each possess different damages, Abilities, and Disabilities.

Special Effects

The special effects of Area Effect, Burning, Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, Quake, Spreading, and Tangle are determined by the base damage or percentage of base damage of the attack only. Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers are not included in the calculation. Additionally, Armour and Force Fields do not normally protect against Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, or Tangle.

A character can choose to inflict less damage than the normal 20 points/Level. Also, less than 100% damage may be inflicted, as indicated by the roll on the Damage Percentage table (page 125). In both of these instances, Attack Abilities are not removed or negated, but their special effects may be reduced. Table 2-12 shows how the effects are determined if damage is less than 100%. "Base Damage" refers to the rated damage, calculated as previously indicated (it will be a multiple of 20). "Damage Inflicted" refers to the final damage delivered, after the damage percentage is determined and all appropriate damage modifiers have been considered. "Percentage of Base Damage" refers to a percentage of the base damage alone,

Table 2-11: Special Attack Abilities

Ability	# of Slots	Ability	# of Slots
Accurate	1	Irritant	1
Affects Incorporeal	1	Knockback	1
Area Effect	1	Linked (Attack)	2 or 4
Aura	2	Long Range	1
Auto-Fire	3	Mind or Soul Attack	5
Burning	1	Muscle-Powered	1
Concealable	1	No Healing	1
Contagious	2 or 4	Penetrating (Armour)	1
Drain Body	1	Penetrating (Force Field)	1
Drain Mind	1	Quake	1
Drain Soul	1	Spreading	1
Enduring	1	Stun	1
Flare	1	Tangle	2
Flexible	1	Trap	1
Homing	1 or 2	Undetectable	4
Incapacitating	3	Unique Ability	variable
Incurable	4	Vampiric	2, 3, or 4
Indirect	1		

without any other modifiers; this option is used most frequently with Auto-Fire, and Special Attacks with the No Damage Disability.

For example, The Sentinel's Atomic Thunder attack delivers a base of 100 points of Flare damage in an Area Effect. If he voluntarily reduces the total damage of the attack to 20 while battling bank robbers, the area of the blast will not change (since the Area is determined by base damage only). Since a Flare's check penalty is dependant on the amount of damage inflicted, however, the penalty is reduced from -5 to -1.

Special Attack Abilities

The following Abilities may be assigned to a Special Attack. The GM may disallow any inappropriate Ability combinations.

Table 2-12: Reduced Damage Effect Summary

Ability	Effect	Based On
Area Effect	Area	Base damage
Area Effect	Damage	Damage inflicted
Auto-Fire	Additional hits	Percentage of base damage
Burning	Damage each round	Base damage (one tenth)
Drain (Any)	Stat drain	Percentage of base damage
Flare	Check penalty	Percentage of base damage
Incapacitating	Check penalty	Percentage of base damage
Irritant	Check penalty	Percentage of base damage
Knockback	Knockback distance	Damage inflicted
Quake	Fissure depth	Damage inflicted
Spreading	Extra targets	Base damage
Tangle	Entanglement Health Points	Percentage of base damage

Accurate

The attack is unusually accurate, giving a +2 bonus to Attack checks (or Stat checks if the attack has the Mind or Soul Attack Ability). This ability can be assigned two or three times for a +4 or +6 bonus, but may not be combined with the Linked (Attack) Ability. This Ability is usually assigned to hand-held weapons created as Items of Power (page 52) only, since Attack Skills (page 89) better represent a character who is adept at using his or her Special Attack.

Affects Incorporeal

This attack will affect characters who have very low densities — or are currently astral, ethereal, or incorporeal — as if they were solid.

Area Effect

This is an attack, like an explosive blast, that affects not only the direct target, but also anyone in the immediate area. The area of effect is a sphere with a radius of 1 metre for every 20 points of base damage. All affected characters are allowed a Defense check (diving for cover, swerving out of the way), but a successful Defense check may not be enough to escape completely (GM's discretion; depends on how target avoids attack). The target of the attack (or anyone at the centre of the effect) can reduce the damage percentage by one rank when successfully defending (see page 123). All other individuals caught in the area of effect can reduce the damage percentage by two ranks when successfully defending. Area Effect can be assigned multiple times; each Ability doubles the area radius.

Aura

Rather than having to make an actual attack, the character instead automatically damages anyone who touches his or her body. An example might be a character who was sheathed in flame or electrified. If this Ability is combined with the Area Effect Ability, it automatically damages anyone in the designated area around the character. Aura counts as two Abilities.

Auto-Fire

The attack consists of a burst of multiple shots like a machine gun or rapid sequence of energy bolts. Instead of scoring one hit when an attack is successful, the attacker scores hits (minimum of one, maximum of ten) equal to the difference between the Attack check and his or her Check Value (Attack Combat Value plus relevant Combat Skill). For example, if a character's attack Combat Value is 6 and relevant Combat Skill at Level 1, and the player rolled 5 (after all modifications), he or she would score 2 hits. The defender's chance to avoid the attack is derived in a similar way, however: a successful Defense check will defend against a number of hits equal to the difference between the Defense check and Check Value (Defense Combat Value plus relevant Combat Skill), with a minimum one hit avoided on a successful defense. Each hit delivers separate damage (important when considering Armour and Force Fields). Bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers are only applied to the first hit in an Auto-Fire burst — all others only inflict the percentage of base damage of the Special Attack. Auto-Fire counts as three Abilities.

Burning

This represents acid, flaming liquid, or similar attacks that deliver continuing damage over several rounds. If the initial attack damage penetrates the opponent's Armour, the target will suffer an additional 1/10 of the base damage for five rounds or until the effect is somehow neutralized (GM's discretion; it should depend on the type of attack, and may require several rounds for full neutralization). Armour does not protect against the extra Burning damage in subsequent rounds. Alternatively, Burning can be defined as an "hourly burn," which inflicts 1/10 of the base damage each hour after the attack, or "slow burn," which inflicts 1/5 of the base damage each day (rather than round-by-round). This ability may best represent a disease or slow poison attack. Unlike a regular Burning attack, the hourly and slow burn damage will continue until the victim is dead or makes a successful check with at -4 penalty against the average of his or her Soul and Body (made on an hourly or daily basis).

Concealable

This option is only available for hand-held weapons. The weapon is small enough to be used with one hand and concealed under clothing. Most pistol-sized or knife-sized weapons are Concealable. For more cinematic games, larger weapons such as swords and machine guns can be designed as Concealable as well.

Contagious

Some or all of the attack's damage or other effects will be passed on to others who touch (or otherwise contact) a victim. If mildly contagious, not everyone will be infected; a prospective victim must fail a Stat check at a +4 bonus to be affected. If taken twice, it is highly contagious; someone must fail a Stat check (without modifiers) in order to be affected, or possibly contagion may be automated under some circumstances. The base Check Value is normally the Body Stat, but magical or cybernetic contagion may use Mind or Soul. The GM should adjudicate effects and countermeasures. The Ability is usually combined with the Toxic Disability. Contagious counts as two abilities if mildly contagious or four abilities if highly contagious.

Drain Body

The attack causes the victim to suffer weakness and/or loss of co-ordination. The victim's Body Stat is reduced by 1 for every 20 points of base damage the attack delivers (round up). The Body Stat drain is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Body Stat, but inflicts no other punishment, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. In this case, the Body is drained by 1 for every 20 points of damage the attack would have normally delivered. A character who is reduced to a 0 Body Stat is unable to move. Lost Body Stat Points are recovered at one Point per hour of rest. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value, but Health Points will not be affected.

Drain Mind

The attack causes the victim to lose his or her sanity. The attack may be a psionic attack, a tranquillizer or similar drug, or another form of attack. The victim's Mind Stat is reduced by 1 for every 20 points of base damage the attack delivers (round up). This Mind Stat drain is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Mind Stat, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. In this case, the Mind is drained by 1 for every 20 points of base damage the attack would have normally delivered. A character reduced to 0 Mind is "mindless" and will act in an illogical and animalistic fashion. The drained Points return at the rate of one every hour. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value.

Drain Soul

The attack affects the victim's spirit. This attack may be a wave of fear, despair, or some other willpower-destroying emotion. The victim's Soul Stat is reduced by 1 for every 20 points of damage the attack delivers (round up). This drainage is in addition to any Health Point losses from the attack. To design an attack that only drains the Soul Stat, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. In this case, the Soul is drained by 1 for every 20 points of damage the attack would have normally delivered. A character reduced to 0 Soul is "broken," and lacks all drive or volition. The drained Points return at the rate of one every hour. Losing Stat Levels will also lower the Combat Value, but Health Points will not be affected.

Enduring

Enduring can only be assigned in conjunction with Area Effect. The attack remains active within the affected area over multiple rounds. Examples of this type of attack include chemical clouds, sheets of fire, electrical charges, or supercooled vapours. Anyone entering or remaining in the area is immediately subject to the attack; defense checks are outlined under Area Effect. Each time Enduring is assigned, the Area Effect attack remains active for 1 additional round.

Flare

If the target is hit (or in the radius of an Area Effect weapon attack) the defending character may be blinded. Every target looking in the vicinity of the attack must roll a Body Stat check at a -1 penalty for every 20 points of damage inflicted, ignoring Armour. To design an attack that only blinds opponents, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. In this case, the penalty is -1 for every 20 points of damage the attack would have normally delivered. If a target character rolls greater than his or her Body Stat, he or she is blinded for a number of combat rounds equal to the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll. Flare may be taken multiple times; each time it is taken, add an extra -2 penalty to the Stat check. Flare can also be generalized to cover other sense-overloading attacks. For example, an acoustic attack might cause deafness.

Flexible

This ability represents long, flexible, or extendible attacks such as a prehensile whip, energy-lash, razor-ribbon, or similar attack mode. The target defends at a -2 penalty. If the attacker is strong enough to physically lift the target, a successful attack can trip or disarm an opponent (snagging a hand-held weapon) in lieu of delivering damage. Such non-damaging attack stunts are made at a -2 penalty to the Attack check since they require great skill to execute accurately.

Homing

The attack or weapon fires a projectile or energy bolt that can track and follow its target. The character receives a +4 bonus to his or her Attack check, and if the attack misses or the target successfully defends, the weapon will return to try again (only one more time) in the next combat round. A Homing attack may be vulnerable to Sensory Block, however (see page 65). In a setting where electronic Sensory Blocks are not common (such as fantasy world campaign) Homing counts as two Abilities, rather than one.

Incapacitating

This represents any form of attack that can instantly incapacitate a foe even if it does not inflict actual damage. This includes putting an opponent to sleep or turning him or her to stone. Regardless of whether the attack does physical damage, the victim must make a Stat check (Body, Mind, or Soul — decide when the attack is designed) to avoid being completely incapacitated. The check is made at a +4 bonus with a -1 penalty for every 20 points of damage inflicted. For example, an attack rated for 80 damage would require a Stat check at 0 penalty; one doing 20 damage would be made at a +3 bonus. When designing the attack, specify the form the incapacitation takes: asleep, awake but paralyzed, turned to stone, transformed into an inert doll, etc. The effects will wear off in several minutes, unless the Incurable Ability is also taken. To design an attack that only incapacitates the target, the No Damage Disability should also be assigned. In this case, a penalty of -1 is assigned for every 20 points of damage the attack would have normally delivered. Incapacitating counts as three Abilities.

Incurable

The attack produces wounds or other effects that do not heal naturally, and are incurable by normal methods. Rather than recovering at a normal rate or being amenable to medical treatment, recovery cannot take place until some exotic event or treatment has occurred. This requirement must be specified when the attack is designed, subject to GM approval. Incurable counts as four Abilities.

Indirect

The weapon can fire shots in a high ballistic arc. Examples include grenade launchers and plasma artillery guns. This allows the attacker to shoot at targets hidden behind buildings, hills, or other obstacles (or even shoot over the horizon, if the Long Range Weapon Ability is also taken). Indirect fire is tricky, however. To effectively fire at an indirect location, the attacker must be able to "see" the target (sensors can be used), or someone else must spot the target and relay its position to the attacker. Indirect fire results in a -2 penalty to the Attack check; firing at a target the attacker cannot "see" results in an additional -6 penalty (-8 total). A weapon with the Indirect Weapon Ability can be used under normal mid-range conditions without any penalty.



Kreuzritter strangles Livewire with his armour's awesome power

Irritant

This represents pepper spray, a skunk's musk, an itching spell, or similar effect. Whether or not damage penetrated Armour or Force Fields, the subject must make a Body Stat check at -1 penalty for every 20 points base damage that the attack delivers. If the target fails, the character is partially blinded and distracted (-2 penalty on all checks to do anything) for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which he or she failed the check. Irritant is usually taken in conjunction with the Toxic Disability to simulate an attack against which a gas mask offers protection.

Knockback

The attack impacts the target forcefully, knocking him or her back one metre for every point of damage delivered. Armour is ignored when determining Knockback distance; Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability do reduce Knockback, however. This Ability is for attacks that impact the character, and may not be appropriate for slashing or piercing attacks. The Knockback distance is doubled each time this Ability is assigned. Combat Value (for characters with the ACV Knockback Combat Technique), Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers may be added to the attack damage when determining final Knockback distance; apply these after any doubling for multiple Knockback assignments. The effects of Knockback are described on page 128.

Linked (Attack)

An attack with this Ability is "attached" to another (or "master") attack. The master attack may be an ordinary weapon (such as a Gadget, like a sword or a gun), a Natural Weapon or unarmed attack, or a different Special Attack. If that attack is successful, this "linked" attack automatically hits as well (no defense allowed), but if it misses or fails to penetrate Armour, the linked attack automatically fails too. If the master attack hits and delivers enough damage to successfully penetrate Armour, then the Armour does not protect at all against the damage of the second linked attack. Damage bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, and critical hit multipliers only apply to the master attack, not to each attack. An attack with the Linked Ability may not be given the Accurate or Long Range Abilities or the Inaccurate, Melee, or Short Range Disabilities; its range and accuracy are dependent on the attack to which it is linked. Linked (Attack) counts as two Abilities. If damage bonuses from Combat Value, Massive Damage, Superstrength, etc. are applied to both attacks, this counts as four Abilities.

Long Range

An ordinary attack has an effective range of about 500 metres (10 km in space). This Ability extends the range to 5 km (100 km in space). It can be assigned multiple times: each time it is taken after the first doubles the actual range. Since the Earth's horizon limits line-of-sight for characters standing on the ground, multiple Long Range Abilities are often combined with the Indirect Ability (page 76). The Long Range Ability is incompatible with the Melee or Short Range Disabilities.

Mind or Soul Attack

The attack is not a physical attack but rather is a mental assault (Mind Attack) or contest of spirit or will (Soul Attack). During character creation, the player must specify either Mind or Soul as the focus of the Ability. Instead of the attack requiring Attack or Defense Combat Value checks, the players must roll successful Mind or Soul Stat checks for their characters to attack or defend (though appropriate Skills can modify this). Mind or Soul Attack ignores Armour, Shields, and Force Fields, and affects Insubstantial or Astral characters normally. Both versions count as five Abilities.

Muscle-Powered

This ability normally is only appropriate for melee or thrown weapons. The character may add any damage bonus from the Superstrength Attribute (page 75) to the attack's basic damage. Note that ordinary melee weapons may rely on the user's strength but might not have this ability because they are not durable enough for the user to take advantage of Superstrength (they will break). Also, for a Muscle-Powered Special Attack to inflict Knockback (see page 128), the Knockback Ability (page 71) must be assigned.

No Healing

This is a lesser form of Incurable. The damage from the attack cannot be restored using the Healing or Regeneration Attributes but can otherwise recover or be repaired normally.

Penetrating (Armour)

The Armour Attribute does not stop damage from these attacks as efficiently as usual. Each time Penetrating (Armour) is assigned, the Armour stops 20 less damage than normal from the attack (up to the Armour's maximum rating). For example, assigning Penetrating (Armour) to a Special Attack 3 times reduces the amount of damage the target's Armour stops by 60 points.

Penetrating (Force Field)

The Force Field Attribute does not stop damage from these attacks as efficiently as usual. Each time Penetrating (Force Field) is assigned, the Force Field stops 20 less damage than normal from the attack (up to the Force Field's maximum rating). For example, assigning Penetrating (Force Field) to a Special Attack 5 times reduces the amount of damage the target's Force Field stops by 100 points.

Quake

This attack creates a linear shock wave in the ground, causing rumbling and fractures. The quake "fault" will only be large enough for one person to fall into its depths unless it is combined with the Area Effect Ability. A victim may fall into the crevasse if he or she fails a Body Stat check (the Acrobatics Skill will provide a bonus). The fissure will be approximately one metre deep for the first 20 points of damage inflicted and is doubled for every additional 20 damage points. Thus, a 40 damage point quake would create a fissure two metres deep, while an 80 damage point quake would create a crevice eight metres deep. Although the Massive Damage Attribute is not usually considered for determining fissure depth, this limitation may be ignored if the Quake is also Muscle-Powered (see page 71). Quake can only be used on a solid surface (which may be earth, sand, cement, or asphalt), and may not be combined with the Aura Ability.

Spreading

This type of attack spreads to cover an expanding area like a cone of energy or a spray of projectiles or energy bolts. The defender receives a -1 penalty to his or her Defense check. Multiple adjacent targets in the attack path may also receive damage if they are lined up or in a dense formation, up to a maximum of one extra target for every 20 points of base weapon damage. The Spreading Ability can be acquired multiple times; each one further penalizes the target's Defense check by -1 and doubles the number of possible adjacent targets. Spreading is often assigned in conjunction with the Short Range Disability.

Stun

An attack with this Ability inflicts temporary damage such as an electric shock that shorts out electronics and renders people unconscious. Lost Health Points are recovered at one Point every minute. Stun damage cannot kill. Although the attack does less damage than a regular attack of a comparable Level, it has the advantage that it may be used to incapacitate a foe without the risk of killing him or her.

Tangle

Attacks that can entangle the victim may include an assault that freezes the target in ice, or traps him or her in the branches of an animated plant, or simple webbing. The entanglement has 10 Health Points for every 20 points of damage the attack delivers. If a target does not successfully defend against a Tangle attack, he or she is trapped until sufficient damage is delivered to the entanglement to reduce its Health Points to zero or lower (at this point, it is destroyed). A trapped character has restricted movement and: attacks physically at a -4 penalty, cannot defend, and cannot perform actions that require complex gestures. The character is usually able to speak, however. A victim who has partially destroyed an entanglement may regain additional body movement, however (GM's discretion). A Tangle attack also inflicts damage as normal unless the No Damage disability is also assigned to the attack. In this case, the entanglement has 10 Health Points for every 20 points of damage the attack would have normally delivered. An "Incurable" entanglement can only be damaged by some special means (such as fire or water), defined when the Tangle attack is created. Tangle counts as two Abilities.

Trap

The attack lays a mine, booby trap, or some other similar device, which "sits and waits" until someone triggers it. A successful Mind Stat check will reveal the trap's presence. The Trap Ability can be paired with the Melee Disability (page 73) to simulate a booby trap that must be carefully planted. Without the Melee Disability, the trap can be deployed at a range; a successful Attack check indicates that the Trap was fired or tossed into the correct area.

Undetectable

Most Special Attacks have a visible component that makes it easy for targets to determine who is attacking them. An attack with the Undetectable Ability does not provide any indication that it is about to strike and cannot be traced back to the attacker using normal methods. This may result in the attacker gaining surprise, which prevents the victim from making a Defense check (page 123). If the target knows he or she is under attack, however, a Defense check can still be made at a -8 penalty (as though the attack were invisible; page 52). This Ability is most often associated with non-physical attacks such as ones with the Drain (Any), or Mind or Soul Attack Abilities. Undetectable counts as four Abilities.

Unique Ability

The attack has some other unspecified Ability that is not listed, and is subject to GM approval. Examples can include an attack that alters the target's memories, one that affects the appearance of the target, and many more. The number of Ability slots is determined by the GM based on the benefit the Unique Ability provides.

Vampiric

This Ability can be added to any attack that causes normal damage or one that drains Stat Points. Upon a successful attack, the lost Health Points or Stat Levels are transferred to the attacker. Vampiric counts as two Abilities if the attack can only restore lost Points or Levels (thus, the character could heal him or herself). It counts as three Abilities if the attack can increase the character's Health Points above their normal maximum value (no more than twice normal, however). Finally, it counts as four Abilities if it can increase the character's Stats above their normal maximum value (though not beyond a value of 20). Any values or Points in excess of the user's normal Level fade at a rate of 20 Health Points or one Stat Level per hour. This Ability may not be combined with the Area Effect or Spreading Abilities. Vampiric costs 2, 3, or 4 Ability slots.

Attack Disabilities

Some, none, or many of these Disabilities may be assigned to a Special Attack. The GM may disallow any combination that seems inappropriate.

Table 2-13: Special Attack Disabilities

Disability	Number of Slots	Disability	Number of Slots
Backblast	1 or 2	Self-Destruct	4
Drop Shields	1	Short Range	1
Hand-Held	1 or 0	Slow	1-5
Inaccurate	1	Static	2
Internal	1	Stoppable	1-5
Limited Shots	1-3	Toxic	1
Low Penetration	1	Unique Disability	1
Melee	2	Unreliable	1
No Damage	1	Uses Energy	1 or 2
Only In (Environment)	1 or 2		

Backblast

The attack produces some sort of backblast or other side effect that affects anyone or anything standing directly behind the attacker (within 1-2 metres). An example is a rocket launcher that produces a hazardous backblast to anyone standing behind the gunner, but some spells or supernatural abilities might have similar risks. The

damage of the backblast is normally one-fifth the damage of the actual attack. If this Disability is taken twice, it affects everyone in a 1-2 metre radius around it, including the attacking character (unless he or she also has Special Defense: Own Attributes; page 74). Backblast cannot be combined with the Area Effect and Aura Abilities at the same time.

Drop Shields

This Disability can only be taken if the character also has the Force Field Attribute. It requires the character to turn off all Force Fields before using the attack, and they must remain down until the character's turn to act on the following round.

Hand-Held

Attacks usually emanate from the character, but they may be designated as hand-held. A hand-held weapon can be lost or grabbed by an enemy, or loaned to an ally. The character using the weapon must have at least one hand free to hold it. Optionally, the GM may decide this Disability takes up zero slots (it's for description only).

Inaccurate

The attack is not accurate, suffering a -2 penalty to all Attack checks (or Stat checks, if it is a Mind or Soul Attack). This ability can be taken two or three times for a -4 or -6 penalty.

Internal

The attack is only usable inside a specific structure. This may represent a headquarter's built-in internal security systems or an attack for which the character draws power from inside the building and channels it through his or her body.

Limited Shots

The attack is only usable for a few combat rounds, after which it either runs out of ammunition or power, or simply burns out. Assigning this Disability once means it can make up to six attacks; if taken twice, up to three attacks; if taken three times, only one attack. If the attack also has the Auto-Fire Ability (page 68), one "attack" means a single Auto-Fire burst.

The base number of Disability slots are for attacks that take several minutes or more to "reload." If the attack can be "reloaded" with one action, the number of Disability slots is reduced by 1 (minimum of 1 slot). If the attack can be "reloaded" instantly (an ammunition source is still required), the Disability is worth two fewer slots (minimum of 1 slot).

Low Penetration

The attack has an inferior ability to penetrate Armour and Force Fields relative to its damage. Examples include shotgun blasts, hollow-point bullets, or phased plasma guns. Any Armour or Force Field Attribute stops an additional 20 points of damage. The Game Master must approve multiple assignments of this Disability. This Disability is incompatible with either of the two Penetrating Abilities. GMs must approve Special Attacks with multiple assignments of Low Penetration.

Melee

The attack is only usable against adjacent opponents and may require physical contact. An example of a Melee attack is a physical or energy sword, or a touch that inflicts debilitating effects. Of course, many Melee weapons can be thrown as well in desperate situations, but the attack suffers a -4 attack penalty and the base damage is divided in half. The Melee Disability cannot be combined with the Long Range Ability or Short Range Disability. It is sufficiently limiting that it is equivalent to two Disabilities.

No Damage

The attack does not deliver ordinary physical damage; the attacker's Attack Combat Value and Massive Damage Attribute bonus do not add to damage either. This Disability is usually only taken if combined with Abilities such as Drain (Any), Flare, Incapacitating, Irritant, or Tangle that produce effects that do not rely on physical damage. The damage value of the attack is used only to rate the effectiveness of these special abilities — the greater the damage value, the more effective the attack. Characters that use Special Attacks with the No Damage Disability may still need to roll the damage percentage (page 125), however.

Only In (Environment)

The attack or weapon can only target objects that are on or in a particular limited environment, for example, "only in water" (representing a torpedo) or "only in space" (representing a powerful weapon that requires a vacuum to work). The environment should not be one that is ubiquitous in the campaign (for example, "only in air" is not valid unless a lot of the game action will take place in airless environments). If the environment is very rare in the campaign, the GM may allow this to count as two Disabilities.

Self-Destruct

Use of this attack destroys the weapon (characters obviously take this Disability very rarely). This Disability is often combined with Melee and Area-Effect to represent an explosive self-destruct system. It may not be combined with Limited Uses. It counts as four Disabilities.

Short Range

This attack is only usable at close range (effective range of about 50 meters). The Short Range Disability cannot be combined with the Long Range Ability or the Melee Disability.

Slow

The attacker must use one combat action to aim, charge, chant an incantation, load the weapon, or perform some other necessary activity before each attack. Someone with the Extra Attacks Attribute (see page 43) can use one of his or her extra actions to prepare the attack rather than wasting the entire round. The Slow Disability can be taken more than once to represent an attack that takes even longer to initiate. Assigning it twice increases the time to three rounds; three assignments increase the time to 10 rounds (about a minute); four increases the time to two-six hours; five increases the preparation to days. This Disability may not be used with the Linked (Attack) Ability.

Static

The attack cannot be used while the character is moving. This could be due to a need for precise aim or total concentration. The weapon might also require all power to be diverted to its energy supply, or might be static because of recoil, or another reason. The character may not even make Defense checks on the round a Static

attack is used; if he or she has already made a Defense check, the character cannot attack with a Static weapon until the following round. Static is worth two Disabilities.

Stoppable

The attack fires a projectile or energy bolt that is massive or slow enough to be shot down and does not reach the target until Initiative zero. Consequently, the attack can be stopped in mid-flight. A cannon shell would probably not qualify, but a missile or plasma-ball might. Anyone with an unused combat attack action during the same round may make a ranged or melee attack against the projectile. To stop the attack, a successful hit (or hits) must deliver at least one-third as much damage as that delivered by the Stoppable attack. Stoppable may not be combined with the Melee Disability. Stoppable may be purchased more than once to reflect an attack that takes even longer to reach the target. Each additional Stoppable rating grants one additional round where characters may attempt to intercept or otherwise stop the attack. Weapons using the Indirect or Long Range Abilities can take minutes or hours to reach their targets; in these cases, the Stoppable Disability is assigned a maximum of five times.

Toxic

The attack is a gas, toxin, biological weapon, sound, radiation, or other harmful effect that only damages living things. Non-living material or characters who have the appropriate Adaptation or Special Defense Attributes are immune to its effects.

Unique Disability

The attack has some other unspecified limitation, which is subject to GM approval. Examples could include a weapon that fires in a random direction, one that is extremely costly to operate, an attack that drains Heath Points from the user, etc.

Unreliable

Any time this attack is used and the Attack check is an unmodified (or "natural") 19 or 20, the attack fails to take place and the weapon or ability burns out, jams, overheats, or otherwise malfunctions. The Special Attack will not work again until some condition is fulfilled. For example, repairing a technological weapon requires a skilled individual to make a successful Mind Stat check (one attempt each round), and while the character is making repairs, he or she cannot carry out other activities. The same could apply to a magical attack with a Mind Stat check needed to remember the correct words. Other remedies might be appropriate for recovering different attacks (for example, a supernatural monster whose breath weapon has "burned out" might have to eat a hearty meal first).

Uses Energy

This Disability is only available in campaigns where Energy Points are used. The attack draws upon the user's personal energy, each attack draining 10 Energy Points. This Disability can be taken twice, and, if so, it uses 10 Energy Points per Level of the Special Attack.

Special Defense

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Variable
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 special defense slot (Level 1) increasing to 10 special defenses slots (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; partial defense (for 2 Slots only)

A character with this Attribute is resistant or completely immune to a specific type of uncommon ailment or injury, normally one whose effects are otherwise insidious in nature. Special Defense can be acquired multiple times to represent a character who is resistant or immune to different kinds of attacks/events.

If a category is assigned one slot, the character is partially resistant; for two slots, the character has complete or enhanced resistance. For ability to survive under harsh physical conditions, see the Adaptation Attribute (page 30). For characters who have defenses against particular Attributes, see the Block Power (page 33) Attribute.

Several examples of Special Defenses and their effects are shown below. The GM and players are encouraged to develop their own as well.

Table 2-14: Special Defense

Effect	1 Slot	2 Slots
Ageing	Ages slowly	Does not age
Air/Oxygen to Breathe	Survive in low-oxygen environment	Does not breathe
Disease	Half damage or effect	Immune
Hunger	Need to eat once every 2-4 days	Never need to eat
One Type of Magic	+3 Defense/Stat checks	+6 Defense/Stat checks
Own Attributes	Stat check to avoid effect	Immune
Pain	Unwanted sensation is reduced	No pain is felt
Poison	Half damage or effect	Immune
Sleep	Sleep once every 3-7 days	Never need to sleep
Specific Attack Ability	+3 Defense/Stat checks	+6 Defense/Stat checks
Specific Special Attack	Half damage	No damage

Special Movement

Cost: 1 Point/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 type of movement (Level 1) increasing to 10 types of movement (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; movement is exhausting to the character; involving particular surfaces

The movement abilities may be the result of genetics, mystical forces, supernatural talents, or intense training. The character may select one Special Movement Ability for every Level of this Attribute. Several examples are given below; the GM and players are encouraged to develop additional abilities as well. See Flight (page 44), Hyperflight (page 50), Jumping (page 53), Speed (page 75), Teleport (page 79), Tunnelling (page 80), or Water Speed (page 81) for other methods of movement.

Balance

The character never loses his or her balance, even when running on a narrow rope or beam.

Cat-Like

The character will take half damage (round down) from most falls and always lands on his or her feet.

Dimension Hop

Upon a successful Stat check, the character can instantly travel between his or her home dimension to one other dimension, such as Asgard, Heaven, Hell, alternate Earth, the astral plane (the body is left behind), etc. Each time this method is assigned, the character can travel to another single dimension. Characters who can travel among many dimensions should probably have the Dynamic Powers (Dimensions) Attribute instead. The GM will determine if Dimension Hop is appropriate for his or her campaign.

Light-Footed

The character can skim over sand, snow, or ice at full speed.

Slithering

The character can slither along the ground at normal walking/running speeds. This allows a character to move quickly while maintaining a very low profile.

Swinging/Brachiating

The character can swing through forests and cities (areas with natural or artificial structures above swinging height) using vines/ropes/webbing or simply his or her arms.

Untrackable

The character never leaves footprints, tracks, or a scent when he or she walks or runs.

Wall-Bouncing

The character can move at regular walking speed without touching the ground by bounding back and forth between nearby vertical surfaces (walls). For example, he or she can proceed down hallways or climb an alleyway between two buildings (bouncing from wall to wall).

Wall-Crawling

The character can cling to walls or ceilings as though they were on the ground or floor. This counts as two Special Movement abilities.

Water-Walking

The character can walk or run over water as if he or she was on land. This counts as two Special Movement abilities.

Zen Direction

When the character opens his or her mind to the natural world, he or she will always move in the "right" direction. The "right" direction is not always the desired direction, however.

Speed

Cost: 6 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart and Linear, starting at 100 kph and +2 Initiative (Level 1) increasing to 5 million kph and +20 Initiative (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; Stat/Skill checks required to run safely

On average, a character can sprint up to 6 metres per round (4.3 kph) times his or her Body Stat. A character with Speed can move much faster than this, as well as perceive the world at an increased pace. At Speed Level 5+, the character moves quickly enough to run over any liquid surface as well.

In a superhero game, a fast-moving character can still interact with the world. This means that the character will not run into buildings along city streets because he or she can perceive them early enough and make sharp turns to avoid them. Speedsters can also read books quickly, write at incredible speeds, and perform normal chores and activities at enhanced rates. In addition to gaining +2 Initiative at each Level, the character is harder to hit when moving quickly due to the incredible speed at which the character is moving. For more information about Speed and its influence on combat, see page 121.

Speed is a modular Attribute that does not provide the character with many other benefits typically associated with speedsters, however. Many characters with Speed will also possess one or more Levels in the following Attributes: Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes), Extra Attacks, Extra Defenses, Heightened Awareness, Massive Damage (speed attacks), Mass Decrease (Incorporeal), Regeneration, Special Movement, and Special Attack (tied to Speed through the Dependent Defect).

Superstrength

Cost: 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Slow Progression Chart, starting at 2 tonnes (Level 1) increasing to 60 tonnes (Level 6); then Fast Progression Chart, starting at 100 tonnes (Level 7) increasing to 100,000 tonnes (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; no extra combat damage; Superstrength in single limb only

On average, a character can lift 30 kg times his or her Body Stat, but some characters are far stronger than their Body Stats indicate. This Attribute can represent the muscular strength of a large or powerful non-human, a supernatural ability, or the hydraulic systems of robotic muscles. Each Level of Superstrength determines the maximum mass the character can lift. Each Level



The powerhouse Iron Duke tosses a truck at Sentinel

also adds +10 close combat damage when using punches, kicks, body slams, melee weapons, Special Attacks with the Muscle-Powered Ability, or the Natural Weapon Attribute (see page 57). Each Level also grants a +4 bonus for Body Stat checks where pure strength is involved.

A character's Superstrength is independent of his or her Body Stat. When someone or something has Superstrength, strength moves beyond the 1-20 Stat scale; the Body Stat now represents fitness, durability, and agility rather than actual muscle. Thus, a player could create someone with a Body Stat of 2, but Levels of Superstrength (clumsy but powerful!).

Swarm

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 critter for every current Health Point (Level 1) increasing to 10 critters for every current Health Point (Level 10)
Reduction: Power always used in same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; fewer critters; suffer damage when transforming

A character with this Attribute can transform into a swarm of small creatures: rats, bats, wasps, crows or other creatures or things (such as tiny attack robots). Vampires and demons most often possess this dramatic ability.

The type of swarm must be determined during character creation. The character can create one critter from his or her body for every current Health Point, multiplied by the Level in this Attribute. Thus, a character with 130 current Health Points who has Swarm at Level 4 could transform into a mass of 520 creatures (130 x 4 = 520).

When transformed into a swarm, the character cannot use any of his or her existing Attributes or Skills. The actions of the swarm are basically limited to three options: move, observe, and attack. Additionally, all the critters of the swarm must remain within close proximity of each other (within a radius of five metres per Level).

A swarm's Attack Combat Value is equal to the Swarm Attribute Level + 4. Its attack damage is not based on Combat Value, though. Instead, it inflicts 1 point of damage for every 10 critters (round up; minimum one damage point) in the swarm. In many instances, the Armour and Force Field Attributes will protect the target character from all damage, since the Attributes stop sufficient damage from each critter attack. Against some critters, even regular clothing may be enough to stop some or all damage. Each situation will be different; the GM must determine how much damage, if any, will penetrate the target's defenses.

A swarm can be attacked normally, and each creature in it dies if it is hit (no Defense check is allowed). Unless an opponent is using an attack with the Area-Effect or Spreading Abilities (see pages 68

and 72), however, only a single member of the swarm can be killed per attack (GM's discretion). Consequently, a swarm of 200 creatures requires 200 attacks to completely destroy, and each round, the swarm can inflict up to 20 points of damage by biting or stinging. If a swarm's opponent lacks an effective weapon, he or she should consider running away very quickly!

A character who dissolved into a swarm may choose to revert into normal form during his or her Initiative in a combat round. To accomplish this, all available critters in the swarm (those not killed or trapped) must join together. Transforming back to normal form replaces a character's action for that round. The character will return to normal form with Health Points equal to the number of critters that recombined, divided by the Swarm Attribute Level (round down). For example, if a character with 130 current Health Points and Swarm at Level 4 divided into 520 creatures, and after a battle, recombined with only 100 available critters, the character would then have a current total of 25 Health Points (100÷4=25).

Telekinesis

Cost: 2 or 4 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg (Level 1) increasing to 1 billion kg (Level 10)
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; more specific matter limitation

The character can concentrate on an object and move it without physically touching it. Telekinesis may represent psionic ability, magic, or some form of tractor beam. Characters with the ability to magically control the movement of a particular element (Earth, Water, etc.) may also use Telekinesis to represent their particular ability.

A character using Telekinesis can lift him or herself, a character, an object, or a group of adjacent objects and move it at a fast walking speed (10 metres/round) or manipulate it with the dexterity of a human hand. The higher the Attribute Level, the greater fine motor control the character has when manipulating objects as well. The character can also levitate an object and have it strike another person as if it were a short-ranged thrown weapon. The mass Telekinesis can lift is reduced by a factor of 10 when throwing an object hard enough to inflict damage. For example, a character with Level 4 could lift up to 1,000 kg but could only throw objects massing up to 100 kg. This is treated as a normal attack and thus can be negated by a successful defense. Damage depends on the mass of the object hurled: 5-15 points for an object massing up to 1 kg, 15-30 points for up to 10 kg, 45 points for one up to 100 kg, 60 points for one up to 1,000 kg (one tonne), etc. The same damage applies to the object being hurled. If Telekinesis is used to directly crush or constrict a target, damage delivered equals 5 points for each Attribute Level.

A character who uses Telekinesis to grab another person and throw him or her uses the same procedure, but this requires a successful Attack Combat check to "grab" the target. Accurately tossing an opponent so that he or she hits another target requires a second successful Attack check. If attempting to disarm a character with Telekinesis, the subject should be allowed a Body Stat check to retain the weapon at a -1 Check Value penalty per Level of the disarming character's Telekinesis Attribute. If a character wishes to fly at speeds exceeding 10 metres/round, he or she needs the Flight Attribute (page 44) rather than Telekinesis.

Ordinary Telekinesis (capable of moving anything physical, but not forms of energy) costs 4 Points/Level. At a cost of only 2 Point/Level, the character may have a more focused Telekinesis. This restricts the character to telekinetically moving (or sculpting) a particular type of matter. Some examples are given below.

Air

The character can only move air (or other gases). A cubic metre of air masses about 1.3 kg. Enough air to fill a 3 metre by 3 metre by 3 metre (roughly 1,000 cubic feet) room masses 35 kg.

Earth

The character can only move dirt, rock, stone, sand, etc. He or she cannot affect treated metals. A cubic metre of packed dirt masses about 2 tonnes; the same mass of concrete masses about 2.5 tonnes, while a cubic metre of solid granite masses about 2.7 tonnes.

Fire

The character can only affect flames of an existing fire, or can possibly start them with his or her mind as well (GM's discretion). Since fire does not have mass, the Level indicates the size of the flames that can be controlled and manipulated: small fires at Level 1 (like a candle or match flame), up to raging infernos that cover several city blocks at Level 10.

Metal

The character's Telekinesis only works on metal. This may be a mystical limitation, or it may be the character's Power is actually based in magnetics. A cubic metre of steel masses about 8 tonnes.

Water

The character can lift and move water. A cubic metre of water (1,000 litres) masses about a tonne. A gallon of water (about 4 litres) masses about 4 kilograms.

Wood

The character's Power only works on wood (living or dead). This ability is usually mystical in origin and common to nature priests and spirits. A cubic metre of wood masses just under a tonne.

Telepathy

Cost: 1-3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Descriptive
Reduction: Power always used in same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; time limit; usage weakens character

Telepathy is the classic psionic ability. Versions of telepathy may also represent other magical capabilities; demons that can tempt their victims often possess Telepathy, for example.

Telepathy costs 1 Point/Level if its utility is quite restricted (for example, "only works with canines" or "only with close friends"). It costs 2 Points/Level if its utility is somewhat restricted (for example, "only with humans" or "only with beasts"). It costs 3 Points/Level if it has universal utility.

This Attribute allows the character to read and transmit thoughts, and at higher Levels, to actually "invade" a person's mind and probe their memories or alter their thoughts. Telepathy works only if a subject is in very close proximity, unless the Range or Area PMV Rank is 2 or higher. Pinpointing a single target in a crowd can be difficult; the GM may require a Mind Stat check, modified by any Levels the character has in the Heightened Awareness (page 48) or Heightened Senses Attribute (page 49).

A subject cannot detect a telepath reading thoughts or sensory impressions unless he or she has the Telepathy or Mind Shield Attributes at an equal or higher Level. If so, he or she can choose to block the telepath, in which case the only way to get through is via mental invasion. A subject will always be aware of a mental invasion (although a non-telepath may not understand exactly what is going on). See the Mind Combat rules (page 131) in Chapter 3 for details of mental invasions.

Once contact is made, a telepath at Level 6 or higher can temporarily gain a target's specific knowledge that is associated with a Skill. The actual Skill is not learned in full, however. For example, a telepath can scan the mind of a nearby surgeon to learn how to perform a specific operation on an ally, but he or she does not gain the Medical Skill. The telepath will soon forget this newly learned Skill-based knowledge.

Unlike most Attributes, Telepathy only has entries for Levels 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. If necessary, the GM can interpolate the intermediate Levels. When performing a Mind Stat check to determine if the Telepathy attempt was successful, the character receives a Check Value bonus equal to half the Attribute's Level (for example, a Level 8 Telepath makes his or her Mind Stat checks with a +4 Check Value bonus).

Level 2 The character can, by concentrating, use mind reading to pick up the "loud" surface thoughts of a subject. A "loud" thought is something about which the subject is thinking intensely or that has a very strong emotional content. The character can also transmit a single feeling, such as "fear" or "love" to another person.

Level 4 The character can, by concentrating, use mind reading to pick up the ordinary surface thoughts of a subject. The character can only read what a person is actually thinking at the time. Two telepaths can communicate with one another at conversational speeds by reading each other's thoughts. The character can also transmit a word, simple image, or simple concept (like "flower," or a person's face) to a non-telepath on which he or she concentrates. It requires an entire round of concentration to convey one concept, which makes telepath to non-telepath communication slow.

Level 6 The character can easily read a subject's surface thoughts and sensory impressions (for example, seeing through a subject's eyes, feeling what the subject feels, etc.). The character can choose to ignore some senses if desired. The character can send and receive mental speech to a non-telepath at normal conversational speeds. If the Targets PMV is raised to Level 2 or higher, the character can broadcast the mental speech of one subject to others in the range/area as well.

Level 8 The character has the same capabilities as at Level 6 Telepathy. In addition, he or she can invade another person's mind. This counts as an attack, and if the subject is unwilling or unaware, the character will enter Mind Combat with him or her (see page 131). If the subject is willing or loses the mental combat, the telepath can probe his or her memory for information he or she needs. The character will also automatically read surface thoughts of anyone within the telepathy area.

Level 10 The character has the same capabilities as Level 8 Telepathy. He or she automatically shares the sensory experiences of anyone within the telepathy area without need for concentration, unless he or she deliberately tries to block this ability. Additionally, a successful mental invasion can probe memories that the subject can no longer consciously remember, delete existing memories, and plant false ones.

Example

Jade Naga, a member of the serpentine Haud, possesses Telepathy (Haud only) at Level 6 with the Area and Targets PMVs both at Rank 5. He can therefore easily read surface thoughts of up to 100 different Haud within a 1 km radius. He can also mentally communicate at conversational speeds. If a check is required to perform a telepathic feat (such as reading the mind of an unwilling target), Jade Naga makes the check with a +3 bonus.

Teleport

Cost: 5 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind
Power Modifier Values: Area, Range, Targets
Progression: Fast Progression Chart, starting at 10 m (Level 1) increasing to 10 million km (Level 10)
Reduction: Power always used in the same way
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; teleport not accurate; naked form only

Teleport enables the character to transport him or herself instantly from place to place without crossing the intervening space. It is a common ability for psionic characters, sorcerers, and superhumans.

Teleporting is only possible if the character has visited the intended destination or can see or otherwise sense the destination (possibly through the Heightened Senses or Sixth Sense Attributes). The Game Master may allow characters to teleport to unknown destinations (such as "100 metres up," or "to the other side of the door"), perhaps for an additional 1 or 2 Character Points total. Accidentally teleporting into a solid object may be fatal or simply cause a failed teleport at the GM's option. A character can carry anything while teleporting that he or she could normally carry.

When Teleport is first assigned, the GM may ask the player to decide if velocity (speed and direction) is conserved during travel. Alternatively, the character might adapt velocity to each Teleport individually. In many campaigns, the effects of velocity will simply be ignored.

Tough

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Linear, starting at +20 Health Points (Level 1) increasing to +200 Health Points (Level 10)
Reduction: None
Restrictions: None

Possessing this Attribute increases the Health Points of the character, allowing him or her to withstand more damage in combat. The Tough Attribute, along with the Body Stat, also reflects a character's resistance to sickness, disease, and other physical ailments. See page 102 of Step 7: Derived Values for more information on Health Points. Note that characters with high Body or Soul Attributes may be very healthy even without this Attribute.

Transfer

Cost: 5 or 10 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Soul
Power Modifier Values: Duration, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at 1 Level of Power Attributes (Level 1) increasing to 10 Levels of Power Attributes (Level 10)
Reduction: More than one but less than all
Restrictions: Character loses Attribute while it is transferred; transfer to specific type of targets; transfer of specific Attributes

Upon a successful Stat Soul check, the character can temporarily grant the use of any one of his or her Power Attributes (not Characteristic Attributes) to any single willing target character within the Range PMV distance. Dynamic Powers and Power Flux cannot be Transferred under normal circumstances. The Transfer Attribute Level determines the maximum Attribute Level that can be granted. The Level of a transferred Attribute replaces the target's corresponding Level (if applicable), which can be an increase or decrease. The target gains the benefits of a transferred Power as long as indicated by the Duration PMV. The GM may also decide that Stats, Skills, and/or Characteristic Attributes can be given to a target when Transfer reaches Level 5 or higher. To grant Attributes to multiple targets, the Transfer Attribute can be assigned multiple times.

For 5 Points/Level the character can only transfer one Attribute at any single time. When the character grants a new ability, the target ceases benefiting from any currently transferred Power. For 10 Points/Level, the character can transfer all desired Attributes simultaneously to a single target. When an Attribute is Transferred, the receiving character is in complete control of its abilities.

Transmutation

Cost: 3-5 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Power Modifier Values: Duration, Range
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 1 kg (Level 1) increasing to 50,000 kg (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; creation is visually flawed; limited control over actual object created

This Attribute allows a character to transmute one non-living object (or set of connected objects) into another. Transmutation costs 5 Points/Level if the character can transmute any object into another (within the limits of his or her Level). It costs 4 Points/Level if the character can only transmute (to or from) a general class of objects such as "metal," "weapons," "clothing," or "food." It also costs 4 Points/Level if the character can only transmute one object to another of similar mass; the types of objects are unrestricted. Finally, the cost is 3 Points/Level if the character is limited to a transmuration within a specific category and of similar mass, such as

"regular clothes to battle costume," "lead to gold," or "spoiled food to edible food." The GM may restrict any categories that seem overly broad or too powerful.

Few characters with the Transmutation Attribute will also possess the Creation Attribute (page 37). Since Transmutation allows a character to transform air, the earth, and buildings into anything else, this Attribute effectively "trumps" Creation. Only in rare circumstances will a character find him or herself in a situation in which nothing in the immediate area can be transmuted.

The character cannot transmute material into new objects outside the character's experience. The character could transmute a weapon into a book, painting or videotape, but the content must be something with which he or she was already familiar. Likewise, a character who had no familiarity with computers could not transmute a television into one using Transmutation. The GM may choose to require a Mind Stat check (or relevant Skill check) if the character attempts a particularly complex transmutation. Failure may indicate the new object does not function properly; this is especially applicable when creating complex technological devices. Unless the GM decides otherwise, Transmutation is only able to make objects that could be classified as Gadgets; it cannot create Items of Power. When attempting to transmute an Item of Power, the character suffers a penalty to the Mind or Soul Stat check of -2 for each Level of the Item of Power.

The object will remain transmuted for a period of time indicated by the Duration PMV.

Tunnelling

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 10 m/hour (Level 1) increasing to 500 km/hour (Level 10)
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; in specific terrain; depth limitation

The Tunnelling Attribute allows a character to move earth and/or burrow underground. Tunnelling assumes that the character is going through sand or packed earth; boring through solid rock is one Level slower. The tunnel the character leaves behind will either be permanent or will collapse immediately (must be specified during creation of each tunnel).

Unique Attribute

Cost: 1-10 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic or Power
Relevant Stat: Variable
Power Modifier Values: Variable
Progression: Variable
Reduction: Any
Restrictions: Any

This Attribute covers any and all Character Attributes (Characteristic or Power) not detailed in the rules. Often one single Point in a Unique Character Attribute is sufficient to give the character "flavour," but more Points can be allocated to enhance the effects on game play and must be added if the Attribute would be of considerable benefit. Discuss the Attribute with the GM to determine what specific game effects the Unique Character Attribute possesses.

The GM should assign a Point cost per Level based on how the Attribute compares to other Attributes and how useful it is. An Attribute that is somewhat useful in the game should cost 1 Point/Level; one that is very useful should cost 2-3 Points/Level; one that is extremely useful should cost 4-6 Points/Level; and one that is exceptionally powerful and useful should cost 7-10 (or more) Points/Level.

Unknown Superhuman Power

Cost: Variable
Type: Characteristic or Power
Relevant Stat: Variable
Power Modifier Values: Variable
Progression: Special (see below)
Reduction: Any
Restrictions: Any

In some campaigns, the characters may be unaware of their superhuman Powers until they manifest at crucial moments. To represent this, the player can allocate some Points to Unknown Superhuman Power when creating the character. The player does not purchase a Level in this Attribute — he or she simply spends a

Example

Julie is creating a character for a game that Laura is running. She works out her character concept and decides to play a character that just recently gained superhuman Powers in a freak accident at work. She selects a couple of Powers that she wants her character to have (Armour and Superstrength) but decides that her character has yet to discover all of her abilities; she assigns 40 Character Points to the Unknown Superhuman Attribute. The GM increases the total by 50%, to 60 Character Points, and selects 60 Points worth of Powers for Julie's character. Laura does not tell Julie what the Powers are — she and her character will discover those abilities over the course of the game. In the first adventure, Laura has Julie's character hit by a powerful punch. Though Julie's character's Armour protects her from most of the damage, she is still knocked back, off of the roof of a high-rise office building. As her character falls towards the pavement, Laura informs Julie that her character suddenly stops in mid-air, floating. A moment later, her character is climbing into the air, back towards the rooftop. Laura tells Julie that her character has the Flight Attribute, which she records on her character sheet. At some point later, Julie is going to have her character test how fast her character can fly to determine her Flight Attribute Level. Also, with 60 Character Points of unknown powers, there is a good chance that Flight is only the first Power she will discover.

selected amount of Character Points. The GM takes those Points and adds a bonus of 50% (rounding up) and uses them to assign other Characteristic or Power Attributes to the character. The GM does not tell the player which Attributes have been assigned; they are revealed to the player (and character) as the game unfolds and the Powers manifest. GMs are encouraged to reveal the character's Powers slowly and when it is appropriate for the campaign's story. The GM should never feel pressured to tell the player what his or her character's unknown Attributes are before the time is right.

Water Speed

Cost: 2 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at 5 kph (Level 1) increasing to 100,000 kph (Level 10)
Reduction: Limited control
Restrictions: Under certain conditions; only surface travel; time limitation

A character with Water Speed can float and travel on or under water. Aquatic creatures or amphibious non-humans such as mermaids usually possess this Attribute. The character can swim on the surface at high speeds and dive underwater for brief periods by holding his or her breath, or indefinitely if he or she has the Adaptation (Underwater) Attribute. To survive the pressure associated with deep diving, the Adaptation (Pressure) Attribute must also be assigned. Also, depending on the speed at which the character is moving, opponents may suffer a penalty to hit the character (see Speed Modifiers, page 123).

Wealth

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Characteristic
Relevant Stat: None
Power Modifier Values: None
Progression: Medium Progression Chart, starting at $500,000 (Level 1) increasing to $10 billion (Level 10)
Reduction: Very specific utility
Restrictions: Difficult to access funds; less non-liquid assets; spending limits on single items

The character is more financially stable ("liquid") than an average person. This will allow him or her to easily acquire commercially available goods, and bribe or hire people. Note that hirelings that are intensely loyal to the character should still be acquired through the Henchmen or the Sidekick Attributes. The character usually has non-liquid assets (like houses or real estate) commensurate with his or her wealth as well. In order to have access to things that are illegal or difficult to acquire without special licenses, the character should still acquire the Organizational Ties or Gadgets Attributes (pages 59 and 47).

Designer's Note

Gadgets/Items of Power vs. Wealth

What is to prevent a player taking Wealth (see page 81) and using the money that the Attribute grants his or her character to purchase all sorts of equipment without having to spend the Character Points? Well, the short answer is "nothing." Wealth is a very influential Attribute and thus has a high Point cost. Players should be able to use the money that Wealth affords them to purchase equipment for their characters. Since they have not purchased that equipment with Character Points, however, as is done with Gadgets (see page 47) and Item of Power (see page 52), the item is not protected from GM destruction. When a player selects an item with Gadgets or Item of Power, he or she can be relatively certain that the item is secure from random destruction or loss. The player's investment of Character Points means that the item is an intrinsic part of the character. Thus, if lost or destroyed, the item will be replaced with another item (or superpower) of equal Character Point value or will eventually (usually within two or three game sessions) be returned to the character. Items purchased with money, through Wealth, are not afforded the same protection. If a GM wishes to have a villain destroy the character's fancy new car that he is driving, brand new, off the lot, the GM can do so without hesitation. There is no necessity to replace the item since it was purchased with money, not Character Points. If the character wants another car, he will have to plop down some more money to buy one.

Another essential difference is availability. Items purchased through Item of Power or Gadgets will always be available to the character with little to no effort (they may need to go back to their base to get it, but it will be there). For a character to get items with Wealth, they must first purchase the item which, for rare and expensive items, can take weeks or even longer, depending on what they want. Further, while characters with Wealth have a great deal of money at their disposal, they may not have liquid assets available when they are needed. The character, for example, may have a rare collection of cars worth $100 million, but in order to spend some of that money, the character must first sell off one or more of his valuable collection, adding additional time to the process of purchasing what is needed.

Thus, while Wealth may afford a character a large number of toys, it does not afford those toys any protection from the ravages of the GM's villains and offers a greatly reduced accessibility to those items.

Example

Slipstream — Mark first assigns Speed to Slipstream; Level 5 (30 Points) allows the speedster to move at 10,000 kph, which is an appropriate speed for most city adventures. He then chooses other Attributes related to his fast reflexes: Attack Combat Mastery Level 4 (12 Points); Combat Technique Level 4 (4 Points); Defense Combat Mastery Level 1 (2 Points); Extra Attacks Level 3 (24 Points); Extra Defenses Level 4 (12 Points); Heightened Awareness Level 4 (4 Points); Regeneration Level 1 (6 Points); and Special Movement Level 3 (3 Points).

Mark then rounds out Slipstream with other Attributes relating to his alien heritage or his status on Earth: Features Level 2 (Appearance x2; 2 Points) since he is very attractive; Gadgets Level 1 (Time Suit; 1 Point) to represent the suit needed to keep him from always running fast; Mind Shield Level 2 (2 Points) since his race has natural resistance to mind invasions; Organizational Ties Level 6 (6 Points) for the position of Physics Department Head at Empire University; Organizational Ties Level 8 (8 Points) for his position in Empire City's beloved superhero team, the Guard; Special Defense Level 2 (Level 2) since Slipstream ages slowly and is resistant to disease; and Tough Level 2 (4 Points) to reflect his race's vitality.

Mark is pretty sure that Slipstream will also require Highly Skilled to give extra Skill Points, but since he doesn't know what Level would be appropriate yet, he holds back until he assigns the Skills.

With 122 Points used to acquire Attributes, Slipstream has overspent by 3 Character Points. Mark will need to add some Defects to bring the balance back to zero.

Alice — Combat-related Attributes are obviously important for Alice, Queen of Hearts. Jesse makes a list of Attributes that are appropriate for his vision of Alice as a talented assassin: Attack Combat Mastery Level 6 (18 Points); Combat Technique Level 9 (9 Points); Defense Combat Mastery Level 5 (10 Points); Extra Attacks Level 1 (8 Points); Extra Defenses Level 2 (6 Points); Features Level 2 (Appearance x2; 2 Points); Gadgets Level 3 (Weapons; 6 Points); Heightened Awareness Level 2 (2 Points); and Massive Damage Level 3 (Short-ranged attacks; 6 Points).

Since Alice also has psychic abilities (many relating to combat), Jesse adds the following Attributes to make Alice a particularly effective nemesis for Slipstream: Flight Level 2 (Skimmer; 4 Points); Force Field Level 1 (Shield; Area PMV 2; 6 Points); Invisibility Level 3 (9 Points); Mind Shield Level 3 (3 Points); Sensory Block Level 1 (Telepathy; Area PMV 4; 3 Points); Sixth Sense Level 2 (Emotions and Telepathy; Area PMV 4; 6 Points); Special Movement Level 5 (5 Points); Telekinesis Level 2 (Solid Matter; Area PMV 3; 11 Points); Telekinesis Level 2 (Fire; Area PMV 3; 7 Points); and Telepathy Level 4 (Humans; Area PMV 3; Targets PMV 2; 13 Points).

Alice will have many Skills, and Jesse knows he will need to return to this step to add the Highly Skilled Attribute once he determines the number of Skill Points needed.

With 136 Points used to acquire Attributes, Alice has overspent by 9 Character Points. Jesse will need to add some Defects to bring the balance back to zero.

Step 5: Select Skills

Your character's Skills represent his or her extensive training and experience in a particular field. Skill Points, not Character Points, are used to acquire them.

A starting character receives 30 Skill Points plus an additional 10 Skill Points for each Level of the Highly Skilled Attribute (page 49) that he or she possesses. A character with the Unskilled Defect (page 100) has 10, 20, or 30 fewer Skill Points. Non-player characters created by the GM may have any number of Skill Points. Minor characters will usually have only 5-15 Skill Points, for example, while a major, recurring villain may have 100 or more.

The different Skills are divided into Levels 1 through 5. Increasing the value of a Skill by one Level requires 1-12 Skill Points, depending on the Skill. The higher the Skill Level, the better your character is and the broader his or her knowledge within the field.

Table 2-15: Skill Level Descriptions

Skill Level 1	Well-Trained. The character has had moderate training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 2	Expert. The character has had significant training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 3	Veteran. The character has had extensive training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 4	Master. The character has had exhausrive training and practice with the Skill.
Skill Level 5	Grand Master. The character has unparalleled ability and knowledge with the Skill.

Skills and Specialities

General and Combat Skills have a number of associated Specializations, which describe the different ways that the Skill may be used. For example, Gun Combat is divided into Auto-fire, Pistol, and Rifle. When you assign a Skill to your character, choose one of the listed Specialization or create a new Specialization with GM approval. Your character will be significantly better in the chosen Specialization than he or she will be in the other aspects of the Skill. A Specialization is usually recorded in parentheses after the Skill, for example, "Gun Combat (Pistol) Level 3."

Instead of improving a Skill by one Level, it is possible to take an extra Specialization. Each extra Specialization costs only one Skill Point regardless of the Point cost of the Skill. If your character has Skill Points to spare, however, you may find it more advantageous to add an extra Skill Level rather than take many extra Specializations.

Using Skills

Each Skill has its own description, which indicates game effects and the Stat which is usually most relevant to the Skill's use, should a Skill check be needed. Game mechanics for using Skills in play are described under Skill checks (page 109), but there is no need to worry about them while designing a character. Simply choose those Skills that most closely fit your concept.

A player should not assign a particular Skill to his or her character to justify some familiarity within the field. Even a Level 1

Table 2-16: Skill Point Costs

Skill	Cost	Relative Stat
Acrobatics	6	Body
Animal Training	1	Soul
Architecture	2	Mind
Artisan	2	Body/Soul Average
Biological Sciences	4	Mind
Boating	1	Body/Mind Average
Burglary	3	Body or Mind
City Knowledge	3	Mind
Climbing	2	Body
Computers	4	Mind
Controlled Breathing	1	Body or Soul
Cultural Arts	2	Mind
Demolitions	5	Body or Mind
Disguise	3	Body, Mind, or Soul
Domestic Arts	1	Mind or Soul
Driving	2	Body or Mind
Electronics	4	Mind
Etiquette	1	Mind
Foreign Culture	2	Mind
Forgery	4	Mind
Gaming	1	Mind or Soul
Interrogation	4	Mind or Soul
Intimidation	3	Body, Mind, or Soul
Languages	1	Mind
Law	3	Mind
Management/Administration	1	Mind
Mechanics	4	Mind
Medical	3	Mind
Military Sciences	4	Mind
Navigation	2	Mind
Occult	2	Mind
Performing Arts	2	All Stat Average
Physical Sciences	5	Mind
Piloting	2	Body/Mind Average
Poisons	4	Mind
Police Sciences	4	Mind
Power Usage	8	Body, Mind, or Soul
Powerlifting	6	Body
Riding	1	Body, Mind, or Soul
Seduction	3	Body or Soul
Sleight of Hand	3	Body
Social Sciences	2	Mind
Sports	1	Body
Stealth	3	Body
Street Sense	2	Mind or Soul
Swimming	1	Body
Urban Tracking	3	Mind
Visual Arts	2	Body, Mind, or Soul
Wilderness Survival	1	Mind
Wilderness Tracking	2	Mind
Writing	1	Mind/Soul Average

Combat Skill	Cost	Relative Stat
Archery	7	None
Gun Combat	8	None
Heavy Weapons	9	None
Melee Attack	7	None
Melee Defense	7	None
Ranged Defense	12	None
Special Ranged Attack	10	None
Thrown Weapons	8	None
Unarmed Attack	8	None
Unarmed Defense	8	None

Skill assignment reflects a significant amount of training, and will demonstrate that your character is quite knowledgeable or capable in the chosen area. If a character has only limited capabilities within a specific area, he or she should not possess the relevant Skill. For example, anyone can throw a punch or fire a gun without necessarily having any real talent. A character that knows how to drive a car safely on city streets does not automatically need the Driving (Car) Skill nor does someone with a first year university course in physics necessarily have Physical Sciences (Physics). A character who is a "natural" or "prodigy" in a particular field may have a high Skill Level after only a small amount of formal training. Conversely, a character may have high Skill Levels without any formal training, because he or she has used the Skill in daily life for many years (such as a brawny farm worker having the Powerlifting Skill). Characters should rarely possess Skill Levels for 4 or 5 — this Level of ability reflects an incredibly high degree of proficiency. A character with Skill Level 5 is widely regarded as the best in his or her field. Someone with a Master's Degree in a chosen field would have a Skill Level of 1 or 2 so ensure that a character's capability matches the Skill Level assigned.

Skill Point Costs

In the Tri-Stat System, the Point cost of a Skill is based on its utility in the game and not on the difficulty of learning the Skill (see Table 2-16 for the per Level Skill costs). Thus, in a typical Silver Age comic book setting, action, scientific, and combat-oriented Skills are fairly costly at 8-12 Skill Points per Level, while other less useful Skills only require 1-6 Skill Points per Level. Skills are subdivided into General Skills and Combat Skills to help highlight the importance of combat knowledge within the genre.

Table 2-17 is a guideline for determining how much a particular Skill should be worth in a specific campaign:

Table 2-17: Skill Cost Descriptions

6-12 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that define a particular campaign setting and will be vital in nearly all aspects of a story. Examples: Acrobatics, Powerlifting, most Combat Skills.
5 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that will be used multiple times in a particular game session, or give characters extreme advantages. Examples: Demolitions, Physical Sciences.
4 Points/Level	This is appropriate for general adventuring Skills that characters will find useful in most story lines, or give characters significant advantages. Examples: Biological Sciences, Computers, Mechanics, Police Sciences.
3 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that are specialized enough that a character might use them only once in a typical session, but which are either of general utility or are likely to be important to the campaign. Examples: City Knowledge, Disguise, Law, Medical, Stealth.
2 Points/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that may be beneficial, but for which opportunities for use will probably not come up frequently. Examples: Cultural Arts, Foreign Culture, Social Sciences.
1 Point/Level	This is appropriate for Skills that are mainly used to flesh out character backgrounds, but which will not usually be important to play. Examples: Boating, Domestic Arts, Languages, Riding, Sports.

Skill Groups

Some Game Masters and players prefer a less-rigid Skill system for their campaigns — one with which they can indicate general knowledge within an area of expertise without assigning specific Skills. To accommodate this preference, you can use the Skill Groups we provide below ... or create your own custom Groups.

A Skill Group represents a broad area of learning that provides dice roll bonuses the same way that normal Skills do (see page 109). Skill Groups do not, however, provide combat bonuses. Rather than specific Skills, however, a Skill Group relates to all aspects within the field, as agreed upon by the GM and player. For example, the Scientific Skill Group usually indicates high levels of competency in: biological sciences, physical sciences, medical sciences, natural sciences, theoretical sciences, etc. A character may possess several Levels in multiple Groups when appropriate.

Skill Groups are acquired with Character Points rather than Skill Points. If Skill Groups are used in your game, Skill Points will probably not be used at all; we do not recommend mixing individual Skills and Skill Groups. Like normal Skills, Skill Group assignments can range from Levels 1 through 5. Skill Groups do not have any Specializations, however.

Very brief descriptions of the Skill Groups are included below:

Everyman Skills that are often obtained without formal education, and that have applications in daily life.

Philosophy Skills related to artistic endeavours and the social academic fields.

Business Skills that cover a wide variety of business applications, including management, sales, policy, and savvy.

Diplomatic Skills common to world travellers and those with political interests.

Street Skills that reflect familiarity with underworld elements as well as urban culture and survival.

Technical Skills related to gadgets and their functioning, including aspects of mechanics, electronics, and computers.

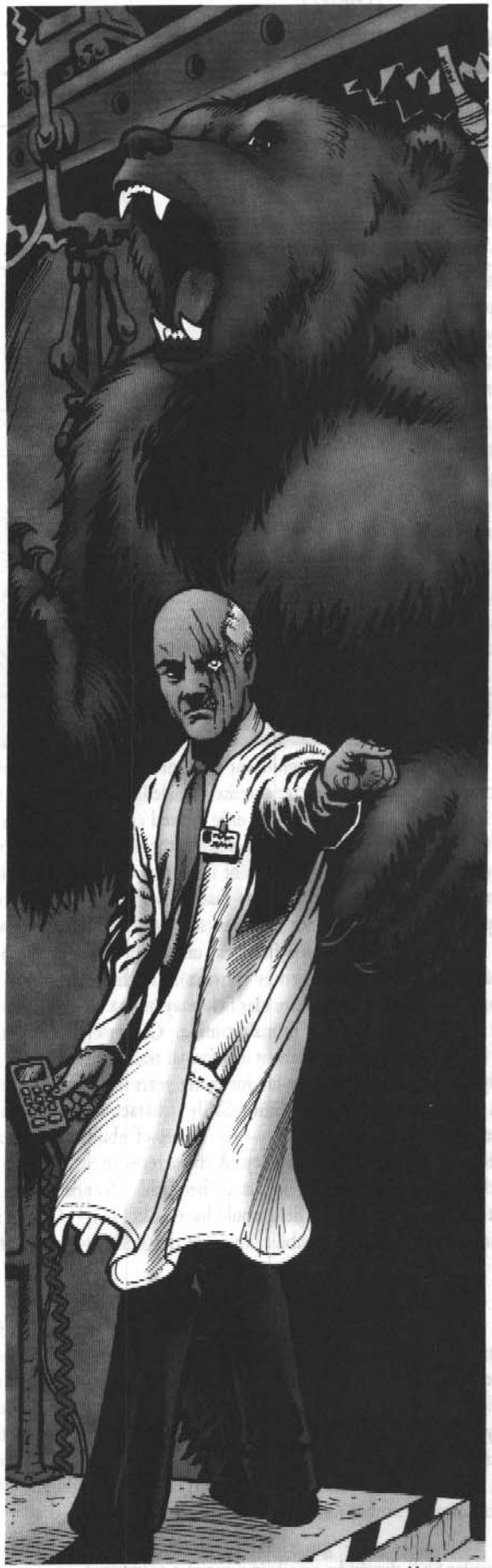
Military Skills connected to organized troop efforts, espionage, and combat support.

Scientific Skills appropriate to trained academics in quantitative fields, such as biological, physical, medical, and natural sciences.

Adventuring Skills that apply to a broad spectrum of high-risk explorations of the unknown in urban or wilderness environments.

Detective Skills relating to police sciences, investigations, urban immersion, and subterfuge.

Skill Group	Cost
Everyman	2 Points/Level
Philosophy	2 Points/Level
Business	3 Points/Level
Diplomatic	3 Points/Level
Street	4 Points/Level
Technical	4 Points/Level
Military	5 Points/Level
Scientific	5 Points/Level
Adventuring	6 Points/Level
Detective	6 Points/Level



The diabolical Mr. Matthews prepares to unleash his mutated bear, Montgomery

General Skills

Acrobatics
Cost: 6 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Specializations: Balance, Flexibility, Jumps, Tumbling

The ability to perform feats of agility with minimal chance for injury. Includes jumping, flipping, contorting, and reacting quickly.

Animal Training
Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Soul
Specializations: Any single animal such as dogs, dolphins, horses, etc.

The ability to teach and train animals with an intellect above that of instinctive insects. An animal usually has a Mind Stat of 1-2.

Architecture
Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Aquatic, Bridges, Fortifications, Small Buildings, Skyscrapers

Knowledge of construction methods, architectural drafting, etc. A successful use of this Skill can also find weak points in constructions or help in locating old structural plans.

Artisan
Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Soul
Specializations: Carpentry, Leatherworking, Metalworking, Plumbing, Tailoring, Woodworking

This Skill represents a character's ability to work with a variety of materials to repair or produce useful or aesthetically pleasing objects not electronic or mechanical in nature.

Biological Sciences
Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Bacteria/Viruses, Botany, Ecology, Genetics, Physiology, Zoology

This field covers scientific knowledge of how living things function.

Boating
Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Mind
Specializations: Hovercraft, Large Ships, Small Boats, Submarines

The ability to safely operate a watercraft.

Burglary
Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specializations: Breaking-and-Entering, Hot-Wiring, Safe Cracking.

The ability to open locks, quietly cut glass, hot-wire car ignitions, etc. The ability does not cover disarming electronic security systems, which is handled by Electronics (Security) Skill.

City Knowledge
Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: One specific area (district, neighbourhood, street) of a single city

Knowledge of the geography and people of a single city, and one specific area within it. The smaller the area, the more detailed and extensive the character's knowledge. This Skill may be assigned multiple times to indicate knowledge of several cities. Alternatively, the word "city" can be replaced by other locations such as "village," "forest," "lake," etc.

Climbing
Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Specializations: Natural Surfaces, Poles, Walls, Vegetation

The ability to scale vertical surfaces with or without the use of specialized climbing equipment.

Computers
Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Artificial Intelligence, Databases, Intrusion/Security, Networks, Programming

Practical knowledge of computer use. Computer engineering (hardware) is covered by Electronics.

Controlled Breathing
Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Specializations: Cyclic Breathing, Holding Breath, Slow Heart Rate

The ability to control respiratory functions in order to maximize breathing efficiency or to perform tricks such as "playing dead."

Cultural Arts
Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Archaeology, Art Appraisal, History, Literature, Urban Legends

Knowledge of aspects of human culture (or another species's culture).

Demolitions
Cost: 5 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specializations: Artificial Structures, Bomb Disposal, Natural Structures, Safe Cracking, Underwater

The ability to set explosive charges without getting hurt in the process or inflicting undesired collateral damage. It is also used for deactivating explosives set by someone else.

Disguise
Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specializations: Costume, Make-up, Prosthetics

The ability to change one's personal appearance in an attempt to deceive others.

Domestic Arts

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specializations: Cleaning, Cooking, Decorating, Home Budgeting

The ability to efficiently organize and run a domestic household.

Driving

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Mind
Specializations: Big Rig (large tractor/trailer trucks), Car, Motorcycle, Small Truck (vans, pick-ups, hi-cubes), Tank

The ability to operate a powered ground vehicle. Skill checks are only necessary in difficult situations such as performing vehicular stunts, avoiding hazards, etc.

Electronics

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Communications, Computers, Consumer Electronics, Robotics, Security, Sensors

The ability to maintain, repair, build, modify (and at high Levels, design) electronic equipment.

Etiquette

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Lower Class, Middle Class, Upper Class

The knowledge of polite, proper, and inoffensive behaviour in social settings.

Foreign Culture

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: One Specific Culture

Reflects knowledge of the history, religion, ethics, and lifestyle of one or more foreign countries or cultures: one foreign culture at Level 1, two at Level 2, three or four at Level 3, five to eight at Level 4, and more than nine at Level 5. Naturally, less than the maximum number of cultures can be assigned. Thus, multiple Specializations may be listed for Foreign Culture.

Forgery

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Electronic Documents, Handwriting, Paper Documents

The ability to counterfeit documents and papers. This Skill can be used in conjunction with the Computers Skill.

Gaming

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul (Body for some video games)
Specializations: Board Games, Computer Games, Gambling/Card Games, Military Simulations, Role-Playing Games

The ability to play various games and simulations well.

Interrogation

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specializations: Drugs, Psychological, Physical

The ability to convince someone to provide information against their will. Can also be used to help withhold information when being Interrogated by an enemy.

Intimidation

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specializations: Business, Political, Street

The ability to convincingly project a "tough guy" image. A successful check means someone witnessing your performance is convinced you mean any threats you make. How they react after that will depend on how tough they are themselves in relation to the kind of threat you present — they may respond with respect, fear, hatred, or amusement.

Languages

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Any one language, Braille, Code Language, Sign Language

Reflects an aptitude for languages and their historical usage. Additionally, a character will be able to speak and write one foreign language at Level 1, two at Level 2, three or four at Level 3, five to eight at Level 4, and more than nine at Level 5. Thus, multiple Specializations will be listed for Languages — the first is the character's native language (a free Specialization), while the others are foreign languages.

Law

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Civil, Criminal, Customs, Family, International, Political

Knowledge of legal procedure and practice. GMs may assume that anyone with Level 3 or more has a license to practice law. In addition to lawyers, many police officers, politicians, and superbeings have the Law Skill at Level 1 or 2. All Specializations, except International, are specific to one country or region only (for example, "Japanese Criminal Law").

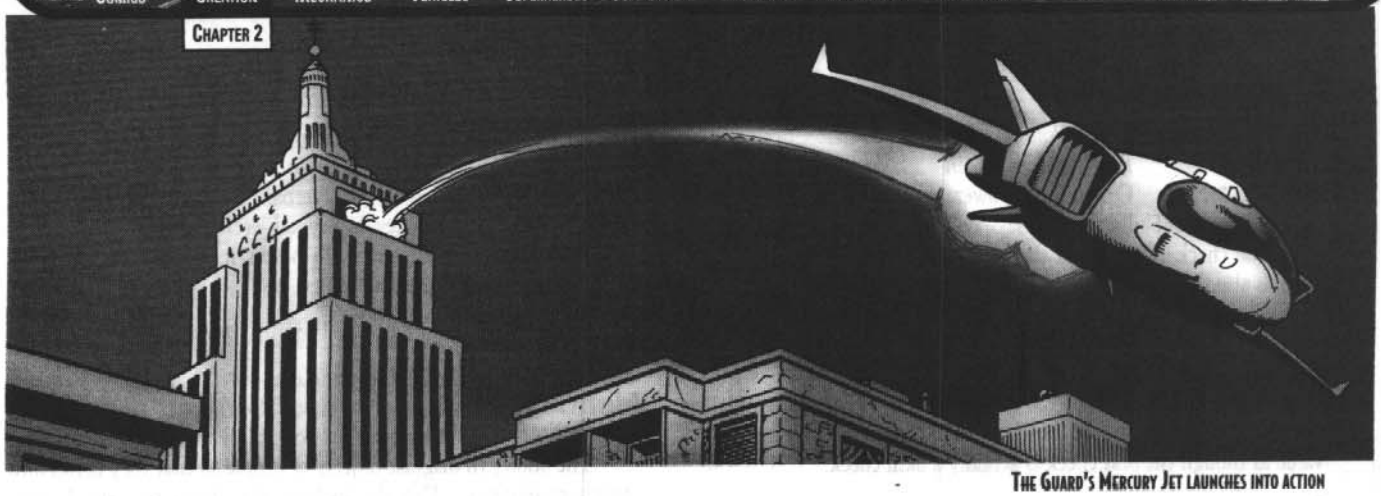
Management and Administration

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Accounting, Banking, Executive, Fraud, Government, Marketing, Small Business

The ability to organize, run, and understand part or all of an organization (such as a business, government, or association). For mercenary or superhero groups or private detectives, this Skill is useful for locating new employees.

Mechanics

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specializations: Aeronautical, Armourer, Automotive, Gunsmith, Locksmith, Micro, Traps



The Guard's Mercury Jet launches into action

The ability to maintain, repair, or build mechanical and electro-mechanical devices. This also includes knowledge of tool use, welding, etc. Armourer applies to heavy vehicle-mounted weapons while Gunsmith covers personal weaponry. Use Artisan for archaic weapons.

Medical

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specializations: Acupuncture, Dentistry, Diagnosis, Emergency Response, Homeopathy, Pathology, Pharmacy, Surgery, Veterinary

Knowledge of how to heal the body. GMs may assume that anyone with Level 3 or more has a license to practice medicine. A typical general practitioner would Specialize in Diagnosis, while most police officers or paramedics Specialize in Emergency Response.

Military Sciences

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Hardware Recognition, Intelligence Analysis, Logistics, Strategy, Tactics, Teamwork

The character has military-style tactical, staff, or leadership training. In addition, SWAT (or other tactical police units) often include individuals who pick up similar Skills (and often recruit ex-military personnel).

Navigation

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Air, Highway, Sea, Space, Urban, Wilderness

The ability to read maps or use specialized navigation equipment. The Navigation Skill will help a character find the fastest/safest route to a destination.

Occult

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Astrology, Channelling, Numerology, Rituals, Spirits, Tarot, Voodoo, Witchcraft

Knowledge of the arcane and mystical arts, and their applications in both historical and modern society.

Performing Arts

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Average of Body, Mind, and Soul
Specializations: Comedy, Dance, Drama, Music, Public Speaking, Singing, Fast Talking

The ability to perform well before an audience, and to evoke an emotional response through the art form.

Physical Sciences

Cost: 5 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Astronomy, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Physics

Scientific training in the way the universe works, including the necessary background knowledge.

Piloting

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Average of Body and Mind
Specializations: Heavy Airplane (usually multi-engine), Helicopter, Jet Fighter, Light Airplane (usually single-engine), Lighter than Air Craft, Spacecraft

The ability to operate air or space vehicles. Skill checks are normally only necessary when performing an unusual manoeuvre, avoiding a hazard, piloting an unfamiliar aircraft, etc.

Poisons

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Alien, Natural, Synthetic

The ability to recognize, concoct, apply, and neutralize a variety of poisons and toxins.

Police Sciences

Cost: 4 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Ballistics, Criminology, Forensics

This is the science behind detective work. Ballistics is the study of the wounds inflicted by projectiles; criminology focuses on studies of criminal behaviour and strategies; forensics covers evidence gathering (including hair-and-fibre, fingerprint and DNA-based identification techniques).

Power Usage

Cost: 8 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul
Specializations: One specific Power Attribute only

Unlike other Skills, Power Usage only offers a Check Value bonus to the Stat check (not Combat check) for one specific Power Attribute, which is also the Specialization. To receive a bonus on multiple Powers, this Skill must be assigned multiple times at 8 Points/Level. The Skill is useful to a character who may not have a high Stat (such as Mind) that is associated with one of his or her Attributes (such as Mind Control or Telepathy). When the character must make a Stat check for the specific Attribute, the Power Usage Skill adds a bonus to the Check Value as though the Stat check is actually a Skill check.

Powerlifting

Cost: 6 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Specializations: Bulky Objects, Free Weights, Humans, Moving Objects, Small Objects (Hand-Held)

The ability to perform feats of strength with minimal chance for injury. Includes lifting or pushing heavy objects, stopping objects in motion, and supporting large masses.

Riding

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind or Soul
Specializations: By species (Camel, Horse, Tiger, etc.).

This is the knowledge of how to care for a riding beast, how to saddle, mount, and dismount the animal, how to get it to perform difficult or dangerous manoeuvres safely and without balking, and how to best pace it for long distance rides.

Seduction

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body or Soul
Specializations: Alien, Female, Male

A character with this Skill is adept at exploiting their sex appeal. A successful Skill check will convince another person that the character is genuinely interested in them. Whether or not the subject actually responds will depend on his or her own romantic inclinations and sexual preferences.

Sleight of Hand

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Specializations: Card Sharking, Lock Picking, Pick Pocketing, Stage Magic

A character with this Skill (also known as prestidigitation) has superior manual dexterity, greater than that suggested by his or her Body Stat. This includes the ability to perform "magic" tricks, palm small objects, cheat at cards, plant an item on someone, etc.

Social Sciences

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Anthropology, Geography, Politics, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology, Theology

Understanding of the way people function in society as well as societal behavioural patterns.

Sports

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body (sometimes Mind or Soul)
Specializations: Baseball, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Volleyball, etc.

The ability to play well with others in a team or individual sporting event with specialized rules.

Stealth

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body (sometimes Mind)
Specializations: Camouflage, Concealment, Silent Movement

The ability to disguise objects or people so that they blend into their surroundings. This also includes the ability to conceal small objects on one's person and the ability to move silently.

Street Sense

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind or Soul
Specializations: Gang Activity, Influential Individuals, Territorial Divisions (all by region)

The knowledge of street activity within a particular region or city. This is a vital survival Skill for a person on the streets.

Swimming

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Body
Specializations: Competition, Deep-Sea Diving, Free Diving, Scuba, Snorkelling

The character is skilled at swimming or diving. The GM may assume that any character in a modern setting can swim even without this Skill. A swimmer can usually move at a speed equal to his or her Body in kilometres per hour for short distances.

Urban Tracking

Cost: 3 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind
Specializations: Academic, Corporate, Residential, Underworld

Urban Tracking is the ability to "shadow" someone (or follow a vehicle in another vehicle) through an industrialized, populated area or to find certain people in a particular sub-culture or environment by asking the right questions.

Visual Arts

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Body, Mind, or Soul (often an average)
Specializations: Animation, Drawing, Flower Arranging, Painting, Photography, Sculpting, Video

The ability to produce a work of fine or commercial art in a particular visual field.

Wilderness Survival

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Body)
Specializations: Aquatic, Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Plains

The ability to find food and shelter in the outdoors, to avoid natural hazards, and to identify wild plants and animals.

Wilderness Tracking

Cost: 2 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: Mind (sometimes Soul)
Specializations: Aquatic, Arctic, Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Plains

The ability to successfully trail or track someone or something while outdoors in a rural or wilderness setting.

Writing

Cost: 1 Skill Point/Level
Relevant Stat: Average of Mind and Soul
Specializations: Academic, Fiction, Journalistic, Poetic, Technical

The ability to communicate ideas or emotions in a written work.

Combat Skills

Archery

Cost: 7 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Bow, Crossbow

The ability to accurately shoot with a bow or crossbow. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Gun Combat

Cost: 8 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Auto-fire, Pistol, Rifle

The ability to accurately shoot with a hand-held firearm and to keep it properly maintained. Auto-fire applies to firing bursts of fully automatic fire from any gun, whether it is a small submachine gun, a big assault rifle, or a heavy machine gun. Pistol applies to firing single shots from a handgun. Rifle covers firing single shots from guns with a shoulder stock including rifles and shotguns. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Heavy Weapons

Cost: 9 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Artillery (indirect fire weapons such as Howitzers), Gunnery (heavy machine guns, tank guns and other vehicle-mounted direct-fire weapons), Launchers (rocket and missile launchers)

The ability to accurately fire vehicle-, shoulder-, or tripod-mounted weapons such as a tank cannon or heavy machine gun, and to perform routine maintenance. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Melee Attack

Cost: 7 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Axe, Baton/Club, Knife, Improvised Weapons (chairs, lamps, ladders, etc.), Polearms (spears, naginata, etc.), Shield, Sword, Whips/Chains

The ability to attack effectively with a hand-to-hand melee weapon. This is an Attack Combat Skill.



Red Phoenix and rival, Green Ronin, battle once again

Melee Defense

Cost: 7 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defense Combat Value)
Specializations: Axe, Baton/Club, Knife, Improvised Weapons, Polearms (spears, naginata, etc.), Shield, Sword, Whips/Chains

The ability to defend well with a hand-to-hand melee weapon. This is a Defense Combat Skill.

Ranged Defense

Cost: 12 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defense Combat Value)
Specializations: Personal, Air Vehicle, Ground Vehicle, Water Vehicle, Space Vehicle

The ability to avoid ranged attacks, but this does not enable a character to actually dodge bullets. Rather, it is a combination of situational awareness and tactical movement as well as knowing when to keep moving (to present a more difficult target) and when to drop for cover. This is a Defense Combat Skill.

Special Ranged Attack

Cost: 10 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: One specific Special Attack

This Skill is used for weapons created using the Special Attack Attribute (page 67) that emanate from the character's body, rather than a device or weapon. For example, eye beams, fireballs fired from the hand, or sonic blast shot from the mouth would qualify, but a laser gun or a deadly boomerang would not. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Thrown Weapons

Cost: 8 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Blades, Cards, Grenades, Rocks, Shields

The ability to accurately throw weapons or objects at a target. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Unarmed Attack

Cost: 8 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Attack Combat Value)
Specializations: Strikes, Holds, Throws, Grappling

The ability to attack without weapons. This is an Attack Combat Skill.

Unarmed Defense

Cost: 8 Skill Points/Level
Relevant Stat: None (uses Defense Combat Value)
Specializations: Strikes, Holds, Throws, Grappling

The ability to block armed or unarmed melee attacks without using a weapon. This is a Defense Combat Skill.

Example

Slipstream — Mark first assigns Slipstream his scientific Skills: Biological Sciences Level 2 (8 Points); Computers Level 1 (4 Points); Electronics Level 1 (4 Points); Physical Sciences Level 5 (25 Points); and Social Sciences Level 2 (4 Points). He then decides that Slipstream learned the following Skills on his home planet: Climbing Level 2 (4 Points); Foreign Culture Level 1 (2 Points); Medical Level 2 (6 Points); Navigation Level 3 (6 Points); Piloting Level 3 (6 Points); Swimming Level 2 (2 Points); and Writing Level 2 (2 Points). Finally, Slipstream's role as a hero is rounded out with City Knowledge Level 3 (9 Points), Languages Level 4 (4 Points), and Street Sense Level 2 (4 Points).

Slipstream's Skills cost 90 Points total. With the 30 Skill Points given to all starting characters, he requires the Level 6 Highly Skilled Attribute (6 Character Points) to generate the 60 remaining Skill Points. Now Mark needs to assign 9 Bonus Points worth of Defects to make up for Slipstream's extra 9 Character Points.

Alice — Jesse assigns Alice four combat Skills: Gun Combat Level 3 (24 Points); Thrown Weapons Level 2 (16 Points); Ranged Defense Level 2 (24 Points); Unarmed Attack Level 1 (8 Points); and Unarmed Defense Level 2 (16 Points). He then adds nearly a dozen other Skills that give her the tools she needs to get the job done: Acrobatics Level 4 (24 Points); City Knowledge Level 2 (6 Points); Burglary Level 3 (9 Points); Driving Level 3 (6 Points); Electronics Level 2 (8 Points); Intimidation Level 2 (6 Points); Mechanics Level 2 (8 Points); Performing Arts Level 3 (6 Points); Seduction Level 3 (9 Points); Street Sense Level 2 (4 Points); and Urban Tracking Level 4 (12 Points). Finally, he adds some creative inspiration to Alice by giving her the Visual Arts Skill Level 2 (4 Points).

Alice's Skills cost 190 Points total. With the 30 Skill Points given to all starting characters, she requires the Level 16 Highly Skilled Attribute (16 Character Points) to generate the 160 remaining Skill Points. Now Jesse needs to assign 25 Bonus Points worth of Defects to make up for Alice's extra 25 Character Points.

Step 6: Character Defects

Defects are disadvantages through which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life. Defects serve as an excellent and often comical role-playing opportunity. They only impede your character to a limited extent and are not intended to totally negate his or her many abilities. The Defects that have "Linked to Power Attribute" in their description are direct limitations on your character's Powers, rather than more general disadvantages (BP returned by linked Defect cannot exceed Attribute cost).

By taking a Character Defect you can gain up to three (or occasionally more) Bonus Points (BP) to use when acquiring Stats or Attributes. The number of Points you receive is directly proportional to how much the Defect hinders your character; Defects that do not inflict a significant disadvantage (such as a weakness to bullets made from the earth of planet Neptune) are not worth any Bonus Points. After you have selected your character's Defects, return to the previous steps to use your Bonus Points.

It is recommended that you assign no more than eight Defects to your character (this limit does not apply to Defects linked to a Power). In most cases 2-5 Defects are appropriate.

Designer's Note

My Overconfident, Lazy, Stubborn, Honourable Superhero

No, you don't get any Bonus Points for creating overconfident characters in Silver Age Sentinels. Or truthful ones, or sadistic ones, or shy ones. Less desirable personality traits should appear in the game through role-playing, not Points on a character sheet. If your character is a coward, then portray him or her as cowardly. It's just that simple.

Defects represent disadvantages over which your character has little or no control (i.e. no free will). One example is Phobia – a person with an irrational fear has no choice but to be afraid of the specific trigger. A Phobia is not a personality trait.

Table 2-18: Silver Age Sentinels Defect Name Equivalents

If You Are Looking For ...	See the Defect Named ...
Accidental Change	Involuntary Change
Ageism	Ism
Always On	Permanent
Berserk	Blind Fury
Charges	Limited Use
Dependant NPC	Significant Other
Distinctive Features	Marked
Extra Time	Activation Time
Hunted and Watched	Wanted
Linked	Dependent
Mute	Physical Impairment
No Conscious Control	Unreliable Power
Only in Hero ID	Alternate Form
Partially Limited	Restriction
Public Identity	Famous
Rivalry	Nemesis
Secret Identity	Skeleton in the Closet
Side Effects	Backlash
Susceptibility	Bane
Visible	Detectable

Defects and Dual Identities

If a character maintains a dual identity either through the Alternate Form Attribute or the Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity) Defect, some other Defects may not affect him or her in one of the identities. For example, a masked vigilante may be wanted by the police on murder charges (the Wanted Defect), but his or her alternate identity may be a respected politician. In these instances, the character will receive Bonus Points at a reduced amount.

If either the character's normal or secret/powered identity (but not both) suffers from a Defect, the Bonus Points granted are reduced by 1 BP. If both identities suffer from the identical Defect, at the same or different BP Levels, the character is granted Bonus Points equal to the higher BP Level. If a character only has one identity, the Defects return Bonus Points as normal.

Linked Defects associated with an Alternate Form (page 31) provide Bonus Points directly to the form's Point total.

Table 2-19: Character Defects

Defect Name	Progression	Defect Name	Progression
Achilles Heel	BP 1-3	Maximum Force	BP 1-3
Activation Time	BP 1-10	Nemesis	BP 1-3
Awkward Size	BP 1-10	Not So Tough	BP 1-3
Backlash	BP 1-3	One-Way Transformation	BP 1-3
Bane	BP 1-3	Owned	BP 1-3
Blind Fury	BP 1-3	Part of Body	BP 1-3
Burns Energy	BP 1-10	Permanent	BP 1-3
Concentration	BP 1-3	Phobia	BP 1-3
Conditional Ownership	BP 1-3	Physical Impairment	BP 1-3
Confined Movement	BP 1-3	Recurring Nightmares	BP 1-3
Cursed	BP 1-3	Red Tape	BP 1-3
Dependent	BP 2,4,6	Restriction	BP 1-3
Detectable	BP 1-3	Sensory Impairment	BP 1-3
Diminutive	BP 2,4,6	Significant Other	BP 1-3
Famous	BP 1-3	Skeleton in the Closet	BP 1-3
Inept Attack	BP 3,6,9	Special Requirement	BP 1-3
Inept Defense	BP 2,4,6	Unappealing	BP 1-3
Involuntary Change	BP 1-3	Unique Defect	BP 1-3
Ism	BP 1-3	Unreliable Power	BP 1-3
Less Capable	BP 1-10	Unskilled	BP 1-3
Limited Use, Instantaneous	BP 1-3	Vulnerability	BP 1-3
Limited Use, Ongoing	BP 1-3	Wanted	BP 1-3
Marked	BP 1-3	Weak Point	BP 1-3

Achilles Heel

The character loses twice as many Health Points as normal from a particular attack form, which must fit with the character concept. It might be something with appropriate mystic resonance, such as wooden stakes for vampires or silver for werewolves. It could also reflect the character's nature such as a fire-based villain taking extra damage from water, or an alien's weakness to weapons from his or her home planet. The GM must approve any Achilles Heel Defects. A character may have an Achilles Heel to either a common, uncommon, or rare attack form (in the context of the campaign).

1 BP The attack form is rare.
2 BP The attack form is uncommon.
3 BP The attack form is common.

Example

Sentinel has the Achilles Heel (Extreme Cold) Defect at 1 BP. While cold-based attacks are common in a superhero game, and thus would normally be worth 3 BP, Sentinel is only vulnerable to truly extreme temperatures (-100°C or lower). Only at these low temperatures does Sentinel begin to suffer increased damag. Thus the Defect is only worth 1 BP since that extreme temperature is very rare. Also, while most characters suffer damage at very cold temperatures, Sentinel suffers double damage. For example, the GM may decide that Caliburn suffers 10 points of damage per round of exposure to a horrendously cold chemical spill. Since this is Sentinel's Achilles Heel, however, he suffers 20 points of damage per round.

Activation Time

Linked to Power Attribute. A character with this Defect cannot use one of his or her Attributes whenever desired because the Power requires a short time to activate. Once activation has started, only the character can stop it from becoming active when the appropriate time is up. This could represent a physical change that is not instantaneous, the collection of spiritual energies to perform a task, a device that takes time to "power up," or an Attribute that only works when the character is mentally prepared (or angry, or overcome with another emotion).

Activation Time extends to Level 10 following the Time Progression Chart, starting at 10 Initiative (1 BP) and increasing to 1 month (10 BP). Additionally, the Defect may return an additional 1 or 2 Bonus Points to the character. 1 additional BP is granted if the activation can be interrupted temporarily, but restarted where it left off. One example of this is an Item of Power body suit that the character must put on. If the character stops activating the Power (i.e. stops dressing) to make a phone call, he or she can continue afterwards. 2 additional BP are granted if the activation must start again from the beginning if it is interrupted before the Activation Time has elapsed. An example of this is a spell that must be chanted completely before the Power activates; if it is interrupted, the spell must be started again from the beginning. The Concentration Defect (page 93) is often linked to these two applications of Activation Time.

Example

Example 1: Rain Killer possesses the Activation Time Defect at 5 BP for her Item of Power — it takes Rain Killer 1 minute to put on her armour (to "activate" her Item of Power). One minute, however, only corresponds to Rank 4 on the Time Progression chart. Since Rain Killer is able to pause the activation of her Item of Power, the Defect is worth an additional 1 BP. After 45 seconds of fitting into the armour, if a villain interrupts her, she may pause long enough to knock the villain out and then resume activating her Item of Power. She would continue with 45 seconds completed and thus only require an additional 15 seconds (totalling 1 minute) to finish putting her armour on.

Example 2: Iara has the Activation Time Defect for her Transfer Power, gaining 5 BP. Iara gained an additional 2 BP, however, because, if interrupted, she must begin activating the Power from the very beginning. It therefore only requires 5 rounds (Rank 3 on the Time Progression chart) to activate the power, but if after 4 rounds Iara is interrupted, she must start all over again — those 4 rounds waiting for the power to activate are lost.

Awkward Size

This Defect means the character is notably larger than an ordinary human. A character with Awkward Size may have trouble fitting through doors and moving through narrow hallways, and does not fit into many vehicles. A character with Awkward Size is also much easier to notice. The larger the character, the more BP this Defect will be worth. In most cases, Awkward Size above 1 BP is not appropriate for human characters, only for robots, aliens, giant monsters, or similar entities.

Awkward Size extends to Level 10 following the Slow Magnitude Chart, starting at 2.5 to 4 metres tall (x2 height; Level 1) increasing to 2000 metres tall (1000x height; Level 10). Mass increases proportionately as a cubed function of the height multiplier, starting at 0.8 tonnes (Level 1) increasing to 27,000 tonnes (Level 5), and finally to 1 billion tonnes (Level 10). An elephant, for example, would be Awkward Size Level 2.

Backlash

Linked to Power Attribute. The character suffers from an unfortunate side effect whenever an associated Attribute fails to work. If the character fails his or her Stat check when using the Attribute, the character is hit with the energy or essence that would have powered the Attribute's use. The Backlash could be physical damage, memory loss, Stat drain, disorientation, or many other effects that make the character's life more difficult. The player and GM should determine the game effect of the Backlash.

1 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 6 or more.
2 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 3 or more.
3 BP The backlash occurs if the character fails the check by 1 or more.

Example

Mother Raven possesses Backlash at 3 BP, linked to her Special Attack. Therefore, if Mother Raven's Sun Kiss Special Attack misses a target by a Margin of Failure of 1 or greater, Mother Raven suffers 20 points of damage due to the backwash of energies.

Bane

A character with the Bane Defect is vulnerable to an otherwise non-damaging substance such as water, sunlight, or a specific element, material, or object. The Bane should relate to the character's background or Powers in some way. If the Bane only affects the character under specific conditions, such as Bane (Water) while a character is using the Alternate Form (Flame) Attribute, the Bonus Points granted are reduced by 1.

The character suffers damage if his or her skin is physically touched by the Bane. If the Bane does not require direct physical contact (such as sunlight, seeing one's reflection, hearing the noise of a church or temple bell, or having the Bane in close proximity), the damage is halved. Alternatively, if the Bane only affects the character when ingested, the damage is doubled. Finally, the damage rating assumes that the Bane is common, such as water, sunlight, steel, or wood. If it is less common, such as a holy symbol, Buddhist scripture, or rare element, the damage is also doubled. If it is even more rare such as one particular artifact, the damage may be tripled or quadrupled.

1 BP The Bane causes minor damage (20 points/round of exposure).
2 BP The Bane causes moderate damage (40 points/round of exposure).
3 BP The Bane causes severe damage (60 points/round of exposure).

Example

Bloody Mary has the Bane (Sacred Ground) Defect at 2 BP. Any time she enters a church or otherwise walks upon sacred ground, she automatically suffers 40 points of damage per round she remains there. She cannot defend against the damage — it is automatically suffered.

Blind Fury

Under specific conditions selected by the player (and approved by the GM), the character will enter a state of unbridled anger. While enraged, the character will furiously attack the closest person, whether that individual is a friend or foe. Once that person is defeated or flees, the berserk character will attack the next closest "threat." Examples of conditions that might initiate Blind Fury include: receiving a certain amount of damage, sight of blood, a specific sound or smell, being outnumbered in combat, seeing a friend in mortal danger, confrontation with a specific opponent, etc.

The character can only return to a normal emotional state under another specific condition. This return could involve a Soul Stat check, or could be an automatic reversion. Examples of return conditions include: no opponents in the vicinity, a specific calming technique performed by an ally, solitude, injection of a particular drug, being knocked unconscious, etc.

1 BP Initiating the Blind Fury is difficult; reverting to normal emotional state is easy.
2 BP Initiating the Blind Fury and reverting to a normal emotional state are both moderately difficult.
3 BP Initiating the Blind Fury is easy; reverting to normal emotional state is difficult.

Burns Energy

Linked to Power Attribute. This Defect is only available in campaigns where Energy Points are used. The character's Energy Points are used to power a particular Attribute. The Energy Points will either be reduced after the Attributes use (for Attributes for immediate effects, such as Teleportation or Special Attack), or while the Attribute is used (for Attributes that are used over a period of time, such as Flight or Invisibility).

Burns Energy extends to Level 10. For immediate effects, reduce the Energy Points by: 1 (L1), 2 (L2), 5 (L3), 10 (L4), 15 (L5), 20 (L6), 30 (L7), 50 (L8), 80 (L9), or 100 (L10). For Attributes used over a period of time, reduce the Energy Points as follows: 1/week (L1), 10/week (L2), 10/day (L3), 30/day (L4), 10/hour (L5), 30/hour (L6), 10/minute (L7), 30/minute (L8), 10/round (L9), or 10/second (L10).

Concentration

Linked to Power Attribute (or the Activation Time Defect, page 92). The character must concentrate while using a specific Attribute that functions over a period of time; it does not apply to Attributes with an instantaneous effect. If the character's concentration is interrupted voluntarily or by an outside event, the Attribute ceases to function.

1 BP The Attribute requires slight concentration. The character can still perform other non-combat actions, but cannot engage in combat or use other Attributes that also require Concentration.
2 BP The Attribute requires intense concentration. The character can move at a slow speed and talk with others while using the Attribute, but cannot perform any complex actions or use any other Attribute.
3 BP The Attribute requires full concentration. The character cannot do anything else while using the Attribute; he or she must remain still and devote full attention to the Power.

Conditional Ownership

Linked to Characteristic Attribute. This Defect can only be acquired by a character who possesses either the Item of Power or Gadgets Attributes (pages 52 and 47). The character's possessions granted by those Attributes actually belong to another person or organization. They are issued to the character, but the agency imposes "mild," "strict," or "severe" conditions on their use.

"Mild conditions" indicate that the character can use the objects for some personal business (such as travelling), but if he or she is released from the organization or disobeys direct orders, the objects can be taken away. The character can also be assigned different objects at any time. For example, a police detective might have conditional use of an unmarked police car.

"Strict conditions" indicate that the character is only permitted to use the objects for activities as ordered by the organization. This is the way most military and police equipment is issued. If the character is caught using the objects for personal activities, he or she will receive a severe reprimand.

"Severe conditions" indicate that the character can only use the objects under specific orders. A government owned time travel device would probably fall under these conditions. Using the objects at any other time results in incarceration, physical punishment, or even death.

1 BP Mild conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.
2 BP Strict conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.
3 BP Severe conditions are imposed on the objects' ownership and usage.

Confined Movement

This Defect prevents the character from leaving a narrowly defined area. This may represent an undead villain that is cursed to haunt a particular place, an android that is programmed to follow a specific guard route, or a government-licensed superhero that is only registered for travel in a specific region.

1 BP Restricted to a large area (100 km radius), such as a single county or large city.
2 BP Restricted to a small area (1 km radius), such as a small town or large, multi-structure complex.
3 BP Restricted to a tiny area (100 m radius), such as a small village or single building.

Cursed

A Cursed character has likely offended a great being of power in his or her past, or is the direct descendent of someone who did (Curses often pass through bloodlines). The Curse can take a near limitless number of forms, but should not provide a character with an obvious advantage (remember, it's a curse!). The exact nature, background, and limitations of the Curse should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP The character suffers from a slight disadvantage.
2 BP The character suffers from a moderate disadvantage.
3 BP The character suffers from a severe disadvantage.

Dependent

Linked to Power Attribute. The character cannot use the chosen Attribute without first using a second (or more) Attribute. If the character fails a Stat check to activate the second Attribute, he or she cannot use the other one either. Examples of the Dependent Defect include: a character who can fly after activating his Force Field (Flight dependent upon Force Field), a character who gains additional Armour when invisible (Armour dependent upon Invisibility), a character that can run much more quickly after stretching his or her legs and growing (Speed dependent upon Elasticity and Grow), etc. The player must justify the Dependent Defect to the GM to avoid silly combinations.

2 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 1 other Attribute is activated.

4 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 2 other Attributes are activated.

6 BP The Dependent Attribute cannot work until 3 other Attributes are activated.

Example

Doc Cimitière's Power Flux has the Dependent Defect linked to his Mind Control. Doc Cimitière must therefore successfully Mind Control a loa *(Voodoo spirit) before he can use his Power Flux Power. If he fails to Mind Control a* loa*, he cannot use Power Flux.*

Detectable

Linked to Power Attribute. While using a specific Attribute, the character can be pinpointed and possibly identified by others who have specific detection techniques. For example, the Attribute's use may make a loud noise or a bright flash, send vibrations through the ground, or emanate mental shock waves. Detection techniques include: astral; ethereal; human sight, hearing, or sense of smell; infrared; mental; radar; radiation; sonar; spiritual; ultraviolet; vibration; and others. The Special Attack Attribute (page 67) is an exception to this Defect — characters must acquire an Attack Ability to make the attack undetectable.

1 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 1-2 methods.
2 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 3-5 methods.
3 BP The Attribute's use can be detected using 6-9 methods.

Diminutive

The character is permanently smaller than a human. Although a Diminutive character is physically weaker than an average human, he or she is able to get into spaces that a human cannot and may be small enough to hide in someone's pocket. The Level progression is similar to the Shrink Attribute (page 65), but Diminutive is a disadvantage — the character does not have the option of shrinking to different Levels whenever desired, since the Defect is permanent.

Diminutive provides 2, 4, or 6 Bonus Points.

2 BP The character is the size of a cat or small dog. His or her running speed and weapon range is reduced to 20%, and he or she can only lift up to one hundredth (1%) normal capacity (for an average human, this is approximately 1 kilogram). Any damage the character inflicts using physical melee attacks is reduced by 10, while attacks from human-sized enemies inflict an additional 10 damage. Enemies making ranged attacks, however, suffer a -4 Attack penalty. Finally, he or she suffers a -6 penalty on any Body Stats checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat size.

4 BP The character is the size of a rodent. His or her running speed and weapon range is reduced to 5%, and he or she can only lift up to one ten thousandth (0.01%) normal capacity (for an average human, this is approximately 10 grams). Any damage the character inflicts using physical melee attacks is reduced by 15, while attacks from human-sized enemies inflict an additional 15 damage. Enemies making ranged attacks, however, suffer a -6 Attack penalty. Finally, he or she suffers a -12 penalty on any Body Stats checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat size (-6 penalty for larger than rodent size).

6 BP The character is the size of a bug. His or her running speed and weapon range is reduced one two hundredth (0.5%), and he or she can only lift up to one ten millionth normal capacity (for an average human, this is approximately 10 miligrams). Any damage the character inflicts using physical melee attacks is reduced by 20, while attacks from human-sized enemies inflict an additional 20 damage. Enemies making ranged attacks, however, suffer a -8 Attack penalty. Finally, he or she suffers a -18 penalty on any Body Stats checks that require lifting, carrying, or grappling with objects larger than cat size (-12 penalty for larger than rodent size; -6 penalty for larger than bug size).

Famous

The character is recognizable by many people, and thus it is difficult for him or her to keep secrets or maintain a private life. Journalists and photographers may hound the character regularly, and report his or her actions on television, in newspapers, and on websites. While being Famous may have some privileges (preferred seating at restaurants, daily special treatment, etc.), it is a significant disadvantage for a superhero or supervillain — especially one that maintains a secret identity.

1 BP The character has regional fame.
2 BP The character has national fame.
3 BP The character has international fame.

Inept Attack

This Defect reflects a character's poor judgement in offensive combat situations, which makes it much more difficult to strike an opponent successfully. A character with the Inept Attack Defect suffers a penalty to the Attack Combat Value. The penalty cannot lower the Value below 1. See Step 7: Derived Values for more information on the Attack Combat Value. Inept Attack provides 3, 6, or 9 Bonus Points.

3 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 1 Point.
6 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 2 Points.
9 BP The character's Attack Combat Value is decreased by 3 Points.

Inept Defense

This Defect reflects a character's poor judgement in defensive combat situations, which can often place him or her in precarious positions. A character with the Inept Defense Defect suffers a Defense Combat Value penalty. The penalty cannot lower the Value below 1. See Step 7: Derived Values for more information on the Defense Combat Value. Inept Defense provides 2, 4, or 6 Bonus Points.

2 BP The character's Defense Combat Value is decreased by 1 Point.
4 BP The character's Defense Combat Value is decreased by 2 Points.
6 BP The character's Defense Combat Value is decreased by 3 Points.

Involuntary Change

This Defect is only available to characters who have the Alternate Form Attribute. The character may accidentally change from human form to super form (or vice versa), or an external trigger (opponent, ally, natural force, etc.) may induce the change. This Defect may represent a character who: transforms between identities upon hearing or uttering a specific sound or word, reverts to normal form when a particular chemical in the body is in low quantities (such as sugar or salt), transforms when a button on a gadget or Item of Power is pushed, transforms in times of stress, etc.

This Defect is assigned once to indicate the character can accidentally change from human to super identity, or from super to human identity. The Defect is assigned twice if the character can transform both ways unintentionally.

1 BP It is difficult to trigger the Involuntary Change.
2 BP It is moderately easy to trigger the Involuntary Change.
3 BP It is very easy to trigger the Involuntary Change.

Ism

Ism is discrimination based solely on one particular aspect of a character. Examples of Ism include: ageism, elitism, racism, sexism, or discrimination based on education, species, genetics, sexual preference, occupation, religion, physical features, etc. The players and GM are strongly encouraged to discuss these contentious discrimination issues, and their role in the game, before play begins.

1 BP The character experiences a small degree of discrimination.
2 BP The character experiences a large degree of discrimination.
3 BP The character experiences a severe degree of discrimination.

Less Capable

Currently, the three game Stats indicate the same level of ability in all aspects of each Stat: the Body Stat represents all physical aspects, the Mind Star represents all mental aspects, and the Soul Stat represents all spiritual and willpower aspects. Some characters may have one or more aspects of a Stat at a less proficient level than the rest of the Stat aspects, however, and this is where the Less Capable Defect comes in.

For example, a bulky brawler might have a high strength, excellence endurance, fast running speed, good manual dexterity, and healthy immune system ... but be rather clumsy. This would fit a character with a Body Stat of 8 or 10, with the Less Capable (Agility) Defect at 2 BP. Similarly, a witty, perceptive, and insightful academic genius that happens to have a surprisingly bad memory might have a Mind Stat of 9, with the Less Capable (Memory) Defect at 1 BP.

Every Stat has a multitude of aspects associated with it, that are considered either Major Aspects (aspects that arise frequently in a game) or Minor Aspects (aspects that arise infrequently). For each BP Level of the Less Capable Defect, Stat or Skill checks for which the specific Major Aspects is important suffer a -3 penalty, while Stat or Skill checks for which the specific Minor Aspects is important suffer a -6 penalty. Less Capable can typically extend to 6 BP for Major Aspects or 3 BP for Minor Aspects. Derived Values are not recalculated.

Each Stat has three Major and three Minor Aspects listed below. Players may create additional Aspects with the Game Master's input.

Body

Strength, Agility, Endurance (Major); Manual Dexterity, Running Speed, Immune System (Minor)

Mind

Intelligence, Wits, Perception (Major); Memory, Intuition, Savvy (Minor)

Soul

Luck, Willpower, Charisma (Major); Presence, Empathy, Composure (Minor)

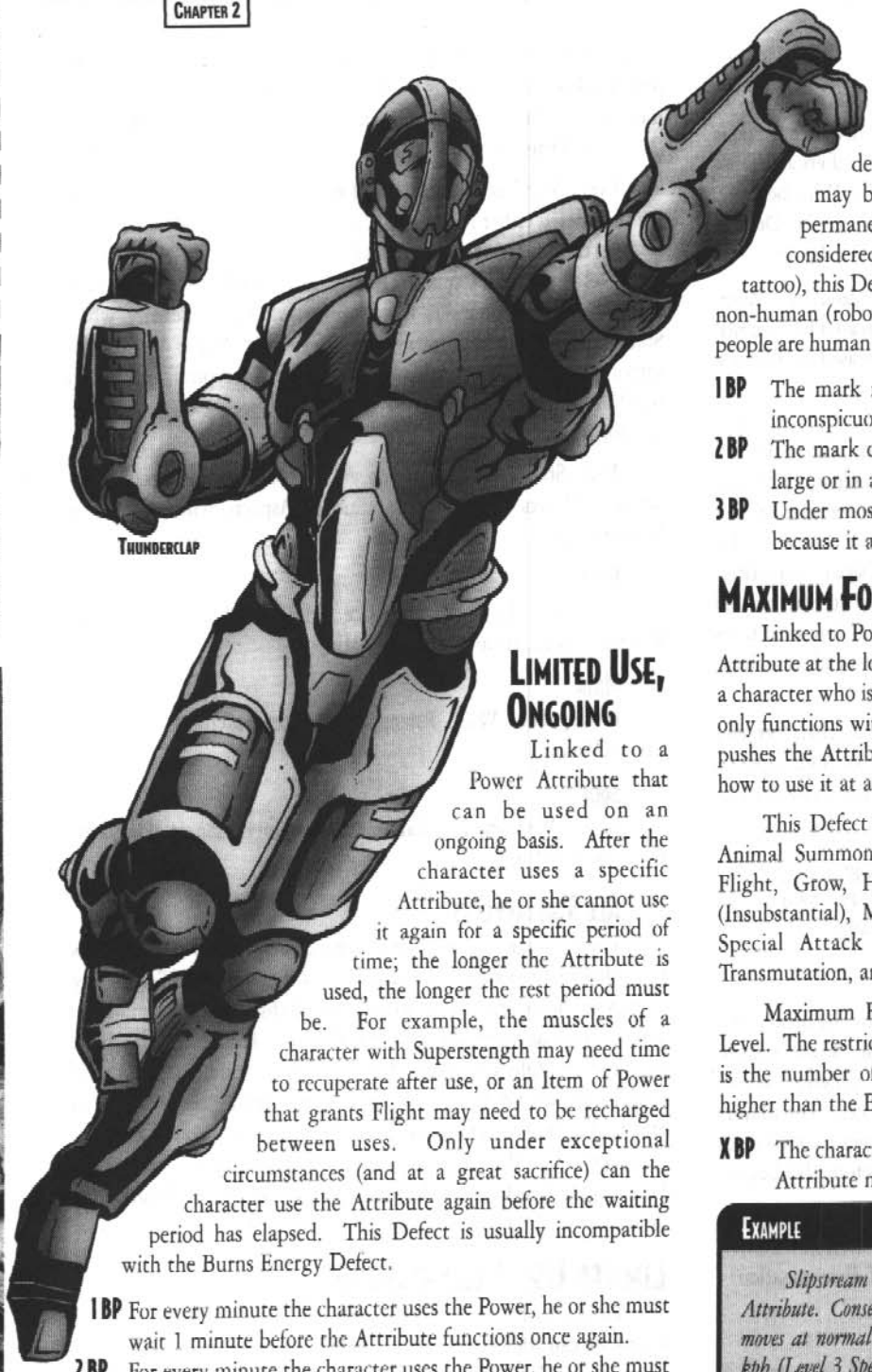
All Stat Aspects

There are rare occasions in which a character may need the Less Capable Defect to apply to all aspects of a specific Stat. This usually applies to characters that undergo a radical change from one form to another, such as that induced by the Alternate Form Attribute (page 31). For example, a scientist character with a Mind Stat of 11 who transforms into a hulking beast may need to reduce his or her Mind Stat to 3 with a Less Capable Mind Defect. For this application, a -1 is applied to the character's specific Stat checks for every 2 BP Levels of the Less Capable Defect assigned. All Derived Values must be recalculated for this application of Less Capable.

Limited Use, Instantaneous

Linked to Power Attribute with an instantaneous effect. The character can only use a specific Attribute occasionally. This may result from a need to recharge the Attribute (or a device), an incredible drain on the character's internal reserves, or a different form of limitation. Only under exceptional circumstances (and at a great sacrifice) can the character use the Attribute more often than indicated by this Defect. This Defect is usually incompatible with the Burns Energy Defect.

1 BP The character can only use the Attribute three times a day.
2 BP The character can only use the Attribute twice a day.
3 BP The character can only use the Attribute once a day.


Thunderclap

Limited Use, Ongoing

Linked to a Power Attribute that can be used on an ongoing basis. After the character uses a specific Attribute, he or she cannot use it again for a specific period of time; the longer the Attribute is used, the longer the rest period must be. For example, the muscles of a character with Superstength may need time to recuperate after use, or an Item of Power that grants Flight may need to be recharged between uses. Only under exceptional circumstances (and at a great sacrifice) can the character use the Attribute again before the waiting period has elapsed. This Defect is usually incompatible with the Burns Energy Defect.

1 BP For every minute the character uses the Power, he or she must wait 1 minute before the Attribute functions once again.

2 BP For every minute the character uses the Power, he or she must wait 5 minutes before the Attribute functions once again.

3 BP For every minute the character uses the Power, he or she must wait 10 minutes before the Attribute functions once again.

Example

Thunderclap's Item of Power has the Limited Use Ongoing Defect at 3 BP. This means that for every minute of use, he must wait ten minutes before being able to use the armour again. When he dons his armour and begins using it, it starts to drain the power-cell of the suit. When he is finished with the armour, he must recharge it to replenish the suits power-cells for 10 minutes per minute he was using the suit.

Marked

A character is considered Marked if his or her body hosts a permanent and distinguishing design that may be difficult to conceal. The design may be a family symbol, an identifying birthmark, a permanent scar, or a unique tattoo. If the mark is not considered out of the ordinary (such as freckles or a common tattoo), this Defect does not apply. Characters who are obviously non-human (robotic, demonic, alien, etc.) in a setting where most people are human (or vice versa) would also have the Marked Defect.

1 BP The mark is easily concealable because it is small or in an inconspicuous location.

2 BP The mark can be concealed, but this is difficult because it is large or in an obvious location.

3 BP Under most circumstances, the mark cannot be concealed because it affects the character's entire body.

Maximum Force

Linked to Power Attribute. The character cannot use a specific Attribute at the lowest end of its power range. This could represent a character who is too talented for his or her own good, an item that only functions within certain parameters, a powerful character who pushes the Attribute's limits so often that he or she has forgotten how to use it at a low Level, or something different.

This Defect is only appropriate for the following Attributes: Animal Summon/Control, Creation, Dynamic Powers, Elasticity, Flight, Grow, Hyperflight, Illusion, Jumping, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Mass Increase, Plant Control, Projection, Shrink, Special Attack (applies to damage only), Speed, Teleport, Transmutation, and Water Speed.

Maximum Force extends to Level 10, providing 1 BP each Level. The restriction on an Attribute's use is given below, where X is the number of Bonus Points granted and (X+1) is one Level higher than the BP Level.

X BP The character cannot use up to Level X of the Attribute. The Attribute must be at Level (X+1) or higher.

Example

Slipstream has linked this Defect, at 2 BP, to his Level 5 Speed Attribute. Consequently, he cannot use Speed at Levels 1 or 2; he either moves at normal human speeds, or he moves at a minimum of 1,000 kph (Level 3 Speed).

Nemesis

The character has someone in his or her life that actively interferes with goal achievement on a regular basis. This Nemesis can take several forms. He or she could be a professional rival such as someone competing for the favour of the character's boss. The Nemesis could also be personal; for example, a villain may be pursued by a specific superhero who devotes his or her existence to putting the character behind bars. The Nemesis may even be a romantic rival such as someone chasing the same person the character is pursuing.

The Nemesis should be someone who makes the character's life difficult frequently (and cannot easily be removed), but the Nemesis does not need to be a mortal enemy. It might be someone the character loves very much, but one whom they cannot avoid. An overbearing parent who lives at home is an example of this. If for any reason the Nemesis is defeated or goes away, the GM should create another Nemesis, unless the player also wishes to use Advancement Points (see page 138) to eliminate the Defect permanently.

1 BP The Nemesis is merely annoying and/or interferes infrequently.
2 BP The Nemesis may actively try to harm the character and/or interferes frequently.
3 BP The Nemesis will always harm the character given the opportunity, and/or interferes constantly.

Not So Tough

The character is less durable than his or her Body and Soul Stats would otherwise suggest. This Defect is appropriate for characters with a "glass jaw," or those who succumb to physical trauma easily.

1 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 10 Points.
2 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 20 Points.
3 BP The character's Health Points are decreased by 30 Points.

One-Way Transformation

Linked to Power Attribute. This Defect can only be taken in conjunction with the Alternate Form, Elasticity, Grow, Invisibility, or Shrink Attributes. Once the character has transformed from a normal state, he or she cannot transform back to a prior form without meeting certain conditions. This might include a magical ritual, work by mechanics or lab technicians, consuming a specific substance, or simply the passage of time.

1 BP It takes several hours of work or special circumstances to enable the character to transform back to an earlier form.
2 BP As 1 BP, but the process requires expensive (or hard to find) replacement components, ingredients, or other prerequisites.
3 BP As 2 BP, but the process takes several days.

Owned

Free will has little meaning for a character who is Owned by a corporation, government, crime ring, or other organization or individual. Control over the character can be exerted through a variety of methods including blackmail, brainwashing, legal contract, technology, or just highly effective propaganda. Dire consequences await a character whose actions conflict with the mandate of the owning body.

1 BP The organization has partial ownership of the character; the character is subject to slight punishment for opposing the owners.
2 BP The organization has significant ownership of the character; the character is subject to moderate punishment for opposing the owners.
3 BP The organization has total ownership of the character; the character is subject to severe punishment for opposing the owners.

Part of Body

Linked to Power Attribute. Only part of the character's body is affected by a specific Attribute, most commonly used for: Adaptation, Alternate Form, Armour, Damage Absorption, Damage Conversion, Invisibility, and Superstrength. For example, a character might only receive Armour benefits against abdominal attacks, possess the ability to turn his or her left arm invisible, or have bionic legs with Superstrength.

1 BP The Attribute affects a large part of the body (torso, both legs, both arms, etc.).
2 BP The Attribute affects a small part of the body (one leg, one arm, abdomen, chest, head, etc.)
3 BP The Attribute affects a tiny part of the body (one hand, face, one foot, groin, knee, etc.).

Permanent

Linked to Power Attribute. A specific Attribute is always functioning, and the character cannot turn it off. This Defect only applies to Attributes that would inconvenience the character if the Power was always active, such as: Force Field, Invisibility, or Nullify. The player and GM should discuss the problems and limitations associated with an eternally active Power.

1 BP The Attribute is a slight inconvenience to the character.
2 BP The Attribute is a moderate inconvenience to the character.
3 BP The Attribute is a severe inconvenience to the character.

Phobia

A Phobia is a fear (often irrational) of an event, object, or person that can limit a character's choice of actions. Avoiding situations that could trigger the phobia may take a high priority in the character's life. Note that a Phobia that effectively cripples the character with fear does not add constructively to the role-playing experience.

1 BP The character has a slight phobia or one that is encountered infrequently.
2 BP The character has a moderate phobia or one that is encountered frequently.
3 BP The character has a severe phobia or one that is encountered constantly.

Physical Impairment

The character has a physical impairment that makes aspects of daily life more challenging. Possible impairments include: one or more missing (or unusable) limbs, loss of speech, constant sickness, nagging injury, severe headaches, an android that requires frequent repairs, etc. The player and GM should discuss the problems and limitations associated with the impairment.

1 BP The impairment is a slight inconvenience to the character.
2 BP The impairment is a moderate inconvenience to the character.
3 BP The impairment is a severe inconvenience to the character.

Recurring Nightmares

When the Recurring Nightmare Defect haunts a character, he or she has trouble sleeping at nights and functions at less-than-optimum performance during the day. The nightmare can be a memory of a tragic event or traumatic experience, or it might be something else such as a prophetic vision or warning. The nightmare may not occur every night but it will haunt the character on a regular basis. Additionally, the nightmares do not need to portray the exact same events repeatedly, but the visions should be related in some way. The details concerning the subject matter of the nightmares and why they occur is the responsibility of the GM and the player to create.

1 BP The nightmares occur infrequently and have a slight effect on the character's lifestyle.
2 BP The nightmares occur frequently and have a moderate effect on the character's lifesryle.
3 BP The nightmares occur constantly and have a severe effect on the character's lifestyle.

Red Tape

The character must negotiate his or her way through a complicated bureaucracy in order to accomplish tasks. This Defect is often associated with characters who are members of law-enforcement organizations or similar government agencies that require paperwork. A large criminal organization, however, may also require a character to receive permission from several levels of bosses before undertaking certain high-profile jobs.

Red Tape also includes whatever measures the character must take "after the fact" to appease the organization to which he or she belongs. For example, a supercop may need to fill out a report every time his or her weapon is fired or may have to follow a complicated series of steps to obtain a search warrant. A supervillain may be required to pay a percentage of his or her take to the regional crime organization or face some very strict penalties.

The Red Tape Defect is inappropriate for characters created via the Henchmen or Sidekick Attributes.

1 BP The Red Tape only impedes the character before or after a major action (but not both) and/or the Red Tape is easy to manage most of the time.
2 BP The Red Tape impedes a character both before and after a major action, and/or is difficult to manage most of the time.
3 BP The Red Tape impedes a character before, after, and during a major action, and/or is extremely difficult to manage most of the time.

Reduction

Linked to Characteristic or Power Attribute. One of the character's Attributes is limited greatly, resulting in a Reduction of its Point cost per Level. This Defect offers a near-endless number of limitations, and consequently the player and GM should discuss the game ramifications and the Attribute's new Level costs.

Each Attribute description provides one sample Reduction. This entry is only a suggestion, and does not represent the only Reductions available. A list of suggested Reductions are shown in Table 2-20: Sample Reductions.

Unlike other Defects, Reduction does not return Bonus Points to the character; the Attribute cost changes instead. The Point cost change is directly related to the original cost of the Attribute. For example, a Reduction that limits a 4 Points/Level Attribute to half of its power might be a 2 Points/Level Reduction; the same limitation on a 10 Points/Level Attribute could be a 5 Points/Level Reduction. This Defect is not usually appropriate for 1 Point/Level Attributes.

Table 2-20: Sample Reductions

Fewer sub-Points awarded	One aspect
Less frequent usage	Partial effectiveness
Limited control	Power always used in same way
More than one but less than all	Very specific utility

Restriction

Linked to Characteristic or Power Attribute. One of the character's Attributes is associated with one or more disadvantages that limits its use. This Defect offers a near-endless number of limitations, and consequently the player and GM should discuss the ramifications of the selected Restriction. A list of suggested Restrictions are shown in Table 2-21: Sample Restrictions.

Each Attribute description provides a short list of three of the more commonly associated Restrictions. These entries are only suggestions, and do not represent the only Restrictions available. The GM may increase the Bonus Points returned to the character to an alternate progression (such as 2 BP, 4 BP, 6 BP; or 3 BP, 6 BP, 9 BP) if the Attribute this Defect is restricting has a high Character Point cost at each Level (see Dynamic Powers, Extra Attacks, or Power Flux for examples). Severe limitations on an Attribute, which will affect the Point cost per Level, is covered by the Reduction Defect (see above).

1 BP The Attribute has a minor Restriction.
2 BP The Attribute has a moderate Restriction.
3 BP The Attribute has a major Restriction.

Table 2-21: Sample Restrictions

Cannot use on oneself	Requires consumable focus
Check needed to maintain control	Requires maintenance
During specific times of the day	Requires special equipment
Easy to counteract	Requires Stat checks
Flawed results	Restricts movement
In particular locations	Specific targets
Initiative penalty to use	Time limit
Limited functioning	Under certain conditions
Loss of specific effect	Usage inflicts pain
Naked form only	Use weakens character

Sensory Impairment

One or more of the character's senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell) are either diminished or lost. An example of a diminished sense is being near-sighted or hard of hearing; the GM should take the impairment into consideration when deciding what the character is able to perceive, and may apply a -4 penalty on checks to notice things with that sense. An example of a lost sense is blindness or deafness. Any diminishment or loss is based on the character's status after benefiting from any technological aids such as eyeglasses or hearing aids in the setting. For example, if a character has a hearing aid but is still hard of hearing, he or she has Sensory Impairment (diminished hearing, 1 BP). In a setting where a hearing aid was unavailable or could not correct his or her particular impairment, he or she would have Sensory Impairment (deaf, 2 BP) instead.

1 BP The character has a diminished primary sense (such as short-sightedness or being hard of hearing), or has lost a secondary sense (such as taste or smell).

2 BP The character has completely lost a primary sense (sight or hearing), or has two diminished primary senses, or has completely lost multiple secondary senses.

3 BP The character has completely lost a primary sense (sight or hearing) and multiple secondary senses.

Significant Other (S.O.)

A character with this Defect has someone for whom he or she will go to any lengths to keep safe from harm, even at the risk of his or her own life. The S.O. should be a regular fixture in the campaign. A one-night stand, or a cousin visiting for two weeks is a plot complication and not an appropriate S.O. The character's sense of obligation towards the S.O. is enough that the character will take great pains to ensure his or her safety and well-being. Examples include spouses and steady boy or girl friends, superhero partners, immediate relatives (parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, perhaps very close cousins), and close co-workers (such as a cop's partner). It is acceptable for a character to take another character as an S.O., provided the players role-play this relationship appropriately. In this case, the S.O. relationship is always worth just 1 BP but is treated as a 3 BP Defect by the GM in terms of the frequency with which it affects the game.

The S.O. Defect is inappropriate for most Henchmen and Sidekick characters.

1 BP The S.O. is rarely placed in grave danger and appears infrequently.

2 BP The S.O. is often placed in grave danger and appears frequently.

3 BP The S.O. is always placed in grave danger and appears constantly.

Skeleton in the Closet

The character has a dark secret. Exposure of this secret could cause harm to the character in the form of public humiliation, loss of a job, arrest, injury, or even death. The number of BP gained from this Defect is based on the severity the consequences if the secret is revealed. The secret must be important enough that the character will actively take steps to keep others from learning of it. If the Skeleton is ever revealed, the character will suffer the associated consequences, and the GM should replace it with an appropriate Defect or Defects worth at least as many BP as Skeleton in the Closet.

For example, most criminals have a 1 BP Skeleton in the Closet: they have committed crimes that could send them to jail or worse, but usually there is no easily available evidence. If their secret is discovered, they will usually have Skeleton in the Closet replaced by an equal or higher value Wanted Defect. A 3 BP Skeleton is usually reserved for characters who face destruction or death if their secret is discovered such as a flesh-eating alien living among humans or an undercover superhero that has infiltrated a villain's organization.

If a character has a secret identity, the Skeleton in the Closet Defect applies. The number of Bonus Points associated with the identity depends on the consequences if the secret is revealed, and thus is heavily dependant on the nature and actions of the character. For instance, if a public hero's identity is revealed, villains can target the character and his or her family more easily. Whether this is a 1, 2, or 3 BP Defect depends on the position of the character, popularity of the character, how many enemies he or she has, how easily the character can maintain a normal lifestyle, etc. When in doubt, assume that most characters who have secret identities gain the 2 BP Defect.

The Skeleton in the Closet Defect is inappropriate for most Sidekick characters.

1 BP The Skeleton is difficult to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are slight, and/or the character's reputation will be impacted slightly.

2 BP The Skeleton is relatively easy to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are moderate, and/or the character's reputation will be seriously impacted.

3 BP The Skeleton is very easy to discover, and/or the consequences of discovery are severe, and/or the character's reputation will be devastated.

Special Requirement

This Defect forces the character to meet a Special Requirement before an action or task can be completed. The Special Requirement may involve a physical object, an event, an action, an environmental condition, or even a state of mind. Everyday activities, such as eating and sleeping, are not considered to be Special Requirements unless they must be carried out under unusual conditions or more frequently for some reason. This Defect covers a wide range of possibilities, and thus the details should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP The Special Requirement is easy to obtain and/or needed infrequently.

2 BP The Special Requirement is difficult to obtain and/or needed frequently.

3 BP The Special Requirement is extremely difficult to obtain and/or needed constantly.

Unappealing

An Unappealing character may find it difficult to blend into a crowd because their appearance is distinctive. The term "unappealing" does not necessarily mean ugly but can also refer to a bad smell, manner of speech, or even an unpleasant habit that provokes a consistently negative reaction.

This Defect is often taken in conjunction with the Marked Defect (page 96). A monstrous, ugly creature is usually both Unappealing and Marked. On the other hand, a beautiful, winged superhero would be Marked (the presence of wings) but not Unappealing.

1 BP The character is slightly unappealing. He or she receives a -2 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.
2 BP The character is moderately unappealing. He or she receives a -4 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.
3 BP The character is severely unappealing. He or she receives a -6 penalty on any Seduction Skill use.

Unique Defect

This section covers any and all possible Defects that a character might possess but are not detailed in the rules. The boundaries and limitations of the Defect should be discussed with the GM.

1 BP The Defect occurs infrequently and/or has a slight effect on the character.
2 BP The Defect occurs frequently and/or has a moderate effect on the character.
3 BP The Defect occurs constantly and/or has a severe effect on the character.

Unique Defect Example: Hard Coding

A character with the Attack Restriction Defect has limitations on whom he or she can attack due to a reduction of free will (such as "hard coded" commands). The attack restriction can only be overcome during exceptional circumstances and may result in harsh consequences, including unbearable guilt or punishment by superiors. This Defect obviously does not apply to heroic characters who will not "attack innocent people."

1 BP The character's restriction applies to very few people, or the character has slight reservations.
2 BP The character's restriction applies to many people, or the character has strong reservations.
3 BP The character's restriction applies to a large group of people, or the character has extremely strong reservations.

Unreliable Power

Linked to Power Attribute. One of the character's Attributes frequently does not function when desired. Before the character can use the Attribute, he or she must make a successful Stat check with a penalty. If the Attribute does not have a "Relevant Stat" entry, the character's Soul Stat should be used as a default. If the Stat check fails, the character can try to use the Attribute again during the next round (when the character is in combat), or in a short period of time (when the character is not in combat).

At the GM's and player's discretion, Unreliable Power can also represent an Attribute that does not always function in the manner desired. For example, a character with Grow might not always grow to the desired size, or a Force Field might not always appear in the correct place. For this alternative, the Stat check determines if the Attribute operates properly; a failed check indicates that it activates in an unexpected manner.

1 BP The character suffers a -2 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 1-10 minutes.
2 BP The character suffers a -4 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 10-30 minutes.
3 BP The character suffers a -6 Stat check penalty. In non-combat situations, the character cannot attempt to use the Attribute again for 30 minutes - 2 hours.

Unskilled

An Unskilled character starts with less than the usual number of Skill Points. This Defect cannot be combined with the Highly Skilled Attribute.

1 BP The character has 10 fewer starting Skill Points.
2 BP The character has 20 fewer starting Skill Points.
3 BP The character has 30 fewer starting Skill Points.

Vulnerability

The character has a critical weakness to a specific object, environment, thought, activity, or condition.

When in close proximity to the Vulnerability, it can temporarily strip the character of his or her Power Attributes. The Vulnerability should only affect the character rarely, however, since it impacts him or her so severely.

1 BP The character's accessible Attribute Levels all drop by up to 3 Levels when affected by the Vulnerability.
2 BP The character's accessible Attribute Levels all drop by up to 6 Levels when affected by the Vulnerability.
3 BP The character cannot use any Attributes when affected by the Vulnerability.

Example

Sentinel suffers greatly when exposed to extremely low temperatures. Along with suffering increased damage, he has the Vulnerability (Cold) Defect at 2 BP. When exposed to extremely low temperatures, all of his Power Attributes drop by 6 Levels. He loses most of his Powers completely with a few remaining, but at drastically reduced Levels. His Powers return to their normal Levels once he is no longer exposed to the extreme cold.



General Winter exploits Sentinel's vulnerability to extreme cold

Wanted

The character is wanted by the law, a powerful criminal, or private organization that has placed a price on his or her head. Being Wanted is different from having a Nemesis; there is no single person devoting his or her life to annoying or hunting down the character. The character will need to conceal his or her identity or move around regularly to avoid having complete strangers calling the police or pursuing the character (depending on the circumstances).

1 BP The incentive to hunt the character is minor. For example, he or she may be wanted on outstanding warrants, but there may be no actual reward posted, or the reward is fairly small.

2 BP The reward, contract, or other incentive offered to hunt the character is significant.

3 BP The reward, contract, or other incentive offered to hunt the character is extreme.

Weak Point

The character's body possesses an abnormal weak point (in addition to the normal human weak points, like the heart and head). If the weak point is ever hit during combat with a Called Shot (see page 116), the result is an automatic critical hit (see page 127). If the attacker rolls a natural critical hit (a natural 2), the target is immediately reduced to 0 Health Points and falls unconscious. The opponent, or even the character, may not be aware the weak point exists, however, until its presence is discovered by accident or through careful study.

1 BP The weak point is tiny (-6 Called Shot Attack check penalty).

2 BP The weak point is small (-4 Called Shot Attack check penalty).

3 BP The weak point is large (-2 Called Shot Attack check penalty).

Example

Slipstream *— Slipstream needs 9 Bonus Points worth of Defects to balance the Character Points. Mark decides one of the Defects for Slipstream involves his Speed Attribute. He sees his character as "slipping" out of time, getting faster and faster the older he gets. This is why Slipstream needs his special time-suit — to keep him in the current time stream. As a result, Slipstream cannot use his innate swiftness for speeds less than 1,000 kph; he either moves at normal human speeds, or over 1,000 kph. This is Maximum Force (2 BP), and Special Requirement (2 BP).*

Mark then gives Slipstream four additional Defects appropriate to his background and duty: Nemesis (Alice; 1 BP); Nemesis (Jade Naga; 2 BP); and Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity; 2 BP).

With 9 Bonus Points of Defects assigned, Slipstream is now a balanced 175 Character Point hero.

Alice *— Alice needs 25 Bonus Points worth of Defects to balance the Character Points. Jesse decides that many of her Defects are related to Telekinesis and Telepathy. First, Attack Combat Mastery, Defense Combat Mastery, and Invisibility are all based on passive Telepathy (2 BP), and do not work against higher Level telepaths — Unique Defects worth a total of 3 BP. Similarly, Force Field, Jumping, Massive Damage, and Special Movement are all based on passive Telekinesis (Unique Defect; 2 BP). Additionally, Alice's normal Telekinesis and fire-based Telekinesis are limited to crude shaping through the Restriction Defect (2 BP each, or 4 BP total).*

Alice also has several Defects appropriate to her villainous status: Famous (2 BP); Nemesis (2 BP) to both Slipstream and the entire Guard; Skeleton in the Closet (3 BP); and Wanted (3 BP).

Finally, Jesse finishes Alice with four other Defects: her Flight is Dependent on a Dimension Hop to the astral plane (2 BP) and requires Concentration (1 BP); Sixth Sense requires Concentration (1 BP); she is Marked with tattoos (1 BP), and Less Capable (Composure; 1 BP), which indicates her edginess.

With 25 Bonus Points of Defects assigned, Alice is now a balanced 175 Character Point villain.



Alice dispatches some members of Egide Ubiquiste

Step 7: Derived Values

Calculate the character's Derived Values. These numbers are based directly on the Body, Mind, and Soul Stats and thus do not afford any choices of Point distribution.

Combat Value

This value governs all facets of physical conflict including your character's abilities in attacking, defending, and delivering damage. A higher Combat Value reflects fighting spirit and an increased knowledge of all physical combat forms: armed, unarmed, martial arts and ranged weapons. There are two separate components of the Combat Value — Attack and Defense. Character Attributes and Defects may modify either component separately, but unless otherwise noted, the term Combat Value refers to both Attack and Defense.

Increased skill in combat can only be achieved through harmony of the Complete Self. Lack of self-unity through weakness of any facet of the character will restrict his or her ability in combat. Consequently, the Body, Mind, and Soul are all of equal importance to the combat master: Body Stat for a forceful attack and defense, Mind Stat for quick wit, knowledge of combat techniques and anticipation of an opponent's actions, and Soul Stat for the winning spirit and good fortune. For example, a petite female standing five feet tall with martial arts training can take down an opponent nearly twice her size; knowledge and determination is just as important as brute force.

To calculate the base Attack Combat Value, add together all the Stat Values and divide by three, rounding down ([Body + Mind + Soul] ÷ 3).

The base Defense Combat Value is two less than the Attack Combat Value ([Body + Mind + Soul] ÷ 3 - 2).

Health Points

This Derived Value dictates the amount of physical damage your character's body can sustain before it ceases to function (for example, your character is knocked unconscious or even dies). Damage points delivered in combat are subtracted from your character's current Health Point total. If the total ever falls below zero, the character is rendered unconscious and may die if he or she does not receive medical attention. The base number of Health Points is equal to the sum of the Body Stat and Soul Stat multiplied by 5 ([Body + Soul) x 5]). Attributes or Defects may further modify Health Points.

Henchmen Rule

To reflect the ease with which unimportant NPCs are dispatched in combat, the GM is encouraged to assign such "extras" the Not So Tough Defect at 2 or 3 BP, therefore reducing their Health Points by 20 or 30. The GM will decide which characters constitute minor NPCs.

Energy Points (Optional)

This Derived Value can be used for games where the GM feels that characters possess a personal reserve of energy that is depleted when carrying out difficult tasks. Energy Points are needed to fuel Power Attributes that are associated with the Burns Energy Defect

and Special Attacks that have the Uses Energy Disability. If your character's Energy Point total is ever reduced to 0, he or she will fall unconscious from exhaustion.

CAUTION! The use of Energy Points can slow the pace of a game and greatly increase the amount of bookkeeping. Additionally, your character may tire quickly if you assign the Burns Energy Defect to several Powers, preventing him or her from using them over sustained periods. Whether this is appropriate for your character or not depends on how you envision your hero.

To calculate your character's initial Energy Point total, add together the Mind Stat and Soul Stat and multiply by 5 ({Mind + Soul} x 5). Energy Points may be further modified by the Energy Bonus Attribute (page 42).

EXAMPLE

Slipstream *— Slipstream's base Attack Combat Value is 9 (9+10+9 = 28; 28÷3 = 9), and base Defense Combat Value is 7. Adding his Attack Combat Mastery Attribute Level 4 gives a final ACV of 13. Adding his Defense Combat Mastery Attribute Level 1 gives a final DCV of 8.*

Slipstream's Health Point base is 90 (9+9 = 18; 18x5 = 90). Adding 40 Health Points for the Tough Attribute Level 2 gives a final total of 130. The campaign does not use Energy Points.

Alice *— Alice's base Attack Combat Value is 8 (9+5+10 = 24; 24÷3 = 8), and base Defense Combat Value is 6. Adding her Attack Combat Mastery Attribute Level 6 gives a final ACV of 14. Adding her Defense Combat Mastery Attribute Level 5 gives a final DCV of 11.*

Alice's Health Point base is 95 (9+10 = 19; 19x5 = 95). Since Alice does not possess the Tough Attribute, her final value remains the same.

Step 8: Background Points

Now that the numerical component of your character is complete (Stats, Attributes, Defects, Skills, and Derived Values), you should concentrate on fine-tuning his or her personality, while still leaving room for the character to grow in the future. One of the most effective ways to better visualize your creation is to provide detail through a background history, a character story, or a character drawing. Spending time to develop your character without a rule structure will enhance your role-playing greatly, and can give the GM a window into your character's motivations. Additionally, your Game Master might hand out a character quiz for you to answer. As an incentive, the GM will award you 1-3 **Background Points** for each contribution that you complete, which are then distributed among the Character Attributes. If any of your character's Stats are changed after using the Background Points, you must recalculate the three Derived Values.

This final step in character creation also serves as your last chance to answer important character questions before game-play begins. Why/how did he or she become a superhero? Where does he or she live? Work? Earn money? What are your character's likes? Dislikes? What about family? Friends? Romantic interests? Enemies? Details add depth to your character, but you should not become obsessed with them. Leaving room for growth can provide numerous character development opportunities during the course of the adventures.

DESIGNER'S NOTE

Effects-Based Versus Power-Based

Silver Age Sentinels is an effects-based system. This means that we provide the effects of an Attribute, and you define the specific application of those effects. For example, a character might achieve the capabilities of the Flight Attribute using: wings, magic, anti-gravity fields, psionics, force of will, reality-warping techniques, thermal riding, or many other methods. Similarly, a Level 2 Special Attack delivers 40 points of damage that could take the form of a near-infinite number of sources.

A power-based system defines both the effects and application of an Attribute. Dungeons and Dragons, for instance, details magic attack spells such as Burning Hands, Fireball, Lightning Bolt, and Magic Missile. They all deliver damage, but the way in which they deliver damage is determined by the rules, not the players.

An effects-based system gives players more freedom to create, but a particular application might not make any sense if used without forethought. The Nullify Attribute (page 58) at the 12 Points/Level version allows a player to counteract all of an opponent's Powers, regardless of their origin. In a campaign where Powers are derived from many different sources, this might not be feasible. If all Powers stem from genetic mutations, however, the use of Nullify is justified: the character has the ability to suppress the mutations' effects. Talk with your GM if you have any question regarding the special effect applications of your character's Powers.



JANUS PREPARES TO CLAIM YET ANOTHER VICTIM

Modular Character Design

Silver Age Sentinels is, in most cases, a modular system that allows a tremendous amount of customization between characters of similar ideas. For example, two speedsters in *Silver Age Sentinels* can be extremely different in their abilities — not all speedsters are created the same. This means that players (and GMs) need to have a solid character concept in mind when creating a character and determine how to best express those ideas using the game system. Having a conceptual idea of the character's Powers and how they work will make creating the character much easier.

As an example of the modular approach to character creation, let's follow the creation of two different speedsters. The first one, created by Tom, is a speedster who is devastating in combat, using his speed to maximum advantage. The second, created by Sally, is more inventive in the use of her superspeed. Both characters will obviously possess the Speed Attribute to reflect their ability to move quickly. Tom's speedster is able to attack numerous times in combat and thus assigns Extra Attacks. He also decides Extra Defenses is also a good idea — if the character can attack multiple times in a round, he should be able to defend multiple times as well. Tom wants his character to throw about 100 punches in a round — after all, he can move faster than the eye can follow. Taking Extra Attacks at Level 99, however, is both insanely expensive and just plain silly. Thus, he elects to have four attacks each round (Extra Attacks Level 3) and decides to take a Level 3 Special Attack: Rapid Punch to reflect the numerous punches thrown in an instant. He designs the Special Attack as an attack that delivers 20 points of damage, has the Accurate, Auto-Fire, and Knockback Abilities and the Melee and Low Penetration Disabilities. This, combined with his four attack rolls allows the speedster to hit opponents with a flurry of punches that can deliver devastating damage.

Sally, similarly, agrees that her speedster should be able to act often in a round, but her character has not mastered the ability to throw a blur of punches. Thus, she elects to take Extra Attacks at Level 4. While this is higher that Tom's character, it simply allows her to act more often — his character is much more likely to throw more punches at an opponent due to his Special Attack. Sally also takes the Extra Defenses Attribute.

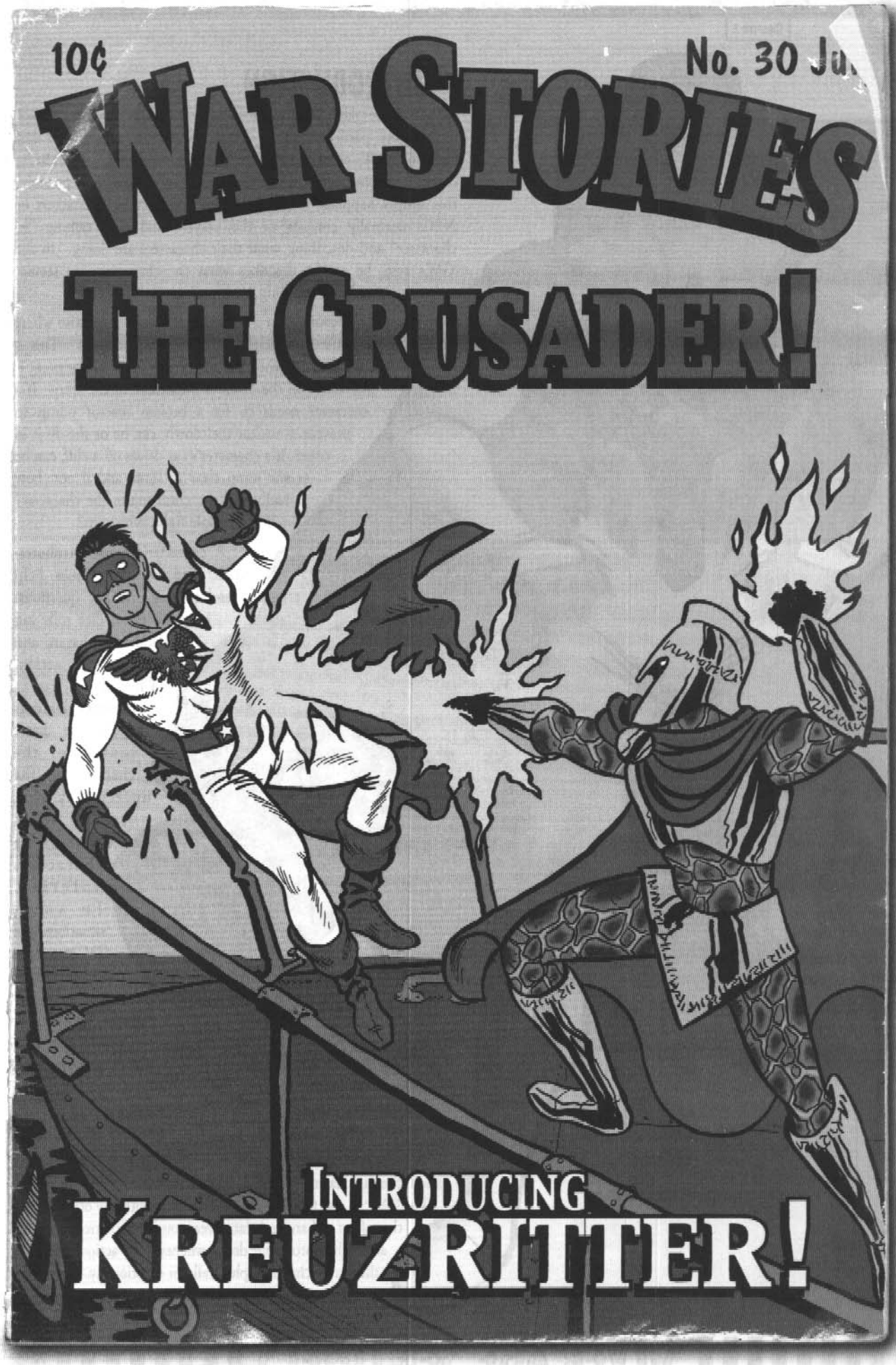
Tom's character has also mastered the Hit and Run manoeuvre and decides to select a second Level 3 Special Attack to reflect this ability. He decides the attack, which he names the Velocity Punch, delivers 60 points of damage and has the Accurate and Knockback Abilities as well as the Melee Disability. Sally's character does not have this ability due to the way her superspeed works and therefore Sally does not select a similar Special Attack. She feels that her character surrounds herself in a "speed warp field" that allows her to run at exceptional speed as well as the other abilities she will select. This field prevents her from being able to make velocity attacks like Tom's character (unless she decides to simply run into the character, see Velocity Damage, page 126).

Sally decides that the "speed warp field" generates a Level 3 Force Field that protects her character from harm when moving at superspeeds. The Force Field provides 60 points of protection and has the Regenerating Ability and the Limited: Only when moving at superspeed Disability. Tom decides his character is not similarly protected (he does not generate a "speed warp field"). Additionally, Sally's character has the ability to vibrate her molecules at incredible rates, allowing her pass through solid objects. She thus selects Mass Decrease (Insubstantial). Again, Tom does not feel that it is within his character's repertoire of superspeed abilities.

Tom decides that, because his character moves so fast, the rest of the world comparatively moves in ultra-slow motion. His character should thus have Attack Combat Mastery and Defense Combat Mastery at high Levels, reflecting his character dodging bullets that move at a snail's pace and hitting foes that resemble stationary statues. Sally agrees that her speedster probably perceives the world as if it was moving in slow motion, but not to the same degree as Tom's character. She selects Attack and Defense Combat Mastery as well, but assigns low Levels to both Attributes. Both players feel that their characters reaction time is incredibly enhanced and so they both select Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes) multiple times to gain an Initiative bonus.

The two players continue building their characters, using their character concepts to determine what Attributes they do and do not have. While assigning a Power may provide them with an advantage, if it does not fit within their character concept — if they cannot rationalize why or how their character would have the Power — they do not select the Attribute.

The above example clearly illustrates how two characters with a similar base Power can still differ greatly in ability. While both characters are playing speedsters, their superhuman speed has provided each vastly different abilities.



GAMEMECHANICS



Introduction

In a role-playing game, most character or NPC actions do not require any particular rules. A player simply says his or her character walks across a room, picks up an object, drives a vehicle, or talks to someone, etc., and if the GM agrees that it is possible, this simply happens. Personal interaction between characters or NPCs normally consists of the players and GM talking "in character" and describing what their characters are doing. In the GM's case, he or she describes what the characters are seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting.

In the course of a game, circumstances may arise where specific rules can help determine what happens. This is usually the case when the outcome of an action or event is uncertain and the result is important to the story. If a character needs to fix a broken reactor pump to prevent a nuclear meltdown, can he or she do it in time? If a character's car drives off a cliff, can he or she jump clear in time, and if not, how badly will the crash injure the character? If two people fight, who wins?

A character's Stats, Attributes, Skills, and Derived Values help resolve these dramatic questions. In many cases, dice rolls can add additional hazard and drama to the action. The dice rolls represent elements beyond the direct control of the character or the uncertainty that results when opposing characters interact. In some situations, the GM may elect to determine the results by simple fiat, without rolling dice (see When to Roll Dice, page 112). The GM may do so if he or she thinks a particular outcome is certain or is dramatically necessary to the game.

One situation the rules cover in greater detail is combat. The rules for combat are extensive, giving players a greater sense that they are in control of their characters' every step. If they lose, they will know the GM has not arbitrarily killed or injured their characters. The GM can also follow a similar procedure with any other actions that affect a character's fate: treat routine activities in passing and delve into more detail whenever an action influences the player character physically or emotionally.

Designer's Note

IMPORTANT! Do not hesitate to go beyond the rules if you are the Game Master. If you dislike a rule presented in the Silver Age Sentinels RPG, you are encouraged to modify it to suit your needs and those of the players. Do not let your own vision of a superhero role-playing game be superseded by anything you read in this book. These pages are filled with guidelines and suggestions, but certainly do not reflect the "One True Way" to role-playing success. Use what you like, discard what you do not, and fill in the blanks with your own ideas.

The Passage of Time

"In game" passage of time in a role-playing game is fluid, just as in a comic book. In some situations, like a conversation between two characters, the movement of game time normally matches real world time. More often, the amount of time that passes depends on the characters' activities as set by the players' actions and dictated by theory of "comic time" — things happen as soon as dramatically appropriate. Climbing a high mountain takes about one splash page and two additional panels. It does not take the several hours that climbing a mountain would really take. The GM should telescope time until something interesting happens: "Two weeks pass while you live the lives of your secret identities. Then Kreuzritter broadcasts a message to the world, announcing his plans to destroy the UN if his demands are not met...." Finally, in very dramatic situations such as combat, the GM may keep very precise track of time, using individual "combat rounds" (see Combat, page 115). GMs may go back in time as well to employ flashback scenes. A flashback is a useful tool to establish the background for a story without simply recounting the information in dry lecture fashion, allowing the player to work through the event.

Scene, Round, and Initiative

Three common measures of game time in *Silver Age Sentinels* are a scene, round, and **Initiative**. A scene is any situation where the events remain linked, moment-to-moment. Think of it in movie terms — a scene lasts until the camera cuts to an entirely new setting, potentially with new characters. If, for example, a character is speaking with an informant in a diner, the conversation constitutes a scene. Once the GM switches scenes to the character entering a back alley, following up on the informant's lead, the diner scene ends and a new scene begins in the back alley. If the conversation was interrupted by a villain attacking the informant, intent on shutting him up before he could reveal any important information, the scene would not yet end when the character chased after the villain down a back alleyway. Since the events are still linked moment-to-moment, it is still a part of a scene although the setting has changed.

A round is a measure of time of approximately 1-10 seconds in length (usually averaged to 5 seconds), while an Initiative is one specific moment in time. When combat occurs, characters roll Initiative (see page 115) and each is allowed to act on his or her Initiative. The round is broken into a number of Initiatives equal to the highest Initiative rolled for the round. For example, in a combat between three characters who roll an 11, 19, and 24, the combat round has 24 Initiatives. The round remains 5 seconds in length, but for the purposes of action within the conflict, there are 24 potential individual moments — 24 instances where a character could decide to act. On the following combat round, when the characters roll 16, 23, and 39, there are now 39 Initiatives within the round.

Taking Action

Every character is capable of performing or attempting a nearly endless list of actions. These can be mundane activities (talking, breathing, thinking), skilled activities (building a suit of power armour, hacking into a computer, moving silently, climbing the side of a building), or combat activities (fighting, dodging, shooting). The Combat section covers Combat action in detail and thus is not discussed here. Additionally, players can assume that characters carry out routine skilled activities successfully on a regular basis unless specified otherwise by the GM. For example, the GM can assume that characters with the Gun Combat Skill routinely keep their weapons clean, safely stored, and properly maintained.

Every GM has a preferred method for having players describe their characters' actions. Usually this involves the GM moving from player to player asking, "What is your character doing?" Experienced GMs try to give each person equal role-playing time so that everyone is an important facet of the story (switching between characters as necessary). Conversely, players are responsible for relating their characters' intended actions to the GM. In return, the GM will describe the results of those actions or will request a Stat or Skill check to determine the outcome.

Consider the three action descriptions below:

Action 1: "My character, Red Phoenix, is going to search for Iron Duke."

Action 2: "My character, Red Phoenix, is going to search for Iron Duke in the basement of the building."

Action 3: "My character, Red Phoenix, is going to quickly search for Iron Duke in the basement of the building. She will fly through walls if she has to, in order to find him as fast as possible."

All three accounts involve Red Phoenix looking for Iron Duke, but the level of detail is quite different. You should not be overly concerned with detail if it is irrelevant to your character's actions (such as the exact speed at which Red Phoenix is flying in Action 3), but sometimes a little detail can greatly alter the GM's interpretation of the event.

Superpowers and Actions

In some situations, it is important to know how many superhuman Powers a character can activate at one time and how quickly he or she can activate the Power. Innate Powers, such as Armour or Superstrength, are considered always active, unless the character selects a Restriction (see page 98) whereby the Power is not always active. Powers which must be activated but do not usually require a dice roll, such as Force Field, can be activated at a rate of one per Initiative; these activations do not require the character to

use an action. Powers that must be activated and do require a dice roll demand focus, and thus the character must spend one or more actions to activate the Power. A character can have any number of Powers active at any moment, though GMs may wish to impose penalties if the character is focusing on too many things. It is usually obvious which Powers fall into which category, but the final classification is at the Game Master's discretion.

Using Attributes at Reduced Levels

Unless a character assigns the Maximum Force Defect (page 96) to an Attribute, he or she can voluntarily use the Attribute at reduced Levels and PMV Ranks. For example, a character with Level 6 Teleport (maximum distance of 1,000 km) could choose to teleport any distance up to 1,000 km. Similarly, if the character also assigned a Targets PMV of Rank 4 (50 people/1 tonne) to Teleport, he or she could use the Power on any number of people or objects up to 50 people/1 tonne.

Fractional Power Use

The GM might also allow the character to use a fraction of an Attribute's effect. A character with Level 10 Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), for instance, may only want to turn a single body part, such as a hand or head, incorporeal. The GM could decide that fractional Power use is more or less difficult than using a Power's full effect, assigning appropriate Check Value modifiers (see Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers).

Dice and Dice Rolls

The *Silver Age Sentinels RPG* uses two ten-sided dice to handle all aspects of the game mechanics. By adding the two numbers shown on each die, values between 2 and 20 can be generated. The distribution of values almost follows a bell curve, with the middle value of 11 generated most frequently (10 times out of 100 possibilities or 10% of the time). There are three major types of dice rolls, or checks, a GM or player may use during game play: a Stat check dice roll, a Skill check dice roll and an Attack/Defense Combat check. When a player announces the intended actions of his or her character, the GM must decide if a dice roll is necessary. Should a roll be required, the GM chooses which type of check is most appropriate.

In most cases, a player rolls dice to determine the success of an action his or her character performs, while the GM rolls the dice to determine the results of NPC actions when they impact the characters. In situations where NPCs are only involved with other NPCs, the GM should simply decide what happens rather than rolling dice.

In some circumstances, the GM may roll the dice to determine the results of a character's action instead of having a player roll, keeping the actual dice roll — and the reason for rolling — secret. This is normally done when the player rolling would give away an event that should remain unknown to the character. If, for example, there is something hidden that the character may or may not notice, the GM can secretly roll dice to see if the character spots it. If the GM allowed the player to roll the dice, the player would know that a clue existed even if the character did not succeed in noticing it.

Stat Checks

A Stat check is used when the GM believes that innate ability is more important than any learned expertise or combat capability. During a Stat check, the GM decides which Stat (Body, Mind, or Soul) would be most relevant to the action in question. If two or three Stats are closely related to the action, an average Stat Value should be calculated instead, rounding up to the closest whole number. For actions that fall under the domain of an Attribute, the relevant Stat is usually given in the Attribute description (see page 29 of Chapter 2: Character Creation).

A successful Stat check involves the player rolling less than or equal to the Check Value on two dice. The base Check Value is equal to the appropriate Stat or Stat average, as determined by the GM. The Stat check is unsuccessful if the dice roll generates a value greater than the Check Value. The greater the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll, the greater the degree of success or failure (see Table 3-1: Degrees of Success).

Table 3-1: Degrees of Success

Roll is greater than the Check Value by 8+	Overwhelming Failure
Roll is greater than the Check Value by 6 or 7	Extreme Failure
Roll is greater than the Check Value by 4 or 5	Major Failure
Roll is greater than the Check Value by 2 or 3	Minor Failure
Roll is greater than the Check Value by 1	Marginal Failure
Roll is equal to or 1 less than the Check Value	Marginal Success
Roll is less than the Check Value by 2 or 3	Minor Success
Roll is less than the Check Value by 4 or 5	Major Success
Roll is less than the Check Value by 6 or 7	Extreme Success
Roll is less than the Check Value by 8+	Overwhelming Success

Check Value Difficulty Modifiers

The GM has the option of modifying the Check Value should the action the character is undertaking be particularly easy or difficult (see Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers). Difficult actions gain a negative modifier to the attempt, while easier actions receive a positive modifier.

Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers

Check Value Modifier	Difficulty of the Action
+10	Practically Guaranteed (why roll dice?)
+8	Extremely Easy
+6	Quite Easy
+4	Easy
+2	Below Average Difficulty
0	Average Difficulty
-2	Above Average Difficulty
-4	Difficult
-6	Quite Difficult
-8	Extremely Difficult
-10	Practically Impossible

Critical Success or Failure

Regardless of the actual Check Value, an unmodified or "natural" roll of 2 always succeeds (it is considered at least a "marginal success"), and an unmodified roll of 20 always fails (it is considered at least a "marginal failure"). This rule is important in a superhero game, because it reflects the extreme possibilities that even the most talented characters sometimes fail in their tasks, while even the most awkward characters can succeed.

Designer's Note

My Normal Person Cannot Do Anything!

Take your ordinary, everyday Joe (or Jane) with a Stat value of 4 (the adult human average) and no applicable Skill and ask him to attempt something. Some people think that there is no chance for Joe to succeed on his task – he needs to roll a 4 or lower! Players and GMs must make certain to remember the Check Value modifiers from Table 3-2: Check Value Modifiers (see page 108), however. These modifiers are based on how easy or difficult the GM deems the task is. For example, let's look at a character attempting to leap across a nine-foot expanse with a running start. The GM decides that this is an Extremely Easy task. The check is therefore made with a +8 bonus. Thus, Joe with his Body Stat of 4 needs to roll a 12 or less to make that nine-foot jump. Odds are quite good that he will succeed. Additionally, if the GM is using a different die type for a low-powered campaign (see page 21, Power Level Scaling), the chance of success is even greater.

The difficulty term "average task" more correctly means "task that is considered of average importance in a superhero campaign, for which the GM would actually want the player to make a dice roll." Parallel parking a car is not an average task – even though many people cannot do it – since it is unimportant in a superhero campaign. When you are thinking about a specific task, if you cannot say "that's a fairly average action for a superhero to accomplish," then it's not an average task.

GMs should remember that this modifier is not a measure of "Joe's" ability to accomplish the task – it is a measure of how easy or difficult the task is for anyone to accomplish. The measure of Joe's ability to accomplish the task is a factor of his Stats and Skills. For example, a character with a very high Body of 10 with the Acrobatics Skill at Level 3 attempting the nine-foot jump would need to roll 13 or less without factoring in a modifier for how easy the jump is. If the GM remains consistent and applies the same +8 bonus to the attempt, the character will succeed on anything except a critical failure (since he or she needs to roll a 21 or less). The GM, keeping in mind when to roll dice and when not to roll dice (see page 112), may decide that the player does not even need to make the check. For the acrobat, this means he almost automatically succeeds while, for Joe, it means he has a good chance of success.

In short, always remember to apply Check Value modifiers if a task is particularly easy or difficult. Additionally, remain consistent in the application of those modifiers – an Easy task for one character is an Easy task for another.

If you remember to apply these modifiers, you will have a very enjoyable game where normal people are still effective while superheroes are capable of accomplishing heroic feats.

Apply Modifiers Equally

GMs must always be consistent with the application of Check Value modifiers based on the difficulty of a task (see Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers, page 108). Since these modifiers are a reflection of how easy or difficult a task is to accomplish, not how easy or difficult it is for a specific character to accomplish the task, they must be applied universally to all characters. If Joe's attempt to make a nine-foot jump is Extremely Easy, then a superhero's attempt to make the same jump should likewise be Extremely Easy and similarly gain a +8 bonus. There is a danger that, for weaker characters, GMs will apply higher bonuses in an effort to give characters a roughly 50% chance of success but give skilled and accomplished characters less of a bonus or even a penalty in order to maintain the 50% chance of success. This is something that must be avoided — always remain consistent in the application of modifiers based on a task's degree of difficulty.

If GMs apply modifiers consistently, their games will have a harmonious feel where characters adept in certain areas are capable of things of which inept players are incapable, making each character shine in his or her specialty.

Contested Actions

If two or more characters are working directly or indirectly against each other (such as two people pulling on a contested object), each character must make a Stat check. The character with the greatest degree of success (or least degree of failure if both characters fail) is considered to have the advantage over the contested action.

Skill Checks

A Skill check is similar to a Stat check, except it is used when the task is one that the GM decides would be governed by both a particular Stat and a particular Skill. For example, if a task required general intellectual ability (such as remembering the name of a person the character had met), a Mind Stat check would be made. Determining the origin of a rare alien species would also require a Mind Stat check, but this task is governed by the Biological Sciences Skill (more specifically, the Zoology Specialization). In game terminology, this task would require a "Mind-Based Biological Sciences (Zoology) Skill check." The base Check Value of a Skill check is equal to the appropriate Stat. Thus, for a Mind-based Skill check, the base Check Value is the character's Mind. If the character possesses the appropriate Skill (even without the exact Specialization), he or she receives a bonus to the Check Value. This bonus is equivalent to the character's Skill Level (if the task does not fall under his or her Specialization) or one more than the character's Skill Level (if his or her Specialization does apply). A successful Skill check involves the player rolling less than or equal to the modified Check Value on two dice. The degree of the action's success or failure is determined by the difference between the Check Value and the dice roll (see Table 3-1: Degrees of Success, page 108).

The GM is responsible for deciding which Stat, Skill, and Specialization are relevant to a particular task, using the Stat and Skill descriptions given in Chapter 2: Character Creation. Since these questions can often be tricky, the GM should listen to the player's reasoning why a particular Skill or Specialization might apply. The final decision belongs to the GM, however.

Unskilled Attempts

Often, a character will attempt an action for which he or she does not possess the relative Skill. The Check Value in these situations is dependant on the nature of the action.

Familiar Action

If the character is undertaking a familiar action, the Check Value is simply equal to the relevant Stat. The familiarity should have been established previously, such as in the character's background story, or be consistent with the character's role within the setting. The player should explain to the GM why his or her character is familiar with the current task. The GM, of course, has final say whether the character is sufficiently familiar to avoid an unfamiliar action Check Value penalty (see below).

For example, a student who attends university to study astronomy undoubtedly has at least a cursory familiarity with many academic fields. Similarly, almost all characters living in Empire City will be familiar with the process of driving a car, even if they do not possess the Driving Skill; in North America, attempting car-related actions is familiar to nearly everyone. A hermit living in the depths of the Amazon, however, is likely not familiar with motor vehicles and therefore driving would be an unfamiliar action.

Unfamiliar Action

If the character is undertaking an action with which he or she is unfamiliar, the task should be treated as a normal Stat check with an unskilled penalty applied to the Check Value. This reflects how difficult it is for an unskilled character to accomplish the task. The unskilled penalty should range from -2 to -10, depending on how much the GM feels training is required and how background aspects of the character could affect the attempt. This unskilled penalty is in addition to any penalty (or bonus) that is applied as a reflection of how easy or difficult the task itself is to accomplish.

For example, keeping a plane in the air after the cabin crew suddenly falls unconscious is a daunting task for anyone who is not trained as a pilot. An average character might therefore suffer a -8 penalty to the Check Value. A character who is an aficionado of combat jets and aircraft documentaries might only suffer a -4 Check Value penalty ... even if he or she has never actually piloted a plane before.

Required Skill

The GM may decide certain tasks automatically fail when performed by characters lacking the required Skill. Examples of required Skill activities include: performing brain surgery, deciphering ancient hieroglyphics, concocting an antidote for a poison, estimating the value of a rare piece of art, etc.

Power Usage Skills

Some characters may select the Power Usage Skill for one or more of their Powers. This Skill provides a bonus when the character makes any check involving the specific Power. Unlike other Skills, Power Usage does not provide an additional +1 bonus for Specializations. For example, a teleporter with a Mind Stat of 9 and the Power Usage (Teleportation) Skill at Level 3 makes Teleportation checks against a Check Value of 12 (a Mind Stat of 9 plus 3 for his Level in the Power Usage Skill).

Additional Modifiers

GMs should remember to also apply normal Check Value difficulty modifiers based on how easy or difficult the task is (see Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers). For instance, landing a crippled airliner on an icy runway at midnight during a blizzard might be a quite difficult task (-6 penalty). Landing the same crippled jet during daylight in fair weather might not incur a difficulty penalty. Any difficulty modifiers that are assigned to a character's task are cumulative with his or her Skill Level bonus.

Table 3-3: Skill Check Modifiers

Skill Level 1	A character gains a +1 Check Value bonus, or a +2 Check Value bonus if the character possesses a relevant speciality.
Skill Level 2	A character gains a +2 Check Value bonus, or a +3 Check Value bonus if the character possesses a relevant speciality.
Skill Level 3	A character gains a +3 Check Value bonus, or a +4 Check Value bonus if the character possesses a relevant speciality.
Skill Level 4	A character gains a +4 Check Value bonus, or a +5 Check Value bonus if the character possesses a relevant speciality.
Skill Level 5	A character gains a +5 Check Value bonus, or a +6 Check Value bonus if the character possesses a relevant speciality.

Combat Dice Rolls

The combat check resolves any type of physical combat including armed, unarmed, martial arts, and ranged weapons attacks. The combat check is very similar to a Skill check except the Check Value is now the character's Attack Combat Value (for Attack Combat checks) or Defense Combat Value (for Defense Combat checks) rather than a Stat. A successful combat action involves the player or GM rolling less than or equal to the Check Value on two dice. The attack or defense is unsuccessful if the dice roll (after any modifiers) is greater than the Check Value.

A character can attack or defend with a weapon (or unarmed) even if he or she does not possess the relevant attack combat Skill (combat is a Familiar Action). Consequently, attacking or defending characters lacking the appropriate Skill do not suffer a Check Value penalty; a character without the appropriate combat Skill simply does not receive a Check Value bonus.



Alice makes a break for it, slipping free of her police captors

Skills adjust the Check Value, but other Attributes may also provide modifiers as well. The GM also has the option of modifying the Check Value should the attack or defense be particularly easy or difficult (see Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers, page 108). A natural dice roll of 2 ("snake eyes") is a critical success and cannot be negated by an opponent's defense (the defender does not even have the opportunity to make a Defense check).

Using Attributes

If an Attribute does not specifically require a Stat or Skill check or a Combat check, GMs can assume they function automatically in most situations, though the Game Master may decide that a Stat or Skill check is necessary in unusual circumstances. For example, a character with the Features (Appearance) Attribute always looks good, but the GM might require a Soul Stat check were he or she attempting to attract someone's attention.

Certain Attributes occasionally require Stat checks (or sometimes Skill checks) to properly use the Attribute. Other Attributes provide favourable modifiers to Stat checks or Skill checks. If an Attribute interacts with Stat or Skill checks, this is noted in the Attribute's description in Character Creation.

When to Roll Dice

It is important for the GM to realize that not all actions require Stat, Skill, or Combat checks. Obviously mundane activities, such as hammering a nail, riding a horse along a road, or eating lunch, should never need dice rolls unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the character's actions. In other situations, the necessity to roll dice is less obvious. If a character is virtually guaranteed to succeed at a task (the only way the character can fail is if the player rolls a critical failure — a natural 20), then the GM should consider whether the check is really necessary. While it is true that the character might fail — the player could roll a natural 20 — having the player roll the dice will slow the game down. Thus, GMs should recognize when a character is almost certainly going to succeed at a task and, in those situations, not request the check and allow game play to continue, uninterrupted.

Conversely, one might think that if a character only succeeds if the player rolls a critical success (natural 2), then the GM should similarly not request a check and, instead, state that the action fails. This, however, is not the case — player characters should almost always be given that one slim chance of success, even at difficult tasks that seem doomed to failure (with the exception of tasks that the GM deems require a specific Skill, see Unskilled Attempts, page 110). While the dice roll may slow game-play down a bit, that slim chance of success allows characters to accomplish heroic feats that will be remembered for years. GMs may wish to allow only player characters to make this roll, even in the face of near-certain failure. Since NPCs are not the stars of the comic book, they should not be allowed the same chance of pulling off superhuman feats.

The following is a list of suggestions when the dice should and should not be rolled. If a check is unnecessary, the character should gain an automatic success for the action.

Should I Make My Player Roll Dice?

On page 113, we discuss when you should or should not have players roll dice. This is an important element of good game mastering that GMs should take care to understand. It is very easy to require players to make a check for most tasks where success or failure is in doubt but, in some cases, the roll is unnecessary and serves only to slow the game down. Take, for example, the world's best detective attempting to break into a home. The home may have a simple security system, but more likely than not, it merely has bolt locks on the doors and latches on the windows. For our detective, a master of many skills, including breaking into buildings, this is an incredibly easy feat to accomplish. The GM may determine that the task is a normal task and thus has no Check Value modifier (see page 108). The detective must roll under his Body Stat of 12 and gains a +5 bonus from his Skill in Burglary (he is the best in the world, after all). Thus, he must roll a 17 or less — it is very likely that he will succeed.

Some GMs may feel that since there is a chance of failure (a roll of 18, 19, or 20), they must make the player roll to see if the detective succeeds at the task. In this situation, however, requiring a check is probably unnecessary — if the detective fails he can try again and he will almost certainly succeed on the second attempt. Unless the detective is working on a tight timeframe (he must get to the bomb and deactivate it in under six rounds or it will explode) or failure may result in the situation changing (an alarm sounding), the GM should not request a check and simply state that the action succeeds. The dice roll should absolutely be made, however, when failure means something.

As another example, a GM should not require a check for an average dentist performing a root canal in his own office. A dentist, a graduate of medical school, probably has a Mind Stat of 6 (one must be smart to graduate medical school) and the Medical (Dentistry) Skill at Level 3. Thus, the base Check Value is 10. When the GM consults Table 3-2: Check Value Difficulty Modifiers, the situation changes. Since the dentist is working in ideal circumstances (his own well-stocked office with a nurse assistant without any outside pressure), making the attempt Extremely Easy; the GM assigns a +8 bonus to the task, increasing the dentist's Check Value to 18. Now, the odds of failure are sufficiently slim that a check is probably not needed (he will only fail on a roll of 19 or 20). If the circumstances of the attempt were more challenging (a tight time constraint, insufficient equipment, numerous distractions, etc.), the character would receive a smaller bonus or even a penalty to the attempt. In such a situation, a check might be required since the chance for failure has increased.

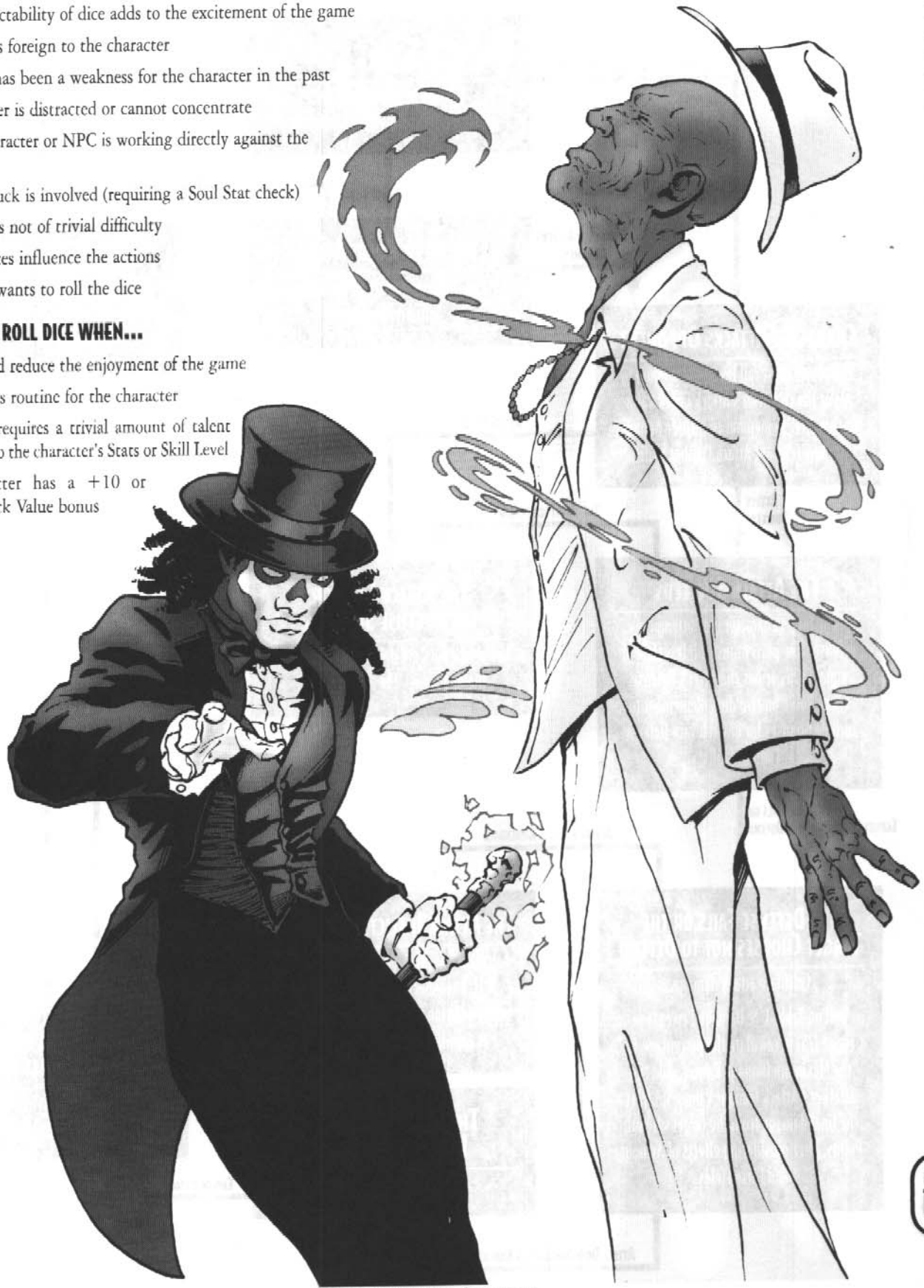
In short, GMs should exercise control over when they ask for a dice roll, recognizing that rolling dice often only results in slowing the game down rather than adding tension and excitement.

Roll dice when...

- the unpredictability of dice adds to the excitement of the game
- the action is foreign to the character
- the action has been a weakness for the character in the past
- the character is distracted or cannot concentrate
- another character or NPC is working directly against the character
- only pure luck is involved (requiring a Soul Stat check)
- the action is not of trivial difficulty
- outside forces influence the actions
- the player wants to roll the dice

Do not roll dice when...

- a roll would reduce the enjoyment of the game
- the action is routine for the character
- the action requires a trivial amount of talent compared to the character's Stats or Skill Level
- the character has a +10 or better Check Value bonus



Rivals, Doc Cimitière and the Baron, battle

Combat Flowchart

Start
Determine Initiative order.
Attacker acts on his or her Initiative.

Character Attacks Opponent → **Character Attacks Opponent**
The player must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Attack Check Value on two dice. Remember to include bonuses for any relevant Attack Combat Skills.

Non-Combat Action → **Non-Combat Action**
The player describes the character's action to the GM, and forfeits one attack for this round.

Non-Combat Action → **Character Holds Action**
The character can act on any lower Initiative number.

Character Attacks Opponent → **Character Attacks Opponent**

Attack Fails → **The Attack Fails or the Defense Succeeds**
The attack does not deliver any damage to the opponent. The attack is over.

End of Attack → **End of Attack or Non-Combat Action**

End of Non-Combat Action → **End of Attack or Non-Combat Action**

Attack Succeeds → **The Attack Succeeds**
The target character may attempt a defense. The player must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Defense Check Value on two dice. Remember to include bonuses for any relevant Defense Combat Skills.

The Defense Succeeds → **The Attack Fails or the Defense Succeeds**

Defense Fails or Target Chooses not to Defend → **The Defense Fails or the Target Chooses not to Defend**
Calculate attack damage.
Roll on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage (page 125) to calculate the percentage of the Maximum Damage Rating. Add the attacker's Attack Combat Value. Subtract the final damage from the target's Health Points, after considering effects of Armour and Force Fields.

Attack Inflicts Knockback → **The Attack Inflicts Knockback**
Calculate Knockback distance using Table 3-11: Knockback Distance (page 128). Inflict additional damage from Knockback as appropriate. The attack is over.

End of Attack → **End of Attack or Non-Combat Action**

Attack Does Not Inflict Knockback → **The Attack Does Not Inflict Knockback**
The attack is over.

End of Attack → **End of Attack or Non-Combat Action**

Combat

Conflict is an essential component of any role-playing game, and certainly of a superhero game. Physical conflict, or combat, is an important element of the *Silver Age Sentinels RPG*, but important is not the same as frequent. Combat should be a vital element of a scene, and not just a distraction that the GM uses to pass the time.

The combat rules for the Tri-Stat System were designed to mimic dynamic, fast-paced combat. Whenever a character enters physical conflict with another character or NPC, the physical Combat Phase begins. Each round of combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives, depending on the characters' actions and the circumstances (the exact time scale is not relevant; a five-second round is usually appropriate). Characters are permitted to take one offensive and one defensive action each round. They may also choose to take more than one defensive action, but suffer a Check Value penalty to each subsequent attempt (see the Defense section). Alternatively, a character may forfeit his or her attack in favour of one non-combat action. Should the conflict not be resolved at the end of the first combat round, subsequent rounds of combat will follow.

The Physical Combat Phase is subdivided into four parts: Initiative, Character Action, Defense, and Damage.

Initiative

Initiative determines the order in which charcters act and is checked at the beginning of each round. Each player involved in the fracas rolls two dice and adds the result to his or her character's Attack Combat Value. A bonus is applied if the character possesses the Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes; page 34) or Speed (page 75) Attributes. The GM does the same for any NPCs engaged in the conflict. The GM may also grant bonuses or penalties if he or she believes the situations calls for it. Alternatively, the players and Game Master can roll once at the beginning of combat to determine their characters' Initiatives for the entire battle (i.e. their Initiatives will remain the same every round).

The character with the highest total has "gained Initiative" and acts first, followed by others in descending order. Should two or more characters or NPCs have the same Initiative, their actions are simultaneous. This means both characters attack and deliver damage at the same time; if one character drops below zero Health Points as a result, he or she still acts before falling unconscious.

A character may delay his or her action until any time later in the round to see what the other characters intend to do. If all his or her opponents also delay their actions waiting for something to happen, the round ends in a dramatic stand-off and a new one begins.

If a character holds one or more actions until the end of a round and does not act, he or she acts on the first Initiative in the next round. The character does not gain an additional action — he or she simply acts first regardless of Initiative rolls. All held actions occur during the first Initiative. If two (or more) characters hold their actions until the following round, then both characters act simultaneously (assuming neither continues to hold their action) and then everyone else involved in the combat acts based on Initiative rolls.

Character Action

Characters act in the sequence determined by the Initiative roll. When it is time for a character to act, he or she may make one offensive action (i.e. attack) or one non-combat action, unless the character has the Extra Attacks Attribute (page 43). Attacks are normally against a single target, though some weapons or attack Abilities may allow the character to engage multiple targets simultaneously.

Before rolling the dice, the player should clearly describe the method of attack, the weapon his or her character uses (if any), and the target. If the character is trying something unusual (such as a Called Shot or attacking with two weapons), he or she should specify this beforehand.

To successfully attack an opponent, the player (or GM for an NPC) must roll less than or equal to his or her character's Attack Combat Value on two dice as described under Combat Dice Rolls on page 110. Remember to include all relevant Attribute, Skill, Defect, Weapon Ability/Disability, and difficulty modifiers (refer to Table 3-6: Attack Check Modifiers, page 123).

If the Attack check succeeds, the character is on target and will hit unless the opponent can defend against the attack. Refer to Defense checks, page 123, for more information. If the target fails the Defense check or does not defend at all, he or she suffers the effects of the attack. This is normally damage and/or any other special effects associated with the attack. To reflect some of the brutally successful attacks demonstrated in superhero comic books, a natural dice roll of 2 is a critical success and cannot be negated by an opponent's defense.

If an Attack check fails, the character has missed. The attacker's action is over, and the attack has no effect, though a miss with a ranged weapon may cause collateral damage if the shot strikes somewhere else instead (this is up to the GM). A natural roll of 20 will always miss and may result in an exceptional failure, such as hitting an innocent bystander or a weapon malfunctioning.

Melee vs. Ranged Attacks

Some attacks are useful at a distance, while others are limited to close, hand-to-hand fighting. For simplicity, ranges are grouped into the four categories listed below. It is up to the GM to decide whether he or she wishes to track ranges and distances, or abstract them.

The distance given for each attack range is the effective reach of that attack. Many may be fired out to twice that range at -4 penalty or five times the distance at -8, though the GM may decide that some attacks or weapons cannot exceed their listed ranges.

Melee

The attack is only usable against adjacent opponents within touching distance (usually one to five metres). This is the range for swords, melee combat, etc.

Short

The attack has an effective range out to about 50 metres. Most pistols, shotguns, grenades, submachine guns, and hurled weapons such as a thrown rock or throwing knife, are short-ranged.

Medium

The attack has an effective range out to about 500 metres. Most superhero energy blasts as well as bows, crossbows, rifles, and machine guns are medium-ranged. This is the default range for weapons if none other is listed.

Long

The attack is effective out to considerable ranges: about 5 km (or more if specifically noted). A surface-to-air missile, an anti-tank rocket, or a tank's main gun are examples of this.

Special Combat Situations

The following are special situations that can occur during combat.

Attacking Multiple Targets with One Attack

When a character absolutely must take down a number of targets but he or she does not have enough Extra Attacks to do so, the character may attempt to use one attack to strike multiple targets. For each additional target beyond the first, the character suffers a -4 Attack Combat penalty. Only one Attack Combat check is made, not one check per target. Each target, however, is allowed to make a Defense Combat check as normal. Additionally, any damage inflicted is reduced by 2 ranks, to a minimum of 0% (see Amount of Damage Inflicted, page 124). Thus, if a character attempted to swing his sword and strike three people in one blow, he would make one Attack check with a -8 penalty (-4 for each of the two extra targets). If he successfully hits any of the targets, his damage is reduced by 2 ranks.

Attacks With Two Weapons

A character with a one-handed weapon in each hand may use both at once against the same target or attack two different targets (even if he or she does not have Extra Attacks) but at a severe penalty to both checks. A two-weapon attack incurs a -8 Check Value penalty if the attacks are aimed at the same target or a -12 penalty if aimed at different targets. If a character has Extra Attacks, he or she can only use this option with one attack and not every attack.

Called Shots

An attacking character may opt to suffer an unfavourable difficulty modifier to hit in exchange for a Called Shot that provides some special advantage. For example, a Called Shot may ignore Armour (by attacking a small, unarmoured spot) or strike a vital point, inflicting greater-than-normal damage results. Players must specify a Called Shot before rolling the dice.

Called Shot – Disarming

A character may attempt to shoot or knock a weapon out of another person's hand. If using a ranged attack, this requires an attack at a -8 penalty. If the attack hits and the opponent fails his or her Defense check, the character knocks away the weapon (probably damaging it). If using a melee weapon or unarmed attack to disarm, the character only suffers a -4, but the target may make a Body Stat check to retain control of the weapon. If the Body Stat check succeeds, the weapon's user still suffers a -4 Check Value penalty on his or her next action with that weapon (since it is off balance), but he or she retains control of it.

Called Shot to Partial Armour

Some armour may provide partial protection, like a flak vest only protecting a person's torso. An attack aimed at a thin or unarmoured area suffers a -4 Attack check penalty and ignores the effects of the armour if successful.

Called Shot to Vital Spot

A character attacking a living being can specify he or she is aiming for a vital spot (heart, brain, spine, etc.) rather than simply shooting at the centre of mass as usual. He or she suffers a -8 Attack check penalty, but, if successful, the attack inflicts full, 100% damage. If the character rolls a natural 2 on this Attack check, subtract 6 from his or her dice roll for determining the effects of the critical hit (see page 127).

Called Shot to Weak Point

If the character knows his or her enemy has a Weak Point Defect (page 101), a Called Shot can be made to hit it in combat. The Attack check penalty depends on the size of the Weak Point: a tiny spot gives a -6 penalty; a small spot gives a -4 penalty; and a large spot gives a -2 penalty.

Combined Attacks

Sometimes, characters will find themselves facing an extremely tough opponent whose Armour or Force Field is tough enough to prevent the characters from inflicting harm. In these situations, characters will often co-ordinate their attacks, attempting to strike the same point at the same time in the hopes of overwhelming the target's defenses. For each character attempting a combined attack after the first, the attackers each suffer a -2 penalty to their Attack check. Each character must hold his or her attack until the slowest character's Initiative (or later) before launching the attack. Each character makes an Attack Combat check to see if he or she hits the target. If the character hits, he or she determines how much damage is inflicted by the attack normally (see page 124). All successful attackers combine their damage values into one total and this amount is inflicted upon the target as if from one attack.

If one attack fails to hit with the combined attack penalty but otherwise would normally hit, the character still hits the target but does not successfully co-ordinate with the other characters. Naturally, if only one character co-ordinates, a combined attack does not occur. The character determines how much damage is inflicted but reduces the damage delivered by two ranks (minimum of 0% damage). If the character misses, no damage is delivered.

The target of a successful combined attack may avoid all damage from the attackers' combined effort with a single Defense Combat check. If he or she is successful, all damage from the combined attack is avoided. A penalty of -1 is applied to the roll for each opponent who successfully participates in the combined attack. Any failed combined attacks, however, must be defended against separately.

Example

Three characters are attacking an extremely tough villain who has 80 points of Armour. Their attacks, thus far, have simply bounced off his Armour and done nothing to slow his rampage through town. Desperate to end the villain's spree of destruction, the three characters decide to co-ordinate their attacks. Everyone rolls Initiative for the new combat round. The hero characters roll 36, 27, and 18. They must therefore wait until Initiative 18, at the earliest, before being able to launch their combined attack. On Initiative 18, the three strike. They each make an Attack Combat check with a -4 penalty (-2 for the each of the 2 characters that are in addition to the first). The first character succeeds and rolls for damage, resulting in 64 points of damage. The second character rolls to attack and fails to hit with the -4 penalty, but rolls well enough that he would have succeeded under normal circumstances, therefore still hitting the villain. He rolls for damage and scores 75% damage but has that reduced by two ranks to 25%. Thus, he only delivers 29 points of damage after his Attack Combat Value is added. The third character rolls and succeeds in the combined attack. She rolls for damage and inflicts 72 points of damage. Added to the first character's 64 points of damage, the combined attack of the two characters inflicts 136 points of damage. The villain attempts to avoid the combined attack but ignores the second character's attack, assuming his Armour can easily handle it (he does not know the exact damage inflicted by that attack, naturally). The villain is not great at defending himself since, in most situations, he just watches as attacks harmlessly bounce off his Armour. Thus, he fails his Defense check and is struck by the combined offensive effort. Finally, the characters breach the villains Armour, inflicting 56 points of damage. It might not be a lot against this powerhouse, but it is certainly a start.

Designer's Note

Combined Attacks Make No Sense

Some people might point out that a character's failure to combine an attack with allies, which results in a reduction of damage inflicted, makes no sense. The decision for implementing this rule is twofold. First, it was done for a game balance purpose. While Silver Age Sentinels makes every attempt to reflect comic reality when possible, it is first and foremost a game. It therefore attempts to maintain both game balance and a fun atmosphere. Combined attacks, when successful, are very effective and provide attackers with a tremendous advantage. They can quickly overwhelm Force Fields and Armour to bring down a foe. To offset this advantage, there needs to be a counter-balance – a detriment to prevent characters from constantly using it as a mode of attack. There has to be a reason that comic book characters do not always combine their efforts into one massive attack upon their opponents. Thus, a mechanic was built into the Combined Attack rule that penalized characters when they failed their attack roll. While a successful Combined Attack remains incredibly effective, a failed attempt is enough of a detriment to force characters to consider if the attempt is worth it. If they can bring the foe down individually, the combined attack is not necessary and the risk of inflicting reduced damage is incentive to not try. If they cannot affect the character normally, then the risk of reducing the damage they inflict is not a consideration – reducing the damage of an ineffective attack still results in an ineffective attack.

Secondly, GMs can easily explain the reduction of damage by pointing out that failure to combine one's attack with allies results in a glancing blow. The character hits the target but his or her effort to hit a precise spot results in a less-than-solid strike.



Prometheus makes a desperate leap to combine forces with Mother Raven against Iron Duke



Caliburn easily incapacitates some muggers

Extra Aim

A character making a ranged attack may deliberately take extra time to aim. If a character aims a ranged weapon for an entire round and does not move or Defend during that period, he or she receives a +2 Attack check bonus, or +3 if he or she is using a scope. If an aiming character chooses to make a Defense check or suffers any damage before he or she can fire, the character loses the benefit of Extra Aim.

Striking to Incapacitate

A character attacking in hand-to-hand combat or with a blunt melee weapon may attempt to knock a surprised opponent unconscious. The target of the attack must be unaware of the attack to be vulnerable. The attacker makes his or her Attack Combat check with a -6 penalty. If the target suffers any damage (after all defensive Attributes are applied), he or she must make a Body Stat check. If the target succeeds on this Body check, he or she maintains consciousness. If the target fails this check, however, he or she falls unconscious. Damage inflicted by an Incapacitating Strike is then divided by ten, rounding down. For example, Red Phoenix wants to capture a villain's henchman so she strikes to Incapacitate. Her punch normally inflicts a maximum of 64 points of damage. She rolls to hit with a -6 penalty and successfully hits her opponent (luckily inflicts maximum damage), forcing the target to make a Body Stat check. Regardless of whether or not he remains conscious, he takes 6 (64÷10=6.4, rounded down) points of damage from the blow.

Striking to Wound

A character in combat can elect to reduce his or her delivered damage below the normal damage value to a minimum of 1 point (known as striking to wound). He or she may not attempt this with attacks possessing the Area Effect, Auto-Fire, or Spreading Ability, however.

Throwing Heavy Things

A character with the Superstrength Attribute (or a high Body Stat) can lift heavy things — up to 10% of his or her maximum capacity — and throw them to deliver damage. It takes one action to grab and lift a large, awkward object, and another to throw it. Consequently, throwing objects is slower than firing most weapons. The advantage of throwing an object is that big things are harder to dodge than smaller ones. The GM should assign objects a number of BP of Awkward Size based on their size and mass; see Awkward Size on page 92. Defense Combat checks suffer a penalty of -1 for each BP of Awkward Size of the object thrown (or equivalent). Damage delivered to both the target and the thrown object is equal to the attacker's Combat Value, plus bonuses for Superstrength and Massive Damage, plus 10 for each BP of Awkward Size Defect of the thrown object.

Total Attack

A character can take this option in conjunction with an attack. It means he or she focuses completely on an offensive action with no thought given to defense. The character may opt to forfeit one

defense action to perform a Total Attack, gaining a +2 bonus to his or her Attack check. Only one defense may be forfeited per attack, though a character with both the Extra Attacks and Extra Defenses Attributes can initiate more than one Total Attack each round.

Touching a Target

Some Attributes require a character simply touch his or her target. It is much easier to just touch a person than it is to physically strike him or her with enough force to cause damage. Thus, any character who is simply attempting to touch an opponent gains a +6 bonus to his or her Attack check. Touching a specific part of a target's body may require a Called Shot (page 116). This assumes the character is simply attempting to make physical contact with the target. If prolonged contact is required, the target must either be willing or the character must grapple the target (see page 120).

Trick Shots

Some characters are known to make trick shots (such as ricochetting weapons or energy blasts off several walls before striking the target). Trick shots make the attack much harder to defend against, but likewise it is harder for the attacker to successfully hit. If the attacker takes a voluntary penalty to his or her Attack Combat Check Value, reflecting the difficult nature of the trick shot, the defender will suffer the same penalty to his or her Defense Combat Check Value.



Orion avoids Tom Foolery's defenses with an expert shot

Table 3-4: Trick Shot Modifiers

Trick Shot Degree of Difficulty	Attack's Penalty To Hit	Defender's Penalty To Evade
Fancy Trick Shot	-2	-2
Challenging Trick Shot	-4	-4
Complex Trick Shot	-6	-6
Difficult Trick Shot	-8	-8
Fantastic Trick Shot	-10	-10

Grappling

Instead of striking to inflict damage in melee combat, a character can attempt to grab someone and pin him or her. This is a grappling attack, and a character must have at least one empty hand free. Grabbing a small, inanimate object not in an individual's **Sphere of Control** (see page 133) does not require a full action.

Game Masters resolve a grappling attempt like a normal attack with the applicable Unarmed Attack (Grappling) Skill. If the attack hits and the target's defense (if any) fails, then the attacker successfully grabbed his or her opponent. The target of a grappling attack defends by making a Defense Combat check. The Unarmed Defense (Grappling) Skill is applicable. The attacker gains a grappling advantage if he or she has more free hands than the defender. "Free" means not holding weapons or other objects, or not otherwise incapacitated. In this case, the defender suffers a cumulative -2 Attack or Defense check penalty for each free hand the attacker uses to grapple in excess of the number of free hands the defender is using. The maximum penalty assigned for this disadvantage is -8. For example, if Slipstream (two hands) tries to escape from the grasp of a Haud worker (four hands), he suffers a -4 Defense check penalty (4-2 = 2; 2 x -2 = -4). If the Haud is holding an object in one of its four hands, however, Slipstream only suffers a -2 Defense check penalty (3-2 = 1; 1 x -2 = -2). Characters with the Elasticity Attribute (page 42) gain a bonus to attempts to grapple.

The attacker can hold a grabbed character relatively stationary. The target suffers a -4 penalty on all Attack and Defense checks when performing other melee attacks or defenses (including grabbing, biting, kneeing, etc.) or -8 when attempting to perform other tasks requiring freedom of movement like using hand-held equipment. Exception: if the grabbed character is much stronger (or more agile, at the GM's discretion) than the opponent, his or her penalty is halved, and the character can still move freely. The GM may consider a character much stronger if his or her Body Stat is at least four Levels higher or if the character has Superstrength at a higher Level. For this purpose, each Level of Less Capable (Strength) counts as a -3 to Body. Thus, a small child (Body 2) could not stop a strong man (Body 6) from pinning him or her while the strong man would be able to move freely if grabbed by the small child. It is, of course, possible for one character to grab an opponent who then grabs the character in return (this is what often happens when grappling).

Grappling Manoeuvres

Once a character grabs an opponent, he or she can attempt a grappling special manoeuvre (Lock, Throw, or Pin) as his or her next attack (see below).

Lock

Instead of attacking normally, a character who (on a previous attack) successfully grabbed his or her opponent can choke, crush, or strangle that foe. This attack automatically hits and inflicts damage equal to the character's Combat Value plus bonuses from Superstrength and Massive Damage.

Throw

Instead of attacking normally, a character who has already grabbed an opponent and is standing can hurl the foe to the ground. A character must make an Attack check at a +4 bonus, modified by the Unarmed Attack (Throws) Skill. If successful, the opponent receives a Defense check using the Unarmed Defense (Throws) Skill. A throw delivers damage equal to the Attack Combat Value plus 5 additional points of damage (as well as bonuses from Superstrength). Additionally, if the defender fails his or her Defense check, the attacker may throw the character out a window or off a ledge, and the GM can assign extra damage based on the situation. If the attacker throws the opponent at another enemy, the target must make a Defense check or suffer equal damage as well. A throw normally breaks the grip on the target unless the attacker attempts to maintain a hold and succeeds in an Unarmed Attack (Grappling) check with a -4 penalty (which must be made whether the throw is successful or not).

Pin

A character who has grabbed someone may attempt to improve his or her hold during the next attack by completely immobilizing the opponent in a pin. Game Masters may treat this manoeuvre the same as the first grab attack. If the attack succeeds and the opponent fails to defend, then the foe is pinned, usually under the weight of the attacker's body. Attackers may not attempt a pin if the opponent is much stronger (see earlier for definition of much stronger). Once a character pins an opponent, the target suffers a -6 penalty on checks when attempting to escape. A pinned character cannot attack or defend.

Biting

Since biting does not require the use of hands, it is an effective tactic when a character has either grabbed or been grabbed by an opponent. Game Masters should treat this as a normal attack that inflicts only one half of the Attack Combat Value in damage (round down), unless the aggressor is using a Natural Weapons Attribute (Fangs, Beak, or Mandibles).

Escaping

A grabbed character may attempt to struggle free. On the character's Initiative to act, he or she can attempt to escape instead of attack. Both characters roll a Body Stat check with modifiers for the Unarmed Attack (Grappling) Skill. The character with the highest degree of success (or least degree of failure) wins. If the grabbed character wins, he or she escapes, and may also attack or take another action. If the characters tie, the grabbed character escapes, but forfeits his or her current action. If the grabbed character loses, he or she is immobilized and forfeits one attack action and one defense action that round. If a grabbed character chooses to attack the person who grabbed him or her (with appropriate penalties) and inflicts damage equal to or greater than his or her foe's Body Stat, he or she escapes the grab.

Fighting from the Ground

Fighters thrown to the ground or who are otherwise forced to fight from a prone position defend and make all attacks at a -4 penalty.

Disarming via Grappling

A character can try grabbing an opponent's weapon instead of the opponent's body. He or she makes the attack at a -2 Attack check penalty. The opponent earns a +2 bonus to the Defense check if holding onto the weapon with two or more hands. A successful attack might dislodge the weapon, but the defender is allowed a Body Stat check to maintain his or her grip. If the defender fails, he or she drops the item; if successful, the defender is at a -4 penalty to use the weapon until the end of his or her next action (after which time, the defender can use the weapon without penalty, unless the attacker attempts another disarm manoeuvre).

Movement in Combat

The GM decides whether he or she wishes to keep detailed track of movement, ranges, and distances. In most close-in combat situations, GMs should not worry about exact speeds and distances — a general idea of the overall situation is sufficient. Alternatively, GMs can measure ranges in a more abstract fashion: "you're behind him and in melee range" or "you can reach her in three rounds, if you hurry." The GM should judge how quickly range shifts from relative speeds to dramatic necessity. For example, in a race between two opponents with equal speeds, the GM can allow the character who keeps winning Initiative to increase the gap gradually between him or her and the other runner. A good way to resolve long distance chases is for the GM to establish a certain number of combat rounds between the starting point and the goal. It then becomes a simple matter of reaching the target first.

If the GM wishes to keep precise track of movement and distances, assume an average human adult can sprint approximately 6 metres per round times his or her Body Stat over short distances (one metre times Body Stat if swimming or crawling). The speed is reduced when a character is running a long distance. This guideline assumes five-seconds per round, but the GM can modify exact speeds when necessary.

Jumping

GMs can allow characters to jump as far as seems dramatically appropriate for the game. If distance is important, a person can jump about two metres forward, or one up or back, with range doubled on a short running start. A successful Body Srar check allows a fast moving character (or vehicle) with a running start to jump, in metres, one-quarter of his or her current speed in kilometres per hour — an average character can reach 5 kph times his or her Body. A failed Stat check means the character falls short. A wheeled or tracked vehicle or a boat can only jump if it has a ramp.

Movement Attack Penalties

When a character is moving in combat, he or she may incur penalties to Attack and Block Defense checks (see Table 3-5). The penalty incurred depends on how quickly the character is moving relative to his or her maximum movement ability. The following chart indicates the movement rates and penalties incurred. For a normal character who does not have or is not using a superhuman Power to move (Speed, Flight, Water Speed), the character's movement rate is dictated by his or her Body Stat, as outlined in the Normal Character column. Characters who are using a movement Power refer to the Movement Attribute column to determine their rate of movement.

Table 3-5: Movement-Related Combat Penalties

	Normal Character	Movement Attribute	Penalty
Jogging	up to Body x 4 metres per round	Up to Maximum Attribute Level -2	no penalty
Running	Body x 5 metres per round	Maximum Attribute Level -1	-2
Sprinting	Body x 6 metres per round	Maximum Attribute Level	-4



Slipstream delivers a lightning-fast hit and run.

Hit and Run Manoeuvre

Speedsters and fast flyers are well known (and often feared) for zipping towards an opponent, striking him or her, and then almost immediately moving out of range of a counter-attack. Even if the speedster lacks the ability to get out of range of an opponent's ranged attacks, they can usually run behind objects to move out of the opponent's line of sight. When a character performs a Hit and Run manoeuvre, he or she is subject to all of the normal movement modifiers (see Table 3-5: Movement-Related Combat Penalties). Additionally, the character can only be counter-attacked if the target has a ranged attack (assuming the speedster is still within range and line of sight) or if the target had previously held an action, awaiting the speedster's Hit and Run manoeuvre. A speedster should not be allowed to perform all of their attacks on one Initiative if GMs allow Hit and Run manoeuvres — the character's attacks are spread over the entire round (see Extra Attacks, page 43, for rules on spreading attacks over a round).

One of the best defenses against a Hit and Run manoeuvre involves holding an action from one round to the next (see Initiative, page 115). A character who is holding an action can make a counter-attack against a speedster. Since fast characters frequently have the highest Initiative in combat, a defender may choose to hold an action for an entire round to ensure he or she is ready for a potential Hit and Run the following round.

For example, Slipstream is fighting against Alice, Queen of Hearts. Slipstream knows that Alice's attacks are quite dangerous so he decides to use his speed to the maximum advantage and elects to Hit and Run. Alice, however, has fought the speedster before and is aware of his tactics. The two characters roll Initiative and Alice scores an impressive 35 but still doesn't match Slipstream's 42. Since Slipstream has four attacks, the GM decides his actions will occur on Initiatives 42, 32, 22, and 12. Slipstream presses the advantage speed affords him and zips by taking a swing at Alice who attempts to avoid the attack, unsuccessfully. On Initiative 35, Alice is able to act but Slipstream has already zipped around a building, out of sight. She is unable to counter-attack the annoying hero. She knows, however, that he is coming back so she holds her action. Sure enough, Slipstream comes racing back on Initiative 32 to make another Hit and Run against Alice. This time, she is ready for him. Both characters attack on Initiative 32, before Slipstream is able to race off again.

If a character is sprinting, he or she incurs a -4 penalty to Attack and Block Defense checks. If the character is running, he or she incurs a -2 penalty on Attack and Block Defense checks. Characters who are jogging do not incur penalties. Additionally, characters do not incur penalties when attempting Parry/Dodge Defense checks regardless of their speed. GMs do not need to keep exact track of movement rates unless they wish; they may simply keep movement abstract.

Example

Sentinel has Flight Level 7 and a Body Stat of 12. He can fly at speeds up to 1,000 kph (Level 5 Flight and lower) without incurring any movement-related combat penalties, between 1,001 and 5,000 kph (Level 6 Flight) with a -2 penalty, and between 5,001 and 10,000 kph (Level 7 Flight) with a -4 penalty. If running, however, he can move at up to 48 metres per round (jogging) without a movement penalty, between 49 and 60 metres per round (running) with a -2 penalty, and between 61 and 72 metres per round (sprinting) with a -4 penalty.

Firing Weapons from Moving Vehicles

Characters who are inside a fast-moving vehicle fire their weapons at a penalty. Firing weapons when moving at moderate speeds incurs a -2 penalty, while moving very quickly earns a -4 Attack check penalty. Game Masters should impose an additional -4 penalty for characters also piloting the vehicle while firing.

Attacking Moving Targets

Attempting to hit a target that is moving at exceptional speeds is very challenging. When attempting to hit a target that is moving quickly, the character suffers an Attack Combat check penalty. See Table 3-6: Attack Check Modifiers for the appropriate penalty based on the target's speed.

Attack Check Modifiers

The GM may impose appropriate modifiers when the players make an Attack check. An attack action normally assumes characters are engaged in active combat — dodging enemy attacks, making quick strikes when the opportunity arises, moving about, etc. The GM should not apply any penalties for this sort of normal combat-related activity. If circumstances are such that a character's aim or concentration seems likely impeded (such as shooting someone whom the character cannot clearly see or attacking a foe while hanging upside down), the GM may assign penalties to the Attack check. Likewise, in stress-free situations (such as whacking an immobile victim, or target range shooting with nothing riding on the outcome), the GM can apply favourable bonuses or assume automatic success.

A number of possible penalties or bonuses are described on Table 3-6: Attack Check Modifiers. The GM may adjust or ignore these modifiers if he or she prefers.

Non-Combat Actions

Rather than taking an offensive action during any combat round, a character may use a non-combat action on his or her Initiative. Such actions include untying a rescued captive, running, changing weapons, climbing into or out of a vehicle, writing a note, changing clothes, etc. Players may also use non-combat actions to safely withdraw from armed or melee combat, provided the opposition does not attack at a later Initiative number in the same round. Note that speaking a few words during combat, running about while attacking, or making a short dramatic speech does not constitute an action.

A non-combat action may succeed automatically, or the GM can require a Stat check, or Skill check to determine whether it succeeds. Some non-combat actions may require several rounds to perform at the GM's option.

Table 3-6: Attack Check Modifiers

Attack Situation	Modifier
Attacker is:	
Taking an action to aim	+2, or +3 with scope
Attacking Multiple Targets with one action	-4 per additional target
Attacking with two weapons (same target)	-8
Attacking with two weapons (different targets)	-12
Attempting a Combined Attack	-2 per attacker after the first
Attempting to Touch the Target	+6
Making a Total Attack	+2
Firing personal weapons from a moving vehicle	-2 or -4
Firing personal weapons while piloting a vehicle	-8
Firing personal weapons while swimming or performing acrobatics	-4
In an awkward position (on the ground, etc.)	-4
Attacker is Attempting a Trick Shot:	
Fancy Trick Shot	-2
Challenging Trick Shot	-4
Complex Trick Shot	-6
Difficult Trick Shot	-8
Fantastic Trick Shot	-10
Attacker is:	
Jogging: At Body Stat x 4 metres per round or lower	no modifier
Running: At Body Stat x 4 to Body Stat x 5 metres per round	-2
Sprinting: At Body Stat x 5 to Body Stat x 6 metres per round	-4
Jogging: At two Levels below maximum Attribute movement rate	no modifier
Running: At one Level below maximum Attribute movement rate	-2
Sprinting: At maximum Attribute movement rate	-4
Attacker is Attempting a Called Shot:	
Disarming (with melee attack)	-4
Disarming (with a ranged attack)	-8
Targeting a partially armoured point	-4
Targeting a vital spot	-8
Targeting a Weak Point	-2, -4, or -6
Target is Moving at:	
up to 99 kph (Flight 1 or 2)	no modifier
100 to 499 kph (Flight 3; Speed 1)	-2
500 to 999 kph (Flight 4; Speed 2)	-4
1,000 to 4,999 kph (Flight 5; Speed 3)	-6
5,000 to 9,999 kph (Flight 6; Speed 4)	-8
10,000 to 49,999 kph (Flight 7; Speed 5)	-10
50,000 kph or more (Flight 8+; Speed 6+)	-12
Target beyond melee range, and:	
Concealed by trees or brush	-2
Concealed by darkness, fog, or smoke	-4
Taking cover	-2 to -6
Range Modifiers:	
Attacking at up to twice range	-4
Attacking at up to five times range	-8

Other Actions

Some activities do not count as attack or non-combat actions. A character can perform all of the following activities in addition to an attack or non-combat action:

- Move a short distance or manoeuvre his or her vehicle.
- Say anything that fits within the span of 1-10 seconds.
- Perform Defensive Actions in response to any attacks against him or her. Note that if the character performs more than one Defensive Action in a round, subsequent Defensive Actions after the first (or later, if he or she has the Extra Defenses Attribute, page 43) in the same round suffer penalties.

Defense

If a character is the target of a successful attack, he or she may attempt to defend against it with a Dodge/Parry Defense (avoiding the attack by moving out of the way, or using a weapon to push the attack to the side or "off-line"), a Power Defense (see page 134), or a Block Defense (interposing an object between the attack and the target). Defensive actions are not dependent on Initiative order but resolved immediately after the attack before the attack damage is calculated or revealed.

To successfully defend, the player must roll less than or equal to the character's Defense Combat Value. Each character can attempt a defense only once against a particular attack (including grapples). A character may defend against more than one attack in a round, but with an appropriate penalty to each Defense after the first (unless the character has the Extra Defenses Attribute; the penalty then applies to each defense after the final bonus defense). Should the opponent not defend (perhaps in anticipation of a more powerful attack still to come), he or she cannot change that decision later in the round.

When defending against multiple attacks in a single round, each defense after the first incurs a cumulative Check Value penalty of -4: -4 for the second defense, -8 for the third, -12 for the fourth, etc. This means that even the greatest fighter may be overwhelmed if badly outnumbered. Remember to include all relevant Attribute, Skill, Defect, and difficulty modifiers. If successful, the defender blocks, dodges, or otherwise negates the attack, and suffers no damage.

When a character defends against a ranged attack, the relevant Skill is Ranged Defense. For a hand-to-hand or other melee-ranged attack, the relevant Skill is either Unarmed Defense (if the character is dodging, or blocking the attack with his or her body), or Melee Defense (if the character is using a weapon to parry or block).

If a vehicle is the target of an attack, its driver or pilot makes the Defense checks. If a vehicle is unable to manoeuvre (trapped in a confined space, for example) the GM may rule that it cannot defend at all. Likewise, a vehicle cannot normally defend against attacks made by a character who is riding in or on it.

A Defense Combat check of a natural 20 is an automatic failure, regardless of the modifiers. In this case, the GM may decide the character automatically suffers full damage from the attack or perhaps even double full damage.



Red Phoenix barely avoids Iron Duke's crushing blow

Block Defense

Rather than attempting to avoid an attack with a Dodge/Parry Defense, the character may instead choose to block the attack with a shield or other suitably large and resistant object (a Block Defense). When a character attempts to block, he or she gains a +2 bonus to his or her Defense Combat check. If successful, the character has interposed the object in front of the attack. The object's Armour Rating provides protection to the character. Thus, a plank of wood can be used to block a powerful energy blast but, if the attack does more damage than the wood's Armour Rating, it will still strike the character, inflicting reduced damage. See Breaking Objects (page 140) for suggested Armour Ratings of common items or Table 4-7: Suits of Armour (page 154) for shields. If the attack delivers five times the object's Armour Rating, the object is destroyed. Characters may only attempt to block melee or unarmed attacks unless they have the Block Ranged Attack Combat Technique (see page 34).

Indefensible Attacks

A character may not attempt a Defense check if he or she is unaware of the attack, unable to move, or is struck with a Critical Hit (see page 127).

Designer's Note

Why is Block Defense Easier?

Of the two defense options – Block Defense or Dodge/Parry Defense – we have decided to make the Block Defense easier for two reasons. First, we believe that interposing an object, like a sword or shield, between your own body and an attack is indeed easier than completely avoiding any contact (a dodge). We also think it's easier than using your own weapon to parry, which requires some skill.

Secondly, we assigned the +2 bonus for Block Defenses for game balance reasons. With a successful Parry/Dodge Defense, the defender avoids all damage completely. Powerful attacks can potentially break the object the defender uses in a Block Defense, however, still inflicting partial damage. In exchange for a higher-risk defense manoeuvre, we are awarding your character a +2 Check Value bonus.

Total Defense

A character can make fewer offensive or non-combat actions in a round to improve his or her chances of avoiding an attack. Instead of attacking or engaging in another activity, he or she concentrates completely on defense. A character performing a Total Defense may still move normally, but may not attack or take non-combat actions; the character is dodging and weaving, parrying frantically, ducking, and hiding. The character receives a +2 bonus to all Defense checks for each attack sacrificed. This lasts until the character acts again next round. Additionally, a character who is employing Total Defense reduces any Knockback suffered (see page 128) by half, representing the character bracing for the attack. Total Defense is a good tactic for anyone retreating, or someone buying time until his or her allies arrive.

Table 3-7: Defense Check Modifiers

Defense Situation	Modifier
Dodge/Parry Defense	No Modifier
Block Defense	+2
Total Defense	+2 per attack sacrificed
Defending Against Additional Attacks	-4 per additional attack (cumulative)
Defending Against Undetectable Assailant	-8
Defending When Surprised	Defense Check Not Possible
Defending Against Critical Hit	Defense Check Not Possible

Damage

Characters suffer damage through combat, accidents, or other hazards. Damage ratings indicate the maximum amount of damage that an attack can inflict. The target character subtracts any damage inflicted from his or her Health Point total if the attack successfully penetrates Armour.

Amount of Damage Inflicted

Each attack has a Maximum Damage Rating, which is equal to the base damage of the attack (which includes a weapon's damage value) plus any bonuses from Massive Damage, and Superstrength, as is appropriate for the attack. When the character successfully

strikes an opponent, he or she rolls on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage to determine the amount of damage the attack inflicts (always round fractions up). The character's Attack Combat Value, a reflection of the balance between Body Stat (force of the blow and manual dexterity), Mind Stat (knowledge of a body's vulnerable areas), and Soul Stat (determination and luck), is added to that value to determine how much damage is inflicted upon the target. The Maximum Damage Rating for normal, unarmed attacks by characters lacking Superstrength and Massive Damage is zero — the only damage delivered is equal to the character's Attack Combat value (do not roll on Table 3-8). It is still important to determine the damage percentage for a Special Attack with the No Damage Disability (page 73), since the result determines the effectiveness of the attack's other Attack Abilities.

Example

A character possesses a Special Attack that delivers 80 points of damage. In addition, he has Massive Damage at Level 2, adding an additional 20 points of damage, and Superstrength at Level 2. Since the attack is not Muscle-Powered, however, it does not gain the damage bonus associated with Superstrength. Thus, the Maximum Damage for the character's Special Attack is (80 + 20 = 100) 100 points of damage. The character attacks a villain and successfully hits the miscreant. The player rolls two dice, scoring a result of 7, and consults Table 3-8. It shows the player that the attack inflicts 75% of the attack's Maximum Damage, therefore the villain suffers 75 (75% of 100) points of damage plus the attacker's Attack Combat Value.

Characters may choose to inflict less damage than the dice roll indicates, if they desire. Thus, a heroic character who scores a crushing blow against an opponent on his last legs can reduce the damage inflicted to ensure that he does not kill the villain by mistake, rendering him unconscious instead.

Some effects reduce the percentage of damage delivered by one or more ranks. Each rank of reduction reduces the damage delivered by 25% to a minimum of 0% damage, though the attacker's Attack Combat Value is still added to this result.

Example

A character uses an Area Effect Special Attack against three targets. The character has a Attack Combat Value of 12. He rolls and hits, inflicting 50% damage, or 40 points of damage. The first target is the primary target of the attack. He makes a Defense Combat check and fails, therefore suffering 52 points of damage (40 plus the attacker's Attack Combat Value of 12). The other two attempt to defend. The first fails and also suffers 52 points of damage from the blast. The third target succeeds on his Defense Combat check, reducing the damage of the attack by two ranks. This reduces the attack from a 50% attack to a 0% attack. Thus, the third character dodges out of the way, only suffering 12 points of damage (zero plus the attacker's Attack Combat Value).

If an attack delivers a percentage of damage, such as a Special Attack with the Burning Ability (page 69), the percentage of damage is based on the Base Damage of the attack, not on the amount of damage that the successful attack inflicts upon the target. If an attack inflicts multiple hits, such as Special Attacks with the Auto-Fire Ability (page 68), each additional hit inflicts the same percentage of damage as the first hit.

Players should record, on their character sheets, the Maximum Damage as well as the 25%, 50%, and 75% damage values of each of their attacks to avoid slowing down game play.

Table 3-8: Damage Percentage

Dice Roll	Result
2-5	Maximum Damage
6-10	75% of Maximum Damage
11-16	50% of Maximum Damage
17-20	25% of Maximum Damage

Designer's Note

Alternate Damage Options

Players interested in exploring additional options for damage should take a look at some of Guardians of Order's other RPGs.

Big Eyes, Small Mouth (BESM)

BESM, and our licensed Tri-Stat anime RPGs, use a fixed damage system. We chose to use variable damage in Silver Age Sentinels because damage values for the superhero game increased (reflecting the heightened power levels of the characters) to a point where a fight between two powerhouse characters could conceivably end after two or three punches. We feel that this does not appropriately mimic the superhero genre. In BESM having all attacks inflict their maximum damage upon a successful hit reflected the anime genre it was attempting to emulate – a genre where mecha are often destroyed after one or two hits and combat is fast and furious. If players wish to utilize a simpler system, they can return to the fixed damage ratings – damage inflicted equals the maximum damage of the attack. This will speed up combat greatly but, in the grand scheme, should not change the outcome of most fights – a character who would win with Silver Age Sentinel's variable damage will probably also win using Big Eyes, Small Mouth's fixed damage. Simply be aware that using a fixed damage value, while totally acceptable, will greatly speed up combat and change the style and feel of the game. The choice of game style, however, is for the players and GMs to discuss.

Hong Kong Action Theatre! (HKAT!)

Some players will prefer a grittier combat system, where a successful Defense Combat check is not absolute, and where the Margin of Success is important. HKAT! illustrates an alternate damage system.

In this variant, the degree by which someone avoids an attack depends on how well a character defends against it. To completely defend against an attack, the player must score a Margin of Success equal to or greater than the attacker's Margin of Success on the attack check. If successful, the defender blocks, dodges, or otherwise negates the attack, and suffers no damage.

If the defender makes a successful Defense Combat check but scores a Margin of Success less than the attacker's Margin of Success, then the defender partially avoids the attack and only suffers half damage (rounding down). This reflects the character successfully blocking a punch but still taking some damage (perhaps after the attacker's fist hits his or her arm) or someone who dives through a window to avoid being shot, etc. If the defender fails his or her Defense Combat check completely, then he or she does not avoid the attack and suffers full damage.

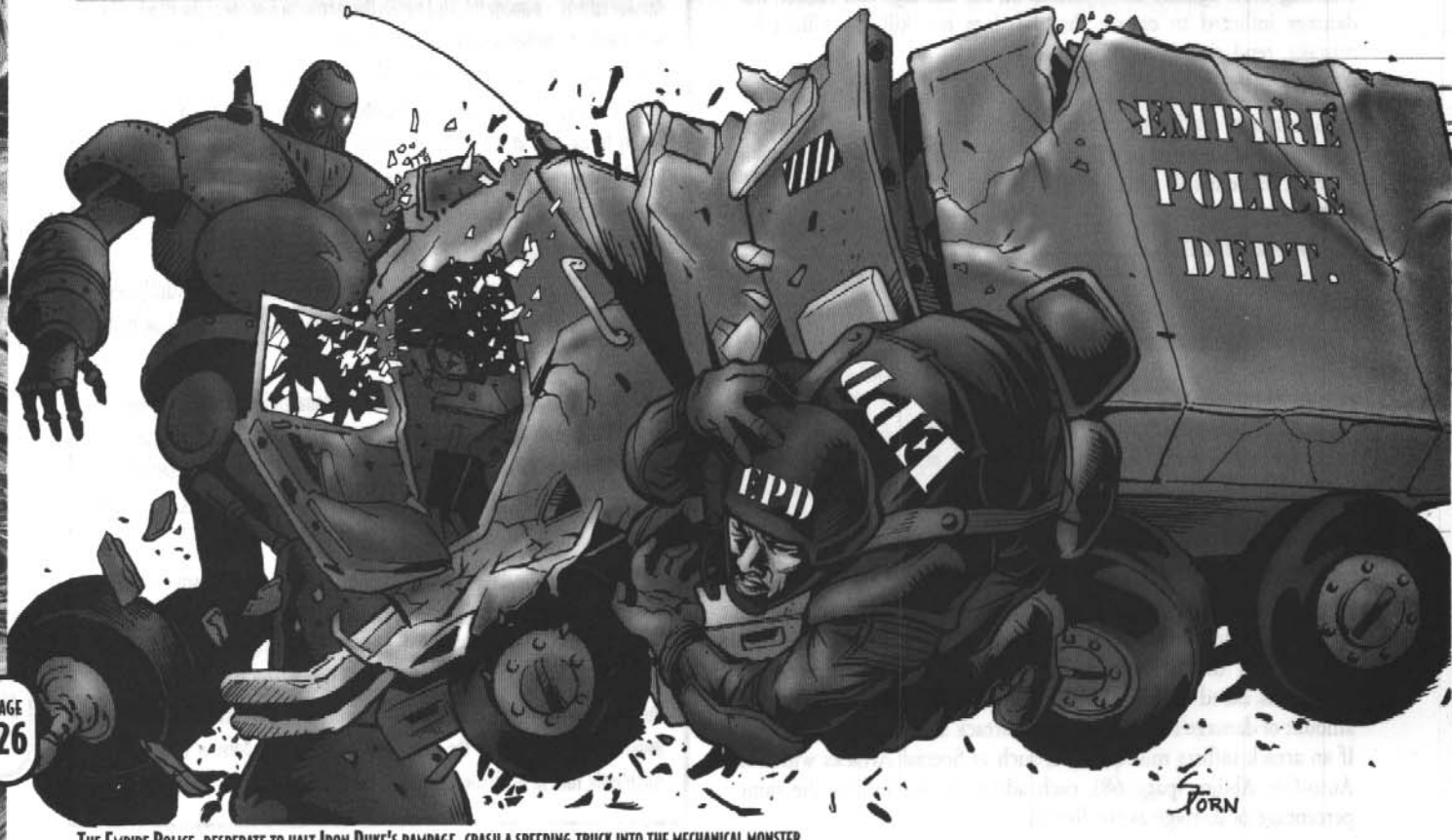
Velocity Damage

When characters are capable of moving at incredible speeds, they are also capable of inflicting tremendous amounts of damage. The problem, however, is that they also suffer the velocity damage they inflict upon their targets. When a fast character smashes into an opponent, both the attacker and the defender suffer damage as if crashing at the speed at which the speedster was moving (see Table 3-9: Falling and Crashing Damage, page 127). Thus, a speedster running at 1,000 kph who hits an opponent will inflict 150 points of damage but will similarly suffer 150 points of damage. The attacker may not voluntarily reduce this damage and the attacker does not roll on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage. Hitting someone at high speeds is incredibly dangerous. GMs should probably not allow characters who have both the Speed and Reincarnation Attributes to use this combat technique. These Attributes allow them to run into a target as a suicide attack, only to reincarnate a couple minutes later. As in all situations, GMs should disallow Power combinations that potentially unbalance game play.

The Game Master may decide that speedsters cannot run towards a target and let go of an object, just before reaching the target, in the hopes of delivering massive velocity damage. This technique is best represented by a Special Attack (see page 67). This restriction prevents speedsters from becoming incredibly powerful and dangerous foes in combat — if they want the dangerous attacks (that do not inflict damage upon themselves), they need to assign Points to them like everyone else, via Special Attack. There are numerous ways of explaining this limitation. For example, the speedster may surround him or herself in a "velocity field" that protects him or her from wind shear. Once the character releases an object, it is no longer protected by the "velocity field" and thus drops to "real speed" — it moves as if carried by a normal person running at top speed, and thus it inflicts no velocity damage. There are many other plausible rationales why the character is unable to perform this attack manoeuvre.

As previously mentioned, the character can overcome this limitation with a Special Attack. One example could be a Level 3 Special Attack: Fastball Pitch. The speedster runs at a target holding a baseball-sized object and lets it go just before impact, delivering 60 points of damage (as is normal for a Level 3 Special Attack). The attack does not inflict the velocity damage based on the speedster's movement rate — the "velocity damage" of the attack is determined by the Level of the Special Attack.

Similarly, a speedster may develop Special Attacks that allows him or her to inflict increased damage due to velocity without suffering the same damage in return. For example, the character may develop a Level 4 Special Attack: Run-By that allows the speedster to deliver 80 points of damage when the character punches a foe at superspeed. As above, the speedster's movement rate does not increase the damage inflicted — the Special Attack's Level determines the damage delivered.



The Empire Police, desperate to halt Iron Duke's rampage, crash a speeding truck into the mechanical monster

Unarmed Combat

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the character's bonuses for Superstrength, and Massive Damage. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Melee Weapons

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the weapon's damage value, plus bonuses for Superstrength and Massive Damage. If the weapon has Abilities or Disabilities, refer to the relevant section (pages 67-74) for their effects. See Table 4-2: Personal Weapons (page 142) for damages delivered by various melee weapons. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Ranged Weapons

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the weapon's damage value, plus bonuses for Massive Damage. A Superstrength bonus may also be added when appropriate (such as for thrown weapons). If the weapon has Abilities or Disabilities, refer to the relevant section (pages 67-74) for their effects. See Table 4-2: Personal Weapons (page 142) for damages delivered by various ranged weapons. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Special Attacks

The attack's Maximum Damage is equal to the Special Attack's damage value, plus bonuses for Superstrength (as appropriate), and Massive Damage. The character's Attack Combat Value is added to the damage inflicted.

Impact Damage

Damage may also result from a non-combat action such as crashing a speedboat into land or falling from a tree. Characters always suffer the maximum damage indicated from falls and crashes — do not roll on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage. Naturally, some non-combat actions may result in an NPC's death, but these events should only kill a player character in exceptional circumstances.

Crashing

During the course of an adventure, a character's vehicle may accidentally (or deliberately) crash into objects along the road, in the sky, in or on water, or in space. GMs should assess whatever damage they deem appropriate upon both the vehicle and occupants in a crash. The Armour and Force Field Attributes may protect against this damage. Similar damage can be applied to a character who jumps or is pushed from a speeding vehicle, or is struck by one.

Table 3-9: Crashing and Falling Damage assists the GM in determining the damage for hitting the ground, water, a building, or some other immovable object based on how fast the vehicle was moving during that round. If a speed falls between two damage values, use the greater of the two.

Falling

A character who falls a great distance will suffer damage depending on the height he or she plummeted. He or she may also make an Acrobatics Skill check with success halving the sustained damage to indicate a proper break fall. The Armour and Force Field Attributes may protect against this damage (GM's discretion).

Table 3-9: Crashing and Falling Damage

Speed	Falling Distance	Damage Delivered
20 kph	3 to 4 metres	10
30 kph	5 metres to 9 metres	20
50 kph	10 metres to 29 metres	30
100 kph	30-metres to 59 metres	50
150 kph	60 metres to 149 metres	70
200 kph	150 metres to 499 metres	90
500 kph	500 metres (or greater)	120
1,000 kph		150
2,500 kph		180
each additional 2,500 kph		an additional 30

Armour or Force Fields and Damage

If a character has Armour (page 33) or a Force Field (page 45), this reduces the delivered damage from each successful attack by an amount equal to its rating. The character suffers any damage not negated by the Armour or Force Field, subtracting it from his or her current Health Point total. See Effects of Damage (below) for the result.

Critical Hits

In the event of a natural attack dice roll of 2, the attacker automatically hits, preventing the target from making a Defense Combat check at all. The target also receives increased damage from the attack. The increased damage inflicted is a multiple of the attack's Maximum Damage plus the character's Attack Combat value — do not roll on Table 3-8 when an attacker rolls a critical hit.

The attacker rolls two dice and consults Table 3-10: Critical Hits (which columns is determined by the GM). If the attacker made a successful Called Shot to Vitals and also rolled a natural 2, subtract 6 from the dice roll. Game Masters must decide if they want critical hits to have a minor (Results A or B) or a major (Results C or D) influence on combats, since the choice may determine how long a combat will last. Player characters and NPCs should rarely be killed as a result of a critical hit.

Table 3-10: Critical Hits

Dice Roll	Result (A)	Result (B)	Result (C)	Result (D)
2-5	175% Damage	250% Damage	200% Damage	400% Damage
6-11	150% Damage	200% Damage	200% Damage	300% Damage
12-20	125% Damage	150% Damage	200% Damage	200% Damage

Effects of Damage to a Character

Total loss of Health Points can cause a character to pass out or die. Should a character or NPC's Health Points ever drop below zero, he or she suffered a severe wound and is rendered unconscious. If a character is reduced to the negative value of his or her Health Points, he or she has suffered a mortal wound and will die (or fall into a coma, depending on the tone of the game) unless medical attention arrives immediately. The GM may allow the character to linger long enough to say a few last words or perform some other final, heroic action.

Death in Comics

Death in comics can occur rarely, often, or never, depending on the tone and theme of the story in question. The default rule in *Silver Age Sentinels* is that death is a real consequence of extreme actions; it happens rarely, but is the end result of deadly force or careless negligence. Characters are responsible for keeping their powers in check, and not laying waste to their targets haphazardly.

Not all comic stories should have the possibility for death, or the chance of accidental death, however. Many people regard the Silver Age of comics as more pure and innocent than today's stories, as a time when a hero could never accidentally cause death. In these games, characters may hit an enemy full force and be comfortable that the GM won't announce they've unwittingly decapitated the supervillain. Wounds may require medical attention, and knockouts, concussions, and comas are all possible, but death only occurs when a player announces that his or her character has had enough, and finally steps over that line. Playing with this rule gives players the freedom to let loose a little, but still maintains the option for intense role-playing, if a character is ever driven so far as to make that choice.

Knockback

Blunt attacks (such as punches, kicks, or blunt melee weapons) and Special Attacks with the Knockback Ability (see page 71) inflict Knockback upon a successful hit. Attacks such as a slash from a sword or a piercing spear do not normally inflict Knockback. The target is knocked back one metre for each point of damage delivered after rolling on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage (before adding the attacker's Attack Combat Value, unless the character has the ACV Knockback Combat Technique, see page 34). This distance is reduced by the target's Body Stat, in metres. Additionally, the Immovable Attribute (page 51) and Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability (page 45) reduce Knockback.

Table 3-11: Knockback Distance (in metres)

Add:

+ Percentage of Maximum Damage delivered (see Table 3-8: Damage Percentage)
+ Attacker's Attack Combat Value (only if the character possesses the ACV Knockback Combat Technique)

Multiply by:

x Critical Hit damage multiplier, if the attack delivered a critical hit (page 127) or Called Shot to Vital (page 116)

Subtract:

- Target's Body Stat
- Target's Immovable Attribute Level x 20
- Target's Force Field Attribute Level x 20 (only for Force Fields without the Full Impact Disability)

Damage Difficulty Penalties (Optional Rule)

The Game Master may wish to assign Check Value difficulty penalties to characters who have been injured in combat. When the character's Health Points are reduced to 75% of their original value or less, all tasks are then rated as "above average difficulty" (-2 Check Value penalty). This penalty applies to all Initiative, Stat, Skill, and Combat checks. At 50% Health Points, tasks are rated as "difficult" (-4 Check Value penalty); at 25%, tasks are "quite difficult" (-6 Check Value penalty). For example, Red Phoenix (195 Health Points) suffers a -2 penalty to all checks when she drops to 146 Health Points, -4 at 97 Health Points, and -6 at 48 Health Points. If a character's Health Points are raised above one of the damage tiers (through the Regeneration Attribute, or another Power), the corresponding difficulty penalty no longer applies.

Second Wind

If an event occurs during the course of combat that induces an affect (a powerful emotional response) within a damaged character, the character is given an opportunity to refocus on the combat and eliminate all damage difficulty penalties — getting a "second wind." The GM decides which events are significant enough to evoke such a reaction. In these situations, the penalties are removed if the character makes a successful Stat check, without any modifiers, against his or her highest Stat Value. For example, Red Phoenix (Body 15, Mind 7, Soul 12) can ignore all previous damage difficulty penalties if she rolls a 15 or less for her Body Stat check.

If a character drops below one of the remaining damage tiers (50% or 25% of original Health Points) after getting a second wind, he or she will immediately suffer from the corresponding damage difficulty penalties once again: -4 at 50% or -6 at 25%. A character can only get a second wind once during any combat scene.

Table 3-14: Damage Difficulty Penalties

Percentage of Original Health Points	Action Difficulty	Check Value Modifier
100-76%	Average Difficulty	0
75%-51%	Above Average Difficulty	-2
50%-26%	Difficult	-4
25%-0%	Quite Difficult	-6

Knockback Impact Damage

Characters who are knocked back usually tumble along the ground or sail through the air, but do not suffer any additional damage. When a character is knocked back into an object, however, he or she suffers 1 point of impact damage for each metre of Knockback, up to a maximum of five times the Armour rating of the object into which he or she is knocked (see Breaking Objects, page 140).

Example

Iron Duke clobbers Sentinel for 100 points of damage. Knockback is calculated as 100 (damage) -12 (Sentinel's Body Stat) -60 (Immovable) = 28 metres. Sentinel tumbles through the air, smashing into a metal dumpster with an Armour rating of 18. Sentinel receives an additional 28 damage when hitting the dumpster, but since he has Armour Level 6 (stops 60 damage), he receives no further injury. The dumpster, which also suffers 28 points of damage, is partially crushed from the impact but is not destroyed (18x5 = 90 points of damage needed to destroy it).

If Iron Duke had instead scored a double damage critical hit on Sentinel (200 damage), Knockback would be 128 metres. When Sentinel smashes into the dumpster, he is blown right through it — the 128 damage destroys the metal frame. Sentinel receives an additional 90 damage from the dumpster impact (maximum of five times the dumpster's Armour), which is reduced to 30 after his Armour stops 60 damage. Sentinel was hurt badly from the attack: 140 damage from Iron Duke's punch (200 - 60 Armour = 140), plus another 30 from Knockback. Sentinel's 195 Health Points are reduced by 170 points to 25 by a very solid hit from Iron Duke.

Other Knockback Effects

If a character is knocked high into the air, off a building, or some other similar situation, additional damage may be suffered when the character falls to the ground. The Special Movement (Cat-Like) Attribute and Acrobatics Skill can mitigate damage (GM's discretion). If a character is knocked up into the air, reduce his or her Knockback distance by half; the character falls back to the ground and suffers full damage from the fall. A character that falls to the ground as a result of Knockback only suffers damage from the fall (see Table 3-9: Crashing and Falling Damage, page 127), not the Knockback impact damage outlined above.

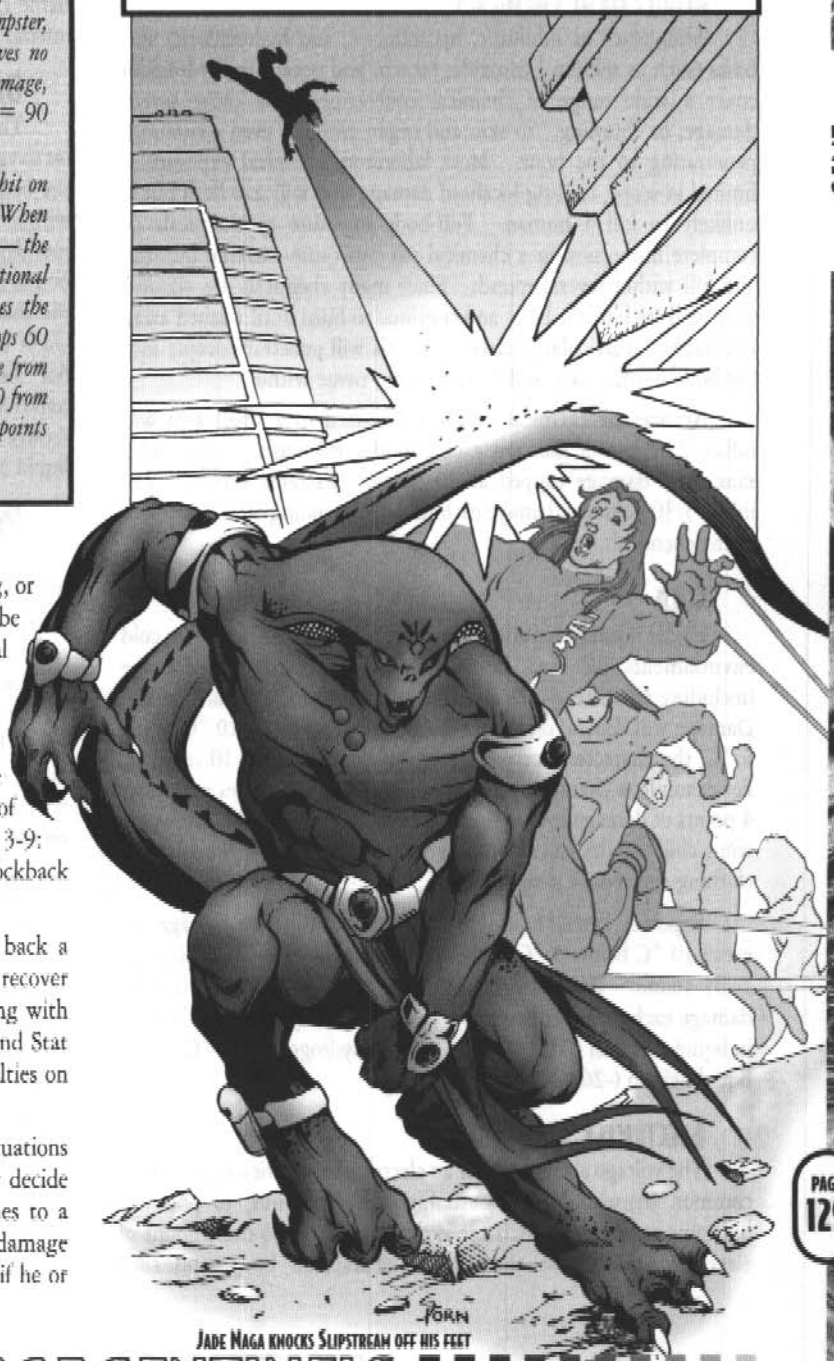
Additionally, if the character can fly and is knocked back a great distance, the GM can determine if he or she is able to recover his or her senses soon enough to begin flying before colliding with an obstacle. The GM may require a successful Body or Mind Stat check for a character to accomplish this (possibly with penalties on the check).

GMs may, however, alter any of this to reflect specific situations or game styles, as is appropriate. For example, a GM may decide that a character who is knocked back 80 metres and comes to a skidding stop on the pavement will still suffer some damage (perhaps equal to one tenth the Knockback distance), even if he or she does not collide with a building or object.

Designer's Note

Simple Knockback

Although the base calculation for Knockback is quite simple (ignoring ACV Knockback, Immovable, and Full Impact Force Fields), some Game Masters may prefer a more qualitative approach. Simply using the guideline that targets of powerful attacks are knocked back dramatically appropriate distances can eliminate an extra calculation and make action-packed combats proceed more quickly. This Knockback will usually not have any direct character effect – other than moving the target out of melee combat range – but the situation might call for additional damage (such as Knockback off a tall building). GMs that use this narrative approach to Knockback should ensure the players do not assign the Combat Technique (ACV Knockback), Immovable, or Force Field (Full Impact) Attributes to their characters.



Jade Naga knocks Slipstream off his feet

Environmental Damage

Superhero characters often suffer damage from the surrounding environment, or attacks from enemies not covered by the Special Attack Attribute. Since the conditions under which this damage is inflicted varies greatly from scene to scene, strict damage values cannot be listed for each event.

The entries in this section should help GMs and players determine the appropriate damage values, but are only a general guideline. The important question to ask oneself when determining damage is "how quickly do I think an average human would be knocked unconscious or die under this condition?" An average human has 40 Health Points and will thus fall unconscious at 0 Health Points (40 damage) and die at -40 Health Points (80 damage).

Acidic/Basic Chemicals

Acids (such as sulphuric, hydrofluoric, and hydrochloric) and bases (such as sodium hydroxide, bleach, and potassium hydroxide) cover a wide range of chemical concoctions that cause severe damage, or "burning," to skin and organ tissue ... even sometimes penetrating to the bone. Most laboratory chemical exposure is limited in scope, causing localized damage that will scar flesh but is unlikely to kill a human. Full-body exposure to chemicals or complete immersion in a chemical vat can cause extreme burning and kill within several rounds. Since many chemicals are viscous, they will stick to the body and continue to burn until washed away thoroughly. Particularly nasty chemicals will penetrate deeply into the body immediately and destroy living tissue within.

An average chemical exposure localized to a small area will inflict 2 points of damage each round until washed away, with maximum damage capped at 20 points. Extreme exposure will inflict 5-30 points of damage each round, depending on the strength of the chemicals.

Cold

Under normal circumstances, a human body can survive in cold environments for long periods (hours) before severe damage (including frostbite — the freezing of body tissue) or death occurs. Damage will depend on the air temperature: for every 10 °C below 0 °C, the character receives 1 point of damage every 10 minutes. For example, a character exposed to -40 °C temperatures will suffer 4 points of damage every 10 minutes, or 24 points an hour. Strong wind chill factors can double or triple this damage, while warm clothing can reduce it significantly.

Exposure to cold liquids will result in even greater damage: for every 10 °C below 0 °C, the character receives 1 point of damage every round. For example, characters will suffer the following damage each round of exposure: 18 in liquid oxygen (-183 °C), 20 in liquid nitrogen (-196 °C), 25 in liquid hydrogen (-253 °C), 27 in liquid helium (-269 °C).

Electricity

The voltage and current of an electric shock varies greatly, from common household outlets, to high tension wires, to powerful lightning strikes. The damage is directly related to the amount of electricity that flows though the character's body, and thus grounded characters (with good connections to the Earth) will take 5 times more damage than insulated characters (with a weak or no connection to the Earth). Approximate damage inflicted each round (insulated/grounded): residential current 1/5; average commercial current 5/25; strong commercial current 10/50; and lightning strike 10-20/50-100

Fire

Like acid/base damage, fire can burn and scar a character's skin very quickly, but death is only likely after long exposure. The damage values listed in this section relates only to heat damage, either through direct skin contact or heated air; secondary damage, such as smoke inhalation or lack of oxygen, can inflict additional damage. Small fires with localized damage can rarely exceed 40 points total. Approximate damage inflicted each round: candle flame (2); small fire (4); medium fire (8); large fire (12); blazing inferno (20).

Oxygen Deprivation

The body's lungs, heart, and brain need a constant supply of air (or oxygen) to continue to function. Should that supply be removed, the body will quickly die. A character can hold his or her breath, without suffering damage, for approximately 10-20 seconds (2-4 rounds) multiplied by the Body Stat. After that point, the body will be starved for oxygen and the character will receive damage. Should the character's lungs fill with a gas or liquid other than air, such as water or chemicals, he or she will not only be deprived of oxygen, but also cannot breath again until the offending substance is removed. For each round of oxygen deprivation, the character will receive 5 points of damage. This damage is doubled to 10 if another liquid or gas enters the character's lungs as well.

Pressure

The human body can withstand a wide range of pressures (often measured in "atmospheres"), but bones will break and lungs will collapse under extreme conditions. The amount of pressure applied to the body is difficult to intuitively estimate unless the character is underwater: pressure increases about one atmosphere for every 10 metres of water depth. Characters do not suffer any pressure damage up to 10 atmospheres; additional atmospheres of pressure inflict 1 point of damage each round. For example, a character who is teleported 400 metres underwater (40 atmospheres) will suffer 30 points of damage each round (40 - 10 = 30).

Radiation

In comic books, high-energy radiation will either harm a character (as it does in real life) or give him or her superhuman powers. Harmful radiation, such as that emitted by nuclear reactors and radioactive chemicals, causes extreme damage to the human body. The majority of the damage inflicted by nuclear bombs at or near ground zero results from heat and shock wave rather than the nuclear fallout. Exposure to extreme radiation has very little immediate effect upon a character. Within hours or days, however, the cellular damage becomes painfully clear; humans will usually die within a week as the body shuts down. Low levels of radiation exposure will eventually cause radiation sickness, cancer, and death, but these effects can take months or years to develop.

Vacuum

A vacuum is a low-pressure area with little or no air to breathe, such as the vast infinite of space. In comic book reality, the following damage can be experienced by a character in a vacuum: unconsciousness, frozen eyeballs, frostbite, boiling blood, and even exploding limbs. In partial vacuums, such as those artificially created in Earth laboratories, characters suffer 2-5 points of damage each round. In near-complete vacuums, such as outer space, characters suffer 5-10 points of damage each round.

Shock Value and Critical Injury (Optional Rule)

The rules for Shock Value and Critical Injuries are only appropriate for dark and gritty superhero games (or other genre games using these rules) and are not recommended for a four-colour superhero game.

If a character suffers an amount of damage equal to his or her Shock Value, there is a danger that the character will be stunned. If the attack penetrates the skin (such as from a bullet or knife), the Shock Value also represents the damage necessary to inflict a major wound, which, if untreated, can result in the character bleeding to death. The Shock Value is equal to the character's maximum Health Points divided by 5. ([Health Points] ÷ 5).

Shock

If a character suffers more damage from a single attack than his or her Shock Value, he or she must make a Soul Stat check. If the check fails, the character is stunned and will collapse. The character will also let go of anything he or she is holding. The character's incapacitation will last for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which the Soul Stat check was failed. An incapacitated character is effectively out of action, either knocked out or awake but immobilized by pain or shock. He or she may not take any offensive, defensive, or non-combat actions. The duration of incapacitation from multiple failed Soul Stat checks from several injuries occurring in a short period of time is cumulative.

Critical Injury

A character that suffers more damage than his or her Shock Value from an attack that breaks the skin (such as from a bullet, knife, arrow, grenade fragment, etc.) has taken a critical injury. A character who suffers a critical injury loses one additional Health Point every round (every minute, if out of combat) until given successful first aid. Just stopping the bleeding through first aid is not enough, however — it only slows the loss of Health Points. A critically injured character that has undergone successful first aid will lose one Health Point every 10 minutes until he or she undergoes successful surgery (best performed in a hospital). Thus, a character who is badly hurt might die because of shock and internal injuries before he or she can be stabilized. A character can suffer multiple critical injuries. If so, each must be treated separately, and Health Point losses are cumulative.

Medical Treatment for Critical Injuries

If a character suffered a critical injury, he or she will lose one Health Point every round (or every minute if out of combat) until treated via first aid. This requires a successful Mind/Body-average based Medical (Emergency Response) Skill check. Each attempt takes 10 rounds (or one minute); several tries can be made until successful. If the character is trying to perform first aid on him or herself, apply a -2 penalty. If the character does not have an actual first aid kit handy but is forced to improvise dressings, etc., apply an additional -2 penalty.

As mentioned before, a critical injury that is treated will still result in the loss of one additional Health Point every 10 minutes until the character undergoes surgery. This requires a Mind/Body-average based Medical (Surgery) Skill check. There is no penalty if performed with a full staff in a modern hospital, but a -4 penalty applies if it is performed with less adequate medical facilities (for example, in a doctor's office or a poor third-world hospital) or -8 if performed with completely improvised equipment. Each attempt will take at least 10 minutes. Success stabilizes the patient while failure causes him or her to lose additional Health Points equal to twice the margin of failure. Another try is possible, however.

Optionally, a character who has been badly injured (negative Health Points) because of cumulative Health Point loss may also require treatment, even if he or she did not suffer a critical injury. This may be dependent on the nature of the injuries — someone who was badly burned may be in worse condition than someone who was beaten up. The GM can rule that keeping the character alive until adequate medical attention is available requires a successful Medical (Emergency Response) Skill check and that full recovery (at doubled healing rate) will require a Medical (Surgery) Skill check. In both cases, use the average of the caregiver's Body and Mind Stats.

Mind Combat

Mind combat is a special type of conflict, that uses the Telepathy Attribute (page 78) to forcibly invade another's mind. Most telepaths make mental attacks using the Special Attack Attribute with the Mind Attack Ability. This mental conflict, however, is a clashing of two psyches, each struggling to subdue the other — it is akin to two people getting into a mental fist fight. Mental combat can become lethal if either person begins tearing down neural pathways, erasing memories, or destroying brain cells. Physical strength does not play a role in this battle, only the power of the Mind. Each round of mind combat covers from 1 to 10 seconds of time from the characters' perspectives. The exact time scale is not relevant, since one round of physical combat should cover the same amount of time as one round of mind combat.

Mind combat can only be carried out once mental contact has been established, usually using the Telepathy Attribute. Once two minds have touched, the initiator of the contact may withdraw at any time. Alternatively, physical damage to the initiator or perhaps use of an appropriate Item of Power can break the contact. For the target to break unwanted mind contact, the player cannot initiate any other actions for one round and must make a successful Mind

Stat check with a -4 penalty. If the check is successful, the aggressor is forced from the character's mind and the mind combat ends immediately.

If any character in mental contact forfeits all physical actions for the round (including attack, defense, and non-combat action), he or she can attack through mind combat. A successful attack requires the player to make a successful Stat check using the average of his or her Mind and Soul Stats. The GM has the option of modifying the Check Value should the attack be particularly easy or difficult. The target can attempt to defend with a Stat check using the average of his or her Mind and Soul Stats with a -2 penalty.

The psychic damage of a successful attack is equal to the average of the attacker's Mind and Soul Stats. If using the optional rules for Energy Points, this damage is subtracted from the target's current Energy Points. Otherwise, it is removed from the character's Health Points. If a character is ever reduced to or below zero Health (or Energy) Points while in mind combat, his or her mind has been broken and is now at the mercy of the opponent. The victor can end the character's life, search through memories, plant powerful suggestions, erase thoughts, or simply render the character unconscious. Any changes to a character's mind (other than death) will remain until reversed by another character skilled in the Telepathy Attribute. The GM should decide exactly how this must be accomplished. Role-playing a character whose mind has been altered is challenging but can also be very rewarding when played with consistency.

A telepath who wishes to alter a target's mind after winning a mind combat battle must spend a great deal of time to alter it. Minor changes such as removing unimportant memories or implanting unessential false memories can take a couple of hours. Massive changes, such as instilling (or removing) a prejudice or phobia, rebuilding a large portion of the target's memories, or similar large scale remodelling should take days to complete. Characters may rush the procedure, if pressed, but there is a risk of the alteration failing over time. The target may notice a gap in his or her memory and question what happened, or a personality adjustment (new phobia, for example) may weaken over time. If the character wishes to perform a change quickly, the character may perform minor changes in a matter of rounds while the character can accomplish massive changes in about an hour.

When a character attempts to alter a target's mind, he or she must make a Mind-based Social Sciences (Psychology) Skill check. The GM may impose a penalty if the alteration is particularly severe or drastic. The character's Margin of Success determines how long the modification lasts, measured in years if the character took his or her time with the procedure or measured in days if the character rushed things. GMs should make this Skill check secretly and not inform the player of the result unless it is a failure — he or she will not know how long the change will hold, only that it has occurred or not.

The Mind Shield Attribute (see page 57) provides a bonus to the character's attempt to resist mind combat and mental alterations, as well as Armour against mind combat damage.

Example

A mentalist villain rips apart a senator's mind and decides to change the character's personality, as part of his master plan. He needs the senator as a part of a long-term manoeuvre against the Guard, and therefore implants a serious hatred of the Guard as well as unquestioned loyalty towards the villain. He has plenty of time to make the change since he attacked the senator while he was away on vacation — he is not expected back for a week, plenty of time to reprogram his mind. He sets about making the changes. The GM decides both changes are severe — the senator has been a long-time supporter of the Guard and would never want to follow the villain's orders. Thus, the GM imposes a -4 penalty on the mentalist's Mind-based Social Sciences (Psychology) check. The villain scores a Margin of Success of 4. Since the villain took his time, the changes in the senator's personality will last for about 4 years before he reverts to his normal state of mind. This should provide the villain with plenty of time to bring down the Guard.

Recovery

A character who suffers lost Health Points due to damage may heal naturally (or be repaired, for mechanical characters).

Recovering Health Points

Health Points regenerate at a rate equal to the character's Body Stat for each day (or hour for less "realistic" campaigns) of rest. For example, a character with a Body Stat of 5 rejuvenates 5 Health Points every day while resting. The healing rate doubles if the character is in the care of someone with Medical Skill but halved if he or she does not spend time resting.

Recovering Energy Points (Optional)

This rule is only used in campaigns where Energy Points are used. The average of the Mind and Soul Stat (rounded up) equals the number of Energy Points the character recovers every hour whether the character rests or not. A character with a 7 Mind Stat and a 3 Soul Stat, for example, regains 5 Energy Points ever hour ($7+3=10$; $10 \div 2=5$).

Repairing Equipment

Equipment, such as weapons, vehicles, or other gadgets can become damaged in the course of fighting crime. Characters can repair damage to equipment by making a Mind-based Mechanics Skill check. If the object has Health Points, each Skill check repairs 10 Health Points. Each Skill check should take approximately one day of work (approximately six to ten hours), depending on the extent of the repairs required. Most mechanical, or non-organic, characters do not recover Health Points, and must also be repaired.

Using Powers in Combat

In some situations, players will want to use various Powers in inventive ways in the middle of a fight. The following rules outline the use of Powers in combat. In many instances, the appropriate Power Usage Skill (page 88) can influence the chances of success.

Using Powers Against Opponents

Creative characters can use a number of seemingly inoffensive Powers in very effective ways in the middle of combat. Special Attacks are obviously designed for offensive use against an opponent, but what about Teleportation? Could a character not teleport an opponent in front of a moving truck or simply out of a fight entirely? When a character wishes to use a normally inoffensive Power against an unwilling opponent, the character must give up a non-combat action and make a Stat check using the relevant Stat for the Power. If the check is successful, the target is allowed a Soul Stat check to resist the effect (Body or Mind can be substituted if the GM deems it appropriate). If the target fails the Soul Stat check, he or she is affected by the Power. Otherwise, the target resists the effect entirely.

Example

A teleporter is battling a villain and decides he's had enough. Intent on ending the fight quickly, the teleporter attempts to send the villain straight to jail with his Teleportation Attribute. The hero makes a Mind Stat check and succeeds on the roll. The villain, not wanting to be sent to jail, attempts to resist the effect and rolls a Soul Stat check. Luckily, he just barely succeeds, resisting the teleporter's Power. He quickly turns his attention on the hero, not wanting to give him a second chance.

Characters must have PMVs at a Level sufficient to be able to accomplish their desired effect. If a teleporter does not have the Targets PMV, for example, he or she cannot use the Power against an opponent.

Sphere of Control

If a character attempts to use a Power on an object within the sphere of control of a character, the character is allowed to make a Soul Stat check to resist the effect as though he or she was the target of the attack. For example, a teleporter who wished to teleport the bullets out of an opponent's gun would still be required to make a Mind Stat check and the person holding the gun would be allowed a Soul Stat check to resist the effect. Other common objects usually in a target's sphere of control include: the ground beneath the target, air around the target, objects the target holds or carries, etc. The GM determines what objects are under the defender's sphere of control.

All-or-Nothing or Partial Effects

When a Power is used against a group of targets, GMs may use one of two options for resolving the resistance check. When a large group of people attempt to resist the effect of a Power, the GM makes one check, using the average Soul Stat value of the targets. Important characters (player characters or key NPCs) should be allowed to make individual rolls for themselves to prevent villains from teleporting a group of 50 people, including the players characters, thereby using the more vulnerable citizens to avoid the player characters' higher Stats. In this way, either all of the targets are affected by the Power (on a failed Soul Stat check) or none are affected (on a successful check).

Alternatively, the GM may wish to use one dice roll which is used as the same roll for each character's check — characters with high Soul Stats within the group may successfully resist the effects of the Attribute while characters with low Soul Stats are affected.

Example

A character attempting to teleport a group of 50 people to the other side of the city makes a Mind Stat check and succeeds. There is one important character within the group, the main villain of the story. He makes a Soul Stat check and also succeeds, therefore resisting the teleportation attempt. The other 49 people in the group, however, are not considered important characters and thus the GM makes one dice roll for all of them. The GM rolls a 9. Using the all-or-nothing approach, the average Soul Stat of the 49 individuals must equal or exceed 9 to resist the teleportation — otherwise, they are all teleported away. Using the partial effects method, the GM determines that four of the 49 people have a Soul Stat higher than 9 while the others, possessing lower Soul Stats, are teleported away, leaving the four people plus the main villain behind. Either option is acceptable and both can appear in a game — if both are used, players should determine which way their Power works during character creation (each has an advantage and disadvantage, and thus there is no Point cost difference).

Optional Rule: Contested Stat Checks

GMs may, alternatively, wish to use a contested check (see page 109) to determine if a character can affect a target with a power. While this approach is more reflective of how the Powers might work (a good teleporter, who achieves high margins of success, should have a better chance of succeeding than an average teleporter who achieves moderate margins of success), it also presents a potential problem. Many characters have a high Stat corresponding to their Power specialization, and consequently will often gain high margins of success. Their targets, however, may not have high Soul Stats. Thus, GMs should utilize this option with care and forewarning — it will likely result in characters becoming far more effective with their Powers.

Power vs. Power

When two characters pit their Powers against each other, who wins? In most situations, the character with the highest Level wins. For example, a villain is attempting to make his get-away by Flight. The hero grabs the villain and tries to hold the character back, preventing him from flying away. The hero has Superstrength at Level 5 while the villain has Flight at Level 3. The hero, therefore, is strong enough to prevent the villain from escaping.

If the two Powers are close in Level (usually the same or differing by one Level), the GM may request an opposed Stat check to see who wins the contested action. Using the above example, if the villain's Flight Level was 4, instead of 3, the GM could request an opposed Stat check. The villain makes a Body Stat check (since Body is the relevant Stat for Flight) and scores a Margin of Success of 4. The hero must now make a Body Stat check (again, since Body

is the relevant Stat for Superstrength) and score a Margin of Success greater than 4 to prevent the villain from escaping.

What if a character has two or more Powers that can be used in the opposed check? What if the villain, in the first example, also has Superstrength at Level 4? In a situation like this, the GM should simply add the two Attribute Levels together to determine who wins the opposed action. Thus, the villain has Flight at Level 3 and Superstrength at Level 4 for a total of 7 which is much higher than the hero's Superstrength Level of 5. The villain is therefore able to make his escape (possibly lifting the hero into the air or simply breaking free of his hold, depending on the GM's discretion).

Dynamic Powers vs. Normal Powers

What happens when a character with Dynamic Powers uses his or her Power to counteract another character's Power? Is a character with Dynamic Powers at Level 5 powerful enough to prevent a character with Superstrength at Level 7 from lifting a train, for example? Since Dynamic Powers allows a character to create any Power effect (within his or her realm of influence, see Dynamic Powers, page 40), the character can counteract most Powers through a multitude of ways: using telekinesis to push down on an object; changing the molecular composition of the object to make it heavier; etc. When Dynamic Powers is used to generate a Power, the GM simply compares the Level of the Power with the opponent's Power Level as normal (see Power vs. Power, page 133). If a character with Dynamic Powers Level 5 attempted to prevent a character with Superstrength at Level 7 from lifting an object, the maximum Power Level the character could create is Level 5 (as per Dynamic Powers). Thus, he or she is not powerful enough to prevent the character from lifting the train. Multiple Power effect Levels created with Dynamic Powers are not added together; only the highest Level effect is considered.

The possible exception to this is if the character's realm of influence allows him or her to use the Nullify (Drain) Attribute. In this case, the character may simply reduce the opponent's Power Level sufficiently that he or she is no longer capable of accomplishing the desired task. For example, a train engine masses approximately 100 tonnes. Thus, a villain with Superstrength Level 7 is just barely strong enough to lift the train engine. If a character with Dynamic Powers (Magic) casts a Nullify (Drain) spell to drain the villain's Superstrength, he or she would only require Dynamic Powers at Level 1. Since the villain's Superstrength would be reduced to Level 6 — below what is required to lift the train engine — the target could not lift the engine. If the villain had Superstrength at Level 8 (or higher), however, the character's Level 1 Dynamic Powers would be unable to drain the villain's strength sufficiently. The character would need to find another way to prevent the villain from lifting the train engine. The character may (if the realm of influence permits it) make the train engine insubstantial to simply prevent the villain from grabbing hold of it, or some other creative application of Dynamic Powers.

Note: Superstrength provides a +4 bonus to Body Stat Checks. Do not apply this bonus in Power vs. Power contests — it is only applied when the character is attempting something like breaking open a door or bending steel bars.

Using Powers as Attacks

In comic books, character regularly use seemingly passive, non-hostile Powers to attack opponents, causing harm. A character who can teleport may disorient foes by teleporting them repeatedly within one combat round or selectively teleporting portions of non-living villains away, causing massive trauma, for example. The list of possible attack applications of a Power is endless — heroes and villains alike are well known for pushing the bounds of innovation. Most Powers, however, do not account for these offensive tricks and stunts — they are accomplished using Special Attacks. A Special Attack is not limited simply to powerful energy blasts — it can be any "attack" that causes harm or detriment to an opponent. The teleporter who repeatedly teleports a target in a combat round may have a Special Attack with the Drain Body Ability and the No Damage Disability, reflecting the disorientation the target feels after the attack and the fact that no real physical harm is inflicted on the opponent. Alternatively, if the teleporter is capable of teleporting just a select portion of a target away causing harm to the target, the Special Attack may be designed to do an incredible amount of damage. By using the Attack Abilities and Disabilities, players can create any sort of attack, which will account for the numerous and creative ways that heroes and villains utilize their abilities. Some Special Attacks designed this way will have the Dependent Defect (see page 94) — the character must first activate his or her Teleportation before being able to use his or her Special Attack: Teleportation Disorientation, for example.

Using Powers Defensively

Just as characters can find imaginative ways to use their Powers against opponents, they are just as likely to think of ways to use their Powers to defend themselves from harm. Automatic Powers are those that work without a necessary Stat check. A teleporter, for example, is capable of teleporting him or herself without the necessity of a Stat check. Thus, in combat, if an attack is directed against him or her, the character can teleport out of harm's way. The character must attempt a Defence Combat check and, if successful, activates his or her teleportation and vanishes before the attack hits home. The Defense Combat check is used to determine whether or not the character activates the Power in time to avoid the attack, not whether or not the Power activates at all. If the character fails the Defense, the Power may still activate after damage is delivered. The character defends him or herself from attacks exactly the same way all characters do — with a Defense Combat check. This may, however, provide a rationale for a high Level of Defense Combat Mastery.

Defending with an Attack

By holding an action until attacked by an opponent, a character can defend him or herself with the offensive use of a Power. This simultaneous attack and defense option combines the advice under Using Powers Against Opponents and Using Powers

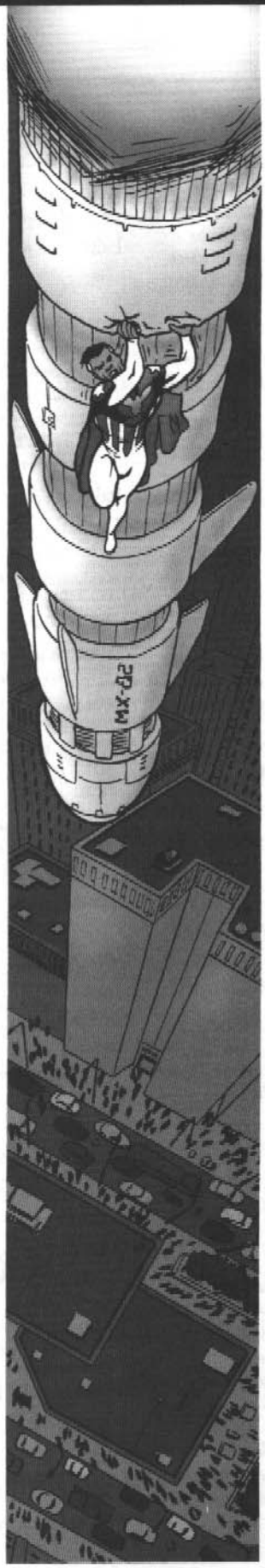
Defensively into a single action. To succeed, the character must activate the Power with an appropriate Stat check (the target can make a Soul Stat check to resist as normal) and also make a successful Defense Combat check to time the effect properly. For instance, when a hero attacks a villain who has a held action remaining, the villain might attempt to use Teleportation to place a bystander between him and the hero's power blast. The villain must first make a successful Mind Stat check to see if the Teleportation works. If the attempt is successful, and the bystander fails to resist with a Soul Stat check, a Defense Combat check determines if the villain activates the Teleportation in time.

Defending Others With Powers

If a character wishes to use one of his or her own Powers to defend another person (or object), the character is usually required to make two checks — one to see if the character can activate his or her Power, and the second to see if the character activates the Power in time. The character must expend both an offensive action (to activate the Power) and a defensive action (to react in time) to use a Power to defend another character.

For example, a character with Teleport wishes to move an ally out of the way of an enemy's power blast. The character must first make a Mind Stat check to teleport the ally character. If the check is successful, the character must then make a Defense check to see if he or she teleports the ally away before the enemy's blast hits. If successful, the character teleports his or her ally out of the way just in time, avoiding the blast. If the character fails, he or she still teleports the character away (having still succeeded on the attempt to activate the Power) but does so after the attack hits and inflicts damage.

The two rolls are only required if the character is attempting to defend a character instantaneously (same Initiative as the attack). Otherwise, the character uses an action and, assuming he or she acts before the attacker, the character proactively uses his or her Power to defend an ally. For example, the teleporter knows that an enemy will attack an ally later in the round. Rather than wait for the villain to attack, the teleporter, who has a higher Initiative than the villain, simply teleports his ally to safety. If the villain, however, had the higher Initiative, the teleporter would be forced to use an offensive and defensive action and make the required two checks to teleport his ally to safety in time.



Sentinel strains to stop the missile in time

If the character attempts to use the Power to defend him or herself, see Using Powers Defensively (page 134). If, however, the character attempts to use the Power to defend him or herself plus others (such as teleporting with a group of allies out of danger), the character must make both checks — to activate the Power and react in time. The character is still attempting to use the Power on additional targets, despite the fact that the character is also affecting him or herself as well.

Pushing Your Power

To encourage players to develop their characters through role-playing, superhero characters may push themselves beyond their normal abilities, sometimes exerting their Powers beyond their normal limits and other times pushing them in ways they have never done before.

Any time the character wishes to push him or herself, the player spends one unused Advancement Point and attempts a check using the relevant Stat for the action with a -6 penalty. If the check is successful, the character has pushed his or her Power beyond his or her normal limits (increased an Attribute's Level by 1; accomplished a new, yet related Power with an Attribute; or whatever else the GM deems acceptable). At the GM's discretion, the character may spend more than one Advancement Point to push a Power even further, such as by 2 Levels or even more. The spent Advancement Point counts toward the cost of purchasing the new Power. For example, if Slipstream uses Speed to vibrate through a wall, he will assign the Advancement Point to the future acquisition of the Mass Decrease (Insubstantial) Attribute. If the check fails, the character fails in the attempt and may suffer some sort of mishap, such as taking some damage — pushing yourself can be risky. Even if the character fails to push a Power, the Advancement Point is still allocated to the new Attribute Level or new Power; even a failure can teach a character something, if only what not to do the next time.

Though characters can normally only push their Attributes, under special circumstances, GMs may allow characters to push their Stats. Additionally, if a character attempts to repeatedly push his or her Power in the same way (such as a speedster pushing the Speed Attribute to accelerate his or her metabolism to induce regenerative healing), the GM may reduce the Stat check penalty by 2 after each successful attempt — representing the stunt becoming easier for the character — until enough Advancement Points are spent to fully acquire the new Attribute or Attribute Level.

Example of Combat

The following dialogue illustrates many of the rule mechanics associated with combat. Since this example is intended to instruct the reader, the combat is more complex and "forced" than normal play. The scenario involves two players — Mark (Slipstream) and Lucien (Caliburn) — and the Game Master (or GM), Jesse, who will role-play their two opponents: Mister Matthews's mutant grizzly bodyguard, Montgomery, and Alice, Queen of Hearts. Character sheets for all four participants are found on pages 290-311.

The example opens during the middle of a game session. It's early dawn, just as the sun is cresting the horizon, and Caliburn has been tracking Alice for a few hours after she stole a briefcase of bearer bonds from the Empire City Bank. He finally catches up with her at Pier 3 on the harbour front, while she meets with the giant Montgomery. Caliburn radios Slipstream for back-up, and the speedster arrives in mere seconds from the other end of the city. After discussing strategy briefly, they conclude that engaging the two villains in combat is the best solution; neither Alice nor Montgomery are likely to surrender peacefully. Knowing that Montgomery is a tough opponent, Caliburn hands Slipstream a shock baton (30 damage

First Combat Round

GM: *Ready? Roll Initiative.*

Mark: *(rolls dice) Slipstream rolls a 9. He's moving at 1,000 kph or Level 4 Speed, which gives a +8 bonus, plus he gets a +10 for Lightning Reflexes x2. Once he adds his ACV of 13, the total is 40.*

Lucien: *(rolls dice) Caliburn rolls a 14. His ACV is also 14, for a total of 28.*

GM: *(secretly rolls; final results are 32 for Alice and 20 for Montgomery)*

GM: *Slipstream is first with 40. I prefer to divide multiple actions over the entire round, when possible. You have 4 actions, so you'll go on about 40, 30, 20, and 10. What are you doing?*

Mark: *I'm going to zip up to the duo in a blinding flash and execute a Hit and Run Manoeuvre on Alice first, and then Montgomery. I'll jab them both in the solar plexus with the baton Caliburn gave me, and run behind one of the dock cranes. Since they are close together, can I go twice on Initiative 40 and discard my action on 30?*

GM: *That's fair. Since you have the Steady Hand Combat Technique, you don't suffer any movement-related penalties. Roll.*

Mark: *Since Slipstream doesn't have any combat Skills, his Check Value is equal to his ACV of 13. (rolls dice twice) I got a 12 on Alice and a 10 on Montgomery. Two hits!*

GM: *Since you surprised them both, they cannot defend against your attack. Roll your damage percentage.*

Mark: *(rolls dice twice) I rolled a 15 and 10, both giving a 50% result. The club's maximum damage is 30, so that's a 15. Add my 14 Combat Value, for a total of 29 damage.*

GM: *Slipstream doesn't add his ACV damage to Knockback, so the base Knockback distance is only 15. Since their Body Stats are close to 15, I will ignore Knockback. Alice and Montgomery are shocked by your attack, though, and Montgomery roars in anger. You make it behind the crane before they can react, however. (29 damage reduces Alice to 66 Health Points — less than 75% of her maximum — which gives her a -2 to all Check Values; Montgomery is reduced to 66 Health Points after his 20 points of Armour are accounted for) Caliburn, Alice turns in your direction, holds her arm slightly to the side, and stands ready. (on Initiative 32, Alice activates her Force Field shield and holds her action) Your turn, Caliburn.*

Lucien: *Damn. I think she activated her shield. I'm going to start running towards the two to eventually engage them hand to hand. While I'm moving, I'll toss my bolas at them, trying to entangle them both with one shot.*

GM: *It's a -4 penalty to attack two opponents with a single action. Also, damage is reduced by two ranks. Give it your best try.*

Lucien: *Since my ACV is 14, and Thrown Weapons Skill is Level 2, my Check Value is a 12. (rolls dice) I rolled an 8.*

GM: *Good shot. (rolls a Block Defense for Alice to see if she interposes her shield in time; her Check Value is 11 DCV plus 3 for Ranged Defense Skill minus 2 for her injury equals 12; rolls a 10, which is under her defense Check Value) Alice raises her force shield just in time to deflect the blow away from her body, and draws a pistol from her jacket with her other hand. (rolls a Parry/Dodge Defense for Montgomery; rolls a 4, which equals his DCV of 4) And amazingly, Montgomery bats the spinning weapon to the side with his mighty paws. Your attack has failed.*

Lucien: *Great. Are they both going to attack me now?*

GM: *You guessed it, and I'm going to resolve both of Alice's attacks now to speed things up. Alice levels a modified Glock 21 at your chest and fires two shots as she dives behind some wooden crates. (rolls a 13 and 5, which are both under her attack Check Value of 16, even with the -2 penalty) Caliburn, you need to make two defense rolls.*

Lucien: *No problem. I'll dive into a roll to the right, closer to the pier's edge. I'll stop just before I tumble into the water. (rolls dice) I rolled a 12 for the first defense, which is less than my Check Value. (rolls dice) I got a 10 for my second defense, which is normally a success. With the -4 penalty for a second defense, though, my Check Value was a 9. I failed the second one.*

GM: *(rolls dice to check for damage percentage; rolls a 9, which indicates 75% of the medium pistol's maximum damage of 10 — 7 points — plus Alice's Massive Damage of +30; 37 damage plus her ACV of 14 inflicts 51 points of damage) You feel the searing hot lead rip through your flesh just below your left collar bone. Take 51 damage.*

Lucien: *I curse at the pain and concentrate on avoiding Montgomery's pending attack. (51 damage reduces Caliburn to 54 Health Points)*

GM: *First, Caliburn has dropped below 75% of his original Health Points, right? Remember that we are using the optional damage difficulty penalty rules. Because of your injuries, all of your Check Values suffer a -2 penalty. If you drop below 50%, that will increase to -4. (rolls 12, which is higher than Montgomery's attack Check Value of 8) Your attentiveness pays off. The hulking grizzly takes a swipe at your head, but you're too quick for him and avoid the blow. (to Mark) What is Slipstream doing?*

Mark: *Since Alice and Montgomery are distracted, I'll try two more hit and runs. This time, I'll knock them both over the head and once again speed away behind a small storage warehouse. (roll dice twice) I rolled a 20 on Alice and....*

GM: *Wait! If you attacked Alice before Montgomery and rolled a natural 20, you fumbled and can't attack for your last action. Your timing is off as you race by Alice, and you lose your footing. By the time you regain your balance, you're already behind the warehouse. Sometimes, you can be too fast for your own good....*

Second Combat Round

GM: *Roll Initiative.*

Mark: *(rolls dice) I rolled a 17, which gives me a 48 total.*

Lucien: *(rolls dice) I rolled a 16. Normally a 30, but the -2 makes it 28.*

GM: *(secretly rolls; final results are 26 for Alice and 14 for Montgomery) Slipstream is first.*

Example (continued)

Mark: *I'll engage Montgomery in hand-to-hand to distract him from Caliburn, going for body hits. He's a powerhouse, I don't want to be hit. I'll up my speed to the full 10,000 kph.*

GM: *You can get two shots in before anyone else acts. Roll.*

Mark: *(rolls dice twice) I rolled an 8 and an 18. One hit.*

GM: *(rolls a 12, which is greater than Montgomery's DCV of 4) He's too slow to avoid your lightning fast attack, and you connect with the baton with his left side. Roll damage percentage.*

Mark: *(rolls dice) I rolled a 9 — 75%. That's 23 for the baton and 14 for ACV, or 37 total.*

GM: *(37 points of damage - 20 points of Armour = 17 points of damage; this reduces Montgomery to 49 Health Points; at less than 75% of maximum Health Points, he now suffers a -2 damage difficulty penalty to all rolls) You hear a rib crack as Montgomery roars, "Ahh'll tahr yooh ahpahrt, pouhnee mahn!" (to Lucien) Caliburn is out of harm's way temporarily, but Alice still has lots of bullets left. What are you doing?*

Lucien: *I'm going on total defense so I can get behind one of the forklifts. That gives me a +2 to my defense Check Value. I'm a sitting duck out here.*

GM: *You dodge and weave towards cover as you hear another gun shot. (rolls a 19 final value for Alice, missing by 3; Alice holds her second action) A bullet zips by your head and ricochets off the forklift. Finally, you're behind cover. (to Mark) Slipstream gets his third action.*

Mark: *Montgomery's on the ropes so I'll press the attack. (rolls dice) I rolled a 15, which is more than 13. Missed.*

GM: *"Nohw yooh paee!" he growls, and swipes at you. (rolls dice to attack and gets a natural 2) Critical hit! His claws rake up your chest, digging deep into your shoulder, as he knocks you into the air and back towards the warehouses.*

Mark: *Ouch! I don't get a defense either. That's gonna hurt a lot.*

GM: *Yes ... it does. We're using the Result (A) critical hit chart. (rolls a 15, for 125% damage; normal damage is 10 for his claws, plus 20 for Massive Damage, plus 20 for Superstrength, plus 8 for ACV = 58; 58 times 125% equals 73) He pounds you for 73 points of damage. Knockback is 73 minus his 8 ACV, minus your Body of 9 — 56 metres! Fortunately, you don't crash into anything else and take more damage.*

Mark: *Yeah ... real fortunate. (73 damage reduces Slipstream to 57 Health Points) I'm at less than 50% Health, so I'm suffering a -4 to all Check Values, right?*

GM: *Correct. What is Slipstream doing for his final action?*

Mark: *I think picking myself up off the ground seems reasonable....*

Third Combat Round

GM: *Roll Initiative.*

Mark: *(rolls dice) I'm moving at normal speeds now, so I only get a 38, minus 4, equals 34.*

Lucien: *(rolls dice) I got a 33 total.*

GM: *(secretly rolls; final results are 28 for Alice and 19 for Montgomery; since Alice held an action from last round, however, she actually goes first; she continues to hold her action, though) Slipstream is first again.*

Mark: *I'm going to try a risky manoeuvre. I will forfeit one defensive action for a total attack on Montgomery. Since he is on the edge of the pier, I want to knock him into the water with a shoulder tackle. I know he's really big, but if I clip him in the kneecaps just right, I think I can do it. I'm not going to do it using speed, though, since the velocity damage from the impact will probably kill us both.*

GM: *It's risky. You'll be making a called shot, which is a -8 Check Value penalty. You already have a -4 damage difficulty penalty as well. Even with the +2 total attack bonus, your Check Value will be a 3.*

Mark: *What if I use an action to size him up? It's kind of like aiming. Will this help?*

GM: *If you spend two extra actions judging his stance, or three actions total, then I'll give you a +2 bonus for a below average difficulty task.*

Mark: *Okay, I'll do it. My Check Value is now a 5. (rolls dice) I got a 4! That's a hit!*

Lucien: *Nicely done, Slipstream!*

GM: *(rolls a 7, which is greater than Montgomery's DCV of 4) You tackle the monstrosity, kneecapping him with your torn shoulder. He teeters on the edge, trying to keep his balance. Seething with rage in his eyes, Montgomery slips off the edge and plunges deep into the darkness. Seconds later, you hear a splash from the water below. Take 5 extra damage for your troubles.*

Mark: *After that last hit, I'll gladly take only 5. (5 damage reduces Slipstream to 52 Health Points)*

GM: *Caliburn, your move.*

Lucien: *I'm taking Alice out with my glue grenade. I'll use a complex trick shot with a -6 penalty, bouncing the grenade off a nearby carton to surprise the Queen of Hearts. Once she's tangled, we can subdue her easily. (rolls dice) I rolled a 5. With a 14 ACV, Thrown Weapons (Grenade) Skill bonus of 3, -2 damage penalty, and -6 trick shot penalty, my Check Value is a 9. Success.*

GM: *Nice shot. Before it connects, however ... (With Alice's held action, GM decides that she pushes her Telekinesis by 1 Level to pick up Slipstream and move him in front of the glue grenade; this normally spends an advancement Point, but this is irrelevant for an NPC; rolls an 3, which is under her Soul even with the -6 pushing penalty; the attempt succeeds) Slipstream, as you slowly pick yourself up from the ground you feel the air around you tightening on your skin. What do you do?*

Mark: *I think it's Alice using her TK ability on me again, so I dodge out of the way of the effect. Do I resist with a Soul Stat check or a defense check?*

GM: *Defense check, since you are dodging.*

Mark: *(rolls two dice) I rolled an 18; that fails even without my damage penalty.*

GM: *(rolls a Block Defense check for Alice and gets a 5; with the -6 trick shot penalty and -2 for injury, her Check Value is 8; she is successful) With a tremendous surge of willpower, Alice picks up Slipstream's weary body and interposes it between herself and the grenade. The projectile explodes, releasing a glob of amber glue over Slipstream's face. As the speedster struggles to breath, Alice moves him over the pier's edge and drops him into the icy waters below.*

Lucien: *Slipstream! No! Damn you, Alice!*

GM: *(to Lucien) You have two choices. You can try to stop me from escaping, or you can save your pathetic friend from drowning. What'll it be, hero?*

Lucien: *Next time you're mine, Alice. (to GM) Caliburn races to the edge of the pier and dives into the darkness....*

Character Advancement

Character advancement is unnecessary in a short adventure, but during a lengthy campaign, players may wish to improve the Stats, Skills, and Attributes of their characters. Advancement is not a requirement, but it can reflect the characters' learned knowledge through conflicts with the environment, with other characters or NPCs, or even with themselves.

The GM is encouraged to award all characters one Advancement Character Point every three to five role-playing sessions and one Advancement Skill Point every couple of sessions. Each player can assign these Character Points to Stats or Attributes immediately (GM's discretion) or accumulate them for future use.

The Point cost for increasing a Stat, Attribute, or Skill is identical to the cost during character creation. Players are encouraged to assign Advancement Points to Stats, Attributes, or Skills their characters use often. Alternatively, players can rationalize their decision to the GM should their characters acquire a new Attribute or Skill. The GM may require a character to perform certain activities to rationalize the acquisition of a new Attribute. In particular, the GM should not allow characters to acquire any Attributes that would disrupt the balance of the game. At the GM's option, players can also use Advancement Points to remove Defects that are no longer appropriate to their characters' concepts.

The GM may allow characters with the Item of Power or Gadgets Attributes to "swap" existing items for other items of similar Point value during or between sessions if a good story rationale exists. For example, a technological inventor who uses a suit of power armour to fight crime may make some modifications to his suit between adventures, swapping Points in Flight to increase the armour's Special Attack Level — the Point cost for the suit of armour remains the same but the character has simply designed the Mark II version. Swapping Points requires the expenditure of in-game resources (favours, money, time, captured enemy gear, etc.) and (often several) Mechanics Skill checks before this can be completed. Additionally, this exchange is a time consuming process that can take several days or weeks of work, depending on the extent of the change attempted (though the Gadgeteer Attribute can reduce this time considerably).

GMs can award Points more frequently for faster character advancement as they desire. The GM also has the option of rewarding exceptionally talented or active players with an extra Advancement Point. Finally, players that complete contributions for the game should receive additional Bonus Points as well (see page 103).

Destroying Buildings

Characters usually gain automatic successes when they target a building in a melee or ranged attack. Most buildings, whether they are mainly comprised of stone, brick, wood, or steel, have 5 points of Armour for each Level of the Awkward Size Defect (page 92). If a building suffers more damage than its Armour Rating, it has suffered structural damage; there will be holes in walls and/or floors, powered systems begin to cease working, etc. If the building ever suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, some or all of the building will collapse. For example, a mid-sized office building partially collapses if it suffers 125 points of damage in one attack. Characters within or adjacent to a collapsing building may suffer damage equal to half the building's original Health Point total, unless they can reach safety (GM's discretion). As with normal Static objects, repeated damage may eventually destroy a building (see Breaking Objects, page 140).

Weapons without the Area Effect or Spreading Abilities are much less effective against large structures such as buildings: any damage that penetrates the building's Armour is halved, representing the attack only damaging a small area of the structure.

Table 3-12: Buildings

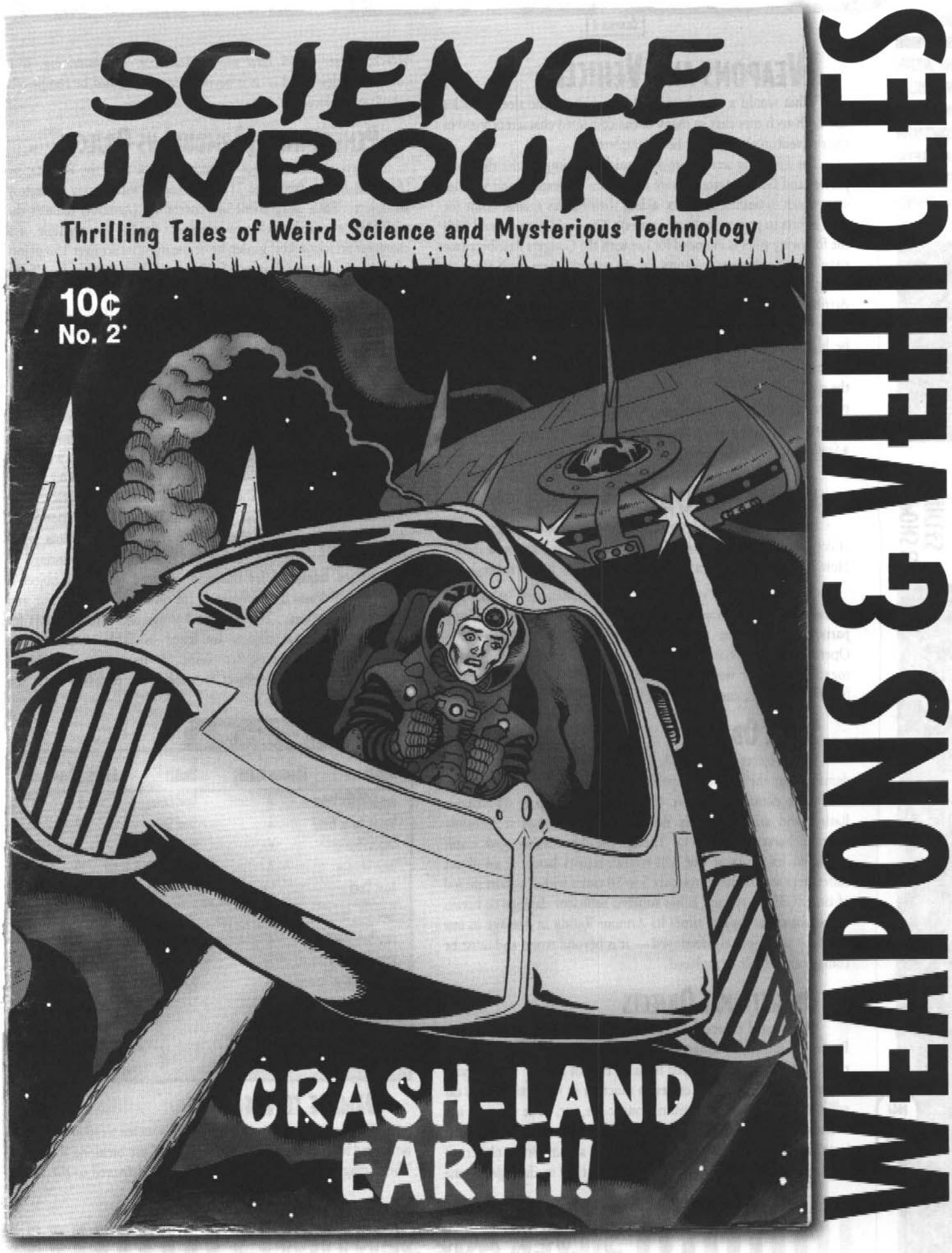
Type of Building	Awkward Size	Armour Rating
Phone Booth	1	5
Wood Shed	2	10
Three-Bedroom House	3	15
Small Office Building (6 Floors)	4	20
Mid-Sized Office Building (12 Floors)	5	25
Large Office Building (24 Floors)	6	30
Skyscraper (50 Floors)	7	35

Blowing Up Worlds

Really large and dense objects like an asteroid, moon, or planet has an exceptionally high Armour Rating (15 Points for each Level of Awkward Size Defect) representing the massive thickness of rock or gas that surrounds its core. In order to do any significant damage to the planet itself (rather than just blowing away cities, vegetation, or other surface features) this Armour value must also be penetrated. Only weapons with Area Effect assigned multiple times are useful — all other attacks simply do not affect a large enough section of the object to be noticeable. Table 3-13: Blowing Up Worlds shows the Armour Rating of planetoids. If an attack delivers more damage than this value, the object has suffered damage necessary to blow away its atmosphere, cause massive earthquakes and (if it has oceans) tsunamis, and other similar disasters. If an attack inflicts five times this value in one blast, it will actually destroy the world, blasting it into smaller chunks or an asteroid belt. As with normal Static objects, repeated damage may eventually destroy a planetoid (see Breaking Objects, page 140).

Table 3-13: Blowing Up Worlds

Size of Object	Awkward Size	Armour Rating
Meteor (125 metre diameter)	6	90
Small asteroid (1 km diameter)	9	135
Medium asteroid (10 km diameter)	13	195
Big asteroid (100 km radius)	16	240
The Moon or Mercury	21	315
Mars	23	345
Earth or Venus	24	360


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WEAPONS & VEHICLES

Weapons and Vehicles

What would a superhero world be without the sleek vehicles and high-tech toys that so many of the costumed characters wield in their adventures? It would be incomplete.

The following section provides quick and simple rules that help players and Game Masters create a plethora of weapons and vehicles with which to outfit characters, aiding their battles against crime (or their efforts to perpetrate those crimes). The equipment created with the following rules is intended for use with the Gadgets Attribute (see page 47). If a character requires a more powerful item, such as power armour or a magical ring, it should be created using the Item of Power Attribute (page 52). Item of Power reflects magical or supertech items that are exceedingly difficult to create. Gadgets, however, may be high-tech or incredibly expensive, but are within the ability of modern science. While a character's vehicle may be the best car on the road, anyone with enough funding and skill could build one. The power armour worn by the supersoldier, however, requires far more than money and skill to create. Ensure that the desired item is, in fact, a Gadget before attempting to build it with the rules herin.

Breaking Objects

Battles between superpowered foes often result in a great deal of collateral damage. How effective is a manhole cover as a shield? How much damage can a telephone pole deliver before it breaks?

Objects are divided into two main categories: static and operational. Static objects are those that exist without working parts, such as most melee weapons, furniture, buildings, etc. Operational objects are things that have moving parts that work together in some way to accomplish a task. Examples include firearms, vehicles, computers, and other similar objects.

Static Objects

Static objects possess an Armour Rating. This is an amount of damage that the object is capable of stopping. If the object is hit with more damage than this, it suffers damage up to its Armour Rating and any remaining damage passes through it (possibly injuring characters behind it). Though the object is damaged, it still maintains its structure but will require repairs later. If an object suffers repeated damage, roughly 5 to 10 times within a short period of time (GM discretion), it has suffered sufficient damage to break. If the object suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, it is completely destroyed — it is beyond repair and must be completely rebuilt or replaced.

Operational Objects

Operational objects have both an Armour Rating and Health Points. If the object suffers more damage than its Armour Rating, the excess damage is deducted from its Health Points. If its Health is ever reduced to zero, it ceases to function in its given task; a car will no longer run, a gun will no longer fire, etc. The object is not destroyed — it is simply rendered non-functional. It can be repaired later and returned to normal. Additionally, as with Static objects, if the item suffers five times its Armour Rating in damage in one attack, regardless of how much Health it has remaining, it is completely destroyed — it is beyond repair and must be completely rebuilt or replaced.

Penetrating (Armour) vs Objects

When a character uses a Special Attack with the Penetrating (Armour) Ability (see page 71), the attack is more likely to destroy an object. Each assignment of Penetrating (Armour) reduces the multiplier required to destroy an object by 1. For example, if a character attacks a steel girder, he or she must inflict over 150 points of damage (Armour Rating of 30 times 5) to destroy it. If the character had special claws with Penetrating (Armour) assigned three times, however, the character only needs to inflict over 60 points of damage (Armour Rating of 30 times [5 minus 3 due to three assignments of Penetrating: Armour = 2]).

Armour Ratings of Objects

The Armour Rating of an object indicates how much damage the object can stop and it is dependent on the material from which the object is made, the size of the object, and how well it is constructed. A hollow, aluminum pole will be far weaker than a solid aluminium pole of the same size. Table 4-1: Static Object Armour Ratings provides rough Armour Ratings for common Static objects. GMs are encouraged to use this chart as a basis when determining the Armour Rating of other objects encountered in their games, adjusting for the material from which the object is made, the thickness of the material, the quality of construction, and other similar factors. The Armour Ratings and Health Points for common operational objects are listed in Tables 4-2: Personal Weapons and 4-5: Vehicle Templates. In most cases, the Health Points of an operational object is equal to 10 plus five times the object's Armour Rating.

Table 4-1: Static Object Armour Ratings

Object	Armour Rating	Object	Armour Rating
Bench/Table, Metal	8	Steel Cables	8
Bench/Table, Wood	4	Steel Girder	30
Cement Barrier	30	Stop Sign	6
Door, Wooden	8	Telephone Pole, Metal	20
Door, Vault	50	Telephone Pole, Wood	16
Dumpster, Metal	18	Tree, Giant	40
Furniture, Wood	6	Tree, Large	30
Ladder, Metal	8	Tree, Medium	20
Manhole Cover	24	Tree, Small	10
Melee Weapons	Equal to the Weapon's Damage, see Table 4-2: Personal Weapons		
Buildings	See Table 3-12: Buildings		
Planetary Objects	See Table 3-13: Blowing Up Worlds		

Damage to Weapons

When a superstrong character uses a melee weapon against an armoured foe, there is a risk of the attack's force breaking the object. The damage from an attack must either be delivered to the target,

or (if the target is armoured) delivered to the weapon itself. If the target's Armour prevents damage equal to five times the weapon's Armour Rating in one attack, the weapon breaks, snapping under the strain. Each Level of Immovable counts as 10 points of prevented damage when determining whether an object breaks or not. When a character scores a critical hit (see page 127), his or her weapon will not break, regardless of any damage prevented.

Example

The Iron Duke picks up a metal telephone pole, which has 20 points of Armour, and takes a swing at Red Phoenix. With the pole, Iron Duke delivers a crushing blow, inflicting 134 points of damage. Red Phoenix has 60 points of Armour and Immovable at Level 4. If she did not have the Immovable Attribute, she would suffer 74 points of damage (134 points of damage - 60 points of Armour) and the telephone pole would be fine since its Armour Rating of 20 allows it to resist up to 100 points of prevented damage (only 60 points of damage prevented). Since she does have the Immovable Attribute, however, the pole reacts as if 100 points damage from the attack had been prevented (60 for Armour and 40 for 4 Levels of Immovable). Therefore, Red Phoenix still suffers 74 points of damage, but as the telephone pole also shatters around her.

Breaking Items of Power

Items of Power are treated as if they possess an additional 5 points of Armour per Level of the Item of Power when determining whether or not they break.

For example, a character with a long sword that is a Level 4 Item of Power attacks the Iron Duke. The character strikes a fantastic blow, delivering 84 points of damage. The Iron Duke has 90 points of Armour as well as 7 Levels of Immovable. Under normal circumstances, a typical long sword, which inflicts 12 points of damage, would break if 60 points of damage were prevented. Since the character's sword is an Item of Power, however, it will only break if 160 points of damage are stopped by an attack (12 points of Armour for a long sword + 5 points per Level of Item of Power = 32; 32 x 5 = 160).

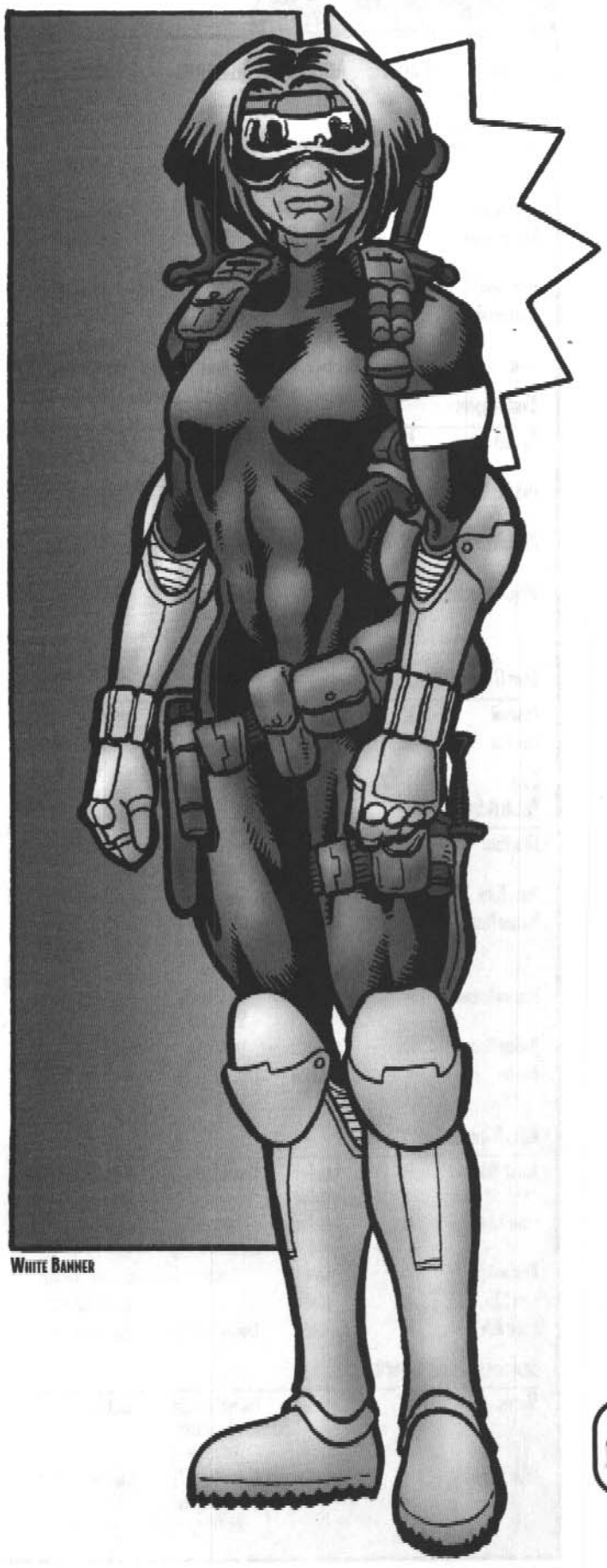
Personal Weapons

In *Silver Age Sentinels*, weapons have a damage value ranging from 1 (least damaging) on up. In combat, the damage value, coupled with the attacker's Attack Combat Value, determines the total punishment delivered by a successful hit (see Chapter 3 on inflicting damage). Should the weapon's effect remain outside a character's direct influence (an automated defense system, for example), the damage equals the weapon's damage value only — the Game Master should not add the character's Combat Value.

Table 4-2: Personal Weapons lists the damage values and other characteristics of common weapons. If a weapon is not listed, the GM should assign a damage value based on one that is similar in form and function.

Some weapons possess Abilities and Disabilities to reflect their unique capabilities. Full descriptions of these modifiers are on pages 68-74. Note that special or magical weapons might cause additional damage or possess unique abilities beyond those listed here.

The Armour Rating and Health Points of operational weapons such as firearms are indicated in the table as well.



White Banner

Table 4-2: Personal Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Abilities	Disabilities	Skill
Melee Weapons				
Bladed Weapons				
Axe	10	Muscle-Powered	Inaccurate Melee	Melee (Axe)
Broadsword	12	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Knife or Dagger	6	Concealable Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Knife)
Long Sword	12*	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Short Sword	8	Concealable Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Sword)
Spear	10	Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Polearm)
Blunt Weapons				
Bo, Staff or Pipe	6*	Knockback Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Polearm)
Club, Baseball Bat	6	Knockback Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Club)
Nunchuku or Chain	6	Flexible Muscle-Powered	Melee	Melee (Whips/Chains)
Whip, Rope, or Belt	4	Concealable Flexible Muscle-Powered	Low Penetration Melee	Melee (Whips)
Bows (2 Armour, 20 Health)				
Crossbow	12	none	Slow, Limited Shots (1)	Archery (Crossbow)
Long Bow	10	none	Limited Shots (1)	Archery (Bow)
Guns				
Pistols (4 Armour, 30 Health)				
Light Pistol	8	Concealable	Low Penetration Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Heavy Pistol	12	Concealable	Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Machine Pistol	10	Auto-Fire Concealable Spreading	Inaccurate Limited Shots (6) Short Range	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Magnum Revolver	14	Concealable	Limited Shots (6) Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Medium Pistol	10	Concealable	Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Revolver	8	Concealable	Limited Shots (6) Short Range	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Rifles (5 Armour, 35 Health)				
Assault Rifle	14	Auto-Fire Spreading	Limited Shots (6)	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Heavy Assault Rifle	18	Auto-Fire Spreading	Inaccurate Limited Shots (6)	Gun Combat (Auto-Fire)
Hunting Rifle	14	none	none	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Light Rifle	8	none	none	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Sniper Rifle	20	Accurate	Limited Shots (6)	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Shotguns (5 Armour, 35 Health)				
Shotgun	18**	Spreading	Limited Shots (6) Low Penetration Short Range	Gun Combat (Rifle)
Heavy Shotgun	22**	Spreading	Limited Shots (6) Low Penetration Short Range	Gun Combat (Rifle)

Weapon	Damage	Abilities	Disabilities	Skill
Guns (continued)				
Assault Weapons (5 Armour, 35 Health)				
Light Mini-Gun	12	Accurate Auto-Fire Spreading	Limited Shots (6) Static	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Heavy Mini-Gun	22	Auto-Fire Spreading	Limited Shots (6) Static	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Machine Gun	20	Auto-Fire Spreading	Static	Heavy Weapons (Machine Gun)
Submachine Gun	10	Auto-Fire Spreading	Limited Shots (6) Short Range	Gun Combat (Auto-fire)
Heavy Weapons (4 Armour, 30 Health)				
66 mm LAW Light Anti-Tank Weapon	40	Area Effect Burning Penetrating	Inaccurate Limited Shots (1) Self-Destruct Slow Static	Heavy Weapons (Launcher)
Thrown Weapons				
Concussion Grenade	30	Area Effect x3 Concealable	Limited Shots (1) Self-Destruct Short Range	Thrown Weapons (Grenades)
Thrown Knife	4	Concealable	Limited Shots (1) Short Range	Thrown Weapons (Blades)
Non Lethal Ranged Weapons (3 Armour, 25 Health)				
Tear Gas Grenade	30	Area Effect x2 Enduring	Inaccurate Limited Shots (1) Self-Destruct Slow Stun Toxic	Heavy Weapons (Grenades)
Taser	12	Stun	Low Penetration Short Range Slow	Gun Combat (Pistol)
Pepper Spray	12	Concealable Irritant Stun	Melee Limited Shots (6) Toxic	none
Ordnance (10 Armour, 60 Health)				
120 mm Heat (M1 Abrams Tank)	80	Area Effect Burning Long Range Penetrating	Limited Shots (1)	Heavy Weapons (Launcher)
120 mm Sabot (M1 Abrams Tank)	100	Accurate Long Range Penetrating x2	Limited Shots (1)	Heavy Weapons (Launcher)
Stinger Missile	60	Area Effect Homing Long Range Penetrating	Backblast Limited Shots (1) Only Air Targets Self-Destruct Slow Static	Heavy Weapons (Launcher)
Tomahawk Missile	140	Accurate x4 Area Effect x3 Long Range x8 Penetrating x2	Limited Shots (1) Self Destruct Slow Static Stoppable	Heavy Weapons (Launcher)

Table 4-3: Personal Weapons Notes

"Damage" is how much punishment the weapon inflicts (the base damage of the attack).

"Abilities" or "Disabilities" are any special capabilities or limitations the weapon possesses. See pages 68-74. Unless noted otherwise, a weapon has Medium range.

"Skill" is the Skill and Specialization that provides a bonus when firing the weapon.

* Requires two hands to wield properly; delivers +4 damage when wielded two-handed.

** Some shotguns are "double-barrelled" and can fire both barrels at once. If so, an additional 8 damage is delivered. Double Barrelled shotguns have the Limited Shots (2) Disability.

Improvised Weapons

In combat between superpowered characters, it is not uncommon for someone to pick up a manhole cover or car and wield it is a weapon. It is impossible to account for every conceivable weapon that the player characters may decide to throw at the villains, but Table 4-4: Improvised Weapons provides commonly encountered examples of improvised weapons and their statistics. GMs are encouraged to use this table as a guideline should their players decide to grab something in the middle of combat that is not listed. Naturally, most weapons have the Melee Disability (page 73) as well, though they can be thrown in combat if necessary.

Table 4-4: Improvised Weapons

Object	Damage	Abilities	Disabilities	Strength Requirement
Bus	30	Area Effect	Inaccurate Low Penetration	Superstrength Level 4
Car	24	Area Effect	Inaccurate Low Penetration	Superstrength Level 2
Dumpster	18		Inaccurate Low Penetration	Superstrength Level 2
Manhole Cover	24		Low Penetration	Body 16
Park Bench	8		Low Penetration	Superstrength Level 1
Steel Girder	30	Spreading	Inaccurate	Superstrength Level 3
Telephone Pole	20	Spreading	Inaccurate	Superstrength Level 2
Stop Sign	6			Body 10

"Damage" is how much punishment the weapon inflicts. The character adds his or her Attack Combat Value to this number to determine total attack damage.

"Abilities" or "Disabilities" are any special capabilities or limitations the weapon possesses. See pages 68-74. Unless noted otherwise, a weapon has Medium range. All Improvised Weapons have the Knockback and Muscle-Powered Abilities.

"Strength Requirement" indicates either the minimum Body Stat Rating or Superstrength Level required to wield the object as a weapon effectively. If any improvised weapon is thrown, it is treated as a Short Range weapon. The range increases by one Level for each three full Levels of Superstrength above the Strength requirement (a Body Strength requirement is treated as Superstrength Level 0). For example, if Red Phoenix, who has Superstrength Level 6, threw a manhole cover, it would be treated as a Long Range weapon (Short increased to Medium for three Levels above the minimum Strength Requirement and then to Long for an additional three Levels above the Requirement). Conversely, if she wished to throw a car, which requires Superstrength Level 2, it would be treated as a Medium Range weapon. If she wished to throw a bus at an opponent, it would be treated as a short range weapon because she is only two Levels above the Strength Requirement to wield a bus as a weapon.

Customizing Firearms

When you can project lasers from your eyes capable of melting a tank into a puddle of molten metal, why would you care about simple firearms? Well, not all heroes have the benefit of awesome superhuman Powers; many street-level vigilantes use exceptional skill, training, and equipment to dish out their truth and justice. The following options can be added to different types of weapons to enhance performance or otherwise alter them. Each accessory or feature normally counts as a minor Gadget. Some options are considered "mundane" (their advantages and disadvantages cancel), and do not cost Points.

Options for weapons are classed as either accessories or features. A feature is a change to the basic weapon template that reflects a particular factory model, or extensive after-market customization. This requires the Mechanics (Gunsmith) Skill to install, and may require several hours or more. An accessory is something that can be easily attached or removed from the weapon within a few seconds to several minutes. Weapon options are available for any class of weapon unless otherwise noted.

Accurized

Modification Type: Feature

The weapon has been specially modified (custom grips, improved sights, polygonal rifling, heavier barrel, etc.) to improve its accuracy. This is typical of target pistols and competition or sniper rifles. This modification grants a +1 bonus to any Attack check when firing single shots, but no bonus if used with Auto-Fire. An accurized weapon must be in excellent condition with its sights precisely aligned — it will lose its bonus if knocked about, dropped, or otherwise mistreated.

Bayonet

Modification Type: Accessory

The weapon is fitted with a lug to accept a bayonet (included with this option). When attached, the weapon is a bit more awkward, but it can be used in melee combat as a spear. When detached (requires one round), the bayonet is also usable as a knife. A bayonet is available for any rifle.

Bipod Attachment
Modification Type: Accessory

When the bipod is unfolded, the weapon is treated as if it is Accurate (cumulative with any other Accurate bonuses) and Static. The weapon must be fired at rest with the shooter lying prone behind it. Folding or unfolding the bipod requires one round. A bipod is available for any rifle.

Brass Catcher
Modification Type: Accessory

This attachment collects cartridges as they are fired out of the weapon, and thus either saves them for hand-loading or prevents any incriminating ballistics evidence from being left behind. A brass catcher is available for any rifle or assault weapon.

Briefcase-Firing
Modification Type: Accessory

The weapon is designed to be concealed in and fired from a briefcase or attaché case without removing it, using a hidden trigger in the case handle. The weapon must be an auto-loading pistol, machine pistol, or a submachine gun. The weapon suffers a -2 penalty to the Attack check when fired from within a brief case. The gun can usually be unclamped from the case and used normally (takes one round). GMs may use similar rules for umbrella guns or other disguised weaponry.

Carbine-Format
Modification Type: Mundane Feature

The weapon has a shorter barrel and stock. A carbine format subtracts 1 point from damage but allows the weapon to be concealed under a long coat (see Concealable Ability, page 69) as if it were a submachine gun. The Check Value bonus for anyone performing a body search is +4, however. A carbine-format weapon is available for any rifle.

Flash Suppressor
Modification Type: Accessory

The hot gasses produced when a bullet is fired are quite visible at night. A flash suppressor is a long device that can be attached to the end of a weapon, masking this signature. A weapon with a flash suppressor attached is easier to detect if hidden (+1 bonus). A flash suppressor is not available for a grenade launcher, LAW, taser, or minigun.

Flashlight Attachment
Modification Type: Accessory

This attachment allows any weapon to be used with a flashlight, and permits illumination of targets at short range so that they can be targeted by attackers without any penalties for darkness. Of course, someone using a flashlight at night can also be detected at a greater distance.

Folding or Telescoping Stock
Modification Type: Feature

The stock on the weapon can be folded or telescoped down, making it handier and more concealable. Unfortunately, a weapon with this feature also suffers from the Inaccurate Defect (-2 Check Value penalty) when firing at targets at over half its effective range. It requires one round (one attack if the character has the Extra Attacks Attribute) to fold or unfold the stock. If the weapon is also carbine-format, sawed-off, or a submachine gun, there is an extra -1 penalty to any check to spot the weapon while concealed, which is cumulative with other modifiers. This feature can be assigned to any rifle, shotgun, or assault weapon.

Laser Sight
Modification Type: Accessory

A laser sight projects a small, bright dot of laser light exactly where the weapon is pointing, which helps the attacker determine whether or not he or she is on target. In game terms, the attacker receives a +1 bonus to their appropriate Gun Combat Attack check in situations where they can see the laser dot on the target (usually up to Short Range unless combined with a scope). Laser sights with an infrared beam (visible only to people with night vision scopes or goggles) are also available.

Night Vision Scope
Modification Type: Accessory (counts as 2 minor Gadgets)

This scope uses thermal imaging or light intensification technology to "turn night into day." This functions exactly like a regular scope, except that it also eliminates any penalties for darkness.

Sawed-Off Barrel
Modification Type: Feature

This modification is for shotguns only. Sawing off the barrel of a shotgun means that it is easier to conceal, but is also shorter ranged. A sawed-off shotgun can be concealed under a long coat (see Concealable weapon ability, page 69) as if it were a submachine gun. At up to Melee Range (5 metres or less) it has a wider spread of pellets (+1 bonus on Attack checks), but suffers -5 penalty to damage at ranges beyond Melee Range.

Snub-Nose
Modification Type: Mundane Feature

A snub-nose is a shorter-barrel versions of any auto-loading pistol, revolver, or machine pistol. The weapon suffers a -1 Attack check penalty at any range greater than 5 metres and delivers less damage (-1 to damage), but is substantially easier to conceal (-1 Check Value penalty to spot the hidden weapon, cumulative with other bonuses or penalties of the weapon).

Scope

Modification Type: Accessory

A telescopic sight mounted atop the weapon gives the shooter an extra +1 bonus to his or her Attack check when taking an entire turn to aim at a target (see page 118). This bonus only applies to targets further away than Melee Range (over 5 metres). Scopes are available for all guns.

Silencer

Modification Type: Accessory

A silencer, or more technically, a sound-suppressor, is a tube that attaches to the weapons barrel and reduces the noise the weapon makes while firing. A silenced weapon cannot be heard at a range of greater than 5 metres unless a nearby character makes a successful Body Stat check. The GM should modify this distance/check for conditions such as ambient noise, range, and Heightened Senses. Auto-loading pistols, machine pistols, submachine guns, and rifles may be fitted with silencers. A silenced weapon cannot be concealed or holstered until the silencer is removed, which requires one round.

Speed Loader

Modification Type: Accessory

A speed loader is a device that holds a number of revolver cartridges and permits them to be rapidly inserted into a cylinder. If a character has this minor Gadget, he or she can ignore the Limited Shots disability of any revolver.

Trigger Lock

Modification Type: Mundane Feature

An integral lock that prevents the gun from being used without the right key or combination. It takes an extra round to unlock the gun before it can be ready to fire. In some areas, trigger locks may be required by law on some or all firearms.

Types of Ammunition

It is assumed that characters have access to ammunition of whatever type they need for their standard weapons. Standard ammunition for auto-loading pistols, revolvers, rifles, and machine guns is a lead bullet; this type of bullet is called "ball" in military parlance. Standard ammunition for shotguns is shot. If characters have more than one type of ammunition, each extra type that is carried counts as a minor Gadget.

Armour Piercing (AP)

This is a bullet specifically designed to punch through Armour, using a steel or tungsten core rather than jacketed lead. Some brands of Armour-piercing ammunition are Teflon-coated, but contrary to myth, the coating on AP bullets has nothing to do with the Armour-piercing qualities — it simply helps protect the rifling inside the gun from the tougher material from which the bullet is made. Weapons using AP bullets are assigned the Penetrating (Armour) Ability (page 71). AP bullets are somewhat less lethal against flesh, and thus the actual damage is always halved (round up) after the effects of Armour are considered. These bullets are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, shotguns, revolvers, and rifles. AP pistol or revolver ammunition ("cop killer bullets") is usually illegal.

Bird Shot

The statistics given for shotguns assume they are using buckshot, which is the usual combat load. If using birdshot (with a greater number of smaller pellets) damage is reduced by 5 points but the target suffers a -1 penalty on his or her Defense check. Bird shot is only available for shotguns.

Blanks

A blank is a cartridge without the bullet that also has a reduced powder load. A blank normally does not deliver any damage when fired, but if the gun's muzzle is directly in contact with someone, the hot gasses expelled can still be dangerous or fatal. When a character is using a blank-firing gun in combat, the gun is treated as if it is firing a rubber bullet, but range is limited to Melee Range. Blanks are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, revolvers, rifles, and shotguns.

Hollow Point (HP)

This is a bullet designed to expand after entering a target, therefore doing greater damage. Hollow Point bullets are known by various trade names, and include bullets described as "expanding," "dumdum," or pre-fragmented rounds such as "safety slugs." HP ammo is standard issue in many police departments, since the rounds are better man-stoppers and are less likely to pierce walls and injure bystanders on the other side. The Hague Convention prohibits HP bullets for military use in international conflicts. Hollow Point bullets have less Armour-penetrating power: Armour protection is doubled against the bullets. These disadvantages are cumulative with any Low Penetration modifiers. If even one point of damage succeeded in penetrating Armour, however, or if the target was unarmoured, 5 extra points are added to the damage that a living target suffers (the bullets "mushroom" inside living tissue). No extra damage is inflicted on machines or structures by HP bullets. If all damage failed to penetrate the Armour, the +5 damage does not apply. HP bullets are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, revolvers, and rifles.

Rubber

These are bullets encased in rubber or plastic, which are designed to be "less lethal." A weapon using rubber bullets automatically suffers from the Low Penetration Disability (page 73) and delivers 5 fewer points of damage. Rubber bullets are available for auto-loading pistols, machine guns, revolvers and rifles, and for shotguns firing slug ammunition.

Shotgun Slugs

A shotgun can fire big bullets instead of shot. Police will often use slugs to stop cars or blow open barricades. When using slugs, a shotgun loses both the Spreading Ability and the Low Penetrating Disability. Slugs are available for shotguns only.

Incendiary Shells

Special shells are also available for shotguns; these shells contain phosphorous chemicals that convert the shotgun into an improvised flamethrower. Damage is reduced by 5 points, but if any damage penetrates Armour, the target receives fire damage, and suffers 1/10 (round up) the basic damage per round for the next five rounds. This damage is also very painful, imposing a -2 penalty on all Check Values. The ammunition tends to foul the gun after use, however. Any further shots fired before the gun can be carefully cleaned suffer a -1 Attack check penalty, and the gun will jam on any roll of 19 or 20 (requiring cleaning before the gun can be reused). These shells are available for shotguns only.

Grenades and Explosives

The user throws these hand-held explosive weapons at a target. Their use requires the Thrown Weapons (Grenade) Skill. All of these explosives count as minor Gadgets except a satchel charge, which is treated as a major Gadget.

Concussion Grenade

This grenade is filled with high explosives. 30 points of damage are delivered to everyone in a six-metre radius who fails a Defense check. Even if characters make the Defense check, they still may suffer some blast damage (see Area Effect, page 68) unless there is sufficient cover (GM's option). If cover is available, a successful Defense check might indicate that the character reached safety and avoided injury.

Tear Gas Grenade

This grenade bursts to fill a room-sized area (three-metre radius) with (usually) non-lethal irritant gas. Damage is the same as concussion grenade (30 points), but is "stun only" — it wears off after a few minutes, and it does not affect non-living things or anyone wearing a gas mask. Anyone exposed to the gas also suffers a -2 penalty on all Check Values due to irritation if they fail a Body Stat check. This penalty lasts for a number of rounds equal to the amount by which the check was failed. Tear gas grenades also release a lot of smoke and may occasionally (GM's option) start fires if they explode next to paper or other flammable substances.

Flash-Bang Grenade

These special grenades produce a super firecracker effect, stunning people with sound and light. This weapon is a favourite of hostage-rescue teams. No physical damage will be suffered, but the victims must make a Body Stat check or be blinded and deafened for a number of combat rounds equal to the difference between the Check Value and the roll. The character suffers a -1 Body Stat Check Value penalty if he or she is right next to the grenade when it explodes. Characters wearing anti-flare goggles (such as a welding mask) and ear protectors will receive a +6 bonus to their Body Stat check to avoid the grenade's effects.

Smoke Grenade

This grenade fills a room-sized area (three-metre radius) with non-toxic chemical smoke for 3 to 8 rounds (depending on wind). Anyone without night vision goggles or a night vision scope will suffer a -4 Check Value penalty when attacking a target obscured by smoke.

Dynamite Stick

This explosive functions like a concussion grenade, except the blast covers only a three-metre radius, and the damage is 20 points.

Satchel Charge

This is a knapsack full of plastic explosive or multiple dynamite sticks. The explosion is treated as a concussion grenade, but the blast covers eight metres and the maximum damage is 40 points. Unlike a grenade, a satchel charge is too heavy to throw far, so its range is limited to melee range for average humans — the attacker will be caught in the charge's blast unless it has a timer.

Timed or Remote Detonator

This device is used to explode a satchel charge (or other bomb) from a distance, either at a specific time or in response to an electrical or radio signal. Attaching the detonator to the explosive and properly setting it requires a Mind-based Demolitions Skill check, with failure indicating a late or premature blast.

Vehicles

Along with their specialized weaponry, many street-level heroes use rigged and modified vehicles in their fight against crime. Additionally, many powerful superheroes and superhero groups use high tech vehicles in their quests to keep the world safe.

This section describes the standard vehicles likely to appear in a modern-day superhero game. Some vehicles are suitable for use as personal vehicles by characters or villains, while a desperate hero or villain may commandeer others (such as a city bus) when no better transportation is available. This section concentrates on general types that are in common use, rather than providing individual statistics for specific models. All costs are approximate US dollar (USD) values, which can vary greatly.

Each vehicle counts as a major Gadget, with the exception of the motor scooter and ultra-light (minor Gadgets). These basic templates can be modified using the Customizing Vehicles guidelines (pages 149-153). Using the customization options, the vehicle can be further modified to match the character's personal vision (adding options such as supercharged engines or armoured glass windows) with each option normally considered to be as a minor Gadget.

Automobile

The basic motor vehicle of the 20th century. Automobiles have four wheels and are normally powered by a gasoline internal combustion engine. Standard features on modern vehicles include headlights, seat belts, air bags, and air conditioning.

Passenger Car

An ordinary compact or mid-sized automobile. Cars are available in coupe (two doors, often with a hatch back and extra cargo space), sedan (four door), or station wagon (extra room in back, but reduced rear visibility for driver) body styles. Year 2001 cost: $12,000+ USD. For an expensive luxury car, add custom options such as Big Engine and Luxury Interior.

Sub-Compact Car

A small, somewhat cramped passenger car. It seats four, but with a lot less comfort than a comparable mid-sized vehicle. It is easier to park, but not as robust. Year 2001 cost: $10,000+ USD.

Pickup Truck or Sport/Utility Vehicle

A light truck with cab seating (2-3 people), off-road suspension, and four-wheel drive and either an open cargo bed (pickup truck) or extra passenger capacity (sport/utility vehicle). Year 2001 cost: $20,000+ USD.

Race Car

A dedicated race car (such as a Formula 1 racer or funny car) with an aerodynamic body, a single seat and very powerful engine. Such a vehicle is not "street legal." Race cars are "hangar queens" that require periodic maintenance every few hours just to keep their finely-tuned engines and transmissions in working order. Year 2001 cost: $100,000+ USD.

Sports Car

A car with good aerodynamics, a powerful engine, and superior transmission and suspension. Some sports cars carry two people, while others sacrifice already-meagre cargo space to carry an extra person or two in cramped back seats. Year 2001 cost: $50,000+ USD.

Stretched Limousine

An oversized passenger car. It will usually have a number of posh features, such as a luxury interior. Year 2001 cost: $50,000+ USD.

Van

A light panel truck or mini-van, with one or two big rear doors and sliding side doors. Use this template with appropriate customization for ambulances. Year 2001 cost: $15,000+ USD.

Motorcycle

A two-wheeled bike powered by a gasoline engine. Standard features include headlights and rear-view mirrors.

Motorbike

A big bike with a reasonably powerful engine. A second person can usually be carried without much difficulty. Year 2001 cost: $3,000+ USD.

Scooter

A small bike with an anaemic engine. Scooters are suitable for a single rider only. A minor gadget. Year 2001 cost: $2,000+ USD.

Dirt Bike

A mororbike designed for off-road operations. Dirt bikes include the Off-Road Suspension option (page 151) at no extra cost. Year 2001 cost: $4,000+ USD.

Oversized Vehicle

A big ground vehicle with six or more wheels, usually powered by a diesel engine rather than gasoline engine (diesel fuel is cheaper, and less flammable). Standard features include headlights, seat belts, airbags, and air-conditioning.

Big Rig

An 18-wheel tractor-trailer combination, with a powerful tractor cab designed to tow a big trailer. With trailer, a big rig may be 20 metres long. Pick one of these options for the cargo area: flat bed (open cargo), van (enclosed cargo), refrigerated ("reefer"), tanker. If the trailer is unhooked from the "fifth wheel" (this takes at least two rounds outside the vehicle to do this), the rig's speed can increase by 10-20 kph. Year 2001 cost: $60,000+ USD.

Bus

A city, school, or excursion bus. In action comics, these usually make their appearance when someone hijacks or plants a bomb on them. A typical bus seats 35-45 people (with plenty of standing and cargo room) and is about 10-15 metres long. Year 2001 cost: $50,000+ USD.

Heavy Truck

A large truck, bigger than an ordinary van. Pick one of these options for the cargo area: flat bed (open cargo), van (enclosed cargo), refrigerated ("reefer"), tanker. A heavy truck may also be a cement mixer, dump truck, street cleaner, fire engine, etc. Year 2001 cost: $30,000+ USD.

Helicopter

A rotary winged vehicle. Modern helicopters are usually powered by a gas turbine engine, and require a pilot's license to operate. They have a horizontal main rotor that provides lift and (by tilting the helicopter) propulsion, and a small vertical tail rotor to act as a stabilizer. A helicopter is capable of executing vertical takeoffs or landings, and hovering. Standard features include landing lights (treat as headlights), seat belts, and often air conditioning.

Combat Helicopter

A devastatingly offensive helicopter (such as the AH-1W Super Cobra), typically used in battle against combat forces and either very powerful or very large supervillain threats. A combat helicopter counts as three major Gadgets. Year 2001 cost: $10,000,000+ USD.

Light Helicopter

A small helicopter that can carry a couple of people. This is a typical news or police helicopter. Year 2001 cost: $100,000+ USD.

Table 4-5: Vehicle Templates

Vehicle	Speed	MB	Size	People	Cargo	Armour	Health Points	Skill
Automobiles								
Compact Car	160	-	2	4	100 kg	8	50	Driving (Car)
Passenger Car	160	-	2	5	200 kg	10	60	Driving (Car)
Pickup Truck	160	-	2	3	1 tonne	12	70	Driving (Car)
Race Car	300	+1	1	1	-	10	60	Driving (Car)
Sports Car	200	-	2	2	200 kg	8	50	Driving (Car)
Sport/Utility	160	-	2	6	200 kg	12	70	Driving (Car)
Stretched Limousine	160	-1	2	6	500 kg	10	60	Driving (Car)
Van	150	-1	3	2	1 tonne **	14	80	Driving (Van)
Motorcycles								
Dirt Bike	140	+1	1	2	-	6*	40	Driving (Motorcycle)
Scooter	120	+1	0	1	25 kg	4*	30	Driving (Motorcycle)
Motorbike	180	+1	1	2	50 kg	6*	40	Driving (Motorcycle)
Oversized Vehicles								
Big Rig	150	-2	4	2	10 tonnes	20	110	Driving (Big Rig)
Bus	120	-2	4	30-50	1 tonne	18	100	Driving (Big Rig)
Heavy Truck	150	-1	3	2	5 tonnes	16	90	Driving (Van)
Helicopters								
Combat Helicopter	300	+1	4	2	2 tonnes	20	80	Piloting (Helicopter)
Light Helicopter	200	+1	2	3	250 kg	8	50	Piloting (Helicopter)
Utility Helicopter	200	-	3	2	2 tonnes **	14	80	Piloting (Helicopter)
Airplanes								
Light Airplane	350	+1	2	4	250 kg	8	50	Piloting (Light Airplane)
Heavy Airplane	300	-3	5	4	40 tonnes **	22	120	Piloting (Heavy Airplane)
Ultra-Light	100	+1	1	1	-	4*	30	Piloting (Light Airplane)
Speed Boats								
Off-shore Racer	180	-	3	6	500 kg	14	80	Boating (Small Boat)
Recreational Boat	80	+1	2	3-4	100 kg	8	50	Boating (Small Boat)
Military Ground Vehicles								
Armoured Personnel Carrier	70	-	4	13	2 tonnes	40	120	Driving (Tank)
Heavy Tank	80	-2	4	4	2 tonnes	60	200	Driving (Tank)

Utility Helicopter

A larger helicopter that is often a civilian version of a military troop-carrying model. These choppers are designed to carry a dozen people or a decent cargo load. Helicopters of this sort are often used as air ambulances. Year 2001 cost: $1,000,000+ USD.

Airplane

An airplane relies on wings for lift and a propeller or jet engine for propulsion. It requires a smooth, flat runway for takeoffs and landings. While airborne it must maintain a minimum speed (usually about 1/10 its maximum speed) to avoid stalling. Standard features include landing lights (treat as headlights), seatbelts, emergency parachutes, and often air conditioning.

Light Airplane

A single-engine propeller-driven passenger airplane, capable of operating out of grass strips or landing on a smooth stretch of highway if necessary. Light aircraft are a favourite of drug runners. Use Piloting (Light Plane) Skill. Year 2001 cost: $100,000+ USD.

Table 4-6: Vehicle Template Notes

Speed is the top speed in kilometres per hour. Pickup trucks, sport/utility vehicles, and dirt bikes move at half speed off-road. Other non-military ground vehicles are road-bound and can move a maximum of one-quarter speed off road.

MB is the Manoeuvre Bonus. +1 means a +1 bonus to Initiative dice rolls (only), while a -1 or -2 means that penalty is applied to both Initiative rolls and to Defense Combat Value.

Size is a relative measure of the vehicle's mass and volume; it is not equivalent to the Awkward Size Defect. "1" means the vehicle is about the size of a motorcycle — you could drive it through a house's door, or stow it in the back of a van (masses up to 500 kg). "2" means it is about the size of a car or pickup truck, and you can park it in a normal garage (masses 1-5 tonnes). "3" means it is the size of a large truck (uses multiple parking spaces, often masses 6-10+ tonnes when loaded). "4" means it is even larger, such as a big tractor-trailer combination that might haul 20+ tonnes.

People is how many people the vehicle is designed to seat, including the driver or pilot.

Cargo is how many tonnes or kilograms (kg) of cargo the vehicle can typically carry without suffering movement penalties. An ** indicates that the cargo area can be converted into passenger space at a ratio of 5 people per tonne.

Armour is the number of damage points that the Armour stops. An * indicates that the Armour only protects the vehicle, not the driver or passengers.

Health Points indicate how much damage the vehicle can sustain before it ceases to function. The vehicle is not necessarily destroyed when its Health Points are reduced to zero — it has merely sustained enough damage to shut the engine down, hinder the control systems, or in some other way prevent the vehicle from working. For rules on destroying a vehicle, see Breaking Objects, page 144.

No range is listed, since all vehicles except the ultra-light can operate for 3-10 hours before requiring refuelling. The ultra-light's endurance is under one hour. Oversized vehicles (trucks, big rigs, busses) usually burn diesel fuel, while most other vehicles use gasoline.

Heavy Airplane

A large plane, often with two or four engines, which is used primarily to transport large numbers of people or cargo. Heavy airplanes often require longer runways in order to take off or land. A heavy airplane counts as two major Gadgets. Year 2001 cost: $10,000,000+ USD.

Ultra-Light

A small one-man powered hang-glider that is used mainly for recreation. A minor gadget. Year 2001 cost: $10,000+ USD.

Speed Boat

Boat designs come in a variety of shapes, depending on their desired function. Speed boats have sleek hull designs and powerful engines in order to travel at high speeds. Standard features include a VHF radio (treat as a CB radio), convertible tops, running lights, and lifejackets.

Recreational Speed Boat

A medium-sized powerboat, usually with an outboard engine. These boats are often used for water-skiing. Year 2001 cost: $10,000+ USD.

Off-shore Racer

These large race boats, usually measuring between 10 and 18 metres in length, are used in offshore racing. Smugglers often utilize these sleek, fast boats to transport illegal goods. Year 2001 cost: $80,000+ USD.

Military Ground Vehicles

When battling against foreign incursions or giant superbeings, the army will come to the rescue with their awesome firepower. Unfortunately, sometimes even that is not enough.

Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC)

A lightly armoured, full-tracked, air-transportable personnel carrier designed to carry and protect personnel and certain types of cargo. Year 2001 cost: $500,000+ USD.

Heavy Tank

Heavy tanks (such as the M1 Abrams) are the backbone of military forces. They provide strong mobile firepower while providing heavy protection for it's crew in almost any environment. A heavy tank counts as three major Gadgets. Year 2001 cost: $4,000,000+ USD.

Customizing Vehicles

Options can be added to different types of vehicles to enhance performance or give them additional capabilities. Unless otherwise noted, each accessory counts as one minor Gadget and can only be taken once.

Note that Engine Rebuild, Turbocharger, and Big Engine have approximately the same effect in game terms. A superfast vehicle may have all three options assigned, however.

Some vehicles possess supertechnology, which grants them abilities beyond those outlined below. These abilities are covered using the Item of Power Attribute (see page 52). Creating a vehicle such as this not only requires minor and major Gadget for the base abilities of the vehicle plus any modifications but also requires a Level in Item of Power sufficient to purchase the Attribute(s) granted by the supertechnology.

Airfoils

An aerodynamic feature (airdams, spoilers, etc.) that improves traction by increasing the downward force on a car. Gives a +1 Check Value bonus to any Driving (Car) Skill check at speeds over 100 kph. Airfoils are available for any automobile and some exceptionally fast boats.

Armour

The vehicle is retro-fitted with armoured panels, Kevlar inserts, and bullet proof glass on the windows. Each time the armour is assigned, the extra weight reduces top speed by 10 kph but increases the vehicle's Armour Rating by 5. Armour is available for any vehicle except an ultra-light aircraft, and counts as two minor Gadgets.

Big Engine

An upgraded engine, such as a big V8 in a passenger car, or a V12 in a sports car. The engine often differentiates an ordinary passenger car from a luxury model, or a basic sports car from a racer. A big engine adds 20 kph to the top speed of any vehicle.

Burglar Alarm

If a door, trunk, or window is opened without the proper key, an alarm will sound to alert (and annoy) everyone in the vicinity. Defeating the alarm requires a Mind/Electronics (Security) Skill check. Marginal failure means the thief realizes he or she cannot disarm it while a worse failure means will trigger the alarm.

Citizen's Band (CB) Radio

With a range of a few kilometres, truckers favour CBs for exchanging information on road conditions, speed traps, and general gossip. Unlike a personal cell phone, a CB broadcasts to everyone in the area — it is not useful for private communication, but is great for distress calls. A similar option can be taken for taxi dispatcher radios. A CB radio can be installed in any vehicle.

Consumer Electronics

These electronic gadgets include small TV sets, a vehicular computer, fax machines, etc. A cassette or CD player in a car can be considered a fairly mundane item. Electronics can be added to any vehicle, provided the size seems reasonable.

Convertible Top

The vehicle with this option has a removable or retractable plastic, fibreglass, or fabric top. Removing the top gives a better view and nice breeze, but also means that the driver and passengers are now "partially exposed," and are at the mercy of the weather. Exposed occupants are also completely unprotected from overhead attacks and can be attacked (bypassing vehicle Armour/Health Points) more easily from the side or rear (-2 Attack check penalty to ignore the car's Armour). On the plus side, those occupants can also fire out of the vehicle without any difficulty, and jump in or out more easily. This feature is available for automobiles; recreational speed boats and most offshore racers automatically possess this option.

Door Mount

This option is a post and bracket for mounting a light or heavy machine gun out a helicopter's or van's open side door.

Electronic Countermeasures

This advanced defense system enables the vehicle to avoid detection by radar and other sensors. Any attempt to mechanically detect the vehicle (except through the basic senses such as sight or hearing) incurs a -6 penalty.

Engine Rebuild

A rebuild is major custom upgrade to the engine, rather than just simply increasing its size. In a car, this may involve removing and completely cleaning the existing system (including "hot tanking" the engine block in a chemical bath to remove grime), then adding various modifications (known as "blueprinting"). Other engine "buzz-words" include forged dome pistons, tuneable fuel injection, strengthened rods and bearings, adjustable or hot cam socket, tubular headers, custom intake manifolds, big valves, and a bored-out throttle body. This option adds 20 kph to the top speed of any vehicle.

Furnishings

Furnishings include a mini-bar, mini-fridge, kitchenette, chemical toilet, bunk bed, etc. For larger furnishings (kitchenette, bunks, etc.) each one added also requires replacing one or two seats, depending on the size. Furnishings can be added to any vehicle with Size 2 or more.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

This option uses satellite systems to provide precise navigational co-ordinators, which prevents the driver from becoming lost. Naturally, it is still possible to miss a turn through human error. A GPS can be added to any vehicle.

Hidden Cargo Space

This space is often used in vehicles that are designed to smuggle goods across borders or past highway patrols. Up to 10% of the vehicle's cargo capacity can be considered "hidden" under fake panels and bogus fixtures. Hidden space can be added to any vehicle with cargo capacity.

Improved Brakes

This option includes high quality brakes, drag chutes, or spiked tires that allow the vehicle to stop faster than normal. Those breaks provide a +2 Check Value bonus to Driving Skill checks on any manoeuvre where sudden, sharp deceleration is important. Improved breaks can be added to any ground-based vehicle.

Improved Shocks

Some vehicles have high quality or adjustable shock absorbers or springs, which provide an extra +1 Check Value bonus to Driving Skill checks in any circumstance where the suspension would be important (such as crossing over obstacles).

Lights and Siren

Any vehicle can be fitted with a noisy siren and flashing lights. This option can also provide a powerful spot search light.

Luxury Interior

Leather upholstery, lots of chrome, extra head room, or other items on a vehicle are a sure way to impress someone special. A plethora of luxury options are available for most vehicles.

Manual Transmission

There are two types of transmissions: manual and automatic. An automatic transmission is assumed to be standard issue for automobiles (but not other vehicles), and means that the gear mechanism changes by itself. In a manual transmission, the driver must shift the gears on his or her own, usually with a stick and the clutch pedal. In the case of automobiles, a manual transmission gives an additional -1 Check Value penalty to characters who are trying to do something else while they drive, such as shoot a gun. If, however, a vehicle with an automatic transmission and one with a manual transmission are competing in a race, the GM should give any driver who has both the Driving Skill and a manual transmission an extra +1 Check Value bonus to reflect the greater speed control the manual transmission provides. This is a mundane option for automobiles.

Nitrous Oxide Tank

This option adds a nitrous oxide tank and push-button injection system. Nitrous oxide ("laughing gas") can be injected into the engine, which releases more free oxygen and improves cylinder pressures and engine temperature. This action allows extra fuel to be burned in a more controlled fashion, resulting in a quick power boost for a short sprint. A single injection adds 30 kph to speed and +1 to Initiative on any round it is used. A tank can be used for up to five rounds before depleting the nitrous oxide bottle. This performance enhancer is available for any vehicle except helicopters.

Off-Road Suspension

A raised suspension and special tires allow the vehicle to drive cross-country at two-thirds of the on-road top speed. The extra suspension weight also means -5 kph to road speed. For airplanes, this option corresponds to Rough-Field Landing Gear that lets the aircraft land without a proper runway. Off-road suspension is available for any ground vehicle or light aircraft.

Police-Band Radio

This radio allows the driver to listen to, and communicate on, police and emergency frequencies. If the cops find one of these in a vehicle, they may be a little suspicious, however. This radio is available for any vehicle.

Pontoons

Pontoons allow an aircraft to land in, or take off from, water. The extra air drag reduces the aircraft's top speed by 5 kph. Pontoons are available for any helicopter or light airplane.

Radar Detector

A detector can warn the driver if a police radar trap is within a few kilometres. Recent models also detect police laser scanners.

Rocket Engine

The vehicle is outfitted with a rocket engine (either replacing propellers for an airplane or as a booster rocket for ground vehicles). The engine drastically increases the speed of the vehicle by an additional 100 kph but the expensive modification counts as a major Gadget. Additionally, for ground based vehicles, the driver incurs a -2 penalty on all Driving Skill checks while the rocket booster is activated.

Rotating License Plate

With a flick of a switch, the license plate can flip to reveal an alternative identity for a vehicle. This illegal modification is available for any automobile or oversized ground vehicle.

Sidecar

Sidecars are attached to motorcycles, allowing an extra person to ride. This option reduces the top speed by 10 kph. A motorbike sidecar requires three rounds to attach or detach.

Slick Tires

A vehicle may be outfitted with flat racing tires (no grooves) for better traction. Slicks give a +1 Check Value bonus to any Driving checks on smooth, dry tracks, but unfortunately have a poor grip on wet roads: an additional -2 Check Value penalty is assigned to any penalties suffered by a vehicle for the weather conditions. Slicks are available for any ground vehicle.

Smoke Screen/Oil Slick

This option releases smoke behind the vehicle, obscuring view in a cloud about 10 meters in diameter. The screen will last for 1-6 rounds depending on the wind. Alternatively, it could act as an oil slick, which creates a slippery area that hampers the control of any vehicle driving through it. A driver may avoid the oil slick if he or she spots it in time. At GM's option, a character caught in a smoke screen/oil slick might be required to make a successful Driving Skill check to avoid an accident. A fully charged smoke screen/oil slick is good for three rounds of use, and is available for any automobile or oversized ground vehicle.

Special Tires or Puncture-Resistant

Tires may be designed with various special abilities. These include solid puncture-resistant tires that run while flat (halve Check Value penalties for losing a tire) or special snow tires (reduce or negate any penalties that the GM may assign for manoeuvring on snow or ice). Any ground based vehicle can be equipped with special tires.

Stretchers and Medical Equipment

This option differentiates ambulances from regular vehicles. Each stretcher replaces two seats for passenger capacity purposes. Medical equipment can be added to any van or utility helicopter.

Stripped

These vehicles are carefully stripped down to improve their power to weight ratio. In a car, this might mean removing glass

from side windows (replacing them with nets), taking out the headlights, stripping out the doors (the driver will now climb through the window), modifying the seats, and otherwise removing items that are required for regular driving but unnecessary or unsafe for a high-speed race. Stripping a vehicle will add 20 kph to top speed if the vehicle is still "street legal" or 30 kph if enough stuff is removed so that the vehicle no longer meets minimum safety standards. All vehicles, except an ultra-light, can be stripped.

Sun Roof

A sun roof is an open hatch in the top of the vehicle, which can be added to any car or van. Characters who lean out the opening can be attacked, but receive a benefit for partial cover (-2 penalty to the attacker's Check Value). A sun roof is available for any automobile or oversized ground vehicle.

Supercharger

A supercharger is designed to increase an engine's power. The supercharger uses a belt-and-pulley mechanism linked to an engine's crankshaft. It functions by forcing extra air and fuel into the engine's combustion chambers. A supercharger adds 20 kph to top speed and the extra acceleration gives a +1 Initiative bonus. Superchargers count as two minor Gadgets, and are available for any vehicle except a helicopter or ultra-light.

Tow Winch

A winch allows the vehicle to tow other vehicles of equal or smaller size (similar to pulling a trailer — see Trailer below). A winch is available for any pickup truck or oversized ground vehicle.

Ok, So How Do I Create a Vehicle?

You've created your street vigilante and now you want to give him a suped-up, special vehicle that he can use in his war against crime. How do you go about it? The first step is to determine what vehicle the hero wants. For our street vigilante, he decides to take a sports car (page 147) and modify it for inclusion in his arsenal against crime. The base sports car has a top speed of 200 kph, can carry 2 people, has 8 points of Armour, 60 Health Points, and counts as one major Gadget. This is a good start; the next step is to modify the vehicle.

Your crime fighter decides to focus on the speed first — the vehicle is fast, but not fast enough. He wants it to be able to get around town in time to catch the criminals, not clean up after them. He decides to begin with a Big Engine, adding 20 kph to its speed. He then goes one step further and performs an Engine Rebuild increasing the speed an additional 20 kph. He also builds in a Nitrous Oxide tank for an additional 30 kph boost. Unconcerned about leather seats, fake wood panelling, and other amenities, he Strips the car down to the bare essentials (no longer street legal), adding an additional 30 kph. He also equips the vehicle with a Supercharger and a Turbocharger, adding another 40 kph. Additionally, in order to make sure he has the best acceleration possible, he opts for the manual transmission rather than the automatic. As a last resort, for those times where speed is really needed, he decides to also add a Rocket Engine. Thus, the Speed of his sports car is now 340 kph or 440 kph with the rocket booster engaged. These modifications have cost him an additional two major and six minor Gadgets.

The next stage is for your hero to make the car safer — if he's going to be driving around at those speeds and fighting crime, he wants to make sure the vehicle will keep him alive. He starts off by adding Airfoils to increase the car's control so that he doesn't accidentally smash into anything while racing around town. His next modification is to beef up the car's Armour. Armour, however, slows a vehicle down so he must decide which is more important — speed or Armour. He decides that he is willing to loose 30 kph in order to increase the vehicle's Armour by 15, to 20. It might not be a lot compared to a supervillain's Powers, but it should stop most firearms used by street criminals. Just in case the criminals are using guided rockets or other heavy weaponry, he decides to add Electronic Countermeasures as well. Improved Brakes and Shocks are a must as well as Puncture Resistant tires if he's going to be using the vehicle in fights. All these safety modifications add an additional eleven minor Gadgets to the vehicle.

The last stage in the creation of his supervehicle is to outfit it with accessories. A Burglar Alarm is a must — it would be incredibly embarrassing if the hero had his car stolen by a common criminal. A CB and Police Band Radio are also necessary if he wants to stay connected with what is going on. In addition, a GPS is invaluable to ensure he knows exactly where he is at all times. He adds some Hidden Cargo Space so that he can store a few secret gadgets and knickknacks. He also adds Lights and Sirens — they should help him cut through city traffic when he's racing to the scene of a crime. A Radar Detector might also prove useful — not to find the police speed traps but to warn him of any incoming missiles launched by criminal masterminds. Lastly, just in case he needs to slip away unseen, he adds a Smoke Screen. These final upgrades add another eight minor Gadgets.

With everything completed, our hero has his supervehicle. The final cost of the vehicle is three major and 25 minor Gadgets. Thus, for the hero to take this vehicle, it will require at least Level 5 in the Gadgets Attribute — he must transfer two major Gadgets into 8 minor ones for a total of two major and 28 minor Gadgets. This leaves him with three additional minor Gadgets to purchase some boomerangs or other equipment to use in his fight against crime.



Green Ronin

Trailer

A trailer lets the vehicle tow extra cargo. A typical trailer is designed for a car or van and can hold a half-tonne (for a car-sized trailer) or 1-2 tonnes (for a larger trailer). The vehicle's top speed will be reduced by 25 kph and it will have a -2 Initiative penalty while towing the trailer. Trailers can be added to any automobile or oversized vehicle.

Turbocharger

This device uses the engine's exhaust stream to drive an air compressor, which increases the engine's power output. This extra power adds 20 kph to top speed, but there is no extra Initiative bonus, due to "turbo lag" — the delay it takes for the turbocharger to respond. Tuberchargers are available for any vehicle except a helicopter or ultra-light.

Weapon Mount – Light

A weapon mount is a bracket or pintle for mounting a light or heavy machine gun on the vehicle's roof, deck, or the underside of a wing.

Weapon Mount – Heavy

This weapon mount is used for mounting heavy weapons such as rockets.

Body Armour and Protective Devices

There are two main kinds of body armour used on the mean streets: soft body armour and tactical armour. Either type of armour only covers some of the body, leaving the face and often other extremities unprotected. An attacker can aim for an unprotected spot in exchange for suffering a penalty on his or her Attack check (see Called Shot to Partial Armour, page 116).

Ancient Armour

Light Mail

A light shirt of fine metal links that can be hidden under a normal jacket and stops 6 points of damage. Due to the armour's weight, the character suffers a -2 penalty on all Body-based Check Values. A minor Gadget.

Partial Metal Armour

A mail hauberk or cuirass, open helmet, and arm or leg protection. It stops 10 points of damage. Due to the armour's weight, the character suffers a -4 penalty on all Body-related Check Values. A minor Gadget.

Full Metal Armour

A complete head-to-foot suit of metal armour, similar to those worn by medieval knights in battle. It stops 12 points of damage. Due to the armour's bulk, the character makes all combat or Body-based Check Values at a -6 penalty. A major Gadget.

Table 4-7: Suits of Armour

Armour Type	Armour Value	Penalties
Ancient Armour		
Light Mail	6	-2 on Body-related checks
Partial Metal Armour	10	-4 on Body-related checks
Full Metal Armour	12	-6 on Body-related and combat checks
Modern Armour		
Leather Jacket	2	None
Soft Body Armour	8	-2 on Body-related checks
Tactical	16	-4 on Body-related and combat checks
Shields		
Buckler	8	None
Standard Shield	12	Requires one free hand to use
Heavy Shield	16	Requires one free hand to use, -4 on Body-related checks
Tactical Shield	20	Requires one free hand to use, -2 on Body-related checks

Modern Armour

Leather Jacket or Riding Suit

This mundane item stops 2 point of damage from melee attacks or concussion damage.

Soft Body Armour

This armour is a light-weight ballistic-fibre "flak jacket" or "bullet proof vest." The armour works by catching the bullet in fibres and rapidly distributing the impact energy, often turning a potentially lethal penetration into a bruising blow. Armour is usually made of poly-aramid plastic fibres (Kevlar or Twaron) or extended-chain polyethylene (Spectra). A typical vest subtracts 8 points from the damage inflicted on the character, but can be worn concealed under a jacket or coat. It is cumbersome, however, and penalizes the wearer with a -2 penalty on all Body-related Check Values. Spotting the armour requires a Body Stat check; it will be obvious if anyone does a pat-down search. A minor Gadget.

Tactical Armour

This armour is a heavy armoured outfit (with a helmet) of the sort worn by SWAT teams and soldiers. It consists of a rigid ballistic jacket, usually made of composite material such as Spectra Shield (Spectra fibres held in a special Kraton resin), sometimes with ceramic or metal plate inserts. The armour is resistant to nearly all pistol fire and some less powerful rifle rounds. Tactical armour cannot be concealed — everyone seeing the character will know he or she is wearing body armour. Tactical armour is uncomfortable to wear all the time, and characters will not be able to rest and relax while wearing it. Someone who wears the armour for several hours on a hot day may have to make Body Stat checks to avoid passing out from heat stroke. Tactical armour subtracts 16 points from damage inflicted on the wearer. The armour requires at least three rounds to strap on or take off, and is sufficiently heavy that all combat or Body-based Check Values suffer a -4 penalty. A major Gadget.

Shields

Buckler

This small shield can be strapped to a character's arm and be used to block attacks. Since it is strapped to the character's arm, it does not require a free hand to use. Stops 8 points of damage. A minor Gadget.

Standard Shield

This shield is approximately 80 cm in diameter and provides excellent protection for the character. Due to its size, however, the character must have one free hand with which to wield the shield. Stops 12 points of damage. A minor Gadget.

Heavy Shield

This shield is approximately one to two metres in height and acts as a virtual wall, protecting the character from damage. Not only does it require a free hand for use, but it's large size makes it difficult for the character to accomplish Body-related checks, imposing a -4 penalty. Stops 16 points of damage. A minor Gadget.

Tactical Shield

This modern version of a Heavy Shield is built from light-weight materials. Due to its advanced construction, it not only provides greater protection but is easier to wield, imposing only a -2 penalty on all Body-related Stat checks. Stops 20 points of damage. A major Gadget.

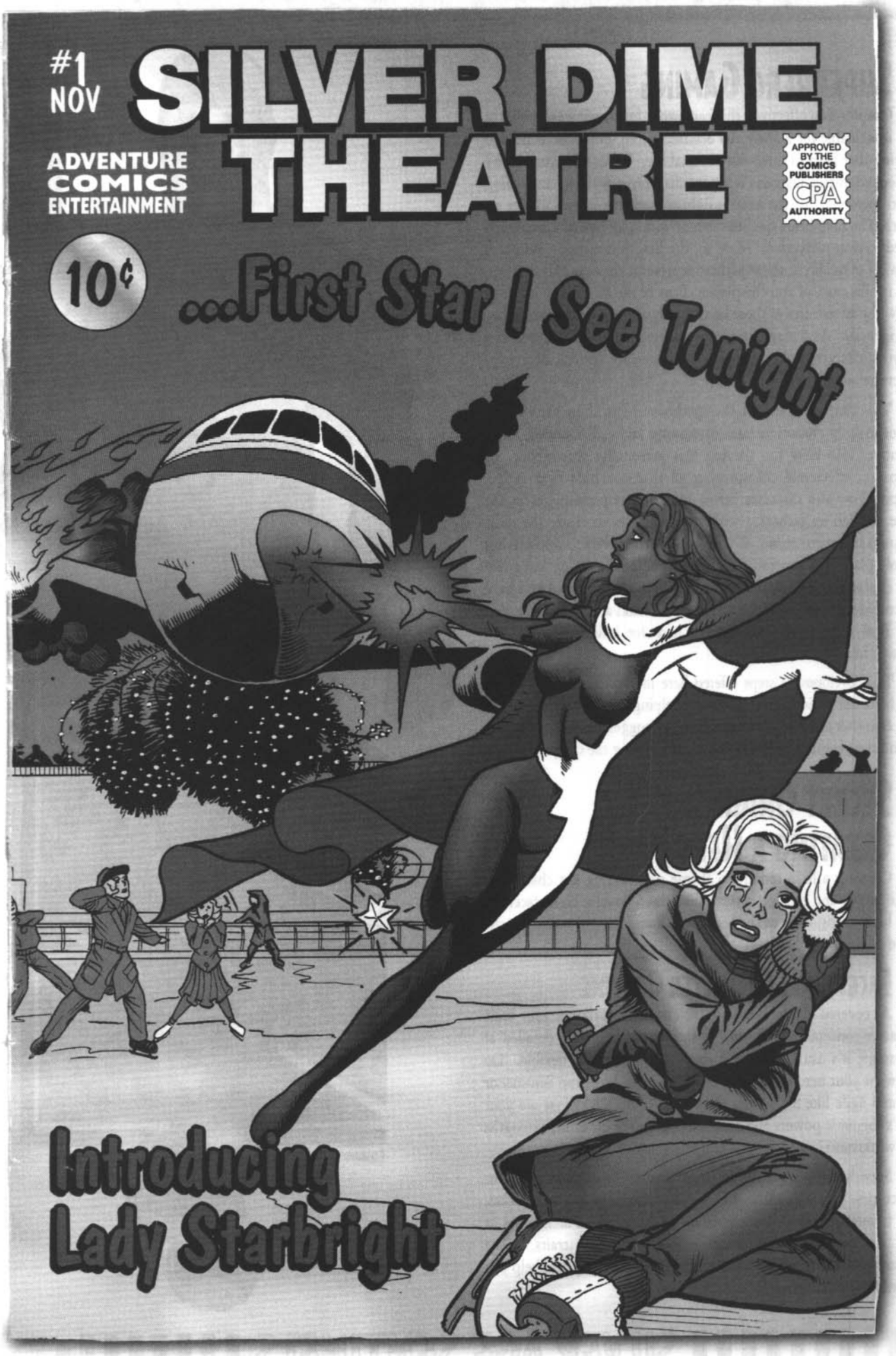
Special Protective Devices

Goggles and Ear Protectors

This gear provides a +6 Check Value bonus to resist the stunning effects of flash-bang grenades, but prevents the character from hearing any normal conversations. They require one round to put on or remove. A minor Gadget.

Gas Mask

A gas mask protects against tear gas and similar attacks, but imposes a -4 penalty on all Check Values for actions requiring peripheral vision. It requires one round to put on or remove. A minor Gadget



PLAYING SUPERHEROES

Superhero Gaming

Chapter Two offers you the framework for creating every sort of hero imaginable for a *Silver Age Sentinels* game, but more is needed to bring that hero to three-dimensional life. What fuels your hero's passions to pursue justice? What instills a heart with the unyielding will to persevere, or the keen insight to perceive the world like no other? The hero bears qualities extant within all humans, but often honed to near perfection. More so, the hero is not simply numbers and a list of qualities; the superhero represents the best of the reader, and, in this case, of you the player. Fans of the Silver Age ideology follow the adventures of those heroes with whose characteristics they best identify. As a player, you will want to emulate those qualities for your character, thus building a personality instead of a two-dimensional cut-out.

This chapter examines the methods of instilling heroes with life, of making characters both interesting and well-rounded. Your incentive? To have fun playing this personality throughout the campaign, effectively championing all that you hold dear in life. Chapter Five also discusses heroic roles and responsibilities in the game, as well as gathering with fellow players to create the most dynamic superhero team. If you are new to superhero role-playing (or role-playing in general), use this chapter to help design and guide your character. It may offer you some ideas and potential you have not considered yet. Even if you are an old hand at role-playing, you may find some useful suggestions here for building a fun and effective hero.

The development steps offered here may fill in many facets of your hero, but their greatest purpose is helping you create direction for your character's future development. The suggestions offered herein expand the potential for the hero's growth during the campaign.


Caliburn

Secret Origins: Creating a Hero

Creating a hero requires a theme surrounding the character's origin, style, and motivations. Polish the following eight facets of your hero to ensure he or she has what it takes to fight villainy in the world of *Silver Age Sentinels*.

Facet One: Character Outline

As covered in Chapter Two, the character outline is your basic character concept or skeleton. It should not be overly detailed at this stage; it's usually better if your concepts remain flexible. Do you want your hero strong and tough like the American Sentinel or fast and agile like Slipstream (or a little of both)? What are your hero's thematic powers and abilities? What are his or her strengths and weaknesses?

Superheroes generally fit into several broad categories or archetypes. Examine the following suggestions for inspiration. Don't worry if your concept does not fit any of these archetypes or if it fits several; many heroes embody multiple traits. The archetypes are just guidelines to start you on your way and help you describe your character.

Acrobat

The acrobat is a combat dancer, moving with such fluidity that they slip around, over, and under attacks with ease. An acrobat is quick and agile, and capable of running, jumping, tumbling, swinging, and similar manoeuvres. Acrobats rely on their quickness and agility for defense rather than on blocks. They are often trained in a martial art (like a fighter, below), but their blows rely on accuracy rather than power. See Lady of the Lantern, page 291.

Suggested Attributes: Combat Technique, Defense Combat Mastery, Extra Attacks, Extra Defenses, Jumping, Special Movement

Suggested Skills: Acrobatics, Climbing, Stealth, Most Combat Skills

Elemental

Elementals embody a natural force both in form and in temperament. They usually wield power over an energy type, such as fire, electricity, radiation, magnetism, light, etc., or other natural elemental forces, including wind, water, ice, the weather, and so forth. With near mastery over an element, their powers are often only bounded by imagination. They can usually shoot energy blasts at a distance (a Special Attack, see page 67), fly, surround themselves in a protective barrier, or even transform into pure energy. See Muzhik, page 297.

Suggested Attributes: Alternate Form, Creation, Dynamic Powers, Environmental Influence, Power Flux

Suggested Skills: Demolitions, Physical Sciences, Power Usage, Special Ranged Attack

Fighter

Fighters often epitomize directed and deliberate training to reach their level of proficiency. They are rarely haphazard heroes created in the moment or through fortuitous catalysts. Some may wield powers born from a singular accident, but they become fighters through regimen, training, and focus. Fighters are experts in one or more fighting techniques, often the martial arts or a particular type of weapon — usually archaic devices like swords or bows. They frequently rely on nothing more than their own skill, training, and perhaps a few special weapons (which may be Gadgets or Items of Power, see pages 47 and 52), but they still overcome superhuman adversaries thanks to years of rigorous training. See Caliburn, page 290.

Suggested Attributes: Attack Combat Mastery, Combat Technique, Extra Attacks, Gadgets, Heightened Awareness, Highly Skilled

Suggested Skills: Any Skills, especially Combat Skills

Gadgeteer

The gadgeteer represents the ultimate savant in knowledge and its application. A gadgeteer uses, and often builds, fantastic devices through a union of three qualities: knowledge, imagination, and a knack for non-linear thought. Some gadgeteers possess a wide array of gadgets while others concentrate on a particular type, such as weapons. One popular take on the gadgeteer is the power-armour hero, who wears a high-tech battle suit that turns him or her into a powerhouse (see below) with various other abilities. Of course, nothing limits a gadgeteer to pure science; some gadgeteers may be enchanters who fashion magical items, or work with biotechnology far beyond the capacity of humanity. See White Hat, page 298.

Suggested Attributes: Computer Scanning, Gadgeteer, Gadgets, Item of Power, Power Flux

Suggested Skills: Computers, Electronics, Mechanics, Gun Combat, Heavy Weapons

Metamorph

Many heroes can transform themselves. They may be able to grow or shrink, stretch like rubber, shapeshift into different people or creatures, or even transform into different substances such as steel, sand, or water. Metamorphs have abilities that are reliant on the type of form assumed, but they are generally flexible, versatile characters. See The Magistrate, page 297.

Suggested Attributes: Alternate Form, Elasticity, Grow, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Mass Increase, Shrink

Suggested Skills: Controlled Breathing, Disguise, Unarmed Attack, Unarmed Defense

Psychic

A psychic possesses various mental powers — sometimes called psionic abilities — such as Mind Control, Telepathy, or Telekinesis. Psychics are often physically weak (low Body Stat) but mentally powerful (high Mind and Soul Stats). Psychics can be extremely effective against weak-minded opponents or those without mental defenses, but they are likewise often vulnerable to more physically powerful foes. See Britannia, page 253.

Suggested Attributes: Illusion, Mind Control, Mind Shield, Sixth Sense, Telekinesis, Telepathy

Suggested Skills: Etiquette, Interrogation, Languages, Social Sciences, Special Ranged Attack

Skulker

Skulkers specialize in stealth. Their costumes are usually black and have abilities such as invisibility or darkness manipulation to cover their movements. They are masters in sneaking and hiding, and often skilled in picking locks and overcoming security systems. Skulkers make excellent scouts. Although many have abilities similar to fighters (above), their strengths lie in surprise attacks and ambushes. See Legacy, page 298.

Suggested Attributes: Attack Combat Mastery, Combat Technique, Invisibility, Special Attack, Special Movement

Suggested Skills: Acrobatics, Burglary, Intimidation, Stealth, Street Sense, Urban Tracking

Speedster

Speedsters are insanely fast. They may run, fly, or even teleport, but they specialize in moving from place to place quickly. Their mobility makes them hard to hit and they can be anywhere



The Baron

nearly instantly. Their alacrity often entails many Attributes not directly related to movement as well. See Slipstream, page 291.

Suggested Attributes: Alternate Form, Extra Attacks, Extra Defenses, Flight, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial), Speed

Suggested Skills: City Knowledge, Navigation, Sleight of Hand, Urban Tracking, Unarmed Attack

Powerhouse

A comic book staple is the superstrong hero who is powerful and tough. He or she can lift tanks (or entire battleships) and bounce bullets, rocket shells, or even more powerful weapons, off his or her skin. Strongmen are metaphorical tanks themselves, and tend more than any other type of hero to look odd, perhaps with strangely coloured skin or armour-plated bones. See Sentinel, page 295.

Suggested Attributes: Armour, Immovable, Massive Damage, Superstrength, Tough

Suggested Skills: Demolitions, Intimidation, Powerlifting, Sports, Unarmed Attack, Unarmed Defense

Wizard

While most heroes are powerful, the wizard is truly versatile and often capable of tremendous feats. The wizard's power may be magic, reality warping, subtle control of probability, or a magic ring fulfilling every wish. Wizards can accomplish a great deal within specific limits, and almost always possess the Dynamic Powers (page 40) or Power Flux (page 62) Attributes. See The Baron, page 297.

Suggested Attributes: Animal Summon/Control, Dynamic Powers, Gadgeteer (Magical), Power Flux, Special Attack

Suggested Skills: Cultural Arts, Foreign Culture, Languages, Poisons, Power Usage

Facet Two: Origin

Heroes all have stories concerning how they gained their amazing powers. Consider the source of your hero's strengths and how it fits your character concept. Some of the more common origin stories are outlined here but, as with archetypes, they are not intended to limit your options. Use them as a springboard when developing the beginnings of your own hero.

Altered

The hero was a normal human until an encounter with something unnatural altered his or her physical or genetic makeup. The alteration may be accidental or intentional. If intentional, it could be something the hero sought deliberately, or perhaps an outside agency was responsible for the change. The alteration's cause may be radiation, chemicals, genetic engineering, surgery, cybernetics, or any number of other catalysts. The hero may owe the person responsible for the change a debt of gratitude (or revenge) for his or her powers. See Lady Starbright, page 297.

Created

What if someone did more than just give the hero powers, actually creating the hero whole cloth? Comic book heroes can be artificial beings such as androids, robots, A.I. computers, golems and other magical constructs, or undead creatures (zombies, vampires, etc.). The hero's creator, who could have different intentions than the hero, may be an ally or a nemesis. See Hellion, page 301.

Design

Some people luck into their powers, but for others it is a matter of hard work and determination. The hero gains powers through deliberate effort, perhaps by designing a suit of powered armour, by training for years to become a martial arts master, or studying a mystical craft. Such heroes are unusually determby ined and motivated. See Caliburn, page 290.

Gimmick

The hero's powers stem from one or more gimmicks in his or her possession (usually an Item of Power, see page 52). The gimmick can be anything from a high-tech battlesuit, to a book of magic spells, to a mystical weapon. The hero might use the gimmick's powers or it may transform the character into another, superpowered form. Some rival agencies may be after the gimmick; losing it will rob the hero of his or her powers. See Red Phoenix, page 294.

Mutant

Comic book mutants are usually people born with genetic differences that endow them with superpowers, which often emerge during periods of stress (puberty, for instance). Some mutants may consider themselves a separate and even superior race from humanity, and normal humans may fear and mistrust mutants. See Skybreaker, page 298.

Non-Human

Comics are full of non-humans of all kinds, including aliens, variant human races, extradimensional beings, deities, and more. A hero may be of a non-human race, with superhuman abilities when compared to ordinary humans. Are the hero's abilities typical for a member of that race or unusual? Also consider why the hero left home and came to Earth, and why he or she stays among humans rather than returning home (assuming returning is an option). See Slipstream, page 296.

Facet Three: Stats

Once you have constructed your hero's outline and origin, it is time to plug in some numbers, starting with the three basic Stats: Body, Mind, and Soul. The Stats determine much about a character's abilities, so choose carefully, and remember to stay within your character outline and your GM's requirements for the game.

The Stat benchmarks on page 23 and the various characters from the Empire City world setting may be helpful in assigning Stats for your character. A Stat of 12 is the maximum level of "normal" human achievement; a higher Stat Rank is definitely superhuman, and your Game Master should be cautious about admitting characters into the game with too many superhuman Stats.

The Less Capable [Stat] Defect also modifies your character's Stats. If you want your character to have a weakness in a particular aspect of a Stat (such as high-Body hero who is not agile), assigning the Less Capable Defect (Agility, in this example) is an ideal solution. Also remember that the Attributes Attack Combat Mastery, Defense Combat Mastery, and Tough can modify your character's Derived Values without increasing Stats.

Facet Four: Attributes

Your character's Attributes include all the various abilities not covered by the basic Stats; along with Defects, they allow you to fine-tune your character in the manner you desire. Using your character outline, peruse the list of Attributes in Chapter Two and write down every one you think applies to your character. Then go back through the descriptions to understand the Attribute Level progressions before assigning Levels to each one.

Total the Attribute Point costs and compare the value to the number of Character Points your Game Master assigned to your character. You can adjust the total by adding or dropping Attributes Levels to bring you closer to the right Point total while still adhering to your character outline. If your character simply cannot be created at the Character Point total your GM provided, you must alter your concept.

When assigning Attributes, do not forget about Power Modifier Values (page 25). Your Attributes may not function as you desire without them. For example, a Force Field Attribute without the Area PMV covers an insignificant area and provides no protection.

Facet Five: Skills

Skills are often very important when designing your character. Once you have solidified the character's Attributes, go through Chapter Two and list all the Skills applicable to your concept. Remember, even one Level in a Skill indicates a high degree of training and study. Do not assign a Skill if your character only has a slight or passing interest, or has not received some training. Many people drive cars, for example, but few are actually skilled, trained drivers, beyond the everyday routine. Examine the Empire City characters to better understand appropriate Skill Levels.

Once you determine your character's Skills, total the Skill Point costs to ascertain whether he or she needs the Highly Skilled Attribute (page 49) or the Unskilled Defect (page 100).

Facet Six: Defects

Now comes the hard part. Look through the Defects in Chapter Two and consider which of them suits your character concept and outline. Defects are as important to your hero as any other character aspect. While it is possible to design an effective character in *Silver Age Sentinels* with no Defects at all, such individuals are not likely to be believable, interesting, or in the comic book spirit. A few flaws add depth and provide GMs with useful plot hooks. Do not overload your hero with Defects just for the Bonus Points, however. Assign the Defects that correspond to your original design, and no more.

Covering All the Bases

Your hero should be well-rounded, but specialized in a particular area. When creating your character, consider these four essential foci: offense, defense, movement, and miscellaneous non-combat Attributes.

Offense

Each hero should have a means of offense. While some villains may surrender because of an intimidating stare or witty comment, most put up a fight, and thus the hero should have some combat ability. Offensive Attributes include Attack Combat Mastery, Extra Attacks, Superstrength, Telekinesis, Special Attack, and others. Combat Skills are also valuable. Heroes often have more than one combat Attribute, but your character will not need a dozen different attacks.

Defense

A strong defense can help keep your hero alive and mobile. For many heroes, Armour or Force Field allows them to avoid damage. For others, it is a high Defensive Combat Value (via Defense Combat Mastery or Skills) and Levels of Extra Defense that allow them to dodge incoming attacks. Finally, the Mind Shield (for strong-willed characters) or Special Defense Attributes can also play a vital role.

Movement

Heroes should have a means of personal conveyance since it can damage one's reputation to take taxis to fights. Many heroes can fly or run really fast; some teleport, while others have access to special vehicles, ranging from custom cars to jet planes and hovercrafts. Urban heroes often swing from high buildings, while aquatic heroes may be able to outswim the fastest hydrofoil. Sometimes hero groups rely on team vehicles for transportation.

Miscellaneous

Heroes are more than just a collection of combat Attributes. Your hero should have Attributes and Skills marking him or her as a unique and interesting part of the campaign. What, if anything, does the hero do for a living in his secret identity? How can he or she use her abilities constructively? What are the hero's hobbies and other interests? Answers to these and other questions will expand your character from numbers on a page to a vivid and dynamic creation.

Facet Seven: Motivation

Cool powers alone don't make a hero. Heroes must have a reason for being, something that drives them, especially when the going gets tough. A hero's motivation may be all that separates him or her from the villains. Of course, heroes are not all cut from the same cloth, and each assumes the mantle for different reasons. Look at the samples described here and consider your hero's motivations.

Curiosity – The Explorer

The universe is a place of endless mystery, and the hero wants to solve as many of them as possible. Curious heroes range from scientists exploring new fields of study (often stumbling upon the most amazing things) to detectives driven to unravel mysterious crimes and bring the criminals to justice. Sometimes curiosity overcomes the hero, leading to rash decisions; for example, a hero may tamper with things better left alone and accidentally unleash danger upon the world.

Excitement – The Thrill-Seeker

Life is an adventure ... or at least for some seeking excitement and intrigue. What better place to find it than in the world of costumed heroes and villains? These heroes brave the game for the sheer excitement and challenge of fighting superpowered criminals. Some might consider it a shallow motive but there is no denying these heroes do good, and where is the harm in enjoying your work, they ask? These characters are always looking for (or creating) trouble, to distract them from the mundane humdrum of everyday life.

Humanity – The Student

Compassion, self-sacrifice, and heroism are by no means qualities limited to human beings, especially in a comic book world. Some heroes may seek their own humanity, whether as immortal gods questing for humility or androids dreaming of understanding human emotions and fitting into the world. Often, the least human characters have the most human personalities and foibles.

Idealism – The Champion

Great power should benefit everyone for the better. Some heroes dedicate themselves to a higher calling, whether it is belief in truth and justice or a particular personal, spiritual, philosophical, or even political ideology. There are intensely patriotic heroes, supporting their nation and culture, but religious heroes are generally rare in the comics. Still, there is no reason a hero cannot fight for justice in the name of one or more gods. Heroes may also pursue the ideals of equality and fairness, trying to serve as examples for their own community, whether they be mutants, women, gays or lesbians, or people of a particular ethnic background or extraction.

Justice – The Judge

They say justice is blind, but some heroes see the need for equity clearly, even if the law does not. The law has limits and the police can only accomplish so much; where due process falters, however, the hero steps in. From grim vigilantes to good Samaritans, these heroes help to move the process of justice along and ensure that no one is beyond its reach. These heroes walk a tightrope, straying close to becoming that which they fight against, since they believe that to uphold justice, sometimes one must bend (or even break) the law.

Leadership – The Shining Beacon

The world needs leadership and direction, and there are those willing to take up the burden and serve as examples to others, to guide, to teach, and to lead. They may do so reluctantly or gladly, but they understand the need and work to fulfill it. Perhaps they try to embody an ideal to inspire and lead others or they may be mentors to the next generation of heroes to come. They may try to bring out the hero they believe is within everyone, needing only a spark to light the flame.

Peace of Mind – The Haunted

Heroes have problems, too ... sometimes serious problems. More than a few use heroism to escape their personal demons, or at least put them aside for a while. Such heroes may be tormented by powers they do not want or cannot control. They live with a terrible burden — the unending thirst of a vampire, or the animal nature of a bestial metamorph. They may be haunted by past traumas, such as the loss of loved ones or the horrors of war. Rather than giving in to their troubles, however, they fight to rise above them and do some good along the way, seeking the peace of mind that has eluded them.

Redemption – The Wayfarer

Not all heroes start out that way. Sometimes people make the wrong choices in life and end up paying for them down the road. Some heroes may have stumbled along the way, but now seek to make good on their past mistakes and redeem themselves to the world and, most importantly, in their own eyes. Such heroes have a hard road to walk, facing mistrust and prejudice at every turn. They hold fast to the belief that people should be judged by their actions, and that theirs will show them to be true heroes.

Responsibility – The Promise-Keeper

Having power can be fun but it also carries a serious responsibility. Heroes cannot turn their backs on the world, knowing that they have the power to make a difference. Some learn about this burden the hard way by trying to ignore their responsibilities; ultimately, there is a price to pay. Others know it from the start, and shoulder the responsibility their power gives them. There are heroes who honour and respect the opportunity fate affords them and a few who, in the difficult moments, wish they could lay their burden down. They may not have asked for it, but they choose to do their best with what they have, and that is what makes them heroes.



Corbae

Facet Eight: Style

Once you have selected your hero's abilities and motivation, give some thought to the character's style. Your outline should have given you ideas about this already, but now it is time to consider them in more depth. Style is what helps separate your hero from all the others with similar powers. While two characters may have identical numbers on the character sheets, they may be very different people in every other way. Style makes your character distinctive and memorable. Here are some style elements to consider:

Costume

If your character is going to be a superhero, he or she probably wants a costume. A hero's costume can be flashy or simple,

colourful or dark, form-fitting or loose and flowing — the possibilities are endless. Some characters' costumes — such as a suit of power armour or an armour-cloth uniform — are acquired with the Item of Power or Gadgets Attribute.

A hero's costume does not usually interfere with his or her powers (and is not affected by them). That means the costume shrinks, grows, stretches, and transforms as your character does; tossing energy bolts or bursting into flames does not harm the costume either.

Emblem

Heroes' costumes often feature a particular emblem or logo, usually on the chest. If this is something you would like for your hero, design a unique emblem and sketch it for the GM and other players to see. A distinctive emblem can help make your hero more memorable and recognizable. A group of heroes may even have a team emblem they all wear somewhere on their costumes.

Motif

Is there a particular "theme" to your character? For example, Caliburn (page 290) has an Arthurian legend motif: he gained his powers from the Lady of the Lake, he named himself after King Arthur's sword, etc. A motif may suggest certain things about the character and can give you role-playing ideas. Take a hero with a "swashbuckling pirate" motif. Immediately, images spring to mind of swords and swinging from chandeliers. Maybe the hero wears an eye-patch that covers a bionic eye with Enhanced Senses, or has a flying ship at his command. Perhaps the hero uses other weapons, such as a whip, or a pistol that looks like an ancient flintlock. It is unlikely that a pirate hero would spin spider webs or throw thunderbolts (although heroes with spider or weather motifs might).

Special Effects

What are the special effects of your hero's powers? The Attributes described in Chapter Two tell you what the hero can do but do not tell you what effects accompany the Attributes. What form does the hero's Special Attack take? Is the hero's Force Field invisible, transparent, translucent, coloured, glowing, or shimmering? When the hero teleports is there a burst of smoke and a loud "pop!" or something more like a flash of light, a sparkling effect, or simply a gradual "fade out?" These extra details make your descriptions of the hero's actions more vivid and easier to visualize during a game.

Tags

Another way of making a character distinctive is to assign a few "tags," unique aspects about the character other people may notice. Examples include: catch phrases, personal habits, distinguishing marks (perhaps enough to qualify for the Marked Defect on page 96), "signatures" like always leaving a flower or a copy of a particular poem behind with a defeated villain, etc. One or two distinctive tags can help your hero to stand out from the crowd.

What's In A Name?

One important choice for your character is the name — comic book heroes usually have interesting and memorable code-names. A good name is often the element that brings a whole character concept together; a dull name can make even an interesting character more difficult to play. There are a number of sources of hero names to consider:

Alliteration

Many comic book characters have multi-part names that start with the same sound, like Peter Parker, Doctor Doom, Wonder Woman, Martian Manhunter, and others. While most of the Empire City world setting characters avoid this name convention, it is used for some characters, such as Mister Matthews.

Appearance

The character's appearance, costume, or a special effect may suggest a name. The Jade Naga is a green, humanoid lizard, while the Iron Duke is a giant robot. Red Minstrel dresses in red and has sonic-based powers.

Goals

A name may embody a particular character's goals. Max Liberty is the Sentinel, telling everyone that his first duty is to watch and guard the innocent. Rain Killer believes she stops evil people who cause tears and sorrow.

History

A place, person, or event from history may inspire a name. Anasazi is named for a legendary lost tribe of Native Americans. Red Summer is named for race riots that took place in 1919.

Item

Some characters are named after a particular item, possibly one they carry. Tommy Gun, for example, carried and used (surprise) Tommy guns as weapons.

Powers

One of the most common is a name based on the hero's powers. Slipstream is a hero with superspeed, for example. White Hat has powers based on computers, so her name comes from a nickname for computer hackers.

Sound

Finally, a name may simply sound good, whether or not it has anything to do with the character's abilities. Red Phoenix implies a dying warrior who is reborn over and over again. Herr Cryptic implies little other than a character who prefers to keep his true nature secret.

Theme

The name may come from a theme or motif as part of the hero's style. For example, Alice, Queen of Hearts has a motif tied into Alice in Wonderland, taking her name from the main character and the Queen of Hearts. Caliburn's motif is Arthurian legend, so he is named for King Arthur's sword.

Great Power, Great Responsibility: Being a Hero

What is a hero? Is it just someone with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortals, or is there something more that makes one person stand out and become a symbol of all that is right and good in the world? Although a hero's powers and abilities are an important part of character creation, you should also give thought to the qualities that really make someone a hero instead of someone who just got lucky with a dose of radiation or mutagenic chemicals.

Villains and Neutrals

Your Game Master might decide to run a game in which you do not play a standard hero. Your antihero might be an actual supervillain who directly opposes the goodness and virtue of the superhero NPCs. Alternatively, the GM may ask you to create a character who walks the line between the hero and villain, known as a "neutral." Neutrals are often vigilantes who operate outside the law; their prime motivator is "street justice." Other neutrals are metahumans who are only concerned with events that impact their own lives; they place their own interests above the needs of nearly everyone else. Much of the advice given in this chapter also applies to villains and neutrals, but the perspective from which you examine your antihero character must be adjusted accordingly.

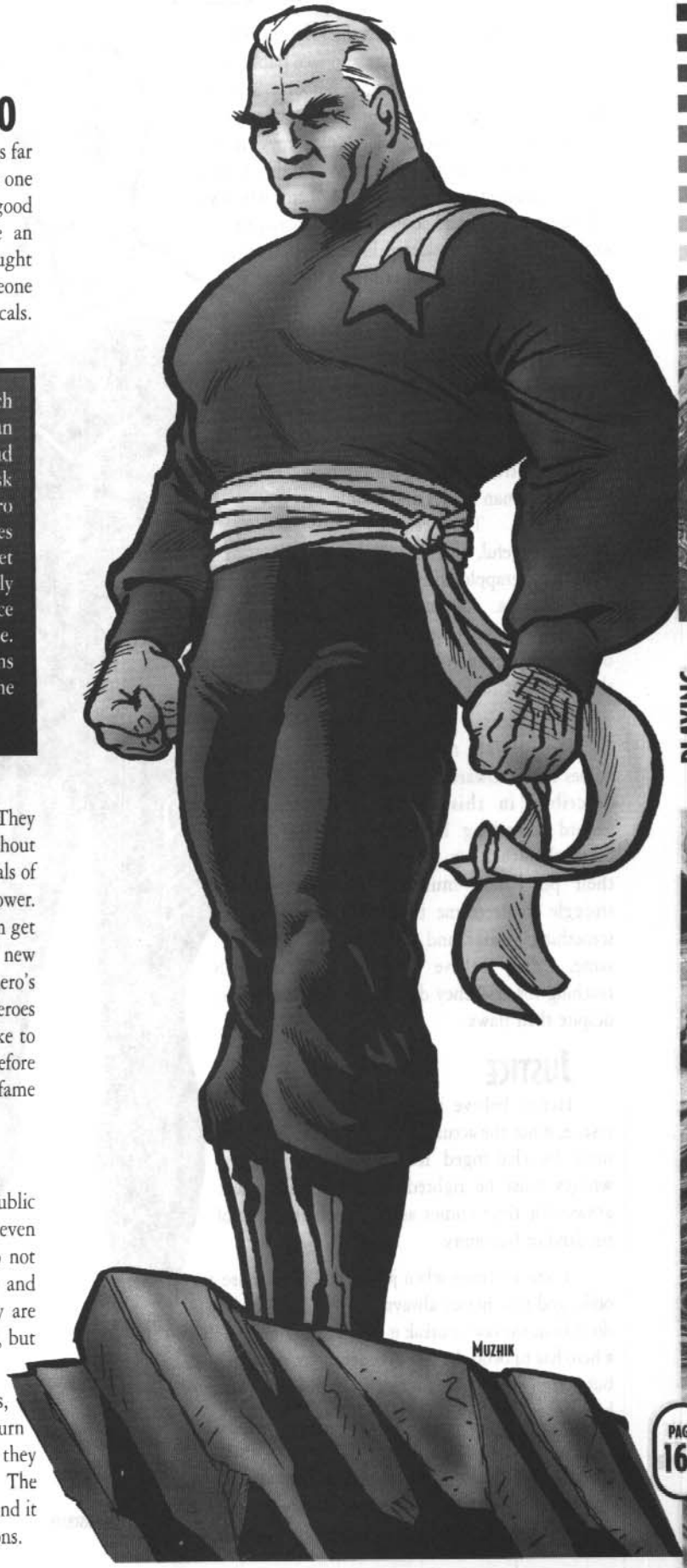
Charity

Heroes already give freely of their time and dedication. They devote themselves to the cause of justice and public service without any thought of reward or compensation. They believe in the ideals of service that comes from the responsibility of having great power. Heroes may accept material and financial support that helps them get the job done (after all, things like high-tech bases, vehicles, and new costumes are not free), but any financial rewards beyond the hero's basic needs are better given to people who really need them. Heroes donate excess funds to worthy charities, foundations, and the like to benefit people in need. Heroes likewise carefully consider before allowing anyone to license their image, and they do not use their fame simply to hawk products or become commercial spokespeople.

Fame (and Infamy)

Being a hero means becoming the idol of millions, a public figure known throughout the nation and possibly the world (or even the galaxy or universe for some heroes). The true heroes do not allow fame to go to their heads, but rather remain humble and thankful for the support and admiration of the public. They are careful not to use their fame or influence for their own benefit, but only to further the causes of justice and peace.

Sometimes a hero's reputation is tainted. In some cases, heroes may suffer from prejudice or mistaken assumptions that turn public opinion against them. They bravely continue to do what they know is right, even in the face of overwhelming public hostility. The heroes may fight to save a world that despises them, but in the end it only matters that they are true to themselves and their convictions.



Heroes who fail to uphold the ideals of responsibility, justice, mercy, and charity may also face public scorn and derision, even from their fellow heroes. The amount depends on the hero's behaviour. A hero who "cashes in" on his fame to promote soft drinks, toys, and other commercial products is going to be considered crass and greedy, disdained by other heroes. A "hero" who regularly kills his opponents and accepts bounty money for doing so is going to be considered little better than a criminal, and may find other heroes looking to bring him or her to justice.

Flaws

You may get the impression that heroes are flawless, saintly paragons of virtue who can do no wrong. This is simply not true. Heroes are often as prone to human foibles and failings as anyone else. They can be petty, greedy, vengeful, and short-sighted. They may grapple with their own inner demons. Sometimes they make dumb mistakes or rash decisions. They often fall short of the ideal, but they do not forget that it exists.

Despite all that, true heroes aspire toward the goals described in this section, toward something higher and better than they are. They set aside their petty and mundane concerns, and struggle to overcome their limitations, to be something greater, and to help others to do the same. They believe that the ideal is worth reaching for, and they do their best to embody it, despite their flaws.

Justice

Heroes believe in and uphold the cause of justice, if not the actual letter of the law. Injustice must be challenged for the good of society, wrongs must be righted, and the guilty must answer for their crimes according to the laws of the land or humanity.

There are times when justice and the law are at odds, and true heroes always choose justice, but they don't flout the law or break it flagrantly. It may be that a hero has to bend the law in order to get the job done, but heroes know that ignoring the law makes them no better than the criminals they fight against.

North American heroes believe in due process and equality under law, and that every criminal deserves a day in court and every person is innocent until proven guilty. While they stop and capture criminals, heroes don't take the law into their own hands. It is up to society to punish criminals as it sees fit. Vigilantes who appoint themselves judge, jury, and sometimes executioner, have overstepped the bounds of a true hero.



Mercy

A hero's desire to see justice done must always be tempered with mercy. Heroes often fight foes willing to kill them or anyone else who gets in their way, but heroes have to take the moral high road. They don't kill their opponents or take it upon themselves to punish criminals, nor do they risk the lives of innocent people. They take no pleasure in the suffering of others, although they can appreciate poetic justice when it befalls their villainous foes.

Most heroes are also hopeful that even the worst criminals can be reformed and made into decent members of society. Even cynical heroes or those confronted with irredeemable evil consider life precious. Their opponents may not deserve any mercy, but (if they ask for it) the heroes must be willing to grant it.

Responsibility

The first and most important quality of a hero is responsibility. It is not having extraordinary powers or abilities, but what you do with them that counts. Heroes feel a responsibility to use their gifts for the benefit of everyone, not for personal gain or glory (or at least not just personal gain or glory). They dedicate themselves and their powers to the cause of justice and a better world for everyone.

In the comics, the people who do not act responsibly, and who choose to put their own needs over those of everyone else, invariably suffer. Either their lives are hollow and empty — they have material success, but nothing more — or tragedy strikes that could have been prevented, if only they had acted more responsibly. Those who ignore responsibility altogether and become criminals end up with a lot of time to consider the error of their ways in prison.

Responsibility means that heroes don't turn away when they are needed, no matter how great the challenge. They never see a problem and think, "let somebody else handle it;" they leap into action and take care of it themselves.

Sacrifice

Heroes willingly sacrifice their time and energy to the service of the greater good. They sacrifice much of their normal lives to take up their cause. When people are in danger, they willingly offer themselves up in exchange for hostages, or walk into a villain's trap to safeguard innocent lives. They are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done and save innocent people.

Heroes regularly stand between the rest of the world and terrible threats as the first and last line of defense. They know that the lives and hopes of many people, sometimes the entire world, depend on them. They cannot afford to fail ... no matter what.

Although death in the comics is rare, heroes regularly face danger, and sometimes it proves too great for them. Heroes are usually prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in the name of all that they believe in.

Secrecy

The other side of the great fame of heroes is their need for privacy, and the desire to live something that resembles a "normal" life. Heroes have great concern for family and loved ones who are not as able to deal with the dangers a hero faces. Many heroes thus conceal their true identities from the public. Most people accept the idea of a "secret identity" out of respect for a hero's privacy. The government does not always share this view, but it usually makes provisions, especially for respected and known heroes. For infamous heroes already held in suspicion, a secret identity may make matters worse. People wonder what the hero may be hiding behind that mask.

Heroes are sometimes entrusted with secrets too dangerous for the public to know. These range from the existence of alien life to superscience devices and techniques that society cannot comprehend. It is up to them to exercise their best judgement to keep the world safe from information that could prove disastrous if it became public. Respected heroes may also be entrusted with secrets of national or world security, to keep them safe from potential threats.

Teamwork

Heroes need to be independent and able to take the initiative, but they also need to be able to work as part of a team ... especially since most *Silver Age Sentinels* games will feature a hero team of player characters. A group that makes the best use of teamwork, playing to each others strengths, covering for each other's weaknesses, and using team tactics, is much more effective than a group of heroes who each go off and do their own thing.

Teamwork extends outside of a hero's immediate group as well. Heroes try to co-operate however they can with the legitimate authorities and the government. Some heroes are less trusting of authority, but most recognize its importance and the value of work undertaken by public servants such as police officers, emergency workers, and elected officials.

And that is what being a hero is all about.

United We Stand: Superhero Teams

Silver Age Sentinels is most often played with a group of players, so your hero is probably going to be a member of a larger team of heroes. This section looks at hero teams and some things you and your fellow players may want to think about when creating your characters and getting them together as a team.

Parts of a Whole: Character Design

A team should ideally feature a range of different abilities and specialities. You rarely see a superhero team made up entirely of big, strong characters with no other abilities. Therefore it is usually best if players try to create individual characters with unique abilities. This not only helps each character stand out more, but also makes the team stronger and more diverse. You and the other players may want to discuss character ideas with each other before the game to see how they might fit together as a team.

Lone Wolves

A "team" of lone wolves is a contradiction in terms. Five loners all wanting to go off and do their own thing can work in certain games (usually with heavy political machinations), but it is not typical of the superhero milieu, and tends to be more disruptive to the group spirit.

That said, the occasional lone wolf can spice up a team tremendously. The loner is often willing to bend the rules the most, and sometimes is the only one who will do what needs to be done. The GM must remember, however, that such diverse moralities may lead characters to spark and conflict. This can provide a great opportunity for role-playing, but can also completely wreck a group if characters (or players) are unwilling to compromise.

If your GM agrees to let you design a lone wolf, you might need to make small compromises to your character concept for the good of the game. You can't always be off doing your own thing, since it tends to monopolize the GM's time and keeps you from interacting with the other characters. You should consider if your character really needs to follow a lead alone, or if he or she should share information with the other characters, and possibly invite one or two along. Although you may wish to keep your character "pure," there's nothing wrong with metagaming occasionally, and making those compromises ensures everyone has a good time. Perhaps your character was a loner before he or she joined this team, but is now starting to care about teammates, and thus will be sure to watch out for them. If you really miss the loner aspect, you can always ask your GM to run a short solo adventure to keep in practice.

Team Origin

Where does the team come from? While it is certainly possible for a diverse group of heroes to meet up and decide to band together, it is far from the only origin for a supers team. Consider some of the following possibilities, and talk with the other players and the GM about the origin of the team.

Common Origin

The heroes may have all gained their powers from the same source. It could have been an accident in which they were all involved, or perhaps they all volunteered for the same experiment or government supersoldier program. They may be from the same alien world, or have similar backgrounds (all mutants, all mystics, etc.).

Common Purpose

Groups often get together to pursue common goals. While these are crime fighting and public safety for most hero teams, the characters may have additional goals in common. Perhaps they all particularly support youth causes and help to run a school for wayward youth (with or without superpowers). Maybe they are focused on environmental causes, and consider fighting polluters and despoilers of the environment part of their fight for justice (which may place them at odds with the authorities). Maybe they all want to investigate the mystery of their origins (which may be connected in some way).

Common Patron

An outside force (usually an NPC) may choose to assemble a team of heroes and direct them toward particular goals. The team's patron can range from a heroic teacher or mentor to a government



The Order (from left to right: Hellion, Grey Ghost, Omega, Iron General, Agent Zero, and Sister Tiamat – Sleeper not shown)

agency, cosmic being, wealthy sponsor, or anyone else the GM deems suitable. Usually the patron is reasonably trustworthy, but sometimes the heroes may have misgivings, particularly if the patron is mysterious or secretive. Sometimes teams break with their patron and go off in their own direction, starting a new chapter in the campaign.

Family Ties

Some or all of the members of a hero team may be related, giving them strong ties. As they say, you choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. The heroes may be siblings or cousins; two (or more) of them might be married. They might all be descended from heroes of previous generations who have grown up together, or could even be multiple generations of the same family, with older heroes mentoring and teaching their younger protégés (and learning a few things from them in the process).

Combinations

Finally, some teams feature a combination of the above factors. They may be family members with a common origin, united by an elder member of their family for a common purpose, for example. Players should look for opportunities for their characters to get together, and should consult the Game Master on any requirements of the campaign in that respect.

Team Name

Just like your hero's name, a team's name is important. It embodies the essence of the team's spirit and since you are going to hear it over and over again during the campaign, the name should be meaningful.

Team names are often short and punchy, labelling who the heroes are or what they do. For example, the Guard is a premier hero team that safeguards the world from various threats. On the other hand, the Untouchables are renegade heroes who operate outside the law. Their name refers to their "outsider" status as well as to the way in which they always seem to slip away when the law closes in on them. The Order is a team that works for the government; their name speaks of law and discipline over safety and protection.

In the comics, heroes and teams often get their names from the media, but you cannot count on that happening in your game. It is better to talk over some ideas for team names with the other players and the Game Master in advance and at least develop some ideas on which you can all agree. Of course, it can also be fun discussing what the team's name will be in character amongst the heroes!

Team Objective and Operations

What is the team's purpose and, just as importantly, how is the team going to achieve that goal? Most superhero teams get together to fight crime and injustice, but there are many different ways of doing so, and not all methods suit all characters equally.

Creating a Team Nemesis

Quite often superheroes in a team share one (or several) Nemesis. If the heroes have a common origin, this could be the villain who inadvertently gave them their powers, or it could be a threat they have defeated several times, who then becomes obsessed with destroying the heroes. Descriptively, there's a great deal of potential.

Mechanically, however, what is the best way to achieve this? The first step is for you and the other players to discuss it with the GM. What do you envision for the Nemesis, and what options does the GM see? Should you all assign the Nemesis Defect at the same Level, or can there be variety? What kind of nuisance, or real menace, is being created? Can a Nemesis be acquired during the course of a campaign? A team Nemesis is a great idea; since it will often become a major feature of a campaign, it should be carefully planned.

The simplest option is to build all of the characters with the same Level of Nemesis at creation. Once you explain to the GM what effect you are trying to achieve, he or she will set an appropriate Level for the Defect. The Nemesis (be it an individual, an organization, or an alien army) treats all the characters equally. None are targeted more than any other, although the GM may focus on one or two characters at a time if it works for the plot.

A Team Nemesis is usually more powerful than an individual's Nemesis, for rather than being a 1-3 BP Defect, it's a 1-3 BP Defect for every member of the group! Suggestions for this enemy are presented on the right:

Team Nemesis

1 BP (per player) An enemy who is a suitable opponent for one-third of the team at once; or a weaker team of villains (fewer members, lower Point value); or an organization with limited influence and weak ruffians.

2 BP (per player) An enemy who is a suitable opponent for two-thirds of the team at once; or a comparable team of villains (same members, same Point value); or an organization with considerable influence and strong thugs.

3 BP (per player) An enemy who is a suitable opponent for the entire team at once; or a more powerful team of villains (more members, higher Point value); or an organization with tremendous influence and very tough henchmen.

As an advanced option, the characters could also have Team Nemesis at different Levels, indicating the enemy views each person uniquely, and targets some people more than others.

Of course, if the GM has a focused plot and a desire for the heroes to share a foe, he or she can require you and the other players to assign the Nemesis Defect at specific Levels.

Will the team have any particular objectives beyond fighting crime? Will the team focus its efforts on a geographic area (such as a city, state, or nation) or go wherever they are needed? The latter might raise some questions of jurisdiction and interfering in the affairs of foreign governments. Will the team seek the sanction of a government or organization like the United Nations?

Rules and Regulations

For a group to function properly, it needs rules. A team may have anything from a formal charter and bylaws to informal agreements about how certain things are handled, depending on the preferences of the members. A group that operates under the auspices of an official organization like the government is more likely to require formalized rules than an informal alliance or gathering of heroes.

What are the group's rules? Is there a formal "honour code" of conduct? Certainly, the heroes are expected to respect and uphold the law, but what about when they don't? What are the group's views on actions such as using lethal force, interfering in political or social matters, accepting rewards, and dealing with defeated or captured criminals? Do not let discussion of the group's rules turn into a dull debate on the pros and cons of lethal force, but keep some of these questions in mind, since the group may face them in the course of the campaign.

Team Property

One of the prime reasons for establishing a team is the pooling of resources. A team of heroes can more easily establish a headquarters, as well as build or acquire group equipment, vehicles, crime files, computer systems, and other useful tools. Of course, these things require money. Do any of the heroes in the group have significant Levels of the Wealth Attribute? If not, then the heroes may have to look elsewhere for resources. The GM may provide a wealthy NPC patron, or the team might go looking for one. Alternatively, the government might offer to fund it (possibly in exchange for making sure it operates "by the book"). The group might even take over a villain's old lair and equipment!

If the team has the option of choosing its own headquarters, where will it be? Many superhero teams have their headquarters in or near a major city, like the Guard's Olympian Tower in Empire City. This has the advantage of putting the heroes close to the people they are protecting, but it also means that when a villain attacks their base, it places innocent people in danger.

Other teams do just the opposite, and place their headquarters as far from civilization as possible: atop a mountain, in the Antarctic, at the bottom of the ocean, in orbit, or even on the Moon. This gives the team a measure of privacy and security and the public additional safety, but also means that the members are farther away in a time of crisis. Of course, this may not be a problem for heroes who can travel great distances quickly.

Transportation is a team's next concern. How does it reach trouble spots around the world (or perhaps even farther) from headquarters? For local matters the heroes probably don't have much trouble patrolling, though it may be tricky for those without any special movement abilities of their own. A group may have a member capable of transporting the others, but that is not always convenient. Relying on one hero may prove problematic if the group's "taxi service" gets knocked out or decides to leave the team.

A hero team often has one or more vehicles for getting around quickly, such as a state-of-the-art supersonic jet or hovercraft. It might even have a starship capable of faster-than-light travel. Additionally, the team may have teleportation platforms or even transport portals that allow the heroes to travel anywhere in an instant.

Your teams should also consider more basic equipment than bases and vehicles. For example, tiny radio communicators allow team-members to stay in contact and co-ordinate over a distance. Palmtop computers can store information and provide access to the team's information resources. Members might wear armoured uniforms or special protective eyewear or headgear in combat. The GM may require the characters to assign Levels of the Gadgets Attribute (page 47) to cover any team equipment it wishes to use, or may provide it to the team without cost.

Team Tactics

One of the other main benefits of a team is its ability to work collectively and co-ordinate its efforts. Sometimes in the comics, the only way the heroes can overcome the villains is through superior teamwork and tactics — traits the untrustworthy villains usually lack.

Hero teams often use code words to designate tactics and manoeuvres they develop in advance. Your team members can do the same, creating special manoeuvres and sign language to confuse and frustrate the villains. Some possible team tactics to consider include:

Co-ordinated Attack

Multiple team members hit the same opponent in the same location simultaneously, hoping to overwhelm his or her defenses. This tactic is a great way to gain an advantage over a villain who has exceptional defensive Powers. See page 116 for game mechanics information.

Fastball

A strong character throws a team member at the opponents as a ranged attack, allowing a hero who cannot fly to enter melee combat with a flying or distant opponent.

Fire in the Hole

A warning code word to let teammates know your character is about to unleash an attack that affects everyone in the vicinity, such as an area attack.

Piledriver

A fast character grabs an opponent and flies or runs him into the attack of another character. A variation is teleporting an opponent into the air and dropping him, or teleporting the enemy directly into the path of a teammate's attack.

Sneak Attack

Part of the team keeps the villains distracted while the sneaky characters, or ones with indirect attacks, get the drop on their opponents from a hiding place.

Team Archetypes

Like heroes, teams in the comics tend to fall into broad categories. Examine the ones included herein and give some thought to what category best suits your team.

Fantastic Voyagers

While the heroes will fight powerful menaces and alien invasions, they are primarily explorers and adventurers rather than crime fighters. They visit lost lands and explore alien dimensions, travel through space and encounter civilizations at the centre of the Earth. Along the way, they frequently encounter threats to their world and must work together to stop them since they are the only ones who know about it. At least some of the heroes in this team are scientists, fascinated by the unknown.

Government Operatives

The team works for the Man. It might be attached to a government agency like the FBI, CIA, or the Army or it may belong to a special agency like the Order (page 301). The government will, of course, deny all knowledge of the heroes if their covert action team is ever captured. Government sponsorship may create a world in which the national "superpowers" are not based on nuclear capacity, but by the size of their superteams. In some campaigns, the team may extend beyond one nation. Perhaps the United Nations has its own superteam to enforce international law and help create world peace.

Heroes for Hire

Who you gonna call? They may be working for charity or for profit, but these heroes are for hire. The team may be organized like a mercenary unit or a high-priced law firm, accepting almost any task, from freeing a third-world nation from a superpowered dictator to appearing at a major black-tie media function (either as security or celebrities themselves). More altruistic heroes look down on them as mercenaries, but nobody can deny that these individuals get the job done ... with a money-back guarantee!

High School Heroes

The heroes are young — teenagers or twenty-something — and usually rookies at the hero game. They have just recently gained their powers and are not taken seriously by adults (including adult heroes). They often hide their true abilities from adults and seek the company of their peers, which brings them together. They may deal with street-level threats while muddling through the difficulties of high school, although the fate of the cosmos might one day rest in their hands.

Redeemers

Once the heroes were not so heroic. They might have each made a mistake in the past they cannot forget, such as living the life of a supervillain for a period of time. Now the heroes are thrown together, either in hopes of redeeming themselves in the eyes of the public, or because there is no one else who can get the job done. They have got a long way to go to win anyone's trust, often including each other's.

Uncanny Outcasts

Whether they are social misfits, or just misunderstood heroes, the characters are outcasts from normal society, forced to band together for mutual protection and companionship as much as from a desire to do good. They work on the fringes of society, usually outside the law, and are sometimes mistaken for villains despite their best intentions. Although the world does not understand them, the heroes still do what they can to make it a better place. The Untouchables (page 298) are an ideal example of this category.

World's Greatest Heroes

The characters are banded together to protect the world from danger and they are among the more powerful superheroes in the world. They have a well-known or public headquarters and the trust of the public and law enforcement. They are called upon to handle everything ranging from crime waves to natural disasters, although they tend to focus on the more serious threats, leaving other matters in the hands of the proper authorities (and sometimes other hero teams). The Guard is the prime example of this sort of team in the Empire City setting.

Advice Summary for Players

1. Read Lots of Comics

If you are going to play in a comic book world, it helps to know the types of themes and events you can expect. Reading comics can give you ideas for characters, powers, and actions that you would like to include in the game. You will also have a better feel for the genre so you can help make the game more enjoyable for everyone. If you do not already read comics, borrow some from a friend to better understand what being a superhero is all about. Ask your GM to recommend comics he or she finds particularly suitable or inspirational for the campaign.

2. Create a Hero Who Fits the World

Comic books cover a broad spectrum; there are many possible superhero stories you can tell with them, and with *Silver Age Sentinels*. Talk to your GM in advance about whether or not your character idea suits the GM's concept of the campaign and setting. A character that may be perfectly playable and interesting in a gritty street-level campaign may not be appropriate for a high-powered four-colour game. Try to work within the framework and limits the GM sets, and discuss any problems you may have with them.

3. Give Your Hero a Few Defects

Every good hero has a few flaws, whether it is a particular obsession with doing the right thing or an Achilles Heel. Not giving your hero any Defects deprives you of some excellent role-playing opportunities and makes your character two-dimensional and uninteresting.

4. Imitate, Don't Duplicate

While it is good to draw inspiration from the comics, don't just create a knockoff of an existing hero with a different name and costume. It is fine if your hero is superstrong, invulnerable, and able



Mother Raven emerges from the shadows

to fly ... just don't make him the last survivor of an alien planet sent to Earth as an infant, with a vulnerability to a particular radioactive space rock as well. Include aspects that make your hero unique and distinct. You may wish to borrow elements from multiple comic book characters you admire, adding some of your own ideas to make it all work together.

5. Be a Team Player

Silver Age Sentinels focuses on the adventures of a team of superheroes: the player characters. It is a lot easier and more fun for everyone if most (if not all) of the player characters are team players. There can still be room for the occasional loner or antisocial character, but it is difficult to create a team of them. If you want to play a character you think will have difficulty working in a team, talk to the GM about it, and be prepared to change your concept if necessary.

6. Don't Get Caught up in the Rules

The rules of *Silver Age Sentinels* exist to give you a common language for playing the game — not a topic for arguments. Learn the basics of the rules, but let the GM worry about the exact modifiers and rulings. If another player has a rules question, let the GM answer it. If you have a rules question or an issue with the way the GM handles something, try and wait until a break or after the game to ask about it, to avoid disrupting the flow of the game. Focus on your character and enjoying yourself, not the rules.

7. Don't Take Things Personally

Bad things sometimes happen to the heroes. It may be an unlucky roll of the dice or part of a villain's scheme. Heroes in the comics often come into conflict with each other as well, by either competing to hone their abilities or due to a misunderstanding. None of this action is directed personally at you, whether it comes from the Game Master or a fellow player. If you believe that a fellow player or the GM is being malicious toward you, talk to him or her about it.

8. Trust the Game Master

There is an unspoken agreement between the players and the Game Master: the GM agrees to provide a challenging and entertaining story for the players and, in return, the players agree to trust the Game Master's judgement. Don't second-guess your Game Master, argue with him or her during the game, or assume that the GM is out to get your character. Even when the GM assumes the role of the bad guys, he or she is still on your side.

9. Provide Constructive Feedback

Discuss the progress of the campaign with your fellow players and the Game Master regularly. Don't be rude or mean, but be honest about how you feel. If you think something works well or is particularly fun, let the GM know so he or she can include it in future games. If you dislike an aspect of the game, it is better to bring the matter up in discussion and reach a resolution than getting angry and stewing over it. Your GM and fellow players cannot improve unless you provide helpful criticism. Conversely, be willing to accept constructive feedback from others and work together to make the game more fun for everyone.

10. Network with Other Players

Many thousands of gamers around the world play superhero RPGs and we provide several ways for your to discuss ideas with them. You can join our *Silver Age Sentinels* email list by sending a message to **silverage-subscribe@yahoogroups.com**. You can also visit our company message boards (featuring an Empire City Shared World forum) at **http://pub59.ezboard.com/bguardiansoforder44269**. For the most up-to-date player information on tapping into the *Silver Age Sentinels* player network, drop by our website at **http://www.guardiansorder.com**.


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SILVER DIME THEATRE
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MISSILES OF WORLD WAR III
GMING SUPERHEROES

Designer's Note

Stripped to the Core: The Heart of D10 Tri-Stat

D10 Tri-Stat, as presented in Silver Age Sentinels, is a flexible and easy-to-learn rules-light RPG system. It is also exceptionally comprehensive, with character creation options that can handle nearly any character – superhero or otherwise – you can imagine.

But at what point do options move a game from comprehensive to complex?

We believe that Tri-Stat presents a nearly transparent rules system that spotlights the role-playing, rather than the gaming, process. Once you understand the basics of its modular components, the rest falls into place. Players looking for a "fast and loose" system may be overwhelmed by the many pages of options presented, however, without recognizing that this book contains exactly what they are looking for. A sort of "can't see the forest for the trees" scenario.

The suggestions presented herein outline alternative ways of viewing Silver Age Sentinels that may clarify our design focus.

Stats

The process of assigning Stats (Body, Mind, and Soul) to a character (page 23) is both straightforward and intuitive.

Attributes

Attributes present the widest range of options in this book, since they are the basis of superhuman powers. Although each Attribute presents its own description and Level progression, they all follow the same basic pattern: low Levels are weak; high Levels are powerful.

You can summarize the entirety of pages 29-72 by pairing the Attribute names and Level costs listed in Table 2-6: Character Attributes to the effects summary in the chart below (intermediate Levels can be interpolated as necessary). As the GM, you get to decide what a character can accomplish with "Moderate (Level 4) Mind Control," "Extreme (Level 8) Speed," or "Primal (Level 10) Teleportation." The Character Point cost remains equal to the Level times the cost/Level.

Level 2	Good. The Attribute has a minor character or game effect.
Level 4	Excellent. The Attribute has a moderate character or game effect.
Level 6	Incredible. The Attribute has a major character or game effect.
Level 8	Amazing. The Attribute has an extreme character or game effect.
Level 10	Unearthly. The Attribute has a primal character or game effect.

PMVs

The Power Modifier Values are a useful option to differentiate different characters with the same Attribute, but they are not necessary for play. The Area, Duration, Range, and number of Targets affected by a Power are subsumed by the Attribute Level; the higher the Level, the more powerful or far-reaching the effect.

As a more specific alternative, you could assign values to the Area, Duration, Range, and Target variables approximating equivalent PMV Ranks given in Table 2-4: Power Modifier Values (page 27). For example, Level 6 Environmental Influence (a major game effect) could affect an Area with a 10 km radius – the size of a small city – up to 1,000 km away. Similarly, Level 10 Healing (a primal game effect) could instantly heal the injuries of 10 million targets anywhere on the planet.

Special Attack

Under normal game mechanics, the Special Attack Attribute (page 67) inflicts a base damage of 20 points per Attribute Level. Damage decreases by 20 points each time you assign an Attack Ability; conversely, damage increases by 20 points each time you assign an Attack Disability.

A less mechanistic approach moves the Special Attack's effectiveness, and thus Level, up or down depending on the number of other advantages (up) and disadvantages (down) it provides. For example, an attack that simply inflicts 120 points of damage has a major effect (Level 6). If it can also track its target, partially penetrate armour, strike at great distances, and affect insubstantial characters, the attack has increased from a major effect (Level 6) to a primal effect (Level 10): Level 6 + 4 advantages = Level 10. Restricting the attack with inaccurate targeting and unreliable firing mechanisms reduces it back to an extreme effect (Level 8).

Skills

Skill Groups (page 84) indicate general knowledge within an area of expertise, and can be preferable to the full Skill system. The Skill Groups include: Adventuring, Business, Detective, Diplomatic, Everyman, Military, Philosophy, Scientific, Street, and Technical.

Defects

Like Attributes, the Defect descriptions on pages 91-101 can be summarized in the chart below. You can select the Defect names from Table 2-19: Character Defects, assign the appropriate number of Bonus Points, and determine the game effects.

1 BP	The Defect occurs infrequently, and/or has a slight effect on the character.
2 BP	The Defect occurs frequently, and/or has a moderate effect on the character.
3 BP	The Defect occurs constantly, and/or has a severe effect on the character.

Initiative

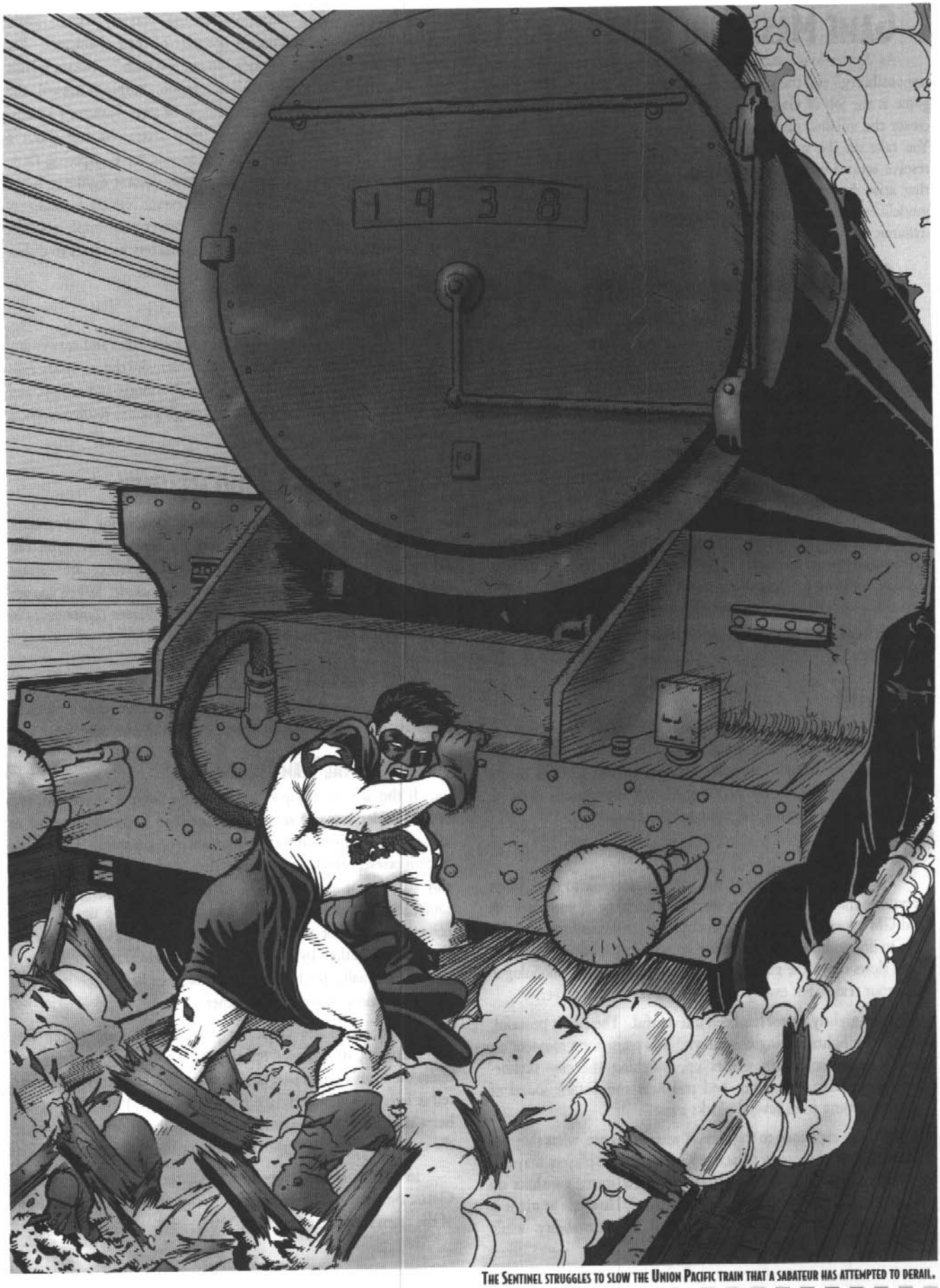
To reduce the number of dice rolls, participants can roll once at the beginning of a combat to determine their characters' Initiatives for the entire battle (i.e. they act on the same Initiatives each round).

Delivering Damage

For faster combat resolution, all attacks can inflict 100% of their normal damage values (i.e. do not roll on Table 3-8: Damage Percentage). Critical hits can still deliver double damage if you prefer.

Knockback

You can ignore rules for Knockback to reduce additional calculations.



The Sentinel struggles to slow the Union Pacific train that a sabateur has attempted to derail.

Silver Age Sentinels

Game Mastering Superheroes

As Spider-Man once said, "With great power comes great responsibility," and the greatest responsibility in a *Silver Age Sentinels* game is the job of Game Master (or GM). As Game Master, you create the villains, plots, and situations that challenge the heroes. You take on the roles of all of the other characters in the story, resolve actions using the game rules and adjudicate rules questions that arise during play. This chapter provides the suggestions and guidelines you need to be a *Silver Age Sentinels* Game Master and run dynamic and exciting games of your own.

Game Mastering Basics

You, as Game Master, fill many roles, handling all the parts of the game that the players do not. These roles can be broken down into four main areas: creator, actor, narrator, and referee.

Creator

You are responsible for creating the world in which the heroes have adventures, from the villains and supporting characters to history, geography, and current events. It requires great effort, but many superhero worlds are similar to our own, and so a lot of the setting information already exists. We have also given you a head start by providing a ready-made superhero world — the Empire City world setting — in Chapters Eight through Ten. You can use this world as a setting for your *Silver Age Sentinels* adventures, or just as an example of how to create your own superhero world.

For more on creating superhero worlds, see World Building (page 200).

Actor

You play the roles of the various non-player characters (or NPCs) in the game, including the major villains, the mayor, the police chief, the heroes' love interests, and anyone else the heroes might encounter. Keep the NPCs' goals and motivations in mind, but also focus on keeping the game fun for everyone.

Narrator

You also narrate events in the game, describing to the players everything that their characters see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. A good GM provides players with enough descriptive information for them to understand their characters' surroundings, but not so much that it slows down the game and turns it into a droning monologue of "flavour text." For example, you might say to one player:

"Your nightly patrol has been uneventful. The city is peaceful, its glittering lights shining downtown. You pause for a moment on a low rooftop, some ten stories up, watching the city skyline. Suddenly, an alarm rings out and you hear the distant sound of gunshots coming from several blocks away!"

You have explained to the players where they are, what they are doing, and placed them in an active situation. The players may ask for clarification about your description. How many gunshots do they hear? Where exactly in the city are they? How late at night is it? Answer their questions to the best of your ability, while encouraging them to take action.

While providing narration for the players, try to avoid assuming actions or feelings on the part of their characters. For example, in the above description, do not end with "... the sound fills you with fury, so you leap into action, rushing toward the commotion!" Each player must decide their own character's actions. Similarly, do not tell players how their characters feel about a particular NPC unless there is some outside force imposing those feelings. Rather than saying, "you take an instant dislike to him," when a character is dealing with an unpleasant NPC, you might try "he just does not seem very likeable." Better yet, simply play the NPC as unpleasant and rude, and the characters will start to dislike him naturally, without any prompting from you.

Referee

Finally, you apply and interpret the game rules and answer any rules questions that arise during play. You make the necessary rolls for NPCs, apply the effects of characters' Attributes and actions, and use the rules given in Chapters Two through Four to resolve conflicts during the game.

Designing Adventures

As Game Master, you are responsible for creating and running adventures for the players. A *Silver Age Sentinels* adventure can feature any story you can imagine, although there are certain common elements you will probably want to include. When you are designing an adventure, take a look at the different components in this section to see if you have covered them all.

Pre-Adventure Checklist

Before you even begin planning the adventure, take a moment to review the selected pre-adventure item in this section:

Getting the Team Together

If this is your group's first *Silver Age Sentinels* adventure, you must consider how you are getting the player characters together as a team. Is the first adventure the team's origin story? If so, what force motivates them to band together (and, more importantly, to stay together if you are going to run a campaign)? It can be something as simple as various solo heroes teaming up to fight a powerful menace or as complex as a series of events that draw the characters together by playing on their individual interests and goals. Eventually, the heroes realize that they have a common goal they can achieve by working together.

If the heroes are already a team at the start of the first adventure, you do not need to bring them together. You can either make the team's origin part of the campaign's backstory, or you can tell it later as a flashback (see Flashbacks, page 190). This option helps start the campaign quickly, although it can deprive players of the experience of their heroes meeting for the very first time.

In comics, when heroes first meet, there is often a fight (see Classic Bits, page 215). Some fun inter-group rivalries can arise out of the team's initial get-together.

Dangling Plot Threads

If this is not your first adventure, examine your notes from the previous sessions and highlight any dangling plot threads or unresolved actions. Are some of the heroes still looking for the villain who escaped a couple of adventures ago? Perhaps they can pick up on some leads. Is one of the characters still searching for her missing father? Is the team still having trouble with their government security liaison? Moving these plot threads along can give a sense of continuity to your campaign and keep players interested in coming back for the next game, just so they can see what happens next.

If you ended your previous adventure on a cliffhanger (see Cliffhangers, page 179), you need to decide how you are going to resolve it. Alternatively, you can leave it up to the players to devise a solution. It is usually best to have some backup in mind, just in case the players are stumped by your cleverness and do not have a way out.

Hero Defects

Review the heroes' character sheets and take note of any Defects they have that might influence the current plot or spark ideas for a new adventure. Has it been a while since someone's Nemesis showed up? Maybe it is time he or she put in an appearance. Is one hero literally a "fish out of water?" Consider an underwater adventure to spotlight the hero's abilities or, conversely, an adventure set in a desert to challenge the character to use his abilities in new and creative ways.

Now for Something Different

Finally, look over your previous adventures for patterns. Are you running a lot of stories where the heroes get into slugfests with a group of villains? Are the adventures all about stopping plots for world-domination? If so, look for something different with which to confront the heroes, such as an alien invasion, a visit to a far-off and exotic place, or a more low-key "day in the life" type of story. Adding variety helps keep the campaign fresh and interesting for the players.

Keep track of any requests your players make for particular kinds of adventures. A player may specifically ask you to run a scenario focusing on some aspect of the player's hero, or they may simply bring up ideas in the middle of a game, saying "hey, wouldn't it be cool if?..." Any time players say that, whether they know it or not, they are asking for a particular type of adventure; you should consider including a related plot in a future session.

The Threat

The centre of most *Silver Age Sentinels* adventures is the threat the heroes must overcome in order to keep the world safe. The threat is most often a villain, but it may also be a natural disaster, an alien invasion, a political situation, or some other event that endangers the safety and well being of the people under the heroes' protection.

A supervillain typically hatches a plot and the heroes must put a stop to it. The exact nature of the plot depends on the villain and the villain's motivations (see Bring on the Bad Guys, page 208, for more on villains). Some villains may seek world-domination while others are motivated by greed, vengeance, or even the desire to systematically destroy everything around them.

Other threats are less personal, but no less dangerous. Heroes may be asked to protect a city from fire or flood, or to help with the relief efforts following a natural disaster. Some threats also lead into others; a natural disaster may only be the prelude to a villain's plot to blackmail the world, for example.

If you are stumped for ideas, check over your previous adventures and confront the players with a threat they have never faced. Some sample threats are included below, with an indication of which Empire City setting villain could be the source of the trouble.

Assassination

Someone — likely an important social or political figure — is targeted for assassination. The assassin may be a supervillain or even a group of supervillains, hired to do the job or acting according to their own beliefs and goals. The assassin could also be a brainwashed innocent, a shapeshifter, or a double agent. For a twist, it may turn out that the target is not as innocent as he or she first appears, putting the heroes in the position of protecting one villain from death at the hands of another. Villain behind it all: Alice, Queen of Hearts.

Cosmic Crisis

The threat affects the very fabric of the universe. It may be a dimensional portal, a temporal disturbance, escalation in the war between Heaven and Hell, a major space battle fought in Earth's solar system, or even the impending destruction of the universe. Anything the GM dreams up can fit in this category, so long as it is big. Villain behind it all: Red Minstrel.

Disaster

A not-so-natural disaster, usually caused by a villainous force, threatens an area. This can include avalanches, earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, landslides, tornadoes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions, etc. Disasters can also include man-made disasters such as oil or chemical spills, nuclear reactor meltdowns, scientific lab accidents, and others. The heroes must avert or contain the disaster. Alternately, the disaster may strike without warning, and the heroes are left to deal with its aftermath. For example, after an earthquake, trapped victims need rescuing, buildings need stabilizing, and fires need extinguishing. Villain behind it all: General Winter.

Invasion

An army invades a peaceful city or nation. It might be a hostile foreign country (perhaps under the control of a supervillain), aliens from space or another dimension, creatures from deep under the Earth or from the depths of the ocean, demonic hordes, or any other force the GM can imagine. The heroes have to hold off the army and put a stop to the invasion. Alternatively, the villain army may infiltrate society slowly, and undermine the safety and security of a nation or the world. Villain behind it all: Jade Naga.

Natural Disasters

Asteroids/Meteorites

Scientists estimate that there are about 300,000 near-Earth asteroids over 100 metres in diameter, and about 2,000 over 1 km in diameter. The asteroid that exploded in the air above the remote Tunguska region in Siberia, on June 30, 1908 was a tiny asteroid, only about 30 to 60 meters across and massing 10,000 to 100,000 tonnes. The energy released was greater than even the Hiroshima nuclear bomb. The forest was flattened, out to about 30 km from the centre, and many trees were completely incinerated. 200 km away, carpenters were thrown off of a building from the shock wave. If an asteroid 1 km in diameter hit Earth, it would cause a dust cloud that would block out sunlight for at least a year and lead to a deep worldwide winter, exhausting food supplies.

Avalanches (Snow or Land)

An avalanche is a rapid movement of snow, ice, mud, or rock, down a slope such as the side of a mountain. They are the result of erosion of the surrounding landscape, triggered by earth tremors, excessive rainfall, or human-made disturbances. The slide of snow, rock, or mud can exceed speeds of more than 300 kph. The damage and destruction from avalanches stem from the wind that precedes the moving mass as well as the impact of the avalanche material. On May 31, 1970 in Yungay, Peru, a powerful earthquake triggered the worst avalanche disaster in history from the summit of Nevado Huascaran, the highest peak in Peru. The landslide obliterated the town of Yungay and killed close to 20,000 inhabitants.

Earthquakes

The magnitude of earthquakes is measured on the Richter scale (invented in 1934 by Charles F. Richter), which extends from 0 to 10. Each whole number increment (such as 2 to 3) indicates a thirty-fold increase in energy released. To put this in explosive terms, a magnitude 1 earthquake releases as much energy as 200 g of TNT (a quarter stick of dynamite); a magnitude 8 earthquake releases as much energy as 4 million tonnes of TNT. The most destructive earthquake in history occurred off the coast of central Chile on 22 May, 1960 (magnitude 8.6). More than 2,000 Chileans were killed, 3,000 were injured, and 2 million were made homeless. Total damage exceeded $600 million USD.

Fires

Fires can cause massive devastation in both wilderness (forest fire) and urban (city fire) areas. The largest forest fire in recorded history blazed in 1987. The Great Black Dragon Fire burned over 70,000 square km of forest in Siberia and Northern China — an area almost as large as the state of Maine, USA. City fires are rated in "alarms." When a fire is reported, it is usually given a rating of 1. Each time the firefighters at the scene radio the fire station for additional assistance, the alarm rating of the fire is increased by 1.

Floods

Floods are usually caused by inordinately heavy rainfalls, or failure of human-made or natural dams. Valleys and low-lying areas below sea level are most vulnerable to flooding. The world's worst flood occurred in the Hunan Province area of China in autumn 1887, when the Yellow River overflowed 20-metre-high embankments. 11 cities and 300 villages were flooded, and over 125,000 square km of crop land were covered by up to 10 metres of water. An estimated 900,000 people drowned (though some claim the final death toll may have exceeded 6 million), and over 2 million people were left homeless.

Hurricanes and Tornadoes

Hurricanes and tornadoes involve high velocity winds that can cause horrific damage to buildings, trees, vehicles, and other objects. Lightning and heavy rainfall often accompany them as well. Hurricanes cover a very broad area many kilometres across. They are rated using the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale — a 1-5 rating based on the hurricane's present intensity, from wind speeds of 119-153 kph (rating 1) to over 250 kph (rating 5). Hurricane Andrew, with an average speed of 230 kph, wrought unprecedented economic devastation along a path through the northwestern Bahamas, the southern Florida peninsula, and south-central Louisiana. Tornadoes have much narrower paths of destruction (measured in hundreds of metres) and are rated on a similar scale from 0-5, called the Fujita scale. The tornado wind speeds range from an F-0 rating (up to 115 kph; light damage) to F-5 (over 420 kph; incredible damage). A tornado cluster that hit Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio in April, 1985 killed 271 people, injured thousands, and caused damage exceeding $400 million dollars USD. The damage inflicted by hurricane and tornado winds are either caused by the winds directly (tearing the roofs from houses, uprooting trees or overturning vehicles), or by objects smashing into each other.

Tsunami

A tsunami ("harbour wave" in Japanese; often erroneously called a tidal wave) is a giant ocean wave generated by an impulsive and forceful disturbance. Earthquakes, explosions, landslides, meteorite impacts, and volcanic eruptions most commonly initiate tsunami. The waves, which can be up to 500 metres in height, impact coastlines harshly, causing enormous loss of property (many millions of dollars) and life. Tsunami move at incredible speeds (averaging 750 kph), crossing the Pacific Ocean in less than a day. As the tsunami approaches land, the speed of the wave slows and the amplitude or height of wave increases (since the wave energy is concentrated in a smaller volume of water). The 1960 Chilean earthquake (see left column) generated a tsunami that radiated outward and crossed the Pacific Ocean, killing 61 people in Hawaii and 122 in Japan.

Volcanic Eruptions

Volcanic eruptions are categorized into two types: explosive (such as at Mount St. Helens) and effusive or freely pouring (such as those in Hawaii). Explosive volcanoes typically produce: widespread ash fall, gaseous plumbs, lava flows, debris avalanches, and landslides. The 1815 explosion of Tambora volcano on the island of Sumbawa, Indonesia released so much volcanic dust into the atmosphere that it caused the atmosphere to cool slightly; 1816 was known as "the year without a summer." Eruptions from effusive volcanoes result in gentle lava flows, spatter cones, and lava fountains. Lava typically moves at few hundred meters per hour up to 10 km per hour; the fastest measured lava flow from the Nyiragongo volcano, in Zaire, was 60 kph.

Kidnapping

A victim is kidnapped, either for ransom or because of something that they possess or know. The victim may be someone important to one of the heroes, like a Significant Other (see page 99). The kidnapper may be a villain or team of villains hired to do the job or working for their own purposes. Villain behind it all: Bloody Mary.

Personal Danger

The threat is directed specifically at one or more of the heroes. It might be an old nemesis out for revenge, an assassination or kidnapping attempt on the hero, or a vindictive politician or media personality. You could devise the threat from the hero's background, Defects, or Attributes. Villain behind it all: Janus.

Rampaging Monster(s)

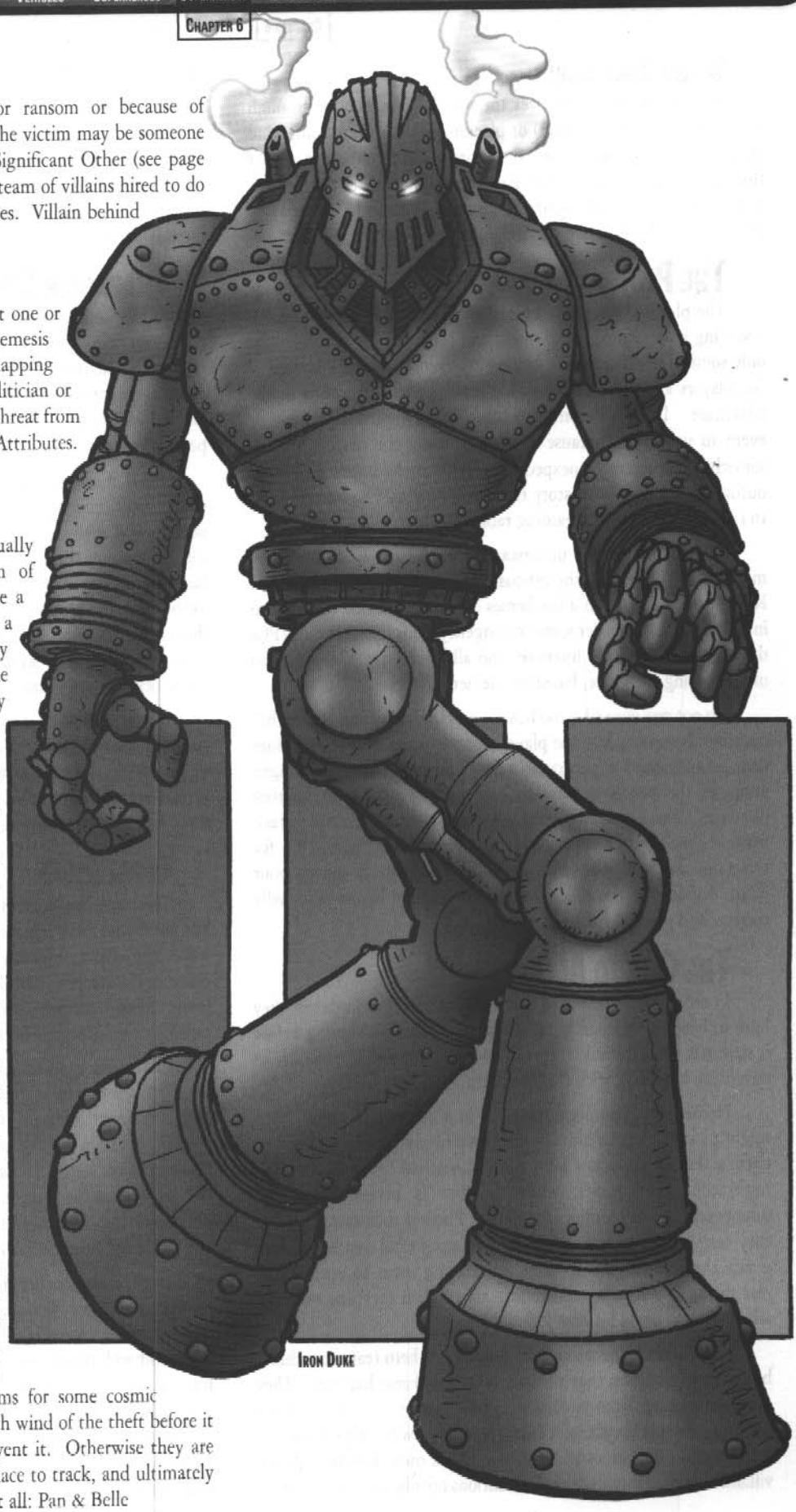
Similar to an invasion, but usually smaller-scale. A creature or swarm of creatures go on a rampage. It may be a single giant monster (see page 215) or a horde of smaller monsters (like doomsday robots or zombies). The monsters' sole purpose is usually destruction, but they may only be a diversion for some other threat. In some cases, the monsters' intentions are misinterpreted. They may normally be peaceful, but stirred up by the actions of the supervillain or human negligence, such as the pollution of their home environment. Villain behind it all: Iron Duke.

Terrorism

Terrorists target a place, usually one of cultural, financial, or political significance. They may plan to blow up a building or monument, release a biological or chemical weapon, or perform some other act of terror. The wake of a terrorist attack is a disaster with which the heroes must cope. Villain behind it all: White Banner.

Theft

Something is stolen. It can be as simple as the classic bank robbery or jewellery heist, or as complex as the theft of valuable (and often experimental) technology, magical artifacts, or collections of random items for some cosmic "scavenger hunt." The heroes may catch wind of the theft before it happens, giving them a chance to prevent it. Otherwise they are usually called in after the theft takes place to track, and ultimately capture, the criminals. Villain behind it all: Pan & Belle



Iron Duke

World Domination

A villain plots to take over the world. This may be through mind control (subtle or overt) or blackmail, often using some kind of "doomsday weapon" to force the entire world to surrender. Other threats, like disasters and rampaging monsters, may be "tests" of the villain's power, while assassinations, kidnappings, and thefts may be preludes to the ultimate plot. Villain behind it all: Kreuzritter.

The Plot

The plot is the series of events that happens in the adventure, revolving around the central threat and conflict with it. Naturally, only some of the plot can be known in advance, since the actions of the players and their heroes define much of what happens in the adventure. Do not become too attached to a particular scene or event in your plot, because it is quite likely the players will do something completely unexpected. Think of the initial plot as an outline for a comic book story that you and your players are going to create together at the gaming table.

You should firmly understand the threat, as well as the motivations and goals of the various NPCs involved in the adventure. Know what will happen if the heroes do nothing or otherwise fail to intervene. Then consider some contingency plans for what the NPCs do when the heroes do interfere, and allow the rest of the plot to unfold during the game, based on the heroes' actions.

Do not rest your plot too heavily on players making the "right" decision. For example, if the players are presented with certain clues that point toward a particular villain's involvement, they might jump to the wrong conclusion and go rushing off in another direction. The key is to gently put them back on the right track without forcing their actions (see Troubleshooting, page 182, for some tips on this). Conversely, you can retroactively rewrite your plans, decide that the conclusion reached by the heroes is actually correct, and proceed from there.

The Call to Action

In order for the heroes to deal with the adventure's threat, they have to become aware of it. A threat that gives no warning before it strikes is not a suitable threat. Instead, the real threat of such an adventure is dealing with the aftermath.

Heroes can learn about a threat in a number of ways. They might pick up clues or hints in their own routine investigations and patrols. For example, one hero might run across the theft of certain high-tech components, while another is investigating the disappearance of a prominent scientist. Putting their facts together they discover the components belong to a powerful weather-control device the scientist was working on, leading them to uncover the real threat of a weather-controlling supervillain (perhaps even the scientist, who faked his own kidnapping).

Alternatively, the authorities may alert a hero team to a threat based on information they uncover or as the threat happens. They may get warning from victims who believe they are targets of the threat, or even learn about it from the villain, who drops hints and clues to taunt the heroes and prove his or her own cleverness. Some villains will even announce their intentions openly, such as delivering an ultimatum to the government demanding they surrender or face the villain's wrath.

Give some thought to varying the way that the heroes discover the threat in the adventure. If they have been waiting around their base getting calls for help for the past few adventures, maybe it is time they discover a threat or two on their own, or have a villain directly challenge them.

Character Goals

While designing an adventure, consider the personal goals of the player characters and use them as "hooks" to get the characters involved. The main hook you can use is that heroes will generally try to avert any threat to public safety, protecting the innocent from harm, but it helps if you can sometimes give an adventure a more personal touch.

What if an orphaned hero wants to find out more about his origins, and suddenly a mysterious villain shows up with the exact same powers as the hero? Could this be a relative of some sort, or the subject of a similar experiment or accident? What if the villain drops hints that he or she knows something about the hero's origins? Most likely, the hero's player is going to be a lot more interested in pursing that villain! Likewise, a heroine who has strong personal feelings about drug abuse is going to pay close attention when word reaches her about a new designer drug that is making the rounds on the street.

If you find that the heroes in your game do not have any personal goals beyond "truth, justice, and freedom," you might want to talk with the players and encourage them to develop some. Characters will develop and change goals so be sure to adapt with them as the campaign progresses.

Challenges

The main challenge of an adventure is overcoming the threat, but there may be many smaller challenges to overcome along the way. An adventure that consists of the heroes stopping a single crime or catastrophe is not likely to take long. To provide a full few hours of entertainment, you need to stretch out the main threat by putting other obstacles in the heroes' path along the way.

Challenges in an adventure can range from confrontations with other villains (or the main villain), mysteries, obstinate bureaucrats or government officials, minor accidents or disasters (possibly leading up to a bigger one), scouts for an invasion force, etc. Sometimes the heroes are only aware of the lesser challenges at first and learn about the main threat along the way. Remember the three basic conflicts: Man versus Man; Man versus Nature; and, most important for a dramatic superhero game, Man versus Himself.

Overcoming smaller challenges may be a part of dealing with a greater challenge. For example, a villain has built mind-control transmitters in several places around the globe, intending to blanket the world with mind-control rays. He has also arranged to have his minions guard the secret projectors. The heroes must discover where the projectors are located (the first challenge) then deal with each of them in turn (the next several challenges), before finding the master villain's secret lair and dealing with him or her (the main and final challenge).

Important NPCs

Maintain records that describe the non-player characters important to the adventure. This includes the villain(s), henchmen, supporting characters, and anyone else the heroes are likely to meet. You do not need to provide detailed game statistics for everyone, just the characters whose Stats and Attributes are likely to be important, like the villain and anyone else with whom the characters will come into direct conflict. For the rest of the NPCs you can have some "generic" Stats on hand, or just make up Stats as needed during the game. Stats of 4 are standard for average people (including an Attack Combat Value of 4). See the sidebar My Normal Person Cannot Do Anything! on page 109 and the NPC templates on page 329.

The Name Game

Characters encounter many random people during adventures, including innocent civilians, police officers, fire and rescue personnel, government bureaucrats, and others. You may find it handy to keep a "cheat sheet" of various names (first and last) on hand. If the players then ask you for the name of that newspaper vendor or cop they met on the beat, you can just pick a name off the list, cross it off, and note it for future reference. Instant NPC!

You can get names from a book of baby names, by going through the phone book, or by just making them up and writing them down. Try to avoid the unique names of people you know, since they will tend to stand out as awkward ("Hey, that FBI agent has the same name as your dad!").

Action!

An important element of superhero adventures is action. If all of the challenges in an adventure involve the heroes just thinking or talking to people, it is likely to be a pretty dull adventure. There needs to be action to keep the adventure moving at a brisk pace and keep the players interested.

Action does not have to be combat, although, in the comics, it often is. It can be any physical challenge that gets heroes moving. Stopping a runaway train or chasing after some crooks is action just as much as a slugfest. Plan the challenges in your adventures to give the heroes a chance at some action.

You can also use action scenes to energize the plot when it starts to get dull. If things are starting to bog down, perhaps its time to have the sinister cultists from the Temple of Mars attack, or have a school bus with damaged brakes start careening toward a partially raised drawbridge. Sometimes these extra action scenes can advance the plot: the cultists may carry a clue that can lead the heroes to the villain's hideout, or the bus's brake-lines were cut as part of plan to distract the heroes. Other times they are just random incidents.

You may find it beneficial to start an adventure with an action scene, to get the players into the spirit of the game and hook them with some excitement right away. This is like the "teaser" of a television program, right before the opening credits, or the "splash page" of a comic book.

The Finale

A great thing about role-playing game adventures is you never know exactly how they are going to end. It all depends on what the characters do and whether or not they succeed. Still, it is good to have at least some idea how the adventure is going to end and how you can wrap things up.

The finale of the adventure comes when the heroes confront the main threat and have a chance to overcome it. It may be a battle royal with the villain and his minions, a shot at averting catastrophe, or a battle against an invasion force. It is the "payoff" after making it through the other challenges in the adventure. Consequently, the finale must be suitably dramatic and challenging for the players. If it is too easy, it is anticlimactic. If it is too hard, then the heroes will probably lose, which is not much fun unless you turn it into a cliffhanger for the next adventure and give the heroes a chance to come back from their loss. Try to balance the finale to make it challenging, so the players feel like they have won a real victory, but not so hard that they do not have a chance.

The finale should usually end in a decisive victory for the heroes, although the main antagonist often escapes. See Let the Heroes Win (page 181) and How the Villain Gets Away (page 211) for some more guidelines.

Cliffhangers

Adventures usually last longer than a single game session. This is particularly true with epic story arcs (see page 184). In this case, it can be helpful to end a continuing adventure on a cliffhanger, or moment of dramatic tension. This creates some suspense and excitement for the next game session.

The best spots for cliffhangers are when the heroes are in the midst of some dilemma or about to confront a major challenge. Death traps make for perfect cliffhangers; the heroes are captured and placed in a death trap. The villain explains their imminent demise, taunts them with information about his fiendish plan, and leaves them to their fate. The adventure ends. Will the heroes escape in time? Show up for the next session to find out!

In addition to generating some excitement and anticipation among the players, cliffhangers allow both you and the players some time to plan your next moves. In the time before the next game, the players have a chance to figure out how they are going to get out of that death trap (or other difficult situation) and you can concoct some ideas for pulling the heroes' bacon out of the fire if they do not succeed. See Death Traps (page 210).

Epilogue

After the finale comes the epilogue, or denouement, where the final threads of the adventure are neatly tied up. Often the epilogue features the heroes standing together with the police, their government liaison, or some other NPCs outside the ruins of the villain's headquarters, recapping what happened and explaining any last little bits about the story.

You can play out an epilogue or use narration to tell the players what happens immediately after the climax of the adventure. For example, you may say, "After you defeat Alice, Queen of Hearts, the authorities show up to take her into custody. The identity of her employer remains unknown, but her target is safe, for the time being." This particular epilogue leaves open the possibility that Alice's mysterious employer will try again. Maybe the heroes can investigate who he or she is in a future adventure.

Offbeat Adventures

Occasionally it is a good idea to insert an offbeat or non-traditional adventure into the campaign, to keep things from getting stale. It might be a light-hearted comedic adventure to break up a run of serious plot arcs or a "day in the life" story that focuses on the heroes' secret identities and their supporting cast. Perhaps the heroes' minds are switched, allowing players to take the roles of each other's characters for one story. It could be an opportunity for the players to assume the guise of some of the supporting cast members or even the villains for an adventure.

These kinds of adventures can be a welcome change of pace, so long as they are not overdone. In your pre-adventure planning, take a look over the sorts of stories you have run recently and see if you need to do something different for a change.

Keeping Notes

When running your *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign, keep notes about what happens during the adventure and write yourself a quick summary of events afterwards while they are still fresh in your mind. Make sure to include any dangling plot lines, subplots, and rules issues or questions that came up (and how you handled them).

Having detailed notes can prevent problems down the road, since they will help you keep all of your plot lines straight and remember what happened in previous adventures. You can consult your notes during pre-adventure planning and, after a while, you will have a record of your entire campaign to read any time you feel like revisiting the "back issues" of your game!

Death: The Final Chapter?

Although death of a player character should be exceptionally rare in a long-term campaign, it may have a place in your game. The player, not you, should be the driving motivation behind a hero's death, however. In the comics, a hero might die after sacrificing his or her life to save a teammate, thousands or millions of people, or even the entire universe. If you make the player aware that his or her character may perish after performing a specific action, and the player decides it is good for the story if the character dies heroically, then death is an acceptable (even desirable) outcome. Make the death a meaningful and powerful sacrifice, and the player will be pleased with the result.

After a character's death, the player will want to generate a new hero. Work with him or her to create a concept that fits with your already established campaign. An ideal character might be a reincarnated version of the dead hero — with strange and wondrous new Powers — or a character thematically linked to the old one. In comics, death is rarely the final chapter.

Keeping the Players Interested

One of your key GM roles involves keeping the players interested and involved. If you and the players are not having fun, your game needs to adapt quickly.

Know Your Players

Do you know what your players want to accomplish in the game? Discover their interests, likes, and dislikes, and cater to them. In some cases, players may be interested in story elements or plot ideas that do not inspire you, or you may want to run a type of game in which the players are not particularly interested. Negotiate something that is agreeable to, and enjoyable for, everyone.

Players have different styles. Some players like to immerse themselves in detailed characters, role-playing interactions with NPCs and the other heroes. Others like lots of action and the opportunity to blow off steam at the gaming table. There are those who want to play ultra-competent characters who are the best in the world at what they do and those who enjoy flawed or tragic heroes who make mistakes and suffer misfortune. Some are thinkers, enjoying puzzles and mysteries, while others are builders, always coming up with new characters and ideas. It is possible to satisfy all of these different types of players by understanding what gives each of them the most enjoyment in the game.

There may also be certain elements your players do not want to see in the game. Try and respect this as much as possible. It is difficult to fulfill the player preference of "I never want my hero to lose," but it is easier to accommodate "I want my character to be truly unique. I never want to see a villain with the same powers as him," or "I really hate having my character framed or set-up," or "Violence and sex should not mix in any of our adventures."

Listen to the Players

Once your campaign is underway, pay attention to what your players are telling you. Most of the time, players make it clear when they are enjoying themselves and when they are not. They often like to speculate or think out loud, saying, "I think that the villain's plot is really..." or "wouldn't it be cool if...." Use these discussions as insights into the minds of your players.

If the players speculate about a particular mystery or possibility, perhaps they might like to see the plot proceed in that direction. You can always change a mystery to fit the players' ideas behind the scenes — a tool called "retroactive Game Mastering" — so long as it does not interrupt the flow of the game.

Be sure you get feedback from your players. At the end of each session or adventure, ask them if they enjoyed themselves and what they liked. If they have criticism, accept it gracefully and use it to make your next story even better. If it seems that a player is not having fun, ask why and see what you can do to correct the situation. Sometimes players have bad days or just do not care for a particular adventure, but other times their expectations for the game are not being met.

The Character Story

Every character should have a "character story" — an overall theme that provides a plot hook for the character, getting him or her involved in adventures and offering the opportunity for growth and development.

For example, Red Phoenix (page 294) has a character story about how she inherited her powers and her role as a spirit of justice. She is still adapting to her role, trying to live up to the legacy of those who came before her. There is the mystery of her missing armour and weapons. As she develops, she may become more comfortable in her role, more confident in her abilities. She may discover some of her missing armament (increasing her Attributes or gaining new ones) and she may have to overcome certain challenges to prove herself worthy of the power she has been given. All these elements provide adventure hooks and chances for the character to grow.

What are the stories of your players' characters? Encourage players to build their heroes with adventure hooks and room to grow, then use them in your adventures. The campaign will then be foremost about the heroes — the main characters in the campaign.

Spotlight the Heroes

If a *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign is like a comic book, then the player characters are the heroes of that story. Therefore, the focus of attention in the campaign should be on the heroes and their actions.

This advice might seem like common sense, but a campaign can easily get caught up in events over which the heroes have little control, taking the focus away from them and putting it on the plans and actions of NPCs. If you have created a detailed and interesting setting, you are going to want to show it off, but do not do so at the expense of the heroes. The story is supposed to be about them.

Likewise, be careful not to allow a particular player or character to dominate the plot. Some players may be more forceful than others, but try to give everyone equal time. In particular, include the specialities of the various heroes in the adventure. There should be objects for the strong characters to lift and break, shadows in which the skulkers can hide, mysteries for the detectives to solve, etc.

If you are finding a particular hero dull or uninteresting, mention this to the player and work together to develop the hero's story further. Find hooks that make for interesting adventures or build a subplot around that hero to inject some more life and colour.

Challenge the Heroes

You should not make conflicts too easy for the heroes to overcome or else the players will end up just as bored as if you were ignoring them. The characters in *Silver Age Sentinels* are heroes, so they should encounter serious threats and overcome great obstacles. Think big and be sure to give the heroes a challenge. A bank robbery or other routine crime may be a challenge for a group of street-level or low-powered heroes, but it is only an appetizer for a group of more powerful characters.

Overcoming these conflicts is what being a hero is all about. If you make adventures challenging, then the players will have a real sense of accomplishment when they do finally succeed, rather than believing you handed their victory to them.

Let the Heroes Win

There should come a time in every adventure when the heroes have a real chance of winning. When it comes, you should be graceful enough to let them enjoy it.

Sometimes you may get too caught up in playing the villains ... so much so that you start rooting for them. You create a masterful, fiendish plan, only see it dashed by a group of meddling heroes. When players unravel your clever idea, or concoct an equally clever one, there is a temptation to snatch victory away from them. When your favourite villain is on the ropes, you may wish to ensure he gets away or is not actually defeated. Do not give in to it! While the players must be challenged, do not cheat them of their rightfully earned victories. If you deny the players even the occasional victory, then the campaign becomes tedious since the heroes face nothing but setbacks all the time.

Take a Break

If you find yourself "burning out" because of stress, the demands of everyday life, or simply because you have run the game for too long, you only have one clear choice: take a break. Put the campaign "on hiatus" for a while and run something else or, better yet, let a player run a new game and give you a chance to play! When you feel like your creative batteries have been recharged, come back to the game with renewed energy. This solution is much better than allowing the campaign to drag and become a chore.

Handling the Rules

Part of the Game Master's job is handling and interpreting the various rules in a game of *Silver Age Sentinels*. The rules of the game are fairly simple — of the "rules light" variety — but players have a way of putting their heroes in situations the game's designers did not contemplate. No rules system can take every possible situation into account; *Silver Age Sentinels* purposely leaves many aspects of the rules open for interpretation. You, as GM, ultimately must make the calls.

Designer's Note

Cheating: Just Do It!

If you want your players to think you are the best Game Master in the world, you only have one option: cheat, and cheat often. Never make a single dice roll without thinking to yourself, "Hmmm ... if I cheat and change the result of this roll, will I make it a better game?" In the games of Game Mastering and role-playing, there are no rules about "being fair," "sticking to the dice roll," or "being honest with the players." There is only one rule: make your game the best it can be. Gott würfelt nicht: "God does not play dice," said Einstein, and neither should you. Dice are only a tool to suggest how you should make up your mind. You make the decisions, not the dice.

Whether you ask your players to also follow this advice is up to you....

Rules Questions

Questions about the rules will arise during games and you must resolve them. They may be questions about how a rule works, what rule applies in a particular situation, or how to handle an unusual situation or application of a rule.

Become as familiar with the rules of the game as you can. Do not commit them to memory, although they may find their own way there the more frequently you play and run the game. Read through the rules thoroughly at least once before running the game, however. If you can, run a couple of solo test combats using the characters in this book or ones of your own creation to better understand how the game plays.

When a rules question arises, take a moment to handle it and make your answer as clear as possible to the players. When you first play the game, you are likely going to need to consult the rules more often, until you and the players understand the D10 Tri-Stat System and its nuances. You may prefer to ask one of the players to look up rules for you during the game so you can focus on the story.

Most situations in *Silver Age Sentinels* can be adjudicated without dice, or with a simple Stat or Skill check with an appropriate modifier. When in doubt, ask a player to make a Stat check for the character and apply a modifier (bonus or penalty) that suits the situation. See Check Value Difficulty Modifiers and When To Roll Dice on pages 108 and 112 for additional guidelines.

Sometimes during the game you will make a "GM's call," where you say, "this is how I want to handle it for now." Ask the players to respect your ruling and move on with the game. If necessary, you can talk after the game about the ruling and how to best handle similar situations when they arise in the future.

House Rules

Every gaming group tends to develop its own set of "house rules" over time. These are modifications (or clarifications) of the game's rules or specific rules about conduct at the gaming table. House rules should make the game a more pleasant and enjoyable experience for everyone, and the players and the Game Master should agree upon them in advance.

Let the players know if you have changed any of the game's rules (see Changing the Rules, page 182) or if you are using any of the optional rules in your campaign. If the players have any concerns about these rules changes, discuss them and come to a compromise, if necessary. Record any rule changes and make a handout for the players, so everyone knows the rules; this will minimize disputes.

Rules of conduct, or "table rules" as they are sometimes known, vary from group to group. Some groups prefer to limit side conversations, inappropriate movie and television quotes, or jokes while the game is in progress. Others have no such rules. One example is the "you said it" rule: if a player says something while at the table while the game is in play, then his or her character says it, too. This naturally limits the out-of-character conversation during the game, but some players may find it too restrained or frustrating.

Other table rules may cover:

- Making die rolls in clear view or not rolling until it is your turn. Alternatively, your group may prefer to make rolls for their actions in advance so they can have the results ready when the GM calls for them.
- Appropriate language and discussion content at the gaming table. This may be particularly important for groups that include younger players.
- Secret communication between players and the Game Master, whether passing notes, using bluebooks (page 189), or something similar.
- Any other rules about how the game is conducted, such as: "we always start at 6 P.M. sharp. If you show up late, you do not get to play" or "new players have to run an NPC 'guest star' character for at least two games before creating a character of their own."

Changing the Rules

On occasion, gaming groups may want to change the rules provided in this book to better suit their own games and style of play. If you find that a particular rule does not work for you then change it! Of course, you may want to consider carefully how any changes will affect point balance and other rules in the game. Test a rules change for a session or two and see how it works. You can always change it back or modify it further as necessary.

A particular opening in the rules does not necessarily require a rules change, but rather discussion and agreement among the players. *Silver Age Sentinels* characters can have tremendous powers, and those powers can be abused by inexperienced players (see Power Abuse, page 183). Rather than changing the rules to restrict the characters, consider talking to the players and asking them to voluntarily modify their characters' behaviours to eliminate the abuse.

Never change the rules arbitrarily or without informing the players in advance of the change, and your reasons for it. This ensures there will be fewer rules disputes and confusion during the game.

Troubleshooting

Even the best gaming groups (and Game Masters) encounter difficult situations. When problems arise, you must resolve them. The following are some of the more common troubleshooting techniques you can use to help keep your campaign running smoothly.

Making Mistakes

Sometimes you may make a mistake, whether it is misinterpreting a rule or not recalling an important fact about an NPC. If the mistake occurs during the game, own up to it, do what you can to correct it, and move on. It is much better to tell your players, "oops, I made a mistake," than to try and cover it up or, even worse, refuse to admit it and allow the game to suffer because of it.

Most mistakes are not likely to make much difference in the game. If a mistake does result in serious consequences (such as the death of a player character), you can either choose to reverse the problem — changing history and saying it never happened — or

you can redress it in a future adventure. Perhaps the heroes get an opportunity to fix the mistake, or even to travel back in time and change history themselves, in order to "right the cosmic balance" by preventing an event that should not have happened.

Conflict Between Players

Although *Silver Age Sentinels* is a game about teamwork and co-operation, conflict may arise between players in your group. Note this is not conflict between characters, which can be interesting and fun, but a conflict between the players that threatens to spoil everyone's enjoyment of the game.

If a conflict develops between two or more of your players, discover what it is and settle it through some mutually agreeable compromise. Make it clear to the players that they should keep their personal disputes out of the game. If they are incapable of doing so, or settling matters, then ask one or more of the difficult players to leave the game. Most problems can be solved long before that becomes necessary, however.

In the case of conflicts over events happening in the game, remind the players that it is just a game and the goal is for everyone to have fun. If an in-game conflict is not enjoyable for a player, try modifying or eliminating it. If there is conflict in the group about the game, find out what it is and settle it by changing the campaign's plot or adding some house rules that address the issue.

Power Abuse

Characters in *Silver Age Sentinels* have tremendous powers. Oftentimes, they can literally move mountains and change the course of history. In the comics, heroes almost always act with the utmost responsibility and restraint, but there is no guarantee that players will do the same. Sooner or later, someone will decide to see just how far he or she can go with their character's superhuman powers.

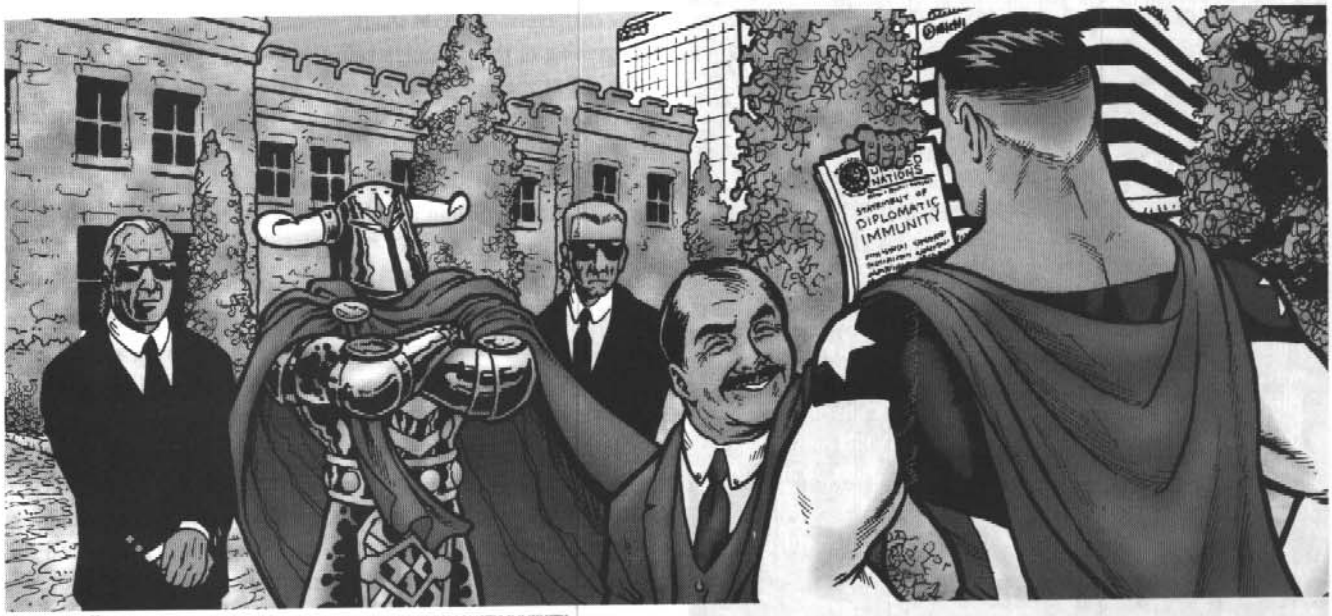
While you should encourage player creativity, there are some uses of powers that are either inappropriate to the superhero genre or likely to ruin everyone's enjoyment of the game, if they are permitted. In those cases, you need to step in and politely, but firmly, refuse to allow them. For example, it is certainly possible to create a character able to control the minds of everyone on Earth with sufficient Levels of the Mind Control Attribute and the Area, Range, and Targets PMVs. Does that mean you have to allow such a character in your game? No. In fact, you probably should not. Tell the player "I do not think that idea works for our game" or "I do not think that Captain Amazing would really do something like that, do you?" A gentle reminder is usually enough to dissuade most players, especially if it is for the good of the campaign as a whole.

In cases where players create abusive powers or characters, you can simply ask them to drop or redesign them to fit the campaign. There is nothing wrong with saying, "your interpretation of that Attribute is simply too powerful for this game" and setting limits on what the heroes are capable of accomplishing. Alternatively, when an abuse of power happens in the game, you can confront the players with the consequences of their actions. How do the NPC heroes in the world react to a "hero" who uses his powers for personal gain, or who kills villains in cold blood? The cold disdain (or open hostility) of respected NPC heroes may encourage players to alter the way they play.

Getting Back on Track

No adventure plan survives unchanged after contact with the players, who do the most unexpected things ... some of which can derail a planned adventure. Sometimes all you can do is go with the flow and follow where the players lead you. If you have a good grasp of the setting and characters for your game, you should be able to improvise and deal with most digressions from your plot. The players may even provide you with some ideas and opportunities you had not originally considered.

Other times, when an adventure is diverting wildly from the story, you may need to nudge things towards the best direction. The trick is to do this without the players realizing, since the ideal adventure leads the players as little as possible. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to guide wayward players back in the right direction.



Once again, Kreuzritter abuses the legal system, flaunting his diplomatic immunity

Give Them a Clue

Villains are notorious for taunting heroes with clues about their fiendish master plans. If the heroes wander away from the plot, have the villain drop them a hint like a riddle, a sudden attack, or a threatening message. A decent clue can put the heroes hot on the villain's trail again.

Sudden Insight

Provide a more direct clue using the heroes' abilities. A psychic or mystic hero might have a vision or flash of insight, or a skilled detective might piece together certain clues. Heroes with enhanced senses may pick up on clues others failed to notice, while a telepathic hero might sense a stray thought or "psychic impression."

NPCs

If all else fails, you can have an NPC guide the heroes in the right direction. The best way to enact this is to have the heroes come to the NPC's rescue, rather than the supporting character solving the problem. For example, a reporter friend of one of the heroes follows up on some leads and stumbles across a vital part of the villain's plan. She has just enough time to get off a panicked phone call to the hero before being captured by the villain's minions. Suddenly, the heroes are off to the rescue and the adventure is running smoothly again.

Creating a Campaign

Creating a *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign may be as simple as running one adventure after another. There is an almost limitless number of different stories you can tell with *Silver Age Sentinels*, and some campaigns are better suited to some gaming groups than others. This section looks at the major choices that go into building a successful adventure series.

Connecting Worlds

Gaming groups might play more than one *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign, even gaming in multiple series each week! These campaigns can be set in different worlds and times, or they can all take place in the same setting — a "shared world" similar to the worlds of the major comic book companies.

For example, you might start a campaign, outlining the world to the players. Eventually one of the players decides to run a campaign as well. Instead of creating a new world, he or she picks a different part of the setting and, with the group's permission, sets her new campaign there. Eventually, a second player may start another campaign in a third city. You may decide to put your campaign on hiatus and do a mini-campaign set in yet another city, and so forth. In this way, the group fleshes out the world and the various campaign can build off of each other. Heroes in one city can hear about the activities of those in another city, and villains and NPCs (or even player character "guest stars") can move between campaign, just like in the comics.

For information on moving your shared world to the internet, see Technology and Gaming, page 192.

Player Input

The first thing to do when planning a *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign is to ask your players what sort of campaign they would like to play. If you want to run a Golden Age campaign of the world's greatest heroes against the forces of the Axis, and your players want to play in a gritty near-future game of costumed vigilantes, you are both going to end up disappointed. Negotiate with the players as necessary until you have a concept that everyone will enjoy.

Once you have established the kind of campaign type, ask the players what kinds of characters they would like to play, since that can affect decisions about the campaign as well. For example, an alien hero implies the existence of at least some alien races in the setting. Some character concepts may not be appropriate for your campaign, and it is better to deal with that up front than have a player get set on a particular character idea that does not suit the game.

Campaigns, Mini-Campaigns, and One-Shots

A role-playing game can range from a brief one-shot adventure that takes a few hours to play to a lengthy campaign that can run over many sessions for a period of months or years. The story pacing and plot depth of a campaign is different from that of a mini-campaign, which in turn differs from that of a one-shot adventure.

Campaigns

A campaign usually has a vast or epic scope with a number of shorter plot arcs that weave together to reveal the greater story. The characters have time to develop unique personalities as they are faced with challenges to their bodies, minds, and souls. The characters can also learn new Skills and Attributes and establish lasting relationships with NPCs. In a campaign, the players have ample time to explore the various aspects of the world that the GM has created. Additionally, antagonists will come and go over the course of a campaign as they are defeated, destroyed, or reformed by the characters. The GM should establish the outline of a plot for the beginning of the campaign before play begins, but the middle and the end of the story will be largely determined by the interests and actions of the characters.

Mini-Campaigns

A mini-campaign is a single story arc that usually takes place over 4-8 gaming sessions. The characters may not develop much over the course of a mini-campaign since the plot only spans a few days to a few weeks. The antagonists are often present in every session with the major villain, if any, usually surviving at least until the final climactic conclusion to the story arc. Mini-campaigns require a greater plot structure than an open-ended campaign, and thus the players are required to focus more on the story and less on their own characters. The GM should know where the characters will start (the beginning) and where they should go (the middle), but the closure at the end of the story is heavily dependent on the choices made by the player characters during the game.

One-Shot Adventures

A one-shot adventure covers one single story idea in a 3-8 hour gaming session. These adventures are frequently run at conventions and for demonstrations at game stores. The characters are unlikely to develop much during an adventure because the story only spans a few hours to a few days. To maintain a high level of intensity during the game, the role-playing of character personalities is often sacrificed for dramatic action and conflict. In order to finish the adventure in one session, one-shots are often highly structured and only offer the characters a limited number of choices for each dilemma that they face. Most GMs usually script the plot to establish the beginning and middle of the story, and have a rough outline of the story ending that can be influenced by the players' actions (for example, will the villain win, lose, or escape?)

The GM's decision on whether to run a campaign, mini-campaign, or one-shot adventure should hinge on a number of important factors:

- Does the scope of the GM's ideas require a minimum number of game sessions to complete?
- How much time are the players willing to commit to the game?
- Is the game introductory in nature, or is it for experienced players? Will it run at a gaming convention with people who have never met before or with players and a GM who are familiar with each other?
- How much role-playing and characterization is desired for the game?

Scale

The "scale" of a campaign describes the importance of the heroes to the world as a whole, from relatively obscure to vitally important. Heroes are the most important people in the campaign, but not necessarily the world

Major Heroes

The player characters may be the most powerful, the most experienced, or the most respected heroes in the world — or all of the above! They may also be the only heroes in the world, or the only ones capable of really making a difference. Everything these heroes do matters, and they are likely to draw a lot of attention because they are so important. Likewise, a great deal of responsibility rests with them. If they cannot handle a problem, then there is nobody else who can.

Standard Heroes

As the name suggests, the characters are not the only ones in the world, although they may be the only ones in their region. Perhaps they are defenders of a major city or small nation. Their actions are important and their absence is sure to be noticed, but there may be other heroes who can take over if they fail or something happens to them.

Minor Heroes

These folks are the "farm teams," often made up of younger or less-experienced heroes, trainees, and those just starting out. They have not earned a major reputation, though they have the respect of some people. They may be up-and-coming heroes of tomorrow or possibly heroes who are past their prime and fading into obscurity.

Obscure Heroes

These heroes are best reserved for tragic or humorous games. These are the real "second-stringers" to which nobody pays much attention. It may be because their powers are nearly useless (like becoming invisible only when nobody is looking), because their costumes and code-names are silly, or because they simply do not have what it takes to be major heroes. A group of obscure heroes trying to make a name for themselves is a staple of comedic superhero stories. Obscure heroes can also show up as has-beens or washouts in a more gritty and realistic superhero campaign.

Setting

Comic books have used settings from ancient history, the modern day, the far future, and distant worlds. *Silver Age Sentinels* games can take advantage of all these settings and more. Nearly any place or time is a potential setting for your campaign.

Fantasy World

The opposite of the futuristic setting is the fantasy world, where technology is primitive (usually medieval at best) but wizards command powerful magic. This world might be Earth in the distant past, when magic ruled, or it could be the distant future, after the collapse of technological civilization and the rise of magic to replace it. Alternatively, it might be an Earth-like world in another dimension altogether, possibly connected to a more modern superhero world (for crossover purposes). Heroes in this setting may be a member of one of the many traditional fantasy races: elves, dwarves, halflings, dragons, etc.

Far Future

The far future offers a ray of hope. Humanity has spread amongst the stars, possibly encountering many alien races. An interstellar civilization travels between worlds at faster-than-light speeds. Heroes in the far future are often from alien worlds. They may be protectors of a particular planet or star system or they might travel the universe on board a spaceship, righting wrongs and giving aid where it's needed.

Golden Age

The Golden Age setting is roughly from 1935-1945 — the end of the Great Depression to the Second World War. This is the era where comic book heroes got their start in 1939; before them people thrilled to the adventures of heroes in pulp magazines. Golden Age heroes are not usually as powerful as their modern day counterparts (although there are some notable exceptions) and the tone is generally more heroic and straightforward.

Historical, Victorian and Gaslight

The Victorian era, strictly speaking, spans from about 1837 to 1901. While "superheroes" did not exist, per se, there were great detectives (Sherlock Holmes), wondrous fairy stories (the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, and *Alice in Wonderland*), and dark horror (such as

Edgar Allen Poe's macabre tales), any of which can provide tremendous inspiration for your campaign. The characters could be typical heroes of the time, or you could run an alternate history (such as Victorian Steampunk) where strange powers and unusual inventions abound. You can also easily span outwards from the Victorian age to early turn-of-the-century gaslight stories. Characters can range from wary investigators of things-best-left-unnamed (like H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos) to the mystery men of the early pulps. DC Comics has used these ideas extensively as fresh backdrops for their iconic characters, in their *Elseworlds* line.

Historical, Wild West

Comics have told the stories of many Wild West heroes and gunfighters. Some heroes have costumes and fancy powers (usually minor magical abilities or clever tricks), but most are just extraordinary men and women out on the frontier. Wild West heroes are typically even more low-powered than Golden Age heroes. On the other hand, you can create a truly "Weird" West game by allowing for more powerful Attributes and adding bizarre elements such as aliens (alien bounty hunters, gambler, gunslingers), magic (Native American, stage magicians), and "steampunk" technology.

Modern Day

By far the most common setting is a modern world, but with the addition of superheroes, supervillains, and all that comes with them. A modern-day setting offers many advantages, not the least of which is familiarity. There is no need for you to explain to the players details concerning various nations and cities, since everyone is already familiar with them. All you need to do is highlight the differences between the superhero world and the current world, such as the addition of fictional cities and countries, or any effect heroes and villains may have had on history. The world setting of Empire City is ideal for a modern day campaign. See World Building (page 200) for some ideas.

Combined Worlds

One of the great things about comics is that nearly anything can show up in the story. Mutant cyborg sorcerers grappling with alien vampires from the 10th dimension over mystical artifacts from sunken Atlantis or Lemuria is not an unreasonable idea. Elements from other genres mix-and-match easily.

In these worlds, you can borrow your favourite fictional or RPG setting and use it for your *Silver Age Sentinels* game. Have a favourite sci-fi or horror setting with already developed worlds and culture? Just add some superheroes and villains to it and you are ready to go. Even if you do not borrow these other worlds wholesale, you can always have heroes from your regular *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign drop in and visit for an adventure or two. Time or dimensional travel can send superheroes to other worlds (accidentally or deliberately), so there is nothing stopping you from adding an infinity of new worlds in which your heroes can have adventures.

Near Future

In the comics, the future within a hundred years of current day is often plagued with trouble. Technology is more advanced, but Earth still faces many threats and needs heroes to overcome them. The threats may include ecological disasters, plagues, greedy megacorporations, corrupt governments, alien invasion, the after-effects of a devastating war, and others. Into this troubled world comes a new breed of heroes ready to tackle it. Near-future heroes are often outcasts, working outside society and the law in order to help make things better.

Tone

The tone of a campaign is how serious or light-hearted it is and how it deals with mature issues such as violence, death, pain, suffering, and other "adult" themes. Tone can have a significant impact on both the feel of a campaign and the types of characters and stories that are appropriate for it. A gun-toting vigilante who hunts and kills criminals, for example, might be considered a villain in a four-colour campaign, but a viable player character in a graphic or mature campaign and commonplace in a dark and gritty campaign.

Like other aspects of a campaign, the GM and players should discuss the tone of the game before play begins to make sure they are in agreement.

Comedic

A comedic campaign is very light-hearted, played entirely for laughs. Heroes and villains are campy, cartoonish, or comical (often all three). Violence is common, but no one ever really gets hurt. Most NPCs are buffoons and stereotypes, and anything is possible so long as it is funny. Comic examples include: *Howard the Duck, Plastic Man, Tank Girl, The Tick, Top 10.*

Dark and Gritty

The division between good and evil is gone, and everything is presented in shades of grey. There are no real heroes, only antiheroes and grim vigilantes. Anyone claiming to be a true and upright hero is probably a liar covering up a secret. Villains are often psychotic or depraved; violence is both common and bloody, with death the most frequent outcome of combat. Governments and other major organizations are corrupt and untrustworthy at worst, incompetent at best. Comic examples include: *Judge Dredd, Hellblazer, Preacher, Punisher, Spawn.*

Four Colour

This is the "default" tone of *Silver Age Sentinels*. It tries to capture the feel of the Silver Age of comics in a modern setting. Heroes are good and villains are evil. There are some anti-heroes and a few noble or misunderstood villains, but otherwise the division between the two is mostly clear. People expect heroes to do the right thing and uphold a certain code. Among other things, heroes do not kill, and even villains are loathe to kill out of hand, so violence is cinematic and death virtually unknown; any time a villain seems to be dead it usually turns out not to be true. Usually the heroes win in the end and things are resolved happily. Comic examples include: *Action Comics, Amazing Fantasy, Astro City, Avengers, Ultimate Spider-Man.*



Red Minstrel

Graphic Novel

The graphic novel style is more realistic and intense than four-colour. Stories tackle mature themes and heroes are both human and fallible. The villains exhibit shades of grey, more misguided than evil in some cases. Violence is often realistic, and may result in death or serious injury. The division between good and evil is mostly clear, but with some ambiguity in between. Some aspects of the Empire City campaign setting more closely resemble this style than that of four colour. Comic examples include: *The Dark Knight Returns, The Death of Captain Marvel, Kingdom Come, Marvels, Watchmen.*

Mature

A mature tone is a serious one. Characters (heroes and villains) are just as human and fallible as anyone else and moral codes are much more a matter of individual choice. Heroes are usually willing to bend (or even break) the law when needed and villains may be quite twisted or verging on antiheroes. Characters' actions have serious consequences, frequently with realistic limits on superpowers as well. Violence can get nasty, and death and injury happen often. Superpowered "slugfests" may be rare. Comic examples include: *Authority, Planetary, Powers, StormWatch, Ultimate X-Men.*

Sample Adventures

This section outlines eight possible game concepts. You can use these ideas as "game seeds" from which a single adventure or entire campaign can unfold.

Cold Warriors

Scale: Major Heroes
Setting: Historical (Cold War)
Tone: Four Colour

In the 1960s, the world is divided between two sides: East and West. The Western nations, led by the United States, stand for capitalism, democracy and freedom; The Eastern Bloc, led by the Soviet Union, seeks to spread their communist regime throughout the world. It is not an overt conflict, but a cold war, one best fought by secret warriors. For years both governments have been conducting experiments to create supersoldiers, the newest in a long series of weapons. Some of them have been successful, and those superagents struggle against each other. For some, the struggle is overt, with costumed American champions fending off the

aggression of the Reds in Eastern Europe and on the home front. For others, it is covert — working against Soviet spies in exotic places around the world. Can the heroes keep the world safe from the Red Menace? Can the Soviet heroes overthrow the bloated and debauched American government?

Difference Engines

Scale: Minor Heroes
Setting: Historical, Victorian
Tone: Four Colour

It is an Age of Wonders where the sun never sets on the British Empire. The never-ending march of Science has created marvels such as the world has never seen, from steam-powered robots to calculating engines. Mysticism is far from gone, only banished to the shadows. Secret lodges of magicians meet even in the city of London, while people hold seances in their homes and consult with gypsies and mediums. Into this age come men and women with astounding powers. Some are created by science, from secret serums, vitality rays, exotic elements, and technological gadgetry. Others owe their abilities to rare herbs from Darkest Africa, training in the occult arts, ancient artifacts and talismans, or the Secrets of the Mysterious Orient. Some are devoted to Virtue and Justice while others use their powers for Evil. Sinister masterminds plot the overthrow of nations while crime lords command legions of followers to loot and plunder. Stalwart adventurers and heroes stand between them and their goals, fighting in the name of Queen and Country.

Fast Times at Hero High

Scale: Obscure Heroes
Setting: Modern Day
Tone: Comedic

As a teenager, you have enough problems: school, parents, work, getting a date, etc., etc., etc. The last thing you need to worry about is bursting into flames or growing to the size of a house any time you get nervous. Unfortunately, that is exactly the kind of situation you are in. Sure, having superpowers is fun sometimes — being able to do homework at blazing speeds, to say nothing of the possibilities of x-ray vision — but as long as you are still in school, you do not want anyone else to know what you can do. You might tell your parents about it (if they are really cool) but otherwise there are just a few friends you can trust because they are in the same boat as you. Of course, you know there are some other kids with powers who are definitely not in your circle of friends. They are bad news, and you do your best to steer clear of them, while keeping an eye out to make sure they do not cause trouble. You hang out with your friends and practice with your powers, keeping the secret from everyone else. Maybe if you are lucky — or use your powers to help you out — you will get to go to that ritzy private school you have heard so much about.

Glory Days

Scale: Major Heroes
Setting: Golden Age
Tone: Four Colour

It is 1941 and the world is at war. On the battlefields of Europe, Hitler's *Übermenschen*, supermen, have made their first appearance. They are capable of lifting tanks, bouncing gunfire off their chests, and more. From the South Pacific come reports of fantastic warriors of the Japanese Empire. True American heroes oppose these Axis supersoldiers, alongside allies from Britain. Rumours abound that mysterious superheroes aid the French Resistance. Can the heroes of the Allies turn the tide of the Axis powers and help to win the war, keeping the world safe for freedom and democracy?

Protectors of Reality

Scale: Major Heroes
Setting: Combined Worlds
Tone: Graphic Novel

The cosmos seems like an efficient machine but it is not that simple. There are aspects of the universe that are guarded by Powers beyond the comprehension of mortal man — embodiments of cosmic forces such as Death, Time, Order, Life, and others. These beings are the appointed Protectors of their aspect of reality. Normally, they exist in harmony, but Protectors occasionally revolt and place the importance of their aspects above all others. When this happens, the other Protectors must band together to restore the balance. There are also threats from beyond reality as well ... ancient and titanic forces that would corrupt or tear apart the universe for their own purposes. The Protectors stand at the watchtowers of reality, keeping these forces at bay. When a plot by a rogue Protector results in the destruction of several others, certain mortals are chosen as replacements to take up their new mantles and fill the roles. Can they learn how to use their vast powers in time to stem cosmic catastrophe? Which of their fellow Protectors are responsible for the deaths of their predecessors?

Star League

Scale: Major Heroes
Setting: Far Future
Tone: Four Colour

A thousand years in the future, the Stellar Alliance spans hundreds of star systems and civilized worlds, including representatives from dozens of different species. The Alliance has enjoyed generations of peace, but the dark spectre of war looms with the presence of the hostile Krim Empire on the edge of known space. The Krim and their client worlds have conquered all within their path and have now set their sights on the Alliance. Fortunately, the Stellar Alliance has the protection of the Star League, an elite team of heroes gathered from the many worlds within the Alliance, each with a unique power or ability. In the past, the Star League has prevented planetary disasters, broken interstellar criminal cartels, stopped space pirates, and defeated would-be conquerors. They face their greatest challenge with the Krim and their combination of science and sorcery. There are troubling rumours of a traitor, a Krim collaborator, within the ranks of the League itself! Can they be true?



Street Justice

Scale: Standard Heroes
Setting: Modern Day
Tone: Mature

The streets of the city — controlled by gangs, mobsters, pushers, and other scum — are not safe any more. Criminals have bought off the police and blackmailed the politicians so nobody can touch them. The criminals in the city think they have won and the streets are theirs for the taking. They are wrong. Someone has to fight back, and there are heroes willing to work outside the law and do whatever it takes to cut the cancer out of the city's heart and ensure that it never comes back. When the first few drug deals or arms shipments were busted, nobody worried, but panic ensued when the first gang leaders and mob bosses were eliminated. Now the mobs are hiring extra muscle of their own. Most of the heroes do not have substantial powers, just their training, their dedication, and a few fancy gadgets. A few of them have abilities beyond those of ordinary people, but it remains to be seen if it will be enough to clean up the city.

The Outcasts

Scale: Ordinary Heroes
Setting: Near Future
Tone: Dark and Gritty

It is the 21st century. Do you know what your children are? In a world not so far from now, things have begun to change. Evolution is no longer a slow and invisible process. Some people are born ... different. This new breed of humanity has powers and abilities far beyond those of their predecessors, abilities that can reshape the world that may spell the end for *Homo sapiens*. Some want nothing more than to use their powers to help make the world a better place, but others consider themselves superior to humans, destined to take their place at the top of the evolutionary pyramid by force. Normal people are frightened by what they cannot understand, while the government seeks to control and legislate this new power in the world. The heroes fight to protect a world that fears them against a threat only they can fully understand.

Game Mastering Techniques

Once you are comfortable with the basics of running games and creating adventures, you may want to try some of the techniques suggested here. Do not introduce them all in a single adventure, though. Used sparingly, these techniques can add depth and detail to your *Silver Age Sentinels* game.

Bluebooking

A useful tool for dealing with subplots and much of the "behinds the scenes" material in a campaign is bluebooking. Gaming author and novelist Aaron Allston coined the term in his book *Strike Force*. Each player has a notebook — Allston's players

used blue-covered college exam books, thus the name "bluebooking." Whenever a player wants to communicate something privately to the GM or another player (in character), he or she writes it down in the bluebook and passes it to the other person, who can write a response, and so forth. Entire conversations or scenes can be played out in this way.

Bluebooking offers several benefits. First and foremost, it is private, allowing players to handle subplots and other matters "off stage." This can give the characters a greater feeling of realism since they have private events going on outside the regular. It allows you to convey information to certain players without telling everyone else about it. The privacy of the communication is also liberating for some players when it comes to role-playing. Players may be more comfortable playing out a romantic scene, for example, in a bluebook rather than live at the gaming table.

Bluebooks also offer the advantage of permanency and record keeping. When a notebook is filled, it can be saved for future reference. This way, you and your players know exactly what took place in a particular conversation. Some players may even be interested in writing expanded stories based on their bluebooks or making them available for others to read, giving the other players a new insight on the campaign.

There are some drawbacks to using bluebooks, however. First, they are time consuming. It takes much longer to play out a scene in writing than it does live, so bluebooks are best reserved for short scenes or conversations. Otherwise, they can take time away from the regular game. Bluebooks also require a lot of your attention and thus should not be used too often during a game; otherwise, the other players must sit idly while you write in one player's bluebook. Your group should set limits on bluebook use in game.

Dream Sequences

In a superhero world, dreams can be much more real than they seem. Dream sequences can include actual dreams (or daydreams), hallucinations, nightmares, visions, or even stories told in the game. For example, a hero might tell a bedtime story to his or her child, about fairy-tale versions of the player characters, and you can actually run the players through the story as an offbeat kind of adventure, playing fantasy versions of their regular characters.

Dream sequences offer the advantage of flexibility, since nearly anything can happen in a dream. Dreams often are not even linear, jumping from one scene to the next. Used wisely, this can give dream sequences the proper surreal feeling. It can make for an interesting adventure where you can undertake actions you normally would not in the campaign, such as killing the player characters or major NPCs, or destroying the world. Players can feel cheated when you say, "and then you wake up, it was all a dream," at the end of an adventure, however, so use this method cautiously.

Additionally, villains may engineer dream sequences for many reasons. One villain might craft particular dreams for the heroes in order to siphon the psychic energy they generate while struggling against dream threats. Another villain might use dreams to torture or trap the heroes, placing them into dream versions of their ideal lives; that is, until they start to pick up on the little inconsistencies that tell them what they are experiencing is not real. A psychic or mystical villain may be able to invade the dreams of others and prove that when you die in your dreams, you die in reality, too.

Dream sequences are a great excuse for "imaginary stories" where the heroes or their world behave differently, from the aforementioned fairy tale world to post-apocalyptic to alternate history.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks take a step back in time to tell about events that have already happened. The most common flashbacks in the comics concern the history or origins of heroes and villains, although other types of flashbacks are possible.

The primary difficulty in playing out a flashback scene is that certain elements are predetermined. For example, the hero obviously does not die in the retelling of his first solo adventure (unless he somehow came back to life), since he is still alive years later. This can cause problems if actions do proceed correctly during the flashback. You may have to nudge the story more than usual to keep it on the right track.

Flashbacks may exclude some player characters, so they should be kept as short as possible unless everyone has something to do during the flashback. That does not necessarily mean playing their regular characters, however. The players might temporarily assume the roles of characters from the flashback, freeing you to set the scene without keeping track of all the NPCs.

Flashbacks can also create non-linear adventures. For example, the heroes encounter a villain who fights them briefly, then vanishes in a blinding flash of light that leaves the heroes momentarily dazed. They return to their headquarters and their normal routine, but begin having strange dreams about committing crimes. Unfortunately, when they awake, they discover they actually have committed those crimes. They either run from the law or are arrested and taken into custody. That is when the other group of heroes shows up, looking exactly like the player characters, and accusing them of being fakes!

Flash back to immediately after the fight with the villain. The heroes come out of their daze trapped in the villain's lair. He gloats, revealing he has created magical duplicates of them. The duplicates have been sent back in their place, which will further the villain's schemes and ruin the heroes' good names simultaneously. After they escape from the villain's death trap and rush to confront their doppelgangers, they will return to the point where they show up to make the accusation seen in their dreams!

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing involves providing clues or hints to the characters (and players) about what is still to come in the adventure or campaign. Your goal is to tantalize the players and pique their interest without giving away too much and spoiling the surprises to come. One example of foreshadowing is the linking of minor events that make up part of a master villain's larger plot. As the heroes pursue each crime, they discover clues and hints that connect the crimes together. Once they know there is something more going on,

they can begin an investigation that will lead them to the master villain's plot just in time to intervene.

If you have mystical or precognitive characters in your campaign, you can use them to provide hints about the future in the form of visions or dreams. Perhaps a precognitive heroine gets regular visions about a mysterious man standing over the defeated heroes, laughing. Then, in her secret identity, she is introduced to the same man at a society party! Who is he, and does he pose a threat to the heroine and her teammates? Perhaps he is really a villain, but it is also possible that the man in the vision is not him but a shapeshifter or disguised villain. He might be possessed or some other explanation, giving you room to plan.

Finally, you can insert "asides" into your adventures. These are short scenes you describe to the players ... not their characters. This is just like the comics, in which the scene shifts to a mysterious shadowy figure, who gloats about his plans for the heroes, often watching them from afar. It is intended to foreshadow events for the reader (i.e. the player), even though the heroes are unaware of it.

Humour

It is not a coincidence that comic books contain the word "comic." Originally, comic books were supposed to be funny; the adventure stories about superheroes came later. You may enjoy injecting humour into your game occasionally, to keep it from getting too serious. Naturally, it depends on the tone of your campaign, but even a normally serious campaign can benefit from a little humour now and then.

The trick is to make sure that the humour flows from the characters and events within the game rather than just trading jokes around the gaming table. Introduce a wacky or zany villain, preferably one able to take a lot of punishment or one that the heroes cannot easily defeat. Better yet, introduce an opponent the heroes must overcome using humour themselves, such as a demon whose only weakness is genuine laughter or a cosmic being that has come to Earth to understand this thing humans call "comedy." You could also introduce a villain who can bring cartoon characters (or role-playing game characters!) to life. Have alien teenagers come to Earth looking for objects as part of a galactic scavenger hunt, or just a place to party. The possibilities are endless.

Unless your campaign is supposed to be comedic all the time, use humorous scenes and adventures only occasionally. They should be a change of pace, otherwise the tone of your campaign will change.

Subplots

You can hook the interest of the players by using subplots — minor story lines that focus on just one or two characters. For example, one hero might have a subplot about searching for information about her forgotten past, while another has a romantic subplot about the attractive attorney in whom he is interested.

The characters' Defects often suggest subplots, particularly ones like Cursed, Famous, Ism, Nemesis, Owned, Recurring Nightmares, Significant Other, and Skeleton in the Closet. Perhaps a hero who has been discriminated against chooses to perform in public service announcements or support hate-crimes legislation (possibly embroiling the hero in controversy). Heroes often have day jobs, romantic relationships, personal issues, and hobbies that consume much of their free time.

Some players may not be interested in subplots for their characters while some may enjoy them very much ... so much so that there is always a danger of subplots overshadowing the main plot. Do not allow one character's subplots to dominate the game, although you can take an interesting subplot and use it as a lead-in for a longer adventure. For example, the hero searching for the truth about her past could discover a lead that starts the plot of an upcoming scenario, giving the character a personal stake in the events.

Using Powers Unexpectedly

Sometimes, players will want to use their Powers in ways that are not covered by the rules. Consider the following three solutions to this problem:

Use the Pushing Your Powers Rules

On page 135 you will find useful guidelines about Power pushing. Players spend Advancements Points to push their characters' Powers in specific ways. This method creates a mechanic to circumvent the rules for each Attribute, and is a great technique to keep a balanced game.

Low Levels of Dynamic Powers

Suggesting that all players assign low Levels of the Dynamic Powers Attribute (page 40) to their character during creation offers you a safety net when players want to do the unexpected. Since Dynamic Powers is such an open-ended Attribute, players can explore their characters Power themes — speed, combat, magic, strength, etc. — within the rules.

Just Fake It

When in doubt, make it up. If a character uses an Attribute in an unexpected way, adjudicate on its use and move on with the game. This technique avoids the rules completely, and does not impede the flow of your game session.

Sources of Inspiration

Sources of ideas for *Silver Age Sentinels* adventures are everywhere in the real world. Game Masters looking to feed their creative fires should consider the following:

Books

You can get many story ideas from reading both fiction and non-fiction books — mystery, fantasy, SF, biographies, real science, true crime, history, etc. When you come across a particularly interesting character or idea, ask yourself, "how would this work in my campaign?" or "what would this be like in a superhero world?"

Comics

Naturally, comic books are a prime source of inspiration, since they are the source upon which *Silver Age Sentinels* is based. Your local comic book shop may have dozens or hundreds of titles in stock, covering all of the various types of stories discussed in this

chapter, and more. Don't forget about the fifty-plus years of back issues! You may set your campaign in a world based on an existing comic line or you might just get some general ideas from reading them. Beware of copying plots exactly from the comics, however, since your players may have read the same story. The same can be said of borrowing plots from books, TV shows, or movies as well.

Internet

The internet is a source for nearly every type of information. You can find websites dedicated to various comic book characters (some of them astoundingly detailed) as well as sites devoted to superhero role-playing in general, or *Silver Age Sentinels* role-playing specifically.

Real Life

You can also draw inspiration from everyday life. Take inspiration from current events and news items, or turn your last vacation or visit to a museum into an adventure idea.

RPGs

Other role-playing games (superhero or otherwise) can provide ideas and inspiration for your campaign. Superhero RPGs are full of ideas that are easy to use; just change the game stats to work with *Silver Age Sentinels*. You can also grab ideas from other games. A space station from a sci-fi RPG may be the ideal secret orbital base for a hero or villain team. A monster from a fantasy RPG may be unleashed on an unsuspecting city. Alien races can visit (or invade) Earth, gadgets can show up in a hero or villain's arsenal, and so forth.

Television and Movies

TV shows and movies, particularly ones about superheroes, can give you ideas for characters and plots. They are useful for plots because they tend to have simple, self-contained stories that can be told in a short period of time. Many of your favourites may be available on video or DVD to rent or buy.

Technology and Gaming: A Changing Landscape

The face of role-playing today is drastically different from that of the '70s and '80s. Technology has had a significant impact on gaming, broadening the definitions of "campaign" and "game" to include a plethora of options available to households with computers and internet connections. Even if you are a traditionalist and prefer keeping role-playing as weekly face-to-face interactions with your local group of friends, computers can still augment your gaming experience in unobtrusive ways. You can greatly enrich your *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign by taking advantage of even a small fraction of what computers can offer to you and your players.

www.your-campaign.com

Establishing a website for your campaign showcases your creativity to the gaming public and is an ideal way to keep players up to date between sessions. Additionally, by posting important documents on the site, you can ensure the players always have access to vital gaming records — session logs, character backgrounds, world history and timeline, cast of NPCs, maps, and perhaps even their own character sheets and advancements. Documents posted on your webpage have several advantages over printed paper ones as well: they saves on photocopy/printing costs, they can be updated frequently without reprinting, and the players can access your website from any computer (even while on vacation).

If you do not have your own website already, one of your players or friends may be willing to host it for you. Perhaps a player will even design and programme your site in exchange for Background Points! If you don't have these options, many companies will host your webpages for a small fee, or even for free. Search the internet for "web hosting" for more information.

Private Emails

Email provides you with a fast and easy method to communicate with your players between sessions concerning campaign meta-issues: where and when the next game will be held, who is responsible for bringing munchies, social events you plan to do before or after the session, etc. It is also a great medium for one-on-one role-playing between sessions, for both player-GM and player-player interactions. A player's character might wish to pursue a lone thread from your campaign, but since no other character is involved, you may decide there is not enough time to role-play it during the normal session. Solo email role-playing, while not as dynamic or exciting as face-to-face interactions, can supplement your campaign by giving that player a chance to pursue his or her goals. This method of role-playing is also useful to further develop the backgrounds of the players' characters, rather than simply treating them as historical footnotes.

With your approval, email can also keep your players' characters connected between sessions. Players can discuss strategy and tactics, develop bonds that cannot be role-played during the sessions due to time constraints, or simply get to know one another's characters better. If the players copy you on the emails, you can comment on the players' messages when required or desired.

Email Lists

Email lists (also known as listserves) are similar to private emails, but all people on the list receive each and every message. This communication method is useful for game announcements and document distribution, especially if you don't have a website. Your internet service provider (ISP) might offer listserve creation as a feature (often handled by a programme called "majordomo"), or you can use one of the many free mailing list services offered by companies on the web. One of the best free services is Yahoo Groups (http://www.yahoogroups.com), which has an intuitive interface and many customizable options. You can set up your email list to allow only approved members (i.e. your players) to join, or open your list to allow anyone to sign up. This latter option is not usually a good idea for a closed campaign, since only a small group of people are involved in the game.

Guardians Of Order hosts many email lists for our fans, including one for *Silver Age Sentinels*. To learn more about our official internet support, see page 331.

Play-by-Email

While a traditional gaming group of one Game Master and handful of players that meets weekly or biweekly to play is perhaps the best way to enjoy a role-playing campaign, forming and maintaining such a group is not always possible (or desired). An alternative to this is a game played over email with players across the city, or even around the world. Play-by-email games trace their roots to the '70s and '80s when play-by-mail games — people playing scenarios by sending messages and role-playing through the postal system — were popular. Although the face-to-face interaction is lost in an email game, it allows friends (or perhaps strangers) from vastly different locations to game together over cyberspace. As the GM, you send messages to all players, describing the events taking place in your superhero world. In turn, the players send you and the other players emails describing their actions and reactions. You adjudicate their responses, and continue the process by letting the players know how their actions transpired.

One main difference between traditional role-playing and an email RPG involves the game system. Frequently, the Game Master does not roll dice to resolve conflicts, but rather decides what would be best for the players and campaign and describes the results through email. Email games usually grant you more control over the story and plot than a standard campaign.

Cyberchatting

Online chatting is a great way to supplement both traditional campaigns and play by email games. If you and your players can find a chat room (preferably a private one) somewhere on the internet, you can meet there at scheduled times between sessions to discuss issues in real-time. A chat is similar to email communication, except the messages and responses can often be sent much more quickly and efficiently to everyone participating in the chat. A telephone conference call is a good analogy to an internet chat, except the chat is naturally slower but there are no long distance charges. Some chat rooms have an archive feature, which allows you to capture a text document of the chat transcript and post it on your campaign website; players who were unable to attend the chat can then catch up on what was said.

One popular form of cyberchatting is organized on-line campaigns known by many names: MUD, MUSH, MUX, MU, MOO, and others (derivations of "MU," which stands for "Multi-User"). These games are usually free to play to anyone on the internet (thousands of them are available), and might be a great way to meet other like-minded players and form a play-by-email game.

Shared Worlds

Although an entire book could be written on the concept of shared worlds, this treatment will be brief. A shared role-playing world is akin to a game setting controlled and directed by multiple Game Masters (and perhaps players). Each GM contributes his or her ideas to the direction and destiny of the world, while considering the input of the other participants. Each GM then uses the co-operatively created setting in his or her respective campaign. Feedback from the results of each role-playing session is then contributed to further develop the world. The process yields a living campaign world that is vast, intricate, and dynamic, shared by all those who participated.

The creation of a shared world is perhaps best facilitated though an email list with an archive function, or a website message board. Guardians Of Order has established a message board for the shared world setting of Empire City to help players and GMs develop this fictional Earth in greater detail for everyone's use. See page 331 for more information.

Networking During Play

If your entire gaming group is tech savvy and equipped, perhaps all players could bring their portable computers to each session and network them together. This decadent set-up can be used to send instant messages between players and the GM, distribute maps and illustrations of places and people, and even generate random numbers for everyone to see (a sort of public dice rolling). Computer networks may have an important place in the future of face-to-face role-playing.

Tech and the Ongoing Game

If you can use a computer to supplement your superhero campaign, why not other forms of technology? Cellular phones offer a wide range of services, such as paging and instant messaging, that may assist you expand your game into an engrossing 24/7 campaign. In-character phone calls are a fast and easy way to inject adventure into your normal sessions, especially if they are made to one of your players by a mysterious third party! Consider how some of the following can be used to turn your weekly game into a daily event for your players: faxes, custom burned CDs or DVD, camcorders, postcards from exotic locations mailed to your players, cryptic notes in school lockers or on the radio, classified ads to the player characters in the school or local newspaper, etc. The options are limitless.

Remember to tell your players about some of your ideas in advance, though, so you don't freak them out when they receive phone calls from the Empire City police commissioner at 3 A.M., begging for rescue from the clutches of their characters' arch nemesis!

Convention Gaming

Each year, hundreds of thousands of gamers worldwide spend one or more weekends playing games with complete strangers at game conventions. The largest in the world is probably Spiel (held in Essen, Germany), which hosts over 150,000 gamers each year (although much of the focus is on board games). In the Americas, both GenCon (25,000+ gamers) and Origins (8,000+ gamers) are well attended, attracting people from all over the world. Large regional cons may have attendance in the high 100s to low 1000s, while the small ones may only have a few dozen participants. Regardless of size, the format is the same: show up at the con, pay your registration fee, sign up for games as a player or GM, and have a great time!

Silver Age Sentinels is an ideal convention game, since the rules are easy to learn and everyone knows what a superhero is. If you are new to running convention scenarios, but are planning to give it a try, consider the following sections carefully.

Constructing Adventures

Role-playing games run at conventions are called a variety of names: one-shots, adventures, modules, demos, scenarios, tournaments, and many others. Usually, you would design a short scenario (2-6 hours) for a small group of players (5-8 perhaps), focusing on a single idea. While the stories behind adventures vary greatly, you may wish to follow a traditional formula.

Level of Difficulty

The first question you need to ask yourself is: "How much knowledge of *Silver Age Sentinel* do the players need?" If you run a novice or beginner game, you will probably have some people sign up who have never played the system before. If you indicate that the game is for advanced or experienced players only, a player could show up who knows the rulebook inside and out. Let the convention organizers know the experience level you expect from the players so everyone can be better prepared.

Pregenerated or Created?

When running a convention one-shot, you might ask each player to create a new character with restrictions specific to the game. This may be your best option, but it can also pose some problems as well. If some players have never played a Tri-Srar System game before, you will need to provide them with a copy of the rules and help them create characters. Additionally, character creation may steal precious minutes from your game time, since most games have a fixed duration.

Instead of having players create characters, you can construct a handful of custom-built characters, with attached background history, for the game before the convention begins. These pregenerated characters are given to the players, allowing you to start the game right away. One major drawback, however, might arise from one player's desire to have a different character. For example, if you give a teenage telepath character to a player who wants to play a venerable martial arts master instead, you have a problem.

Between the previous two option lies a third: a partly pregenerated, partly created character. You may give the players 75 Point template characters, for instance, and ask them to add another 50 Points to develop and customize the designs. This method can save valuable time compared to players creating characters from scratch, but still provides flexibility in character concepts. Alternarively, players can create characters using the random creation rules on page 322.

Be Prepared

You should assume that the players will show up to your game completely unprepared, and consequently make preparations for them. Be sure to have enough dice, paper, character sheets, and pens for each player, in case they forget to bring their own. Wear a watch so you can keep track of time. If you can manage it, bring one or more extra copies of the *Silver Age Sentinels* core rulebook for players to reference before/during the game. If that's not possible, bringing copies of the *Fast Play Rules* is a good idea. Purchase all the drinks and snacks you will need during the game early, to avoid disturbing the flow of the story later. Encourage players to do the same. If it's important, ensure your gaming friends know where you are during the adventure should they need to reach you.

Props

Props can greatly add to the atmosphere of your game adventure if you use them effectively and sparingly. Since you only have a limited time to play, and you might not have met any of the players before the game, using props can convey your ideas more intensely than words alone.

Consider how you can use the following props in your convention scenario: deluxe character sheets in specially designed folders, short history documents for the setting, city maps, headquarter floor plans, illustrations of NPC heroes and villains, trinkets that players will find during the game, pre-recorded sounds or discussions and a portable stereo so you can play them, costumes, and miniatures and a battle map if your adventure is more tactical in nature.

K.I.S.

Keep It Simple. Your one-shor adventures should have a single, clear focus, with a linear plot and clearly defined endgame outline — the exact opposite of a well-rounded campaign. You must ensure that your players do not have too much to accomplish; it will take them time to adjust to the game and consequently they will not be as quick to resolve the plot conflicts as your normal gaming group. After all, the players are interacting with a group of people they have never met before and may be a little uneasy. You must ensure the players do not get distracted chasing unimportant plot tangents if you want them to finish the adventure.

Four Short Hours

Players arrive 10 minutes late (3:50). Introduce yourself and hand out character sheets and other information (3:40). Answer questions (3:25). Wait until Joe Gamer returns from the men's room (3:20). Answer more questions (3:10). Set the scene (3:00). Now you only have three hours left to play the game and it hasn't even started yet! Knock off another 30 minutes minimum if you want players to create new characters. 2:30 and time's wasting....

Oh yeah — don't forget that half the players will be leaving 15 minutes early so they can grab a bite to eat before their next game begins.

Something for Everyone

Perhaps one of the most difficult parts of running a con game is balancing time and action amongst the players. In your home campaign, you can fix the mistake of giving one player less time during one session by giving him or her additional role-playing opportunities the next time the group meets. At a convention, you do not have that support and consequently must get it right the first time.

Players want you to present them with opposition where their strengths can shine: players with strong or combat-oriented characters want to fight enemies; players with smart characters want to solve mysteries; and players with spiritual characters want to

explore funky, non-traditional occurrences. Take a close look at the composition of your player characters and ensure the plot has something for each character to accomplish, both as a group and as individuals.

Wrapping Up

By keeping an eye on your watch, you can predict whether your scenario will finish during the "correct" scene or not. If it looks like the adventure will be unfinished at the end of the scheduled time, you must adjust the action slightly to draw the plot to a conclusion before times runs out. Perhaps that means skipping a planned encounter, or having the enemy leave additional clues that direct the group to the climax of the story. The players will be very unsatisfied if you run out of time in the middle of battle, with the conclusion no where in sight.

If you can manage it, finish the game a few minutes early so you can gather your belongings and answer questions that the players might have. They will likely want to know what really happened, who was really behind the plot, and what will happen to their characters after the adventure.

Did I Win?

Role-playing games are not competitive by nature, but you can establish a scenario where some players are considered to have done better than others (i.e. "won"). This is prevalent in tournament-type scenarios, where the top players from one event advance to the sequel event where they play with others who advance under similar circumstances. It is also important to determine the winners if prizes are provided by the convention.

You know better than anyone else who did the best. "Best" might mean "defeated the most enemies," but it could also mean "solved the most riddles," "saved the most people," or simply "role-played the character most accurately and intelligently." You can decide who won by yourself, but polling all the players in secret (get them to write a name or two on a piece of paper and give it to you) can give you additional insight.

Shared Game Mastering

If you are attending the convention with some of your local gaming friends, you might consider asking one of them to share the Game Mastering with you. Although this is perhaps best suited for games with large numbers of players (12 and up), sharing the responsibility can also benefit the pacing and intensity of an adventure for 4-8 people. If you want to really demonstrate your creative talents, try running a *Silver Age Sentinels* con scenario for 24 players, with 4 Game Masters: you serve as the head GM, while your friends help as assistant GMs. Aside from possible logistical nightmares, the main problem with shared Game Mastering involves the GMs' different styles of play and task resolution. If you decide to run an adventure co-operatively, talk to the other GMs an hour before play begins to set some ground rules — how specific events should be adjudicated, how the Mastering duties will be divided, how the strengths of each individual GM can best be used, etc.

Crossover Games

The crossover game is one of the best character creation alternatives for a convention scenario. For these games, players bring their superhero characters from their home campaigns to the convention and play them in your "parallel Earth" adventure. Obviously, the players will need to know this in advance so they remember to bring their characters, and thus it is vital that you give the convention organizers a suitable description of the game for their preregistration booklet. Crossover games ensure that each player assumes a role with which he or she is comfortable and familiar, and allows you to jump into the action of the scenario right away.

You need to decide whether the characters can be played in the adventure as they are — with any number of Character Points and no restriction on Attributes and Defects — or whether each character needs to be slightly retooled to fit certain specifications (for example, all 150 Point characters, with no Mind Control Attribute allowed). Either choice will work, although the first method is perhaps best suited for more advanced or experienced players who will not be distracted by a Character Point spread amongst the group.

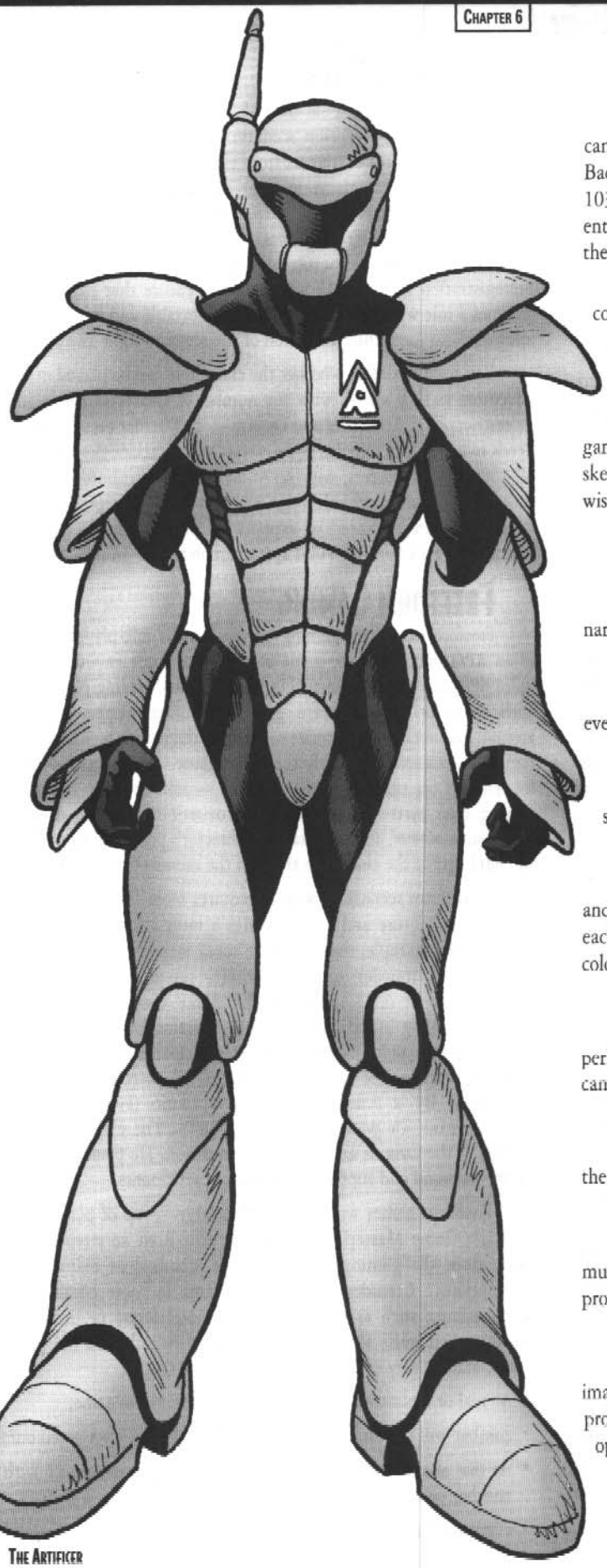
Freeform Gaming

Freeform superhero gaming emphasises the role-playing aspect of an RPG more than the game aspect. The game environment is quite different; rather than sitting at a table and mixing player talk with character talk, freeform games encourage players to walk around, making use of the entire room (or perhaps even building), and remain in-character for nearly the entire game. The players — and for much of the time, the Game Masters — take the roles of actors, playing their parts in a superhero improvisational theatre. You, as head Game Master, also undertake the director's position, using NPCs to loosely guide the characters through the events of the scenario.

A freeform scenario obviously requires more forethought than a regular adventure and often features a more restrictive plot and setting. For example, the adventure could focus on the events of a supernatural murder or grand theft, set in the characters' headquarters or on a small island. Some Game Masters take freeform gaming in a slighrly different direction known as a LARP, or Live-Action Role-Playing. LARP participants frequently wear costumes appropriate for their characters, which could prove very interesting for a *Silver Age Sentinels* scenario (ever wear your underwear outside your clothing in public?). The most ambitious LARPs at the Origins and GenCon conventions are played over the entire weekend and support hundreds of participants.

Freeform games work best with a large group of players and multiple Game Masters. They also benefit from an environment away from the gaming tables that are standard at many game conventions. Consider hosting your game in more comfortable surroundings, such as the convention's hotel lobby or university lounge. You must also set specific ground rules before the game starts, stating very clearly to the participants that:

- no real or replica weapon props are allowed in the game;
- combat will be resolved using the game rules, and not acted out;
- no one should grab, hold, hug, or make physical contact with another participant; and
- everyone should stop what they are doing when a GM says, "freeze."



The Artificer

Contributions and Bonus Points

A great way to encourage player participation in your campaign is to offer Bonus Points for player contributions. Read the Background Points section in the character creation chapter (page 103); player contributions extend that concept throughout the entire campaign. Every player can participate in contributions, since they are not dependent on any single talent or ability.

The number of Bonus Points you assign to players who provide contributions should depend on the amount of work, effort, and/or resources devoted to the task. The number of Points should not exceed the number of Advancement Points you award, however. Players that undertake several contributions should earn additional Bonus Points. Some contributions, such as a diary or game log, require weekly participation; others, such as a character sketch or special contribution, are single efforts. Several players may wish to rotate responsibility for a weekly contribution.

Some examples of contributions are briefly outlined below:

First Person Diary

The player recounts the events of the sessions in a first-person narrative.

Game Log

The player records a third-person description of each session's events.

Character Sketch

The player draws pictures of the player characters, NPCs, or scenes from the campaign.

Campaign Comic

The player creates a comic related to the campaign characters and events. A comic is an ideal contribution for several players, with each person responsible for one part: pencils, inks, writing, colouring, layout/typesetting, etc.

Video Presentation

The player directs a short film of a scene from the campaign (or perhaps some background information), and records it with a camcorder. Many players could contribute to this project.

Website Updating

The player is responsible for maintaining, and perhaps hosting, the campaign website.

Munchies

A player who has more money than time could provide munchies and/or drinks for all the players. This contribution should probably be rotated between several players.

Special Contribution

The nature of a contribution is only limited by your players' imaginations! Players could sculpt images of the characters, provide props for the game, organize special events for the group ... the options are limitless.

Character Quiz

As part of character creation, consider asking your players to provide answers to a character quiz. The quiz is a list of questions that gives you information about the characters' personalities. Sometimes the information is general in scope, but more often it is very specific; it is up to you to interpret the answers' meanings.

Sample questions are provided below, but naturally you can create your own as well. Choose the ones you'd like to pose to your players, and ask them to submit their answers at least a few days before the campaign begins.

- Describe how your character first obtains his or her costume.
- How does your character define "heroism?"
- How does your character get his or her laundry done?
- If your character is plagued by a recurring dream, what would it be?
- Do you have any professional rivals? If so, describe the rivalry.
- What does your character think about the laws of his or her country?
- What emotions does your character not reveal in public?
- What type of fans or followers does your character have?
- Who does your character look to for inspiration? Guidance?
- What would cause your character to kill a villain? A bystander?
- What types of movies or television shows does your character watch?
- Describe your character's first date.
- What are your character's turn-ons and turn-offs?
- To which charities does your character donate time and/or money?
- Describe your character's bedroom.
- What is your character's favourite, and least favourite, food/drink?
- In which comic titles has your character made cross-over appearances?
- Describe your character's first love or crush.
- What are your character's thoughts on death?
- Do "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one?"
- Do "the needs of the one outweigh the needs of the many?"
- Which natural disaster is your character least able to deal with?
- What would your character do if he or she accidentally killed an innocent bystander?
- What is your character's favourite type of pet?
- What guidance can your character offer to a rookie superhero?
- How would your character's family describe the character?
- Describe your character's first superhuman battle.
- If your character could live at any point in time, what period would he or she choose?
- To what lengths would your character go to conceal his or her secret identity?
- Where does your character go to relax when "off duty?"
- Who is your character's best friend? Describe him or her.
- Who are your character's three most valuable contacts?
- What is your character's heart's desire?
- What is your character's opinion of alien beings and/or non-humans?
- Who does your character think are the 10 most influential people?
- What is your character's favourite poem or piece of art?
- Name three of your character's fears: one from youth, one from the present, and one from the future.
- What is your character's opinion of religion, and God/gods?
- What does your character think of lies?
- How does your character think he or she will die?
- Characterize your character in a single sentence?

Moving Beyond D10 Tri-Stat

Once you have perfected the art of Game Mastering *Silver Age Sentinels*, what do you do next? Move beyond the confines of the D10 Tri-Stat System presented in this book.

Remember back to your childhood when you played "House," "Cops and Robbers," (and perhaps even "Doctor") with your friends. There were no Character Points, no rules, no dice, and no character sheets at that time. All that mattered was the role-playing. Capturing the essence of those games you played long ago should be your ultimate goal: just role-playing, and nothing else.

We believe that you are holding the best system ever created for role-playing superhero characters, but that doesn't mean we believe using the system is the best way to actually role-play. We have outlined some brief suggestions below how you can move beyond the game.

Remove the Skills

The main purpose of a Skill system in an RPG is to help define a character's knowledge, most often used to differentiate low-powered characters from each other. The same result can be achieved by defining a character's background and history during creation, however. Take a look at Alice, Queen of Hearts on page 302. Her Skills can be summarized as "well-rounded knowledge appropriate for a sexy, combat mercenary on the streets of Empire City." Janus (page 308) has "a very broad range of Skills appropriate for a murderous, twisted, crazy-like-a-fox aristocrat." When a question arises during a game session that is not covered by a descriptive element, such as "can Alice swim?" or "does Janus speak Cantonese?" the player can simply answer with "yes," "no," "a little," or "depends on the circumstances."

Remove the Attribute Levels

Rather than assigning Speed Level 5 and Superstrength Level 3 to their characters, players could indicate that their heroes are superfast and superstrong. The same applies to PMVs and Defects: let the players define them how they want. When confronted with a situation in which a hero's Superstrength is opposing a villains Superstrength, you should resolve the conflict in a way that best benefits the story.

Remove the Dice and the Rules

Why use any rules at all? Since the story is the most important element, do you need to contain it within numbers, dice rolls, and charts? Dumping the rules moves the role-playing into the realm of improvisational theatre, where you and the players work off each other as the adventure progresses. If you feel this is a little too radical and want the safety net of randomness that only dice can provide, consider having the players roll two dice any time the result of an action is in question: the higher the roll, the better the outcome.

Remove the Game Master

Yes, you can cut yourself out of the game — as the GM — but continue on as a player. Co-operatively weaving an adventure without the moderation of a Game Master is a challenging process for traditional role-players, but millions of children around the world do it daily in the Land of Make-Believe.

Designer's Note

We would like to extend a special thank you to our friend and colleague, Erick Wujcik, for providing the inspiration for the sections on contributions, character quiz, and moving beyond. He presented these great ideas in his Amber Diceless RPG (Phage Press, 1991).

Advice Summary for the GM

1. Read Lots of Comics

There is no better way to understand good superhero stories than reading good comic books ... and lots of them. If you are not already an avid comic book reader, check out your local comic store and browse through the current titles as well as the back-issue bins. Many classic stories have also been released in collected editions that are available in major bookstores. Check out various genres and styles to get a better idea of what you want your *Silver Age Sentinels* game to be.

2. Define the World

As the GM, you define the world for the players. Clearly defining the game setting, tone, and scale helps the players create characters that suit the game well. Be careful not to define the world so much that is restricts the players' imaginations or becomes more important than the player characters, however.

3. Maintain the Genre

If you want to run a comic book superhero game, you have to make sure all elements of the game fit that vision. Be willing to tell players when you feel their ideas or character actions are not in keeping with the spirit of the comics and encourage ideas and characters to fit your plans.

4. The Heroes are the Main Characters

The game is about the player characters. Since they are the heroes of the story, they should be treated accordingly. Try to give all heroes equal time and do not let the NPCs upstage or overshadow them.

5. It is Not All About Fights

Although there is a lot of combat in the comics, make sure that fighting is not the only event taking place in your game, unless that is what you and the players want. *Silver Age Sentinels* is about telling superhero stories, and combat is only a part of the package. When fights erupt during the game, make them dynamic and exciting just like the battles in the comics.

6. Keep Dice Rolling to a Minimum

Only roll dice (or ask the players to roll dice) when absolutely necessary. If an action is not especially important to the overall adventure or its outcome is not really in doubt, then just make a judgement call; tell the players what happens, and move on with the game. Too much dice rolling can slow the pace and bog things down in numbers and rules rather than focusing on the events of the story. See page 112 for useful suggestions on when to roll dice.

7. Be Flexible

No set of rules can, or should, cover every possible contingency, especially when it comes to the action in the comic books. Situations will arise in your game that are not covered by the rules. Decide how to adjudicate the situation quickly, and then proceed with the story. Do not discount player ideas simply because they do not conform to the rules as written.

8. Use Character Defects to Create Subplots

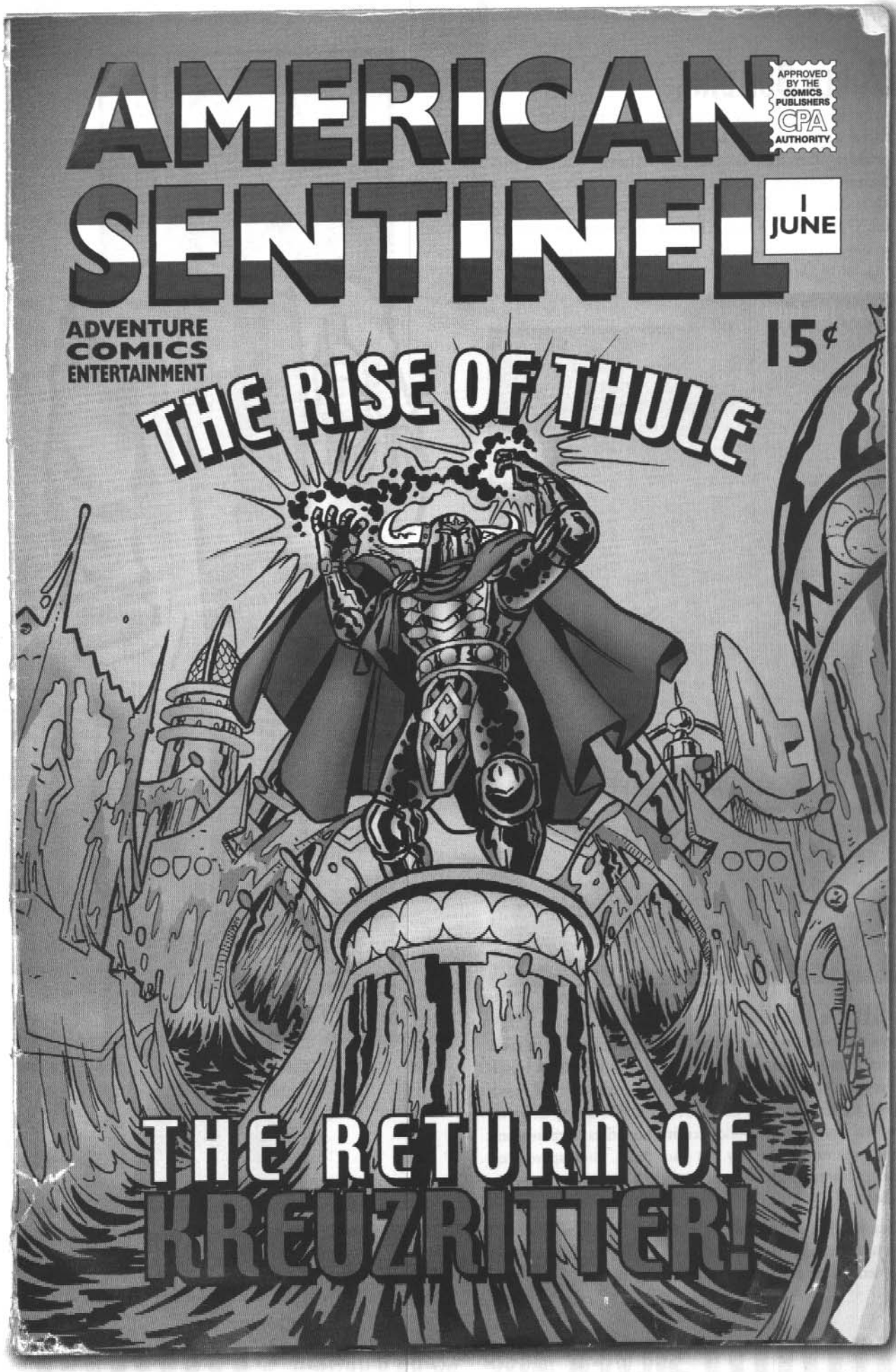
Encourage your players to assign some Defects to their characters, and create subplots around them. Part of heroism is overcoming obstacles and a flawed hero is far more interesting than a paragon of virtue that is perfect in every way. Defects help to define the character; subplots not only add depth to the characters but also involve the player in the unfolding story. Do not use a character's Defects to torture or "defeat" the character. That is a sure way to lose players.

9. Allow the Heroes Their Victories

When the heroes have overcome the obstacles you have placed in their path, when they have fought the good fight and everything comes together, give them the payoff of a satisfying victory over the forces of evil. Do not make things easy on them, but do not snatch victory away at the last minute, either.

10. Encourage Imagination

Role-playing games are all about imagination. The rules are merely guidelines and suggestions to serve as a vehicle for your imagination, not the other way around. If you dislike a particular rule in *Silver Age Sentinels*, then discard it or modify it to suit your needs. If you have an idea that does not fit into the existing rules, go with it and change the rules to fit your vision.



WORLD BUILDING

World Building

You can use the *Silver Age Sentinels* world described in this book (page 220) as a setting for your adventures, even if your campaign is set somewhere other than Empire City. Alternatively, you may prefer to create your own superhero world, or tinker with an existing one, such as the Empire City world, a major comic book setting, or another RPG setting. This section looks at the various decisions you need to consider when building your own superhero world or modifying one to suit your needs.

What are They Called?

In the Empire City world setting, individuals with superpowers are most frequently called "metahumans." What do you want to call them in your campaign? Do you differentiate between beings with superpowers and skilled individuals who might have some gadgets and wear a mask?

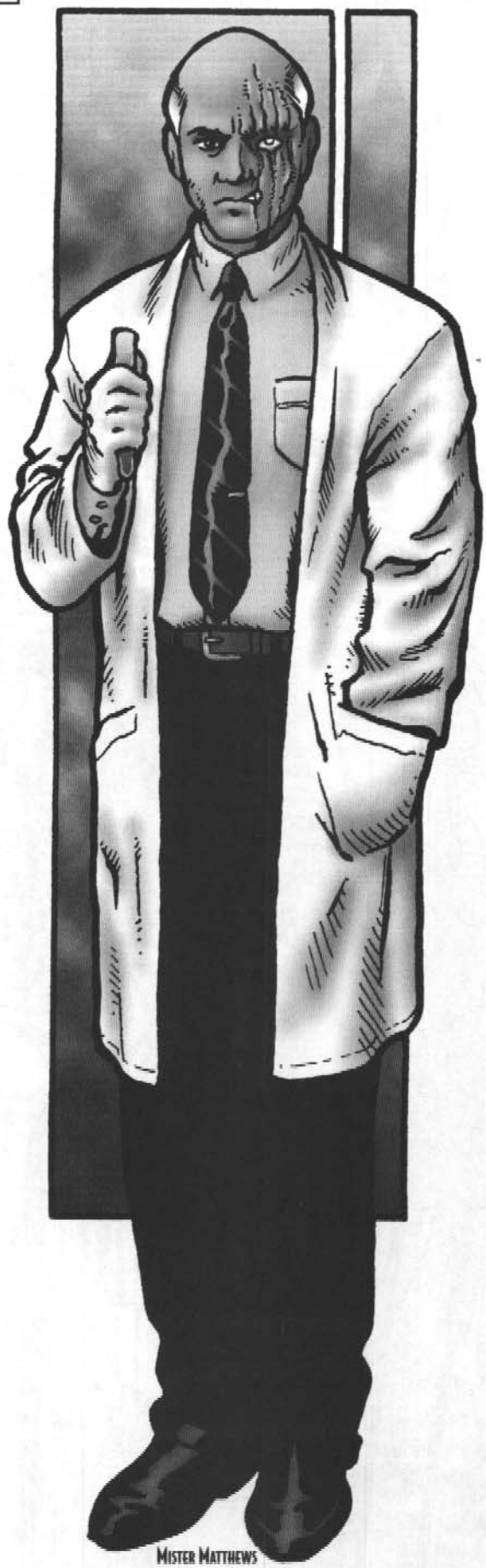
Some of the more common names for such beings are listed below. You can select one of these terms, or create one of your own.

Aberrants	Gods	Powers
Abnormals	Guardians	Primes
Aces	Guards	Protectors
After-Humans	Heroes	Quantums
Aliens	*Homo Superiors*	Replacements
Alphas	Hyperhumans	Saviours
Angels	Hyperkind	Superbeings
Betas	Inhumans	Supercops
Capes	Mages	Superheroes
Champions	Marvels	Superhumans
Changers	Masks	Superiors
Deltas	Megahumans	Supernaturals
Demigods	Metahumans	Supers
Demons	Metas	Supersoldiers
Divines	Multis	Talents
Elites	Mutants	Übermenschen
Flyers	Novas	Ultras
Freaks	Paragons	Vigilantes
Gammas	Post-Humans	Watchers

Outline the Differences

How much does the world you have in mind differ from your own (apart from the existence of superheroes and villains)? A world that is very similar to the real world is less work, since you only need to describe the differences in detail. A world that is very different from the real world is more work to create, but offers more freedom to make things exactly the way you want them. Both approaches have their advantages and drawbacks; which approach suits your ideas best?

Once you have decided how different you want the world to be, and you have considered setting and tone, outline the differences so you can detail them and consider their ramifications.



Mister Matthews

Sources of Powers

Why do superpowers exist in your world? Most comic book worlds have a wide range of different origins and power sources for their characters. You might want to allow any plausible origin that players create, or you may decide to limit the sources of superpowers. For example, you might decide that there is no magic in your world. Therefore, any character with magical powers or a magical origin would not be appropriate, unless the character merely thinks that his or her powers are magical. In reality, that character's abilities are actually based on psionics or sufficiently advanced technology. The default assumption in most comic book worlds, and in the *Silver Age Sentinels* setting, is that there are a number of different sources for superpowers.

Some worlds limit characters to one source of powers, although that does not necessarily have to limit the diversity of powers available. Some common single sources of powers include:

Aliens

Everyone with superpowers is an alien, or was exposed to some alien influence. Perhaps aliens are abducting people for experiments that give some of them superpowers (and drive some subjects insane, creating a ready source of supervillains). Why are the aliens doing this? They might want to create an army of supersoldiers for a distant interstellar war, or perhaps they are simply curious about human genetic potential. People could be exposed to an alien organism (like a virus) or to strange alien technology, causing them to gain superpowers. Perhaps a meteor shower bathes people in strange radiation, triggering superhuman abilities in them. Alien refugees might land (or crash) on Earth and try and blend in with the human population, possibly interbreeding with them.

High Technology

All powers come from various gadgets, or from technological procedures that can be performed on people, ranging from cybernetic augmentation to radiation exposure to genetic engineering. This option is ideally suited to a futuristic setting that already has advanced technology. The source of the technology could be a single genius inventor or organization, an alien civilization, or perhaps even a salvaged alien spaceship or installation.

Magic

The arcane arts are the ultimate source of all superpowers. Some may be overtly magical, from sorcerers who cast spells to magical creatures such as demons, golems, elementals, spirits, and ghosts. Others may be subtle: people exposed to magical energies, ancient spells or curses, or similar events that transform them in various ways. Some may have magical items that give them their powers while a few may be latent sorcerers channelling their powers into gadgets or inventions, making them "technomancers." Maybe every superhero or villain who gains powers from a near-death experience (like being bathed in radiation or toxic chemicals) is actually possessed by a spirit, demon, or angel without knowing it!

Psionics

Superpowers come from the unleashed power of the mind. Since the mechanism for psionics is unknown, this explanation is similar to magic except with the trappings of science rather than the occult. Psionic abilities may be a potential latent in everyone, brought out by stress, trauma, and the stuff of secret origins, or they might arise from a particular mutation, either natural or induced. If superpowers are genetic in origin, there may be a tendency to consider superhumans a separate race or sub-species of humanity. Some supremacists on both sides may try to stir up racial conflict. Since psionic powers are based in the mind, the power of belief may be a strong factor in how they work. Heroes and villains may have various motifs and limitations simply because they believe that they have them.

Power Enablers

Many of the powers and abilities of characters in the comic books blatantly violate the laws of physics. Likewise, most origins ignore the fact that being bombarded with radiation or dunked in electrified chemicals usually kills people rather than giving them powers.

The comics choose not to worry about these things and just get on with the story. You can do so as well, but instead may attempt to explain how it is that supercharacters can do the sort of things they can do. Is there something different about a superhero world that allows a man struck by lightning to develop powers rather than being fried? Is there something that allows strong people to pick up objects that should crumble under their own weight, in defiance of all the laws of leverage? There may well be, and that something is called a "power enabler."

A power enabler is really nothing more than a background element that explains why the superhero world is different from the normal world. It may never show up in play, although it can become the basis for the occasional adventure, depending on the rationale for the enabler. Power enablers can also subtly affect the flavour and style of the game.

For example, assume that consciousness is able to alter reality in certain ways and under specific conditions. You decide that is the basis for superhuman powers in your world: people are unconsciously (or consciously, in some cases) altering reality. When a mighty character picks up a dump truck, he is not just using muscles, but actually mentally editing the laws of physics to make it possible to do the impossible.

In another setting superpowers might exist because of the influence of strange technology, a loophole in the laws of nature, or even the influence of powerful beings from outside the universe, who seem to think that everything is part of some big game they are playing for fun.

History

What is the history of superhumans in the world, and what effect has their presence had on the flow of recorded history? Have people with superpowers been around for a long time or are they a recent development? In most comic book worlds, superpowers have existed throughout history, although superheroes and villains usually do not show up in significant numbers until the 20th century. Just before or during World War II is often the first appearance of metahumans, coinciding with the "Golden Age" of comics.

If people with superpowers have been around for any length of time, have they changed history in any way? In the comics the answer is usually "no." Superheroes do not bring about an early end to World War II (or any other conflict), they do not prevent the assassination of President Kennedy, or intervene in the Cuban Missile Crisis. *Amazing Spider-Man #36*, for example, shows heroes and villains dealing with the aftermath of the September 11th World Trade Center tragedy ... not stopping it. The comics assume that the presence of heroes and villains in history largely results in a sort of cosmic balance; as a result, events happen pretty much the same way they did in normal history.

You may prefer to create an alternate history, where people with superpowers have changed the world. World War II certainly could have gone quite differently with superhumans fighting on either side (as could the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and others). Superheroes may have cured diseases, prevented disasters (the Chernobyl meltdown, the destruction of the space shuttle *Challenger*, or the devastating 1970 landslide in Peru), and otherwise improved the world. Supervillains may have caused even worse problems, however, overthrowing governments, assassinating religious leaders, etc.

How much your world's history differs from real history is up to you. If you do decide to change things, it is important to be consistent. Keep track of the changes you make and consider their impact on the modern world.

Historical Games

One interesting use of history in a superhero campaign is setting the game in a historical time period, such as the 1960s, World War II, the 1930s, or perhaps even earlier. You must decide how much the player characters and NPCs are able to affect the course of history. In a World War II campaign, can the heroes help to end the war early, or are their efforts largely restricted to countering the influence of Axis supervillains?

Your heroes should have freedom of action, otherwise the players will feel too restricted. You should not allow the players to use their knowledge of history to influence events, however. Just because the players know that the invasion of Pearl Harbor is going to happen, for example, does not mean that their heroes know or can do anything about it. Precognitive characters have a unique opportunity in historical games, since the "future" is already written to a degree. The same is true of time travellers visiting the past.

The official *Silver Age Sentinels* world features a few minor historical differences: the existence of the island-nation of Thule, for example, or the events leading up to the creation of modern Empire City. For the most part, the history of the setting is similar to your own.

In some worlds, superpowers are a recent development. There may be no superhumans at all until the game begins and the player characters discover their powers!

Passage of Time

Related to the history of a campaign is how to handle the passage of time. In the comics, time is special. Comic book characters that have appeared in publications since the 1930s and '40s often have not aged a day, and their careers remain a nebulous "ten to fifteen" years long, while other characters age, die, and get replaced by younger and newer characters.

In a long-running campaign, you should consider how you intend to handle the passage of time. Game time will differ from real-world time; an adventure that takes two game sessions to play over the course of a few weeks may only cover a few days (or hours) of time in the game world or it might cover months. Some options to consider:

Game Time = Real Time

Game time passes at roughly the same rate as real time. If two weeks go by between game sessions, then it has been two weeks for the characters as well. This may vary a bit in some instances, such as if there is a cliffhanger between sessions, but the extra time gets made up during a game session (skipping forward a bit to catch up to real time).

With this method, the players always have a good idea of current events in the world and it can allow the game to include current holidays and other seasonal events on a regular basis. It can cause some scheduling difficulties, however, and players may not care for skipping over large chunks of time. In a long-running game that is not played often, time may pass too quickly for some players' tastes.

Independent Game Time

Game time is independent of real time and passes at its own rate. This means that the game world may be behind or ahead of the actual calendar, anywhere from days to years. The GM keeps track of the passage of time in the game and keeps the players informed.

This allows you to tailor the passage of time to suit your game, but it can cause difficulties with the world being out of synch with real time. For example, if current events in the real world have not happened in the game world yet, it may throw off your future plans.

Irrelevant Game Time

Time passes in the campaign world, but the pacing is irrelevant. The characters do not age and things stay pretty much the same. Events happen when they happen and any incongruities are ignored. This is the technique many comics used for years, and it can work in a game as well. It does make it difficult to use time-dependent stories or to have young characters grow up during the course of the campaign, however.

Slowed Ageing

A compromise between comic book time and real time is to have time pass in the campaign, but make a variety of slowed ageing options available to the player characters (and NPCs). Examples include mutants or aliens with vastly extended life spans, immortal mystical beings, advanced medical treatments, and others. That way some characters can age while others remain the same, even if the campaign spans years or decades.

Society

How has society adapted to the presence of superheroes and villains? The society in most comic book worlds closely resembles modern day, to keep events familiar for the readers. Superhumans can potentially have a far-reaching impact on society; how far is up to you.

Law

Society needs laws to deal with both supercriminals, and superheroes. There is sure to be an increase in the types of crimes possible with the existence of superpowers. Is trying to take over the world a crime? If so, who tries and punishes the offender? Once supercriminals are captured and convicted, how are they imprisoned? These and other questions need to be answered in your campaign.

Real world laws should adapt to your campaign. Mind Control, for example, may be classified as a crime similar to assault or kidnapping, while use of telepathy on an unwilling subject may be considered akin to trespassing or invasion of privacy (or worse, depending on how serious a message the law wants to send to possible offenders). Transforming people into demon slaves is probably considered a more serious crime than raising the dead as a zombie army, unless the necromancer obtained those bodies by killing them personally.

Superheroes may face some legal restrictions as well. While the laws of some countries allow people to make "citizen's arrests," it tends to frown on vigilante justice. Will lawmakers make exceptions for superheroes? Do heroes need to be licensed or sanctioned by a law-enforcement agency to carry out their duties? If so, are they subject to the same restrictions regarding searches, arrests, and so forth? The comics usually assume that heroes are either civilians given a great deal of latitude or specially sanctioned government agents with wide-reaching powers. The second option allows them to ignore most of the legal entanglements with which police officers must contend.

What are the legal rights of superheroes and villains? A criminal in the United States has the right to face his or her accuser in a court of law. Are heroes allowed to testify in court without revealing their true identity for the record, or is this considered a violation of the rights of the accused? If so, then criminals cannot be convicted solely on the testimony of a costumed hero. The law may bend the rules for heroes, or it might not, allowing some criminals to slip through the net.

What about civil matters concerning supers? Do heroes have to register their costumes and names as trademarks? If they do not, what is to keep an unscrupulous company from using them for promotional purposes? Can a hero license his or her likeness and collect royalties without a legal identity? The law may allow heroes to testify in criminal court without revealing their real names, but what about civil courts? Can heroes sue people or be sued? Are superheroes responsible for the damage done to a city during their fights with villains, or is there some kind of "superinsurance" or government relief fund that handles it?

The existence of various aliens, mystic beings, and extradimensional creatures can certainly complicate legal matters. Do Earth authorities (in any nation) have the right to try and punish these entities, or should they simply try to "extradite" them? Do non-human beings like androids, robots, undead, and spirits have any legal rights at all? Can the Earth charge the leaders of an alien invasion with war crimes? These are usually isolated cases, but you can make an interesting story surrounding a corporation that created an android hero going to court to claim that he is their property, for example.

Finally, there is the question of what is done with supercriminals once they are convicted. Most comic book worlds have some sort of "superprison" capable of holding supervillains (although not always for long). Cells may be made of special materials, equipped with force fields, power dampeners, and similar technology to prevent escapes. Prison guards may have suits of power-armour, special weapons, or superpowers of their own. A prison-break makes for a good story, as does the player characters being framed for a crime and placed in the superprison where many of their enemies are also incarcerated.

The means used to restrain supercriminals may be controversial. Unless painless universal "power neutralizers" exist, some extreme measures may be needed, such as keeping dangerous criminals comatose (fed drugs intravenously), or using heavy restraints, or other means of preventing their escape. Such methods may be condemned as "cruel and unusual" punishment, or seen as necessary evils.

Perhaps supercriminals are exiled rather than imprisoned, sent to a parallel universe or another dimension where they can do no further harm. Only when their "sentence" is up can they return to Earth. Of course, it may turn out that this other dimension has unusual properties, or is inhabited, and the inhabitants are none too appreciative of Earth sending its worst supervillains there. You can get a lot of mileage out of the intricacies of the law in your campaign, but do not allow things to get too bogged down in legal minutia. If the heroes are afraid to do anything because they might open themselves up to legal liability, or they endlessly debate the legality of specific situations, then you are probably allowing the legal system to have too much influence over your campaign. Of course, if the players like that sort of thing, you can run an offbeat campaign where the characters are all part of a law-firm that specializes in cases involving supers, kind of a cross between your favourite courtroom drama and the comics.

Politics

In addition to saving the world from being taken over by supervillains, heroes can have an impact on politics and the political process. Certainly, lawmakers are forced to deal with the issue of supercriminals sooner or later. Superhumans also raise a number of other political issues.



Even white-collar criminals must be vigilant of Corbae's crime fighting efforts

Silver Age Sentinels

The first is government sanction of superheroes. Does the government grant special law-enforcement powers to certain superhero teams? What, if anything, does the government expect in return? Sanctioned hero teams often have to deal with government liaisons, who may be co-operative or demanding, as you prefer. Such a government representative may be a great tool to rein in a hero team that is out of control. The government may only sanction hero teams that work directly for them, creating a distinction between the government's official hero team(s) and any civilian teams that spring up (assuming they are tolerated at all).

Lawmakers may decide to pass certain laws involving superhumans, such as requiring everyone with superpowers to register with the government (and possibly reveal their true identity). Would superheroes oppose this measure as an invasion of privacy? How do they respond to politicians who say that the innocent have nothing to fear from such a registration process? Or has a registration law already been passed, so the player characters have to live with it (and decide whether or not to defy it)?

There is also the possibility of supers getting into the political process. An endorsement from a popular superhero could make a political candidate's career, while a condemnation could end it. For that matter, maybe a superhero decides to run for office. Some might find the idea of Max Liberty as their mayor, governor, or even president, quite appealing. Others may worry that it will only attract the hero's enemies and cause trouble for everyone. Supervillains can also get into the act, trying to influence the political process, running for office (mostly likely in their secret identities or using a proxy), or simply seizing power for themselves. The villainous inhabitants of Thule (page 258), for example, have diplomatic immunity because of their political status.

Popular Culture

Superheroes have all sorts of potential to influence popular culture. They are likely to become media darlings, swamped by reporters and paparazzi wherever they go. Television shows, movies, books, magazines, and other media will tell their stories, and comic books may be based on the licensed adventures of real superheroes rather than fictional ones. Of course, they may have to take a certain amount of "dramatic license" with the actual stories, which may cause friction with the heroes.

Heroes are likely to have fan clubs, and perhaps websites, and may have all of the benefits and drawbacks of a celebrity, from endless endorsement offers and licensing deals to being recognized everywhere they go. Some may take "hero worship" a little too literally, forming cults or religions based around some superhumans (particularly the ones that actually claim to be gods or mythological figures). Conversely, heroes may attract stalkers, both human and superhuman.

Business

The potential effect of superpowers on the business world is tremendous, although in the comics it usually is not. Heroes do not use their abilities for personal gain, and villains who use their powers to make a fortune in the business world rather than through crime are nearly always exposed in time. You may decide to allow some superpowers to find useful niches in the professional world, however. Certainly a doctor with healing powers and x-ray vision would have a considerable advantage, as would a stock trader with precognition, or a construction worker with Superstrength. The more common superhumans are in the setting, the more likely they will be found in mundane professions rather than using their powers to become heroes or villains. This is also true for campaigns with a more realistic tone.

Technology

Comic books are full of amazing technology and gadgets, including: power armour, giant robots, planet-busting doomsday weapons, and weather control devices. All of this amazing technology usually does not affect the world significantly. Although a secret government agency or hero team might have flying cars, the average citizen would not.

Superscience gadgets are really just a special effect of the powers of heroes and villains. You should not have to worry about the larger implications for the world if a villain invents a time machine or a government lab develops some supermetal. They are just background elements that make good adventures.

Of course, you may want to explore implications of superscience in your own campaign. Allowing supertechnology into the marketplace is likely to transform the world. Imagine if the military had superhero power armour, carmakers built hover-cars, and teleportation booths replaced air travel. It is very different from the current world, but certainly no less engaging.

The government can serve as a great plot device to keep the abundance of technological gadgets in check. Perhaps federal agents confiscate prototype gadgets before they can be replicated, or develop a unique sonar weapon that causes a specific piece of technology to self-destruct. If you are a fan of conspiracy theories, perhaps the government in your campaign guards a secret warehouse at Area 51 that contains thousands of supergadgets seized from both hero and villain organizations over the past few decades.

Scientific Accuracy

Extrapolation of science in comic books range from the realistic to the absurd. The law of "comic logic" usually applies: fiction does not need to portray reality. If you have a background education or interest in science, however, you may wish to make your campaign world more scientifically plausible. In your world, for example: the power of teleportation might result from a breakthrough in quantum physics; speedsters and flyers might need to wear special environmental suits to prevent them from burning up in the atmosphere; or regeneration might only be available to characters who take drugs that enhance a body's metabolic rate. Alternatively, superpowers might not exist in your campaign because they are not possible, forcing all characters to be low-powered, skilled individuals. While the interactions between Man and Nature in your campaign are yours to define, be sure to tell your players of your goal for scientific accuracy to prevent them from approaching the game with conflicting preconceived notions.

Designer's Note

Why Empire City?

As a GM, one of the first questions you will need to answer is: where is your campaign going to take place? It could focus on a small town, or encompass the depths of a big urban sprawl; it could be a cross-country adventure, righting wrongs wherever they are found, or your group could travel between the stars, defending the light against the darkness. For the Silver Age Sentinels campaign world, we decided a major metropolis would be the nexus. The reasons were two-fold. First, a big city is a tremendously exciting place, filled with all sorts of strange people, and thousands of potential adventure ideas. Second, although there are comics that use these other setting-types to good advantage, most of the greatest heroes establish themselves around a fixed geographical locale. In other words, they have a homebase.

The next question is: what do you want to do with this city? Some comic companies try to faithfully detail a real world city, and only change things when necessary. It may be as simple as swapping the logo on a skyscraper, or as symbolic as using speciesism to stand for racism. Other companies invent imaginary cities. They may have a resemblance to a real city, such as New York or Toronto, but the companies use their creative freedom liberally. There are strengths in both options.

For Empire City, we leaned more towards the former, although we stole a few ideas from the latter. Empire City is clearly New York City – we don't try to hide it in any way. We wanted to model it on an actual place because we felt it would be easier for players and GMs to get a handle on the city; anyone who pays a little attention to North American media knows what NYC is like. It sits in the same geographical place as New York, it has the same neighbourhoods, and even has many of the same people. Why then call it Empire City? Because it is a fictional place. We've taken one step away from the reality, where every difference must be justified; that name differentiation allows us to say it's very close to New York. It almost is New York. But it's not quite. We can bend the rules here. The Guard and Matthews GenTech can and do exist, and no one should have a problem with that. If Empire City was completely imaginary, we would have had to define it in much greater detail for you to see the whole picture. By laying a map over New York, however, all we need to detail are the things that are different and unique.

Finally, you need to decide what you are going to take from the world around you to incorporate in your superheroes' metropolis. If the city is completely fictitious, you can invent anyone and everyone. Even if you are modelling a true city, or bending it slightly as we did, you could consider making all the NPCs from scratch. In Empire City, however, we've chosen to try and stay as close as possible to real-world events. This is pretty rare in comics, but that's okay; Silver Age Sentinels is a superhero role-playing game, not a comic book. That gives us a different mandate. We chose to use real names and faces because, again, these are the people with which you and your players are most familiar. You don't have to remember that Mark MacKinnon was a chemist before he became mayor ... or was it judge? You know that Giuliani is in charge (the setting starts in January, 2001). We don't have to build the entire city brick by brick, but only show you where things differ, like the MTU, GenTech, the Olympian Tower, etc.

Not everyone wants to play in the real world. You or your players may have preset notions about some of these people, and you may not want to deal with them in character (or may not be able to shake your personal beliefs for the sake of the game). There's nothing stopping you from keeping everything about Empire City, but changing the mayor or the police chief. Real names populate Empire City because these people play a role in New York, but we have no plans to empower, or vilify, or transform them into hideous beasts. Characters that make for good stories are those we invent; the others just keep the place running, and turn the lights off at night.

Locations

If you are using a world other than Earth as the setting of your campaign, you have to create everything from scratch, starting with a map of the important geographic features, the location of cities, etc. If you are starting out with Earth (modern day, recent past, or near future), then there is a lot less work in terms of location, since most of the world is already mapped out and described for you. Maps are readily available at local bookstores and libraries, or on the internet. In either case, there are some particular locations you should consider in detail before your campaign begins.

The City

Unless your heroes are a world-spanning organization based in a headquarters high in orbit or on the Moon, they probably have an operations base in one particular city. In the comics, heroes tend to patrol large cities, either real ones like New York and Los Angeles, or fictional cities that bear striking similarities to ones in the real world. Empire City (page 267) is a mixture of the real, based on New York City, and the fictional, taking elements from classic comic book cities.

Decide whether you want to base the heroes in a real city or a fictional one. Naturally, real cities tend to be less work, but a fictional city offers the opportunity to tailor things exactly as you want them. Also, you do not have to worry about the players knowing the city better than you do, since it is your creation.

Give some thought to the places in the city featured in your adventures, such as government buildings, landmarks, major parks and recreation areas, banks, colleges or universities, certain restaurants, museums, etc. A large city offers dozens of adventure hooks and opportunities for villains to strike. If you are using a real city as your setting, travel guidebooks can offer useful information. If you are creating your own city, the books can offer you ideas.

Hometown Heroes

Superheroes seem to congregate primarily in cities like New York, or sometimes Chicago or Los Angeles. It can be fun in a *Silver Age Sentinels* game to pick a large city closer to home (assuming that you do not live in New York, Chicago, or LA). Toronto, Boston, San Francisco, Atlanta, Vancouver, Dallas, Seattle, St. Louis, New Orleans, and many others would be great superhero settings; Petawawa, Ontario or Wolf Lake, Michigan would not. For that matter, if you live outside of North America, there is nothing to say that you cannot have superheroes in your own nation and city, be it Paris, London, Tokyo, Beijing, Berlin, or anywhere else in the world.

Setting your campaign in a city that is familiar to you and your players allows you to mention locations that everyone knows while given a minimum description. It can be enjoyable to think about superheroes and villains duking it out among the streets and buildings of your hometown, and trashing your school or your workplace in the process. You can use local news and events to inspire adventures, and you can include local personalities as supporting characters, but do not offend your players ("Why do you always portray my mother as a lunatic anti-mutant activist?").

Lairs and Bases

Heroes and villains usually maintain a public base of operations, or a secret lair. Consider places in your world where you can put them, from underground tunnels to skyscrapers to stately mansions. Where will the heroes be headquartered? You can provide them with a potential base, with the assistance of a wealthy patron (possibly a player character) or the government. It can be a great challenge to let the players figure out on their own where their headquarters is going to be and how they are going to finance and construct it. Maybe after they defeat some villains they can take over the enemy's headquarters!

Lost Worlds

What are the secret, wondrous places in your world? Comic book worlds have hidden cities, lost ruins, prehistoric valleys, underground and underwater civilizations, and more tucked away on Earth. They are home to both heroes and villains and serve as exotic settings for the player characters to visit. Do you want any of these types of places in your world? If so, where are they? You can use the comics and mythology for inspiration, starting with legendary places like Atlantis, Lemuria, Shangri-La, El Dorado, and Avalon, and adding in places of your own creation.

What relations, if any, do these places have with the outside world? Is their existence widely know, or a well-kept secret? The island nation of Thule (page 258) is an example of a fantastic place that is publicly known.

Beyond Earth

Consider the question of outer space and the uncounted planets and stars beyond Earth's solar system in your campaign. Is there life on other planets? If not, then you are missing out on many potential game stories. Are there aliens, or even humans, living on any of the other planets or moons in Earth's solar system? What about in other star systems? Are there alien civilizations with the capabilities to reach Earth, and what do they think about our planet? Are aliens living on Earth and do people know about the existence of alien life?

What about what lies beyond the bounds of the universe? In the comics, there are alternate, mirror, and various mystical dimensions ranging from Asgard and Olympus to Heaven and Hell. There may be universes of anti-matter or higher dimensions with beings capable of manipulating three-dimensional reality at will. What sorts of dimensions exist, and how do the beings there interact with Earth, if at all?

The Supporting Cast

Part of the Game Master's job is creating and portraying the various supporting characters in a campaign. The players will provide you with some ideas of the important people in their characters' lives through their Defects and backgrounds. Give some thought to the classic comic book supporting characters, and see if there are any you think should be included in your campaign.

Advisor

Even superheroes do not know everything; sometimes they need someone to consult for advice or expertise. The person might be an expert in science, mystics, law, politics, or some other area of knowledge the heroes lack. An advisor is also a good way for you to give some guidance to the players about a suggested course of action, subtly pointing them in the right direction.

Best Buddy

The buddy fulfills much the same role as a love interest (see below), but usually without the sex. He or she is a friend or associate of the hero who often gets into trouble and needs the hero's help. A buddy may be able to help the hero on occasion, too, perhaps filling one of the other roles described here.

Doctor

Heroes can really take a beating at the hands of a villain, which is why it is handy to have a doctor around. The doctor may be someone working at a local hospital or in private practice who is entrusted with taking care of injured heroes. The doctor may even run a special clinic for superhumans, or work directly for a hero team as their in-house or on-call physician (on or off the record).

Government Liaison

Like the police, the government will certainly take an interest in the heroes. They may be a state or federally sponsored team with a regular government liaison, who conveys the government's wishes and requirements to them. They may have a less formal relationship with the government, perhaps entirely unofficial, with a contact or two within organizations like the FBI (or one like the Order, see page 301).

The Intrepid Reporter

Where there are superheroes, there is news being made; you can be sure that the reporters are not far behind. Some reporters become associated with heroes, either because it is their "beat" or because they develop friendships or even romantic relationships. Reporters also tend to stumble upon villainous plots, making them targets for villains and in need of a heroic rescue.

Love Interest

Heroes often have a love interest (girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse) who may or may not be aware of the hero's true identity. A love interest can become a target for the hero's enemies, and a useful hook for you, bringing the hero rushing to the rescue.

Loyal Assistant

Some heroes are fortunate enough to have a faithful assistant: butler, manservant, secretary, or all-around helper. The assistant deals with the mundane tasks with which the hero cannot be bothered, and is also on hand to help the hero occasionally. An entire hero group may also have a loyal assistant working for them.

Mayor

The mayor might be the heroes' voice on city council. It is not uncommon for a setting to portray the mayor with much more power over the city than reasonable; he or she makes all decisions without input from councillors. In your campaign, the mayor could even be the direct superior of the police chief or commissioner.

Other Heroes

Consider the existence of other heroes and hero teams in the setting. Although the focus of the campaign should certainly be upon the player characters, that does not mean they have to be the only heroes. Where do other heroes operate? How powerful and respected are they? What do they think of the player characters? Team-ups or rivalries with other heroes can add depth to your *Silver Age Sentinels* campaign.

Police Chief

Heroes are likely to deal with the chief of police (or police commissioner) frequently, particularly if they are sanctioned law-enforcement officers themselves. The police chief may value the heroes and their help or find it intrusive, bothered that the heroes do not always go "by the book."

Organizations

A particular type of supporting cast is the Organization. Some are good, some are evil, while others are neutral and might be seen in either light. Organizations can be a source of adventure ideas, villains, hero origins, and other material for your campaign.

The Agency

In the comics, the government (either the US government or the United Nations, or both) often has an agency dedicated to dealing with superpowered threats to world security. The agency may co-operate with heroes and view them as a valuable resource, or look on all superhumans with suspicion. The agency may recruit or train its own superteam (perhaps even the player characters).

The Conspiracy

The conspiracy is dedicated to acquiring power, usually by undermining and overthrowing governments, or seizing control of them from within. Secrecy is the conspiracy's greatest weapon. Its agents may be shapeshifters, and it may use Mind Control as one of its tools.

The Cult

Similar to the conspiracy, the cult uses magic and mysticism. It may serve evil or demonic beings from other dimensions, a powerful occult artifact, long-forgotten gods, or powerful sorcerers. It performs secret rituals to further its goals, which usually involve gathering magical power to dominate or destroy the world.

The Institute

The institute studies superhumans and their powers, trying to learn more about them. It may be an independent think-tank dedicated to pure research and the betterment of humanity, or a cover for a sinister organization that wants to exploit its subjects. Some institutes focus on a particular type of superhuman (mutants, psionics, aliens) while others are interested in all kinds.

The Syndicate

A vast criminal organization can make the Mafia look small. Where the conspiracy is interested in conquest, the syndicate is only interested in profit. It has its tentacles in criminal enterprises from smuggling and hijacking to extortion, kidnapping, and more.

Bring on the Bad Guys: Creating Villains

They say that you can measure someone by the quality of his or her enemies. That is certainly true in the comic books, where heroes all have colourful collections of bad guys to bring to justice. A good nemesis can serve as a foil and dark reflection of a hero, adding depth. A villain the players really love to hate can keep them coming back for the opportunity to see him or her behind bars. Since villains are important to a *Silver Age Sentinels* game, give as much thought to them as you do to the heroes. This section offers some guidelines for creating villains and using them in your campaign.

Villain Motivations

Perhaps the most important thing about villains is what motivates them. While it is certainly important for a villain to have a catchy name, interesting powers, and a cool costume, those things are all secondary to what really makes the villain tick, what makes him or her a villain in the first place.

Motivation is most important to the main villain characters in your campaign, not the various superpowered minions or goons the master villains employ. You can get away with giving them fairly shallow motivations, like money or the need to work for a strong leader. Consider giving some of your minor villains more in-depth motivations occasionally. For example, perhaps the strong bodyguard of the master villain is doing it for the money, but why does he want that money? Maybe it is to pay for the care of a sick or elderly relative or for the operation that will restore his normal appearance or remove his unwanted powers. Such small twists can make your villains more human and three-dimensional.

Adventures often feature a villain going after a goal and the heroes trying to thwart the villain's plans. A villain's motivation gives you an idea of the sorts of goals and actions that are appropriate for that villain, and it establishes the villain in the minds of the players. There is a difference between a villain planning world conquest because he believes that he is best suited to rule and a villain to whom conquest is nothing more than a game, or one who wants to conquer the world to avenge being rejected by society. They are all quite different from the villain who wants to destroy the world rather than conquer it.

The entries herein provide some common motivations for villains.

Corruption

Corrupters delight in bringing down everything good and exposing goodness as the "sham" that it is. They spread evil through subtle and insidious means and the ultimate goal of a corrupter is to bring about the fall of a truly noble and good hero. Corrupters often work behind the scenes through various minions and proxies, revealing themselves for the final confrontation with their "prey." See Bloody Mary, page 303.

Greed

Simple greed is a common motivation for villains. They want wealth and all the pleasures it can bring and are willing to do whatever it takes to get it. Most greedy villains either become thieves, robbing banks and other sources of wealth, or they become mercenaries, selling their services to the highest bidder. Greedy villains tend to be cowards. If there is no profit in it, they are not likely to stick around for long. Of course, repeated defeats may shift a greedy villain's motivation more toward revenge. See Torque, page 312.

Ideology

Some villains are dedicated to a particular ideology or belief system. Most of them do not even consider themselves "villains," when they bother with what society thinks at all. The villain's ideology might be a twisted or distorted version of a real-world ideology (Communist villains in the '60s being a prime example). It might be a belief unique to the superhero world, usually in the supremacy of a particular type of life, from mutants to aliens, plants, robots, or dinosaurs. Either the ideology itself is evil, like the belief in wiping out all organic life to replace it with machines, or the villain's devotion to it is so fanatical that any crime can be justified, so long as it furthers "the cause." See Kreuzritter, page 309.

Knowledge

Some villains have a twisted devotion to science and the quest for knowledge. They ignore the boundaries of morality and decency in their quest for more and more knowledge, performing unethical experiments, stealing, and more, justifying it all in the name of "science." Mad scientist types that are not out for revenge or to prove their pet theories usually fall into this category. See Artificer, page 312.

Madness

Many villains are just crazy. They range from fairly harmless loons played for laughs to true psychopaths that are horrific in their madness. A lot of other villains may be considered crazy, but villains who fall into this category are defined by their madness. Usually the villain has some defining delusions or particular "method to the madness" in keeping with the villain's style. See Janus, page 308.

Nihilism

This is a particular type of ideology or madness (depending on your point of view) that deserves special attention. The villain wants nothing more than to destroy. Nihilist villains range from mindless engines of destruction to cunning and intelligent foes who want to destroy for a reason (ranging from population control to a desire to remake the universe over again in the villain's own image). Nihilist villains are among the most dangerous simply because they are so ruthless in the pursuit of their goals. See Red Minstrel, page 312.

Power

The villain wants power, which usually means conquest of a city, nation, world, or even the universe. Power-hungry villains take every opportunity to increase their personal power and are always developing schemes to gain power over others. What the villain intends to do with the power once he or she has it varies from one villain to another. Some believe they will rule benevolently (but ruthlessly) while others want the ability to indulge their every whim. See Green Ronin, page 312.



Janus

Pride

Prideful villains have something to prove, to themselves or to the world. They usually have a particular area of expertise in which they want to show supremacy, or a particular theory or idea they want to prove. For example: a villain who lives for the hunt may choose to take on more and more dangerous prey in order to prove herself the greatest hunter in the world; a martial arts villain may challenge other fighters to show his mastery of the art of combat; a mad scientist may be out to show those fools who laughed at his theories at university, etc. See the General Winter, page 305.

Revenge

Someone wronged the villain the past (or at least the villain thinks so) and now that person is going to pay, and pay dearly. The villain's revenge may take the form of kidnapping, murder, harassment, or worse. Vengeful villains often focus their schemes on the heroes who have thwarted them, and more than a few villains take up this motivation after being defeated a few times. See Mister Matthews, page 310.

Survival

The villain is motivated by nothing more than self-preservation. The problem is that either the villain goes to extremes — smashing cities when feeling threatened, for example — or what the villain needs to do to survive makes him or her a threat. A vampire that needs to drink blood is certain to draw the attention of the good guys, along with villains who steal life force, eat elements like gold or radium, or devour entire planets to sustain themselves. These villains are often tragic, since they may not have any choice in what they do. Heroes may seek other ways for the villain to survive that do not endanger innocent lives. See Iron Duke, page 306.

Thrills

Finally, some villains are simply bored and need to have some fun. Unfortunately, their idea of "fun" causes trouble, often serious trouble, for everyone else. A thief or mercenary might enjoy the thrill of the chase. Masterminds may crave the intellectual challenge of pitting their wits against the police and the heroes. The villain might like playing elaborate practical jokes, or just wants to make the heroes jump through hoops. See Alice, Queen of Hearts, page 302.

Villain Design

After deciding upon the villain's motivation, give some thought to his or her motif and abilities. Most of the material given in Chapter Five for heroes applies equally well to villains. Consider the villain's origin (and how that is tied into his or her motivation) and what powers the villain needs to be a credible challenge to the heroes.

Villains generally come in one of several power levels: less powerful than the heroes, as powerful as the heroes, more powerful than the heroes, and cosmically powerful.

Less Powerful

Less powerful villains are useful as cannon fodder for more powerful master villains and to give heroes the opportunity to flex their abilities a little on an easy opponent as a warm-up or short scene in a larger story. They can also be fun for comic relief. Is there a villain in your campaign that just makes the players laugh because he or she is so pitiful? If not, maybe there should be.

As Powerful

The majority of villains should be about as powerful as the heroes. Villains often have more Defects (page 91) or at least more pronounced ones. This has the dual effect of making the villains more powerful (from the extra Bonus Points) and more vulnerable, since smart heroes should be able to exploit their weaknesses. Villains at this level can take the heroes on one-on-one and often band together into villain teams to do so.

More Powerful

The true master villains, ones capable of challenging an entire team of heroes by themselves, are usually more powerful than an individual hero. That does not mean that all master villains must have tremendous physical power. A villain's advantage may be a sharp and cunning mind, a near-endless array of technological gadgets, hordes of obedient minions, or other abilities they can use against the heroes. Still, a master villain often has the power to take on an entire team single-handedly. The heroes have a teamwork advantage that lets them overcome the villain in the end.

Cosmic Power

Finally, some rare villains are so powerful that they are virtually invincible, at least in a physical confrontation. You may wish to use these villains as plot points, rather than actual antagonists. They may command cosmic power, able to bend reality at will. They always have a weakness, however, and heroes can overcome them by cleverly exploiting that weakness rather than uselessly pounding away at the villain. The weak point may be an Item of Power the heroes can take away, a magic word the villain must be tricked into saying, or the villain's inability to resist a game of chance (which the heroes might even rig in their favour).

Death Traps

In the comics, when a villain captures a hero, the villain never simply kills the hero outright. Instead, villains create elaborate death traps to prolong the hero's agony or to show how clever they are (often both). The villain gloats over how the heroes will never escape, and then usually attends to some nefarious scheme, leaving the heroes to their fate (and, naturally, allowing them the opportunity to escape).

Although you should be careful about not overdoing captures in a campaign (see Lost in Translation, page 213), death traps provide a great way to deal with captured heroes. Some classic death traps are outlined below.

Closing Walls

The heroes are trapped in a room in which the walls are closing in, or perhaps the room is slowly filling with sand, water, poison gas or something equally fatal. The walls may also be lined with spikes or heated to extreme temperatures. The heroes have to escape from the room before they are crushed or suffocate.

Controlled Teammate

The villain brainwashes a powerful hero into thinking his or her teammates are enemies who must be destroyed. The team must convince the brainwashed hero not to attack. If you place a character under Mind Control, consider letting that player assume the new role as an enemy. Encourage the other players to role-play helping their comrade break free, rather than reducing it to just a campaign of Mind or Soul rolls.

Countdown

The heroes are sitting on top of a bomb (or similar deadly device) which is counting down to destruction. Of course, the heroes are restrained to prevent them from escaping or easily defusing the bomb.

Decoy Villain

A decoy that looks like the villain (a robot duplicate or simply a dummy) triggers a trap when it is attacked. The decoy might explode or release a toxic gas when struck, or it might trigger trapdoors or cages containing dangerous creatures.

Gauntlet

The heroes must make their way through a corridor or maze filled with deadly traps — automated weapons, fighting robots, creatures, pit traps, swinging blades, and others. There may also be a time limit for the heroes to make it through the gauntlet before something else happens, such as the building exploding or the villain escaping.

Psychodrama

The heroes are trapped inside a mindscape or illusion that involves something drawn from their own memories or worst fears. They may all see the same thing, or each hero might experience something different. For example, the claustrophobic hero feels the walls closing in, the hero afraid of drowning sees the room filling with water, etc. The heroes must overcome their fears to defeat the trap.

Sawmill

"Do you expect me to talk, Goldfinger?" The heroes are strapped down, helpless, while a deadly attack draws near. The threat might be a laser, molten metal, a buzz saw, a rampaging monster, or some specific weakness or vulnerability. The heroes must escape before the attack reaches them. Alternately, a friend or loved one of a hero may be placed in a similar situation (bound and lying on a railroad track?), forcing the hero to come to the rescue.

Tiger Pit

The heroes are placed in a trap where dangerous animals — lions, sharks, piranha, poisonous snakes or even more exotic creatures like alien monsters, mutates, or cyborgs — can attack them. Usually, something is keeping both the creatures and the heroes trapped together, like a pit, pool, or force field. The heroes may also need to overcome the creatures' home-field advantage, such as having to fight sharks or giant squid underwater or dealing with mutant creatures with night vision while in pitch darkness.

How the Villain Gets Away

First, consider carefully whether or not the villain should get away (see Let the Heroes Win, page 181, for more information). Assuming that the villain should escape at the end of the adventure, or as a cliffhanger for the next adventure, consider the following possibilities:

Blackmail

This technique is similar to the distraction method (below), except the villain threatens the heroes with something unless they let him go. It could be anything from a delicate phial of a deadly virus or toxin, knowledge of the heroes' secret identities, hostages, or any other credible threat. If you know in advance that your players never bargain, this is obviously not a good option.

Distraction

The villain distracts the heroes with a more important task to accomplish than capturing him or her. It may be something planned in advance ("You can capture me or try and stop the bombs I've planted throughout the city."), or an impromptu act, such as blasting the structural supports of a large building or bridge, igniting an oil tanker, or creating a landslide or other disaster. The distraction must be big enough to require the whole team to handle it, otherwise the heroes may split up, sending some to handle the distraction while the rest apprehend the villain.

Escape Route

The villain has one or more pre-planned escape routes, usually involving a secret door or passage and a vehicle to whisk the villain away faster than the heroes can follow. This is particularly effective if the escape route makes it difficult for the heroes to follow. Examples include a trapped tunnel, a sealed hatchway, a vehicle that travels underwater, or one that tunnels through the Earth (collapsing the tunnel behind).

Fake-out

When the heroes win it turns out that the villain is not really the villain at all. It may be a robot double, a hologram, a shapeshifter, or even an innocent civilian hypnotized and dressed up as the villain. This last option can have tragic consequences if the heroes simply bust in and blast the "bad guy" with their most lethal attacks.

Mysterious Death

If all else fails, the villain can seemingly go out in a blaze of glory. Usually the villain's headquarters or vehicle explodes in a spectacular fashion, forcing the heroes to flee and leaving serious doubt whether or not the villain survived. No body is found, of course, and if it is, it is a decoy or trick. The villain usually returns later to surprise the heroes.

Teleportation

This escape can be a cop-out if used too often, but otherwise it is effective. The villain simply disappears when capture or defeat is imminent. Unless the heroes devise a way to either track the villain or defeat the teleportation, they are likely to become very frustrated, however (see Let the Heroes Win, page 181).

Player Characters as Villains

In most *Silver Age Sentinels* campaigns, the players will assume the roles of the heroes. You could design an interesting campaign, however, in which the players take up the mantle of supervillains instead. One possibility involves the player characters as superpowered convicts, either blatant criminals or falsely accused victims. They are offered a deal, usually by the government: if they agree to work for their benefactor and the good of society, they get parole and either reduced time on their sentence or a pardon. Naturally, steps must be taken to ensure that the ex-cons co-operate and do not flee. This may range from tracking implants, or mind control or suicide devices that explode if the characters do not follow orders.

Alternatively, parole campaigns can range from an offbeat group of superheroes looking to redeem themselves in the eyes of the world to a grim and gritty "black ops" team of deniable supercriminals sent to do the government's dirty work, depending on your and the players' preferences. Another option is for the player characters to be true supervillains. They may be part of a villain team or have their own agendas. This kind of campaign differs from the norm because the player characters are forced to be more pro-active. They must hatch their own villainous plots and death traps, while you play the heroes trying to thwart them!

Of course, you and the players should set ground rules for a villainous campaign carefully, considering what acts the player characters should be allowed to get away with, and whether or not the players should expect the villains to win. If the villains are not allowed to win, the players may get frustrated; if they are allowed too much free rein, the campaign may become too dark and no longer enjoyable.

Simulating the Comics

The primary goal of *Silver Age Sentinels* is to allow players to re-create the feel of comic book superhero stories in their games. While the game rules are slanted toward that end, there are other actions you can take to help give the game a more "comic book" feel. You may encounter problems, however, when trying to duplicate some specific story lines or events you read in the comics.



Nagrita

Comic Book Conventions

No, not the places where you can hunt for those rare back issues and meet your favourite artists and writers. In this case, comic book "conventions" are the norms of comic book superhero worlds. If you want to make your *Silver Age Sentinels* game feel more like the comics, do not disregard comic tradition.

Action

Comic books are primarily about action. Although subplots and dialogue have an important place, stories involve a lot of activity. When planning a *Silver Age Sentinels* adventure, keep in mind that the heroes should not spend most of their time sitting around waiting for things to happen. Keep the action moving, skipping over the slow parts as necessary to maintain a dynamic pace. If the plot starts to lag, throw in some action. The event might be connected with the plot, or could simply be a momentary distraction to keep the heroes busy.

Consistency

Originally, comic book stories were self-contained, and characters from one book did not interact with characters from other books. As comic book universes developed, they became more and more intertwined, with characters crossing over from one series to another. This led to the development of comic book continuity — a rich history and backstory to the established superhero worlds. Continuity has not always been consistent in the comics, but you can ensure it is in your campaign. Consistency between adventures helps make the world seem more real to the players and gives you additional inspiration to create adventures. For example, a mysterious crime the heroes investigated a few sessions earlier may tie into the master plot of a villain you are currently developing.

Morality

In the Silver Age of comics, morality was often black-and-white. The heroes were decent, upstanding, and moral, while the villains were downright evil, with a few misunderstood characters somewhere in the middle. Modern comic lines from all major production houses have added many shades of grey. While *Silver Age Sentinels* encourages players to take the roles of heroes, fighting the good fight and using their powers to uphold truth and justice, moral ambiguity surrounding specific events may add depth to your campaign.

Translating Characters

You may be interested in taking established comic book characters and translating them into *Silver Age Sentinels* terms. Although Guardians Of Order cannot provide Stats for Superman, Wolverine, Spider-Man, Batman, or other existing characters in this book, there is nothing to stop you from including them in your own game.

When translating an existing character to the *Silver Age Sentinels* game, first make a brief list of the character's abilities. How strong, fast, and smart is the character and what powers does he or she have? Many established comic book characters have been described in considerable detail, although there are always vague areas, especially for characters with long histories.

Next, assign the character's Stats by comparing the information on your list to the benchmarks given for Stats in Chapter Two. Remember that few characters have more than one Stat above 12, and fewer still have Stats approaching Rank 20. Also take note of whether or not the character's Stats have the Less Capable Defects (page 95) associated with them, such as a character who is very strong, but not particularly agile, or one that is very intelligent, but not perceptive.

Now examine the list of Attributes and Skills, and decide which ones fit the character. Some will be obvious, like Flight for a character who can fly (the character's previous comic appearances may have even defined exactly how fast). Other Attributes may be more subtle or open to interpretation. For truly bizarre abilities, you may need to combine Attributes, or assign the Unique Attribute to the character.

Finally, read the list of Defects and assign the relevant ones to the character. Again, some will be obvious (Awkward Size, for example), while others area defined less specifically. Unless you are attempting to adhere to a specific Point total requirement, do not concern yourself with how many Character Points you need; your goal is to create a reasonable simulation of the original.

Lost in Translation

Some established elements of the comics do not work quite as well in a role-playing game. You should be aware of these elements from the beginning, since they can pose problems and make the game less enjoyable for everyone.

Capture

In the comics, heroes get captured frequently, and usually end up in clever death traps (see Death Traps, page 210). In an RPG, however, some players equate "capture" with "losing" and are willing to do whatever it takes to avoid it. It will be difficult for you if the players absolutely refuse to participate in their captures.

The solution to this problem is twofold. First, discuss the matter with your players. Inform them that captures are a part of the genre and may happen from time to time, but that there will always be an opportunity for the heroes to escape. Additionally, try to limit the number of character captures. You may desire to make them "you have no chance to react" situations, where the trap is sprung so suddenly that it simply overwhelms the characters. Players will feel cheated if this happens too frequently, however.

Escapes

Villains often manage to execute last-minute escapes (see How the Villain Gets Away, page 211), but some players are not willing to let the villain go since they perceive this as "losing." They will pursue the bad guy to the ends of the Earth, if need be, grappling with him as his secret lair tumbles down all around them, in order to ensure that he does not escape.

Again, discuss this with the players and let them know that sometimes the villain gets away. Also, consider carefully whether or not the villain should escape. If escape is not vital to your plot, then let the players have the satisfaction of hauling the bad guy to jail. After all, you can always stage a jailbreak later, when you need to use that villain again.

Guest Stars

Comics often feature "special guest stars" to boost sales by having a popular character star in a less popular series. Frequently, the guest star is as interesting (or even more interesting) than the main characters; in an RPG, "guest star" usually equals "NPC," and players hate having their characters upstaged by your creation. If you absolutely must have guest heroes in your adventure, try to keep the attention focused on the player characters rather than the NPCs. If the characters can rescue a powerful NPC hero from the villain's clutches, they will feel empowered by the guest's appearance, not overshadowed.

Lethal Force

Silver Age Sentinels differs from the "kill-evil-things-and-steal-their-stuff" RPGs because the heroic player characters do not kill their opponents. This may be an adjustment for your players, who are used to life-or-death. Neither heroes nor villains use killing force often in comics and people rarely die.

If some players still choose to use lethal force against their opponents, you can handle this in several ways. First talk to the players and tell them whether or not lethal force is considered permissible in the campaign. If the players understand that anyone who uses lethal force is considered a villain, they will be less likely to do so.

Even if you consider lethal force permissible in your campaign, consider confronting vigilante heroes with the consequences of their actions. For example, the criminals they have killed may have family members (some of them vengeful). Public opinion of the heroes may shift if they are known killers, especially in comparison to heroes who are not. The police are not likely to co-operate with a known killer and will put a warrant out for the hero's arrest. Innocent people may get caught in the crossfire, and heroes who immediately resort to lethal force may be caught unprepared when a situation is not what it appears. For example, what happens when the master villain places an innocent victim, dressed in the villain's costume, in the heroes' path ... and the heroes immediately strike to kill?

Loners

You find them in the comics all the time: heroes who dress all in black, skulk around in the shadows, and work alone. Comics were rife with dark and brooding loners at one time and they are still popular today. Unfortunately, loners are not well suited to the team atmosphere of a superhero group, which will probably be the basis of your campaign; a group of loners is a contradiction.

Limit the number of "brooding loner" characters in your campaign. Unless your players feel they can concoct a good reason why a group of loners would get together and stay together, loners will cause problems in your game. The result of having a loner character in a campaign is that you are often forced to deal with the actions of one character's solo forays while the rest of the players are forced to sit around, waiting for their chance to join play. Try to ensure that everyone is involved with game play at all times, whenever possible.

Negotiations

Eventually, a villain in your campaign will take hostages or otherwise force the heroes into a situation where they must negotiate with the villain. Some players flatly refuse to negotiate. Confronted with a hostage situation, they charge in to kick some villain butt, confident that they can take out the villains before anything happens. Conversely, some players are utterly paralyzed by negotiations; they are afraid to act because something might go wrong and innocent people might get hurt. It is important to strike a balance between the two extremes if you want to have negotiations in your campaign at all.

First, encourage the players to take action, but thoughtful, deliberate action. NPCs are useful for providing input here. If the heroes indicate they are going to charge in, have their police contact suggest a more subtle approach. On the other hand, if the heroes are not doing anything, it is time for an official to request their help, or for a tearful friend or relative of one of the hostages to plead with the heroes to intervene.

Also try to make it clear with which villains the heroes can negotiate and which they cannot. If nobody in the campaign is trustworthy, the heroes have no reason to negotiate. Conversely, if negotiations can solve every problem, the heroes have little reason to take action. Some villains should be trustworthy enough to honestly negotiate, while some clearly cannot be trusted.

Problem Powers

Superheroes can have amazing powers; the Attributes given in Chapter Two allow heroes to do anything you permit. Just because the players can create a hero who can transform every villain in the city into a toad, however, does not mean that you must allow it.

Some powers and character concepts can pose problems for your game, or just do not fit in. Players may point to characters with similar powers in the comics, but that still does not mean they fit into your campaign. Comic book characters do whatever the writer expects, and thus there is no danger of them using their powers in an unusual or inappropriate way to spoil the story or ruin everyone else's enjoyment. This possibility is quite real in an RPG, however.

The easiest action you can take involves banning any powers or character concepts you think will prove problematic. If an Attribute later turns out to be trouble in the campaign, ask the player to change the character's powers to eliminate the problem. You can then work the power change into the campaign

Rewards

In the comics, heroes are motivated by the desire to do good with their abilities, not by material wealth. In *Silver Age Sentinels*, heroes earn Advancement Points to improve their Stats or Attributes over time, but do not usually receive the kinds of "treasures" or "toys" characters in other RPGs do. Although your players may be content with this, you might consider alternative rewards to give the characters as a replacement for money. For example, you can emphasize the public goodwill and adoration the heroes receive. Have the city throw a parade or dedicate a statue or monument in their honour. Invite them to the annual policeman's ball so they can receive an award (and what villain can resist a target like that?). Have their mailman deliver fan letters by the truckload. Not only do these rewards give the players a good feeling about their characters, but they also provide excellent role-playing opportunities and give you something with which to encourage heroic behaviour. When heroes step over the line, the invitations and the fan mail stop and things can turn ugly.

One way you can give material rewards to the heroes occurs whenever they defeat a villain — the heroes can confiscate all the villain's cool stuff! From high-tech gadgets to powerful weapons to

a secret island headquarters ... if the villains can no longer use such items, why can't the player characters? Such rewards can either compliment Advancement Points, or replace them completely.

Splitting the Team

Hero teams in the comics often split into smaller groups to handle problems, regrouping at the end of the story for the finale. While this allows the story to focus more on individual characters in a comic, it tends to be more difficult to do in an RPG, in which the rest of the players sit around waiting their turn while one or two of them have the spotlight.

If you cannot avoid splitting the team, cut quickly from one group to the next. Do not let any one group of players sit idly for too long. If you can occasionally arrange it, cut away at a cliffhanger or important moment. For example, you might say, "You batter down the heavy steel door and a bright light floods the room as you enter. Silhouetted against the glare is a dark figure who says, 'Welcome, heroes, I've been expecting you.' Meanwhile, on the surface...."

Varying Power Levels

Teams in the comics often feature heroes with widely differing power levels (not necessarily Character Point totals, although those may vary as well). Unless your players are particularly comfortable with other characters in the group being more powerful, it is probably best to keep the heroes on even footing. Start everyone with the same number of Character Points to create their characters and keep watch for heroes with Attributes that greatly exceed everyone else's. Suggest guidelines to the players regarding appropriate Stat Ranks and Combat Values for your campaign. If you are going to allow Point differences between the characters, you should perhaps limit it to a range of ±25 Points from the average: 75-125 (100 average), 100-150 (125 average), 125-175 (150 average), 150-200 (175 average), or 175-225 (200 average). You should be aware, however, that a Character Point difference of 50 Points often represents a substantial difference in power level.

Classic Bits

In the comics, there are certain elements that appear on a regular basis. Some have become cliché but, used sparingly, they can contribute to making a campaign feel more like the comic books adventure. You can find examples of many of these classic bits in the setting described in Chapters Eight through Ten as well.

Aliens

Most comic book universes are teeming with life, and aliens regularly visit (or invade) the Earth. The planet may be considered anything from a cosmic backwater to a site of great strategic importance, or both. Many comic book aliens are humanoid, even identical in appearance to humans, while others can be quite strange, since comics (like RPGs) do not have a limited special-effects budget. Aliens are usually more technologically advanced than humans, and either very warlike or peaceful. A race of shapeshifting aliens capable of blending in with humanity for a "secret invasion" is a common idea.

Atlantis

The sunken city-state of Atlantis (or Lemuria, Mu, Lyonesse, or some other mythical, sunken civilization) often exists in comics, populated by mer-people and water-breathing humanoids. Atlantis has advanced technology and magic but its greatest wonders were lost during the cataclysm that sank it beneath the ocean. The Atlanteans are a source of aquatic heroes and villains, invasions of the surface world, and oceanic giant monsters.

Cosmic Beings

More powerful than the mightiest heroes and villains are the cosmic forces in the universe, nearly omnipotent and capable of effecting change on a vast scale. These cosmic beings range from impossibly advanced aliens to actual gods or conceptual beings that embody an entire concept like Death or Infinity. Cosmic beings may be good, evil, or beyond human concepts of morality. When faced with beings of such overwhelming power, heroes must be clever and use means other than brute force to overcome or outwit them. Cosmic beings do not need game stats, since they can do anything the GM needs them to do.

Costumes

Distinctive costumes are all but required for heroes and villains, and they nearly always adapt to their wearer's powers. Consequently, flaming auras, growth, shapeshifting, shrinking, stretching, etc., does not destroy them. This feature may have originated when the costume was exposed to the same conditions that granted the wearer his or her powers, or because costumes are made from a special material (discovered on Earth or perhaps alien in origin). Sometimes, it is just the way powers work and nobody questions it.

Exclamations

Heroes (and often villains) have colourful battle cries and exclamations of surprise, such as "Great Scott!" "Merciful Minerva!" "It's Cloberrin' Time!" or even "Spoon!" Some also have "magic words" they say to activate their powers (whether they need to or not).

Giant Monsters

A common threat in the comics is a giant monster, either a normal animal or insect grown to enormous size or a vaguely humanoid creature, spawned by radiation or visiting from outer space. There are occasionally giant robot monsters (or mecha) as well, which may not obviously be machines until a hero tears through the outer skin. Giant monsters are nigh-unstoppable juggernauts of destruction. Often they have a particular weakness heroes can exploit to stop them, or to lure them somewhere they cannot harm anyone (like the bottom of the ocean or into space). Occasionally they are just misunderstood, in need of TLC.

Gorillas

For some reason, comic books with gorillas on the cover always sell more than usual. In fact, in the 1960s DC Comics had to create an editorial policy limiting the number of issues per month with gorillas on the cover to keep everyone from doing it! Talking gorillas are staples of the comics as heroes, villains, or sidekicks; really big gorillas, like King Kong, make great giant monsters. A villain may transform heroes into gorillas (or chimps or monkeys), or the heroes might encounter intelligent or talking gorillas as part of a story.

Hero Fights

Inevitably, when two heroes or hero teams meet, they get into a fight because of some sort of misunderstanding (or villainous trickery). The fight usually ends in a draw when both sides realize they are the good guys. Afterward they team up to go after the villain.

Invulnerable Background Characters

Some of the background characters — reporters, photographers, elderly aunts, lawyer friends, butlers, police detectives, hero-worshipping kids, etc. — seemingly have 100 Levels of the Divine Relationship Attribute. While the city is crumbling around them and the heroes are being beaten to a pulp, certain recurring NPCs always manage to escape injury.

Magic and the Arcane

Magic usually exists in comic book worlds. Only a select few individuals have the talent, drive, and skill to learn and use magic, however. Like radiation, magic is a common source for superpowers, and exposure to unleashed magical forces may be part of a character's origin. Magic can accomplish virtually anything, limited only by the will and knowledge of the magician, often represented by the Dynamic Powers (page 40) or Power Flux Attributes (page 62).

Micro-Worlds

From table-top bottle cities to entire solar systems comprised of subatomic particles, comics have presented many versions of "inner space" as well as outer space. Modern-day comics tend to explain micro-worlds as alternate dimensions or "folds" in space-time reachable through shrinking (see Shrink, page 65), rather than actual tiny or sub-atomic places, but the effect is still the same. The first visit to a micro-world nearly always occurs by accident.

Mutants

A common explanation for superpowers in the comics is genetic mutation, either because of outside influences like radiation or some sort of natural evolutionary process. Mutants are normal people until their powers emerge (often at puberty); this frightens humans, since anyone could be a potential mutant. You can use mutants to explore themes of prejudice and morality in your campaign.

Parallel Worlds

A parallel world is similar, but not identical, to the "real" Earth where the comics' stories take place. Such parallel Earths are often given designations using numbers or letters (for example, "Earth-2" or "Aerth-X") to differentiate them from the real Earth (usually called "Earth-Prime," "Earth-1," or simply "Earth"). Dimensional travel, intentional or accidental, can transport the heroes to these other Earths. Parallel Earths offer tremendous crossover potential, since they can contain almost any setting or characters imaginable. A parallel Earth may feature parallel versions of the heroes; a popular setting is the "mirror universe" where good and evil are reversed (the heroes are villains and vice versa).

Psionic Talents

Amazing powers of the mind are common in comics, especially Telepathy (page 78) and Telekinesis (page 77). They may harness some unknown form of energy or "psion" particles. Psionic abilities are often seen as a more "advanced" stage of evolution. They are most often found among aliens and mutants, and mystics.

Radiation

Exposure to radiation is a common source of superpowers in Silver Age comics, since fictional radiation is more likely to cause strange mutations than induce radiation poisoning. Radiation may come from Earthly sources such as atomic energy or from strange, alien materials (usually meteorites). The effects of radiation exposure may be temporary (lasting only for one session or adventure) or permanent (in the case of most origin stories). Radiation's modern cousin is genetic engineering or biotechnology, which currently serves a similar role in the comics.

Secret Identities

Heroes and villains often wear costumes and masks to conceal their true identities. Although a hero's secret identity is often threatened, the flimsiest disguises and excuses are enough to protect it. Even a simple mask or a pair of eyeglasses is enough to prevent a hero's close friends and family from recognizing him or her (a thin disguise somehow makes a hero's voice unrecognizable as well). Some stories put heroes in situations where they must confront a problem without revealing their true identity, such as when a hero in his or her secret identity stumbles across a crime in progress.

Short-Term Gains

Due to a scientific accident or the intervention of a supreme being, a hero may gain new powers for a short period of time (i.e. one gaming session). Alternatively, the character's existing powers may increase dramatically in potency and scope ... just in time to deal with the new enemy or disaster that threatens to destroy the world. Inevitably, the character should learn that the strength of a power is not nearly as important as the strength of one's heart; by the time the new abilities fade, the character has become a better person.

Superalloys

Virtually invulnerable metal alloys often appear in the comics to provide a challenge for heroes who can rip steel apart like tissue paper or melt it with a glance. Superalloys range in strength from extremely tough (but breakable, given enough force) to nigh invulnerable. You may introduce a superalloy or two, but be guarded against the heroes getting hold of too much of it. It is best if you make the material rare, expensive, or otherwise difficult to obtain.

The Space Patrol

In a comic book universe with aliens and alien civilizations, there is often an interstellar (or even intergalactic) organization devoted to maintaining law and order. Officers are selected from many different races and may have powers of their own or special equipment that gives them the powers they need to carry out their duties. A Space Patrol officer (or several) may be stationed on Earth, or Earth may be "off limits" for them, given that it remains a relatively "primitive" world. An officer on Earth may be a human chosen by the Patrol or an alien stationed on the planet.

Underground

Much activity occurs below ground in a superhero world. Sewer tunnels and storm drains are always big enough to move around in, and often feature underground mutants, giant alligators, hordes of rats, and similar things. Further down are subterranean tunnels and caverns with mole people, goblins, lava men, underground giant monsters, and perhaps even entire lost worlds. These places may really be underground (perhaps very deep underground) or they may only seem to be underground, but are actually "dimensional pockets" or parallel worlds connected to Earth by an underground dimensional gate.

Day on the Job

Part I

3:42 PM

Thunderclap hits the ground hard, driving both powered gauntlets deep into the street. The ground shakes from the impact and a tidal swell of concrete tears up Lexington Avenue. The shockwaves rock Slipstream off his feet, but in the second it takes me to realize he's falling, he's up and running circles around Iron Bow. Unfortunately, Slipstream's flurry of punches bounce off Iron Bow's force field.

Sentinel swoops high through the air, slowing in mid-arc before diving after Cloud Racer, whose force field is still crackling from Sentinel's last punch. Red Phoenix's voice bursts through on my ear radio. She's talking while trading blows with Rapier and his micron-filament blade. There's heavy static on the airwaves.

"<Krz> Se<Krzzz> the way <Kshhh> when Sent<Krzzz> struck his field. <Kzhhhh> must be tied in<Krzzz>ental power supply."

Iron Bow nocks another arrow on his hydraulic-powered bow and aims at Caliburn who appears distracted ... what's he looking for? I scream, "Look out," but Iron Bow has already let the arrow fly.

His last shot punched clean through a parked car.

***

6:34 AM; 9 Hours, 8 Minutes earlier.

"Can you answer a question, Sergeant?" I ask, rubbing my hands together against the morning cold. The dawn sun crests the distant horizon; we have a beautiful vantage point from the rooftop of 1 Police Plaza.

"Yeah, shoot."

"Why the costume?"

Prometheus seems taken aback by the question, but it's legitimate curiosity. I'm not trying to break the ice. I actually want to know.

Prometheus shakes his head. "The costume isn't my idea. I should be in uniform ... I should be carrying a badge instead of wearing this." He emphasizes his point by tugging on his outfit of responsive polymers. It snaps back into place, like there's no air between his skin and the "mask."

"What about you?" Prometheus finally asks me. "Why the MTU?"

I shrug. It's the best answer I have and a question I'm still asking myself. Maybe because it's prestigious. Most POs who serve with the Marvels Tactical Unit (with distinction) write their own tickets to any squad in the Five Boroughs. Most hit sergeant and lieutenant real fast.

Maybe it's the thrill. The Marvels Tactical Unit handles the latest technology in law enforcement, and they're first on the scene of any mask-related incident. They're the world's elite when it comes to human response and metahuman "management."

"Maybe you're bucking for superpowers," Prometheus says with a wry smile.

I laugh. "Who wouldn't?"

In the last five years, three different POs with the MTU developed superpowers and went on to become independent metas themselves. Nothing on caliber with Sentinel or Prometheus here, but at least Orion earned some distinction for saving a busload of tourists from drowning in the river.

"Yeah," Prometheus says, "but don't forget; for those three POs who went meta, a dozen officers died too."

"I know," I say. "I mean ... getting powers isn't what I'm here for."

"Then why?" he asks. "You still haven't answered."

"I guess ... the challenge. The MTU only accepts the best. I want to be part of the best."

"Hmm."

"Hmm?"

"You served in the 3-2."

"Yes sir, a fine precinct."

"And one of the toughest," Prometheus says, "I was there. Then you transferred to Two-Truck, the busiest tactical unit in the ESU."

"Yeah," I say cautiously. "If you want to work in Marvels, you have to bust your chops to get noticed. Emergency Service Unit was the way to go."

"Hmm."

"Excuse me sir," I say, perhaps a little too vigorously, "but are you going somewhere with this?"

Prometheus smiles. "Easy officer. I'm just curious."

"Then just ask me. Why the fifth?"

"Because," Prometheus says with that mantle of authority most heroes seem to carry, "you wanted this assignment."

"Yeah, and?"

"And ... the Marvels Tactical Unit represents one of the few law enforcement bodies working in tandem with heroes to catch supered perps."

"But...."

"Let me finish, Officer Pallin," Prometheus says, robbing me of steam. "The MTU is an ambassador of sorts between the city and those heroes out there. It operates efficiently only because there's goodwill on both sides."

"I follow."

"That also means folks are monitoring your conduct constantly, from other heroes who think the MTU is only getting in the way, to IA who'll watch you like a hawk."

Prometheus pauses to see if I'm paying attention. I am.

"The last thing the unit needs is a cowboy looking to bust a villain just because he has something to prove to the world."

"If I wanted publicity," I ask, "then why would I pick a unit protected by the press?"

Prometheus smiles. "Did your homework, I see."

"Yes, I did." I'm mad now, but I don't back down. I don't

appreciate another cop questioning my integrity. "I know the papers have an agreement with the Commissioner's Office. Let them blur my face; I don't need the publicity affecting my family ... or giving some two-bit hood a target."

Prometheus nods. "Good, that's a healthy attitude." He goes back to staring out over Empire City like nothing happened. It's a nice view, but I'm too ticked to appreciate it. I need a distraction.

"Who's my rabbi for this tour?" I finally ask.

Prometheus smiles. "The man himself ... the Sentinel."

"You're ... you're joking. Right?" Whatever anger I had leaves me like a punch to the gut.

"You okay?" Prometheus asks. He's grinning ear to ear now.

"Sentinel!?! He's a ... a legend!"

"Yes he is."

"But ... he was fighting Nazis when my dad was a kid."

"That's what they say."

"And ... he saved the world like ... what, a dozen times."

"I'm sure he's lost count. Not like they hand out trophies for that."

"And he was on the cover of Time over 15 issues!"

"Trust me ... it ain't that hard."

Now Prometheus is laughing.

"But why?" I ask.

"Why what?"

"Why is he playing my tour guide? Why him? Legends don't play tour guide. I mean ... it's the American Sentinel. It's like Julia Childs giving me cooking lessons."

Prometheus is still grinning. "Hey, the man's worn a uniform before, so he understands and appreciates the service we provide this city."

"But the Sentinel...."

"Listen," Prometheus says, regaining some composure. "The Guard have been the MTU's biggest supporters in the hero community. So they're usually the ones to train you for Training Day. It's just the luck of the rotation."

"What about you? Why aren't you training cops in Tactical?"

"Actually, I do, but that's part of your monthly curriculum. The Commissioner, on the other hand, wants MTU officers establishing ties with the independent hero community as well. Think of this as sensitivity training."

"Sensitivity training? You're kidding, right?"

"Nope. Today is all about seeing the job from their point of view. It's about understanding what they go through trying to protect folks from criminals. That way, you have a better grasp on mask-related situations."

I stay quiet a moment, trying to digest the butterflies flying up my throat.

"Look at it this way," Prometheus says, "who would you rather have protecting you today ... Sentinel or Caliburn?"

"Yeah ... but don't the really big perps go after Sentinel too?"

"There is that."

"Like the Red Minstrel?

"Uh-huh, but they've got him under lock at the Carousel."

"And Iron Duke?"

"Uh-huh, but he's currently in Europe, according to latest Interpol files."

"And Killah Ton?"

"He lost his mass three years ago. You're worrying about nothing."

"I guess ... it's just that ... it's ... the Sentinel."

"I know how you feel. I remember meeting him for the first time. It was intimidating."

"And?"

"And ... he's good people. Reminds me of my dad. Meat and potatoes kind of guy."

"Really?"

"Yeah. He's like ... a Norman Rockwell painting in tights."

I laugh. It helps.

"Listen, Officer Pallin. It's alright to feel this way. I haven't met one MTU officer who wasn't nervous on Training Day. That's why we do this."

"What d'you mean?"

"It's all about eliminating your fears and awe-factor when dealing with metas. In the MTU, you'll be facing potentially dangerous villains who are backed by an arsenal of abilities. You freeze or hesitate in those situations, and people die."

Then it hits me. "That's why you're here, isn't it?" I was wondering why Prometheus was keeping me company for my rendezvous with the Guard.

Prometheus nods.

"You're helping me settle into this assignment." I say. "You're my training wheels."

"So to speak ... yeah," Prometheus nods, "your training wheels."

We're both quiet for a moment. Prometheus is letting me digest this information.

"So," I finally ask, "Sentinel is good people, right?"

Prometheus nods.

"Do you think he'd mind I asked for an autograph? It's for my dad."

"Ask him yourself," he says looking up. "He's here."

I follow Prometheus's gaze, up into dawn's golden sky. Sentinel — red, white, and blue against the light dusting of clouds — sails down from the heavens feet first. He looks casual, like a falling feather, and lands quietly at Prometheus's side.

Before I can react, he stretches out his hand, waiting for me to shake. He's smiling.

"Officer Pallin," Sentinel says with a voice like a young Walter Cronkite, "it's a pleasure to meet you."

Now I'm really nervous.

CAMPAIGN INTRODUCTION



Introduction & History

Welcome to the dusk of the Twentieth Century, and the first incandescent rays of tomorrow. A hundred years is small time in the reckoning of history, but the world has changed, grown, and matured rapidly in the last century. Pandora's Box of science and technology has made the universe infinitely huge, but simultaneously reduced the globe to the span of a single village. Every age has had champions, from Victorian adventurers to Arthurian knights, or Greek demigods to Nordic Valkyrie, yet the modern era is best known for the birth of the Hero. The dreams of mankind, still untouched by the cold logic of rational law, prove fertile ground for amazement and awe. The ages of faith and reason have given way to an Age of Wonder.

Welcome to the world of Empire City, a place that feels familiar, yet constantly surprises. Imagine, for a moment, what it must be like to wake up in a brownstone at the corner of East 86th St. and Fifth Ave. and catch a glimpse of the Sentinel flying high across Central Park in the first dawn light. He has been at work for hours, perhaps all night, ensuring that someone is on watch. It is reassuring that in a world so complex and fantastic that there are heroes, "good guys" who stand tall against the dark.

Imagine a young EPD beat cop on his very first patrol as he finds himself staring down the barrel of Artificer's particle maser cannon. Although he should not and cannot depend on a masked saviour, what a relief it must be when Caliburn crashes down from above, knocking the assault weapon across the alley.

An elderly couple takes an evening stroll through Central Park, but passing by Cleopatra's Needle they are swarmed by a gang of blue-clothed Crips. The punks kick the old man's cane away, and tear his wife's handbag from her, but suddenly pause when they hear a gust of rushing wind. In an eyeblink two have been knocked to the ground while another three are blown five feet in the air. A second later, the remaining six are battered, bruised, and bound together, before Slipstream helps the gentleman to his feet and returns the woman's purse.

The street kids that congregate along the dilapidated boardwalks of Coney Island huddle around trashcan fires at night for warmth, telling stories about Pan and Belle to maintain a spark of hope. Someday, a runaway girl whispers, Pan will find me and magic me into her little sister. Yet as the nights grow colder and blacker, the legends turn to Bloody Mary as the kids scare each other from straying ... for if they wander too far, Mary will emerge from a broken mirror or a tinted window and take them away for good.

Consider a veteran officer of EPD now assigned to the experimental Marvels Tactical Unit division of ESU prepping for a call. The riot armour is hot and heavy while the ballistic helmet strains the neck and reduces peripheral vision. Perhaps he's with the assault team, gearing up to break through the twisted steel and brick barricade that a meta has erected. Or possibly he is part of the sniper team, peering down the scope of his H&K PSG-1 and praying: the marvel won't spot him; if the meta turns towards the hostages, a depleted uranium bullet will puncture his force field; the meta's telekinetic blasts can't reach this rooftop.

What is it like to look up and see a Mercury jet streaking from the heights of Olympian Tower, conscious that the Guard is racing to defend not just our livelihood but our very world? To see Red Phoenix duelling with Iron Duke on the Brooklyn Bridge? To be threatened in a terrible tenement fire and yet be saved by the vast, darkened wings of Mother Raven? Many people in Empire City, a people known to be among the most jaded and cynical on the planet, say that the heroes give them hope. It is almost as simple as that — knowing there are forces tending the light at the end of the tunnel; knowing you can let your guard down if just for a second; knowing that there are still good guys, makes reaching tomorrow easier.

Birth of the Masked Man

The early years of the 1900s set the stage for greater-than-life heroes while the Great War prepared the world for unheard of barbarism. By the time of the Second World War, life had become very complex, yet it would become much trickier with the birth of the atomic man. Certainly masked adventurers existed before the American Sentinel's appearance in WWII, but there is no documented proof that any of them had powers beyond the normal ken. By opening the secrets of the universe, humanity changed its course through destiny.

Men and women of tremendous courage and compassion emerged as models of hope and mercy, inspiring others to "do the right thing." The Frisco Flyer debuted in 1906 as the predecessor to the modern superhero. His cunningly devised flying-gear was crucial in saving so many from the ravages of the San Francisco earthquake. Although almost incomparable to the metahumans of today, the Flyer was the first public costumed adventurer, demonstrating that with a bit of ingenuity, a fair shake of chutzpah, and a true heart, any man could combat the forces of adversity. Revisionist historians have been unkind (though perhaps more truthful) to the Flyer's memory since Alfred Lilienthal passed away in 1966, but many prefer to remember him fondly as a saint of virtue rather than as a fallible and faulted man.

First World War

Even Lilienthal's harshest critics agree with his assertion that as the first "masked-man" the Flyer taught others by example. His daring and bravery, as well as his arrogance and ingenuity, illustrated that the impossible could be done. The fact that his rig could fly was secondary to the concept of a grand public identity, and the notion that a person could operate independent of official sanction and make such a significant, and often welcomed, impact. The British adventurers of World War I, Tommy Gun and Dover Angel, both acknowledged the Flyer as a role model and inspiration.

Tommy Gun was a rogue Englishman who operated on the continent throughout the later years of the Great War. First spotted in France in February, 1916, the lone two-gun Brit criss-crossed the front so often he seemed to constantly dance across No Man's Land. The vaguest whisper that his Union Jack mask had been spotted would strengthen the resolve of the boys in the trenches, while his dramatic entrances, twin guns blazing, would send the Huns scurrying back into their holes. The British command staff was never completely comfortable with Tommy Gun, always fearing he would cause untold ruin by his interference. Yet, at the same time, they clearly recognized he was becoming a powerful image; many theorists have suggested the only way some soldiers maintained the will to fight was because of such role models.

The Call=Chronicle=Examiner

SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY, APRIL 19, 1906

EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE: SAN FRANCISCO IN RUINS

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DEATH AND DESTRUCTION HAVE BEEN THE FATE OF SAN FRANCISCO. SHAKEN BY A TEMBLOR AT 5: SHOCK LASTING 48 SECONDS, AND SCOURGED BY FLAMES THAT RAGED DIAMETRICALLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS RUINS. AT SIX O'CLOCK LAST EVENING THE FLAMES SEEMINGLY PLAYING WITH INCREASED VIGOR, THREA THEIR FURY HAD SPARED DURING THE EARLIER PORTION OF THE DAY. BUILDING THEIR PATH IN A TRIANG EARLY MORNING, THEY JOCKEYED AS THE DAY WANED, LEFT THE BUSINESS SECTION, WHICH THEY HAD E DOZEN DIRECTIONS TO THE RESIDENCE PORTIONS. AS NIGHT FELL THEY HAD MADE THEIR WAY OVER SPRINGING ANEW TO THE SOUTH THEY REACHED OUT ALONG THE SHIPPING SECTION DOWN THE BAY SHOR THIRD AND TOWNSEND STREETS. WAREHOUSES, WHOLESALE HOUSES AND MANUFACTURING CONCERNS FELL IN THEIR PATH. THIS CO DESTRUCTION OF THE ENTIRE DISTRICT KNOWN AS THE "SOUTH OF MARKET STREET." HOW FAR THEY ARE REACHING TO THE SOUTH ACROSS THE CHANNEL CANNOT BE TOLD AS THIS PART OF THE CITY IS SHUT OFF FROM SAN FRANCISCO PAPERS.

DOWNTOWN EVERYTHING IS RUIN. NOT A BUSINESS HOUSE STANDS. THEATERS ARE CRUMBLED INTO HEAPS. FACTORIES AND COMMISSION HOUSES LIE SMOULDERING ON THEIR FORMER SITES. ALL OF THE NEWSPAPER PLANTS HAVE BEEN RENDERED USELESS, THE "CALL" AND THE "EXAMINER" BUILDINGS, EXCLUDING THE "CALL'S" EDITORIAL ROOMS ON STEVENSON STREET, BEING ENTIRELY DESTROYED. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE LOSS IN SAN FRANCISCO WILL REACH FROM $150,000,000 TO $200,000,000. THESE FIGURES ARE IN THE ROUGH AND NOTHING CAN BE TOLD UNTIL PARTIAL ACCOUNTING IS TAKEN.

THE FRISCO FLYER SAVES DOZENS

AT 5:13 A.M. THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO BEGAN SHAKING WHEN TREMENDOUS THUNDER BOOMED FROM UNDER THE GROUND. HIGHWAYS TORE APART; WHARVES TWISTED AND CREAKED; STEEL STRUCTURES SWUNG PRECARIOUSLY AS THE CITY WAS ROCKED BY SIX CONSECUTIVE SHOCKS. MANY PEOPLE WERE TRAPPED BY RAGING FLAMES OR COLLAPSED BUILDINGS WITH NO WAY FOR FIREMEN TO FIND THEM. AMIDST ALL THIS CHAOS AND TERROR APPEARED A SMALL MIRACLE: A MAN IN A FANTASTIC FLYING MACHINE MANAGED TO SAVE MORE THAN TWO DOZEN PEOPLE FROM PRECARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

REPORTS ARE CONFUSED, BUT ALL MANAGED TO DESCRIBE A YOUNG MAN IN A HEAVY METAL AERONAUT RIG WHO DESCENDED FROM THE SKY. THE LARGE, CUMBERSOME WINGS OF THE RIG DID NOT ALLOW HIM ACCESS TO NARROW SPACES, BUT HE MANOEUVRED WITH SURPRISING GRACE. HE WAS ABLE TO CIRCLE RUINED BUILDINGS, AVOIDING HIGH FLAMES AND THICK SMOKE, IN ORDER TO FIND SAFE SPOTS TO LAND. THE RIG, WHICH SEEMED TO BE GASOLINE POWERED, NEEDED A SMALL AMOUNT OF CLEAR AREA TO TAKE OFF, BUT WAS STRONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO CARRY ONE GROWN MAN OR SEVERAL CHILDREN, SUCH AS YOUNG FRANK AND BETTY SHAW RESCUED FROM THE FAIRMONT HOTEL.

MOST OF THOSE HE SAVED WERE TOO STUNNED TO SAY ANYTHING BEFORE HE RACED OFF AGAIN, TO LOOK FOR MORE SURVIVORS. MADAME SEMBRICH, DELIVERED FROM THE RUINED OPERA HOUSE, DID HAVE THE PRESENCE OF MIND TO ASK HIS NAME. "THE FLYER," HE CALLED DOWN FROM THE SKY; THUS THE FRISCO FLYER IS BORN.

KING OF THE AIR: *THE LIFE OF THE FLYER*

It seems obvious today that so many people would follow my footsteps. But back then I was more surprised than anyone. I knew what I was doing was sheer lunacy, and could not for the life of me understand why anyone else would want to put themselves at risk. I did it for the thrill and craziness and because I couldn't stop, but it was hard to believe others could be similarly loony. I don't think it was jealousy, as I intentionally stayed out of the limelight even through the First World War, but I failed to comprehend. If they wanted to be heroes, why didn't they become police officers or soldiers? Why make yourself a target?

At least that's what I thought at the time. Now I have the benefit of experience, although I doubt I'm much wiser, and I have been lucky enough to meet several masks over the years and ask them what it meant to them. That was unheard of at the time, and probably still is today. You never talk about anything other than the situation that you are handling. You don't ask how someone decided to put on a costume, or how they received their powers, or why they do it. You accept them at face value and put stock in their deeds. But I was nosy and burned to know, so I asked.

Tommy Gun was the second documented figure to dress up and put himself at risk. Of course, it was very different for him — World War One had started and his country, Britain, was calling on her sons and daughters to fight. It was obvious that he had a good upbringing from his accent and eloquence, and he also had the money to outfit himself in style. He ran around in a silk jacket with a brilliant red scarf knotted at his throat, wearing a half-mask imprinted with the Union Jack. Reports from that time say he was first seen at Verdun, helping the French. But that wasn't quite right.

I met Tommy in '40 during the Battle of Britain, and we stayed in touch after the war, often going for a pint. He'd tell stories of his first nights "on the job," as he called it. The first time he dressed up was in 1914, at the Battle of the Marne, two years before his "debut." Tommy confided once, when we were both roaring drunk, that I had helped shape his path. He had read articles about me and realized that's how he could get involved; he didn't want to enlist and affect only a tiny piece. Tommy wanted to play a big role and help determine the grand scheme. Thus, he came up with an image and a code-name and bribed passage over to France, intending to be a solo operative. He wore the mask but of course didn't have the namesake-guns yet. He would leap to the attack with twin Brownings, surprising the Germans behind their lines, and then vanish into the night. Few saw him and survived. At Verdun, however, he managed to capture a pair of Bergmann MP18 submachine guns from a German armoury, and that's what made his fearful reputation. In fact, that photograph of him standing upon the abandoned Jeep, guns blazing, is what inspired the American company Thompson to nickname their models after him. They even shipped him a pair care of the British Army! From about 1920 on he really did use twin Tommy guns!

When Dover Angel made her first appearance in France, at the Battle of Third Ypres in 1917, the British government made a hurried decision to accept the science-knight as an unofficial symbol of the cause. David Lloyd George issued a personal invitation to Dover Angel to discuss sponsorship. She would maintain independence in movement and action, but would take advisement and limited direction from the British command. The agreement was never put in the books, but all British officers were made aware that Dover Angel would receive strategic information and resources in exchange for making appearances where they thought she was most needed. Dover Angel maintained her autonomy, and is said to have blatantly refused several suggested missions, but the co-operative effort was seen as advantageous to all.

It was seen as so advantageous, in fact, that other governments began scrambling to field their own mascots. In Germany, Manfred von Richthofen's skill as an aviator was adored, establishing him forever as the Red Baron. Soon after, Kaiser William II promoted Rittmeister Hermann Koenig for his valiant leadership during the withdrawal of Passchendäle. Koenig became Germany's first Futurist-solider, code named Herr Cryptic. Meanwhile, in the United States two masked adventurers were reported operating in the nation's capital. Archer Gold was a brilliantly clad swashbuckler who fought German sympathizers and saboteurs, contrasting the shadowy Corbae's one-man assault against organized crime and corrupt officials. The United States Army eventually managed to enlist Archer Gold's services in 1918, and he stepped into battle at Marne as an independent, elite soldier. The Great War ended with praise and adoration for these adventurers, but their real impact was but a historical footnote compared to the millions of men who died around the world. Yet they paved the way for something much greater.

PARA

Empire University's Journal of Parahuman Ability — Winter 1983

Historical Antecedent of the Hero

Newspapers from the Second World War enthusiastically welcomed the superman with open arms (and secretly thrilled at the über-Nazi, for such drama was needed to move the audience back home). They joyfully traced "his" origins to the earliest decades of the 20th century, running roughshod over dubious facts, forcing parallels and slippery questions of lineage into straight and narrow answers. "The American Sentinel," the *Chicago Daily Tribune (March 14, 1942)* wrote, "is clearly to Tommy Gun what America is to Old Mother England. Yet before both men was the original masked crusader, the Frisco Flyer." Even today there is a common misconception that all heroes can be traced to a common origin point, beginning at the earliest 20th century archetypes: Flyer, Tommy Gun, Corbae, Archer Gold, Dover Angel, Reverend Temperance, Red Summer.

New evidence (see PARA, F1981, *Historiography of Women Warriors, a Case Study of Dover Angel*, Dr. R. Fleischman) suggests that the "superhero" is not simply a 20th century phenomenon, or at least that the parahuman hero existed previously to 1906. Fleischman's paper examines Dover Angel as a product of 19th century hidden science, most infamously pioneered by Victorian England's secret engineers. Fleischman states "analysis of [Dover Angel] reveals a streamlined future-past look, blending science and medieval fictions into tomorrow's amazon. War-time accounts described her weaponry as 'magical,' in a manner similar to the fragmented descriptions of 'weird science' during the Victorian period." Fleischman goes on to examine the historical heroine mythology, stating that there is no "first amazon," but always another layer.

Fleischman stops short of suggesting a thematic link between Dover Angel and Red Phoenix (the modern "tomorrow amazon") but does imply that Dover Angel, Flyer, et *al*, may trace their thematic antecedents into the past.

Boston American - March 8, 1918

KAISER'S ACE BRINGS LIBERTY DOWN

The US Air Service suffered a great loss today when Lt. Maxwell Liberty was shot out of the sky by none other than Germany's Red Baron. Lt. Liberty was on a reconnaissance mission, flying a Sopwith Camel over the Aisne river, when a pair of Fokker Triplanes descended from the clouds. Lt. Liberty managed to down the first plane, crashing it into the river, but this allowed the Red Baron to sweep around and riddle the Camel with gunfire. Lt. Liberty disengaged, retreating behind French lines and the safety of anti-aircraft guns, but crash-landed. Lt. Liberty was removed from the wreckage and taken to a nearby hospital for immediate treatment of spinal injuries.

Lt. Maxwell Liberty is the son of Senator Charles Liberty, the noted industrialist, and Dana (nee Gibson) Liberty. Senator Liberty served as an officer in the Spanish-American War, and has supported President Wilson's stance throughout this Great War. Lt. Liberty attended flight school in Tours, France, before transferring to the U.S. Air Service, 17th Aero Squadron. In less than a year he proved himself as an Ace with 13 kills. He will be transferred home as soon as possible.

Boston American - Jan 15, 1919

FLYER SAVES MANY FROM MOLLASSES WAVE, 21 DIE

The Frisco Flyer made a surprising appearance in Boston today, his first in many months, which was lucky for several dozen people. A 50-foot-high iron tank of molasses exploded, releasing a two-million-gallon tidal wave of molasses. The 15-foot-high tide killed 21, and injured at least 40. Additional injuries resulted from flying scraps of metal. The Frisco Flyer appeared on scene immediately after the explosion. He pulled many trapped men, women, and children from the viscous swamp to safety, and his flying rig shielded the injured from debris. He helped a number of trapped firemen to safety when their firehouse flooded, and also rescued a number of horses. The tank was owned by the Purity Distilling Company, located in the North End of the city.

Empire Times - June 4, 1918

US ARROW STRIKES TRUE

MARNE RIVER, FRANCE — While the doughboys of the First Division drove the Germans out of Cantigny, the Second Division held Chateau-Thierry against the German Seventh Army. American soldiers have not experienced such terrible fighting since the Civil War. Soldiers faced mass shelling and poison gas, which killed and wounded hundreds. The Fifth Marines of the Second Division engaged in the bloodiest hand-to-hand fighting near the village of Bouresches, where the German shock troops, the *Stosstruppen*, held out the longest.

The Americans had an ace, however. Archer Gold made his debut with the Fifth Marines, clad in full mask and costume, bow in hand. He did elect to don a French helmet that had been given to him as a gift upon his arrival. The Huns had never faced such a peculiar foe, and although his bright costume drew heavy fire, his well-placed arrows quickly sent the Germans running!

Archer Gold is a fully enlisted soldier, although his identity remains classified and protected by means of a special commission of Congress. When asked how the first weeks had been, Gold replied, "Tough. The Kaisers put up a good stink, but they're no match for our boys. Just you wait…."

Empire Times
June 7, 1927

REVIEW

CK SHADOWS

Edited by Alain Locke

Reviewed by Astor Moore

Alain Locke's *The Negro Hero* is a tremendous work in the history of the American Negro. It includes verse, non-fiction, and fiction by some of Harlem's most prominent writers, including Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, Claude McKay, Walter White, Jessie Fauset, and the venerable James Weldon Johnson. One of the major themes of the collection is an examination of the masked adventurer, Red Summer. The writers question Red Summer's identity, not caring so much who he is as what colour skin is beneath the mask. His tendency to intervene in racial conflict, most often in Negro neighbourhoods or when Negros are at risk, suggests that he is black.

Included is a Chicago Tribune article that proclaimed him America's first Negro hero, without any corroborating evidence ("Red is First Black Mask", October 1, 1919). In chapter one, "The Negro Hero?" Locke contests this claim. He states even if Red Summer is a black man, and his deeds definitively heroic (despite white supremacist rhetoric), it makes a lie of the many great sacrifices of Negroes throughout American history. Locke's writers argue that whether Red Summer is white, black, or mulatto, is irrelevant; what is important is his appearance in Chicago, Empire City, in Oklahoma, and Texas when things were at their worst.

The concluding piece, "Looking into America's Shadows," written by Johnson, considers how Red Summer has given up any ability to pass by donning an outfit that forces him to stand apart from the crowd. Additionally, by assuming a blood-soaked name, he constantly reminds proponents of racial hatred what they have done. He has never taken a life and has stopped many Negroes from murdering whites … such equality is never seen at lynchings. Johnson ends by saying he would be honoured if Red Summer was a black man, yet at the same time, the colour beneath the mask is irrelevant. The man's deeds are the important thing, and he would be just as honoured if Red Summer were white.

BLOOD RED VALENTINE

Seven members of George "Bugs" Moran's gang were gunned down in an attack in a Chicago beer warehouse last night. Police suspect "Scarface" Al Capone's gang for the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. The murderers, disguised as police officers, apparently opened fire without warning. The machine gun fire killed all seven men, and damaged much of the warehouse.

Before the killers could escape, however, or loot the warehouse, a masked adventurer surprised them. Police believe Reverend Temperance engaged the men, beating all of them into unconsciousness. He then apparently released all of the valves, letting thousands of gallons of beer drain away.

Police Commissioner William Russell was outrage by the gang violence, but pleased the killers were l for the police. When questioned about Rever Temperance's motives, and why he did not interv before the men were killed, Commissioner Russell no comment. Chicago Daily Feb 15, 1929

Continued on A2

The Daily Mirror

Wednesday, June 5, 1940

Bloody Marvellous Miracle

Operation Dynamo evacuated over 300,000 Allied soldiers from Dunkirk, bringing them back to England. It ran from May 26 until just yesterday, with over 800 commercial boats commandeered by the Admiralty, escorted by 39 destroyers. The British Expeditionary Force, along with 110,000 French soldiers, was saved.

Assisting with the withdrawal was none other than Tommy Gun, travelling with the 3rd Division. War correspondent Neville Brook wrote, "we drove through the night, a huge line crawling forward slowly. We kept lights out, watching the white-painted rear of the vehicle in front. Tommy Gun rode alongside on motorcycle, and would often plunge ahead, or drive down the line to ensure everyone was together. We were all scared, worried we wouldn't make it before dawn when the Stukas would catch us in the open. Tommy Gun's presence kept the line from dissolving. He got us out, but stayed behind until the end, bloody marvellous!" Unconfirmed reports suggest Tommy Gun escaped on the last ship, and may have already returned to France.

May 22, 1940

ARCHER GOLD CALLS DOWN NAZIS AT HOME AND ABROAD

EMPIRE CITY — Archer Gold took a few moments to speak at Madison Square Garden last night, after disrupting a Friends of New Germany rally. Outside, Nazi-protestors applauded Gold when he called Fritz Kuhn un-American and a bigot. He made reference to card-carrying members of Kuhn's organization whom had been arrested a week previously for sabotage, and sternly warned Kuhn to "watch out, or you'll be next!" Kuhn's protests were drowned out by the roaring crowd. Before vanishing, Gold told the gathering he planned to volunteer his services as soon as America "chooses to do the right thing. I urge you all to do the same."

This is the second incident this month where Archer Gold has tangled with the Friends of New Germany. On May 15 Archer Gold stopped two men, identified as Heinrich Meiser and Werner Galland, from blowing up the freighter Robin Moore, docked at the Chelsea Piers. The Robin Moore has been used to supply plane parts to the Allies.

INTER-WAR YEARS

While no direct link existed between any of the masked adventurers of the Great War, contemporary sociologists generally agree that each masked adventurer made it easier for subsequent men and women to feel not only comfortable but justified in taking up the cause. The champions of the '20s and '30s were independent, mysterious, and full of optimism. There was little common ground except they were each fighting the good fight. No one knew how the public would react or what the future held. By downplaying their societal status they protected their identities and daily lives, but this kept them apart from each other as well as the people they helped. Red Summer, in his clashes with the Ku Klux Klan, never encountered Reverend Temperance in his crusade against bootleggers. Corbae and Archer Gold both operated from Washington, D.C., but were only sighted together twice in all their years of duty, and they never held press conferences. Compared to today's sky duels and street-wrecking brawls, the legends from yesterday were tempered by a limited scope and suffered considerably less media scrutiny.

Masked adventurers who operated in the intermediate years were regarded somewhat like anachronistic dilettantes, as men and women who liked to play dress-up. Several semi-retired after the war, such as Tommy Gun and the Flyer, while Herr Cryptic vanished into the ruin of post-war Germany. This is not to suggest these men and women did not have important struggles, or worked any less diligently, but their efforts during these two decades are often forgotten between the bookends of world wars. While Archer Gold and Dover Angel achieved status of societal darlings, heroes like Red Summer faced the grim reality of an imperfect world.

The summer of 1919 turned ugly in the heat of July when race riots broke out throughout Chicago, spilling across the nation. Red Summer was spotted most often intervening in lynchings of African-Americans in the Chicago area, but he would also rescue helpless whites from black gangs. Over the next few years his greatest battles would be against the Ku Klux Klan, with no opponent more dangerous than their masked Imperial Wizard.

Red Summer's struggle to find acceptance throughout the 1920s was especially difficult because the nature of race relations was so volatile. Similarly, Reverend Temperance ran the gamut of praise from police and Prohibitionists to curses from almost everyone else. The Reverend was a self-proclaimed hero for teetotallers everywhere, a position seen unfavourably by those who enjoyed strong spirits. Reverend Temperance worked hard to shut down speakeasies and humiliate corrupt officials. His crusade engendered antipathy among organized gangs from Empire City to Chicago. When the 21st Amendment was ratified in 1933, repealing Prohibition, Reverend Temperance quickly faded from sight.

Second World War

The Second World War changed everything, of course. While the world's new face formed, global-powers struggled to define its shape. The greatest players understood what was at stake and expended tremendous resources to gain any conceivable advantage. New technologies redefined the battlefield while enemy states waged total war. WWI's nationalistic champions re-emerged, most prominently Britain's Tommy Gun and Dover Angel, America's Archer Gold, and Germany's Herr Cryptic, but they seemed outmoded and inapt in the midst of a conflict of such magnitude. The chaos and strife were too big for any one man or woman to measure against, so the nations sought to create new symbols of their might.

Birth of the Superhero

In October of 1939, President Roosevelt appointed the Advisory Committee on Uranium to consider the unlimited potential of nuclear chain reactions. Albert Einstein had written a letter warning him that German scientists were already working on a uranium bomb. Although Roosevelt wanted nothing more than

TOP SECRET
TOP SECRET / ANODYNE / RD

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MEMORANDUM

Office of Scientific Research and Development
1530 P Street, NW.
Washington 25. D.C.

13 DEC 1941

To: Major General Leslie R. Groves
cc: President Roosevelt
From: V. Bush
Subject: Anodyne, Phase One
Date: Dec 13, 1941

Dear Major General Groves,

I certainly understand the burden incumbent upon your shoulders this week. The news has had us scrambling, rushing to prepare Phase One. This tragedy has driven us to work harder than ever. Included with this package is a report comprehensively detailing the profiles of the men we've selected, and what they shall face. I believe Anodyne can [redacted] them superbly. Every man has repeatedly said he would sacrifice anything for the war effort. Within a week the [redacted] should be ready, and I hope to have preliminary results immediately. Will you be available?

All volunteers have been moved here to the [redacted], and the paperwork reinstating them has been received, classified top-secret as per your instructions. We have a bright team of patriots and heroes, General. Soon, perhaps, we will have a legion of [redacted].

Respectfully yours,

Vannevar Bush

Vannevar Bush, Director

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TOP SECRET / ANODYNE / RD

MEMORANDUM

Office of Scientific Research and Development
1530 P Street, NW.
Washington 25. D.C.

24 DEC 1941

To: President Roosevelt
From: Major General Groves
Subject: Anodyne, the good and the bad
Date: Dec 24, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

Dr. Bush has finally concluded Phase One of Project Anodyne with extremely mixed results. In fact, the bad is so terrible that I am considering shutting the project down immediately ... but Vannevar convinced me to at least examine the good that may still be done.

On the 22nd of December, Phase One reached the green light stage after [redacted] consecutive days of delay. I flew out to [redacted] to observe and be on hand. [redacted] men were selected for the program, all officers from the Army and Navy unable to serve on the front lines due to injuries suffered for this country. All were interested in the operation before December 7, but since Pearl Harbour have been extremely impatient to get the project underway. This over-eagerness may have rushed Dr. Bush, although, I stress, I do not believe he acted wantonly or with undue haste.

Bush planned to expose the men to a controlled [redacted] reaction, infusing their bodies with the potential to generate internal, controlled [redacted] reactions. They fasted for 24 hours, and at 0500 drank a [redacted] cadmium solution. This would help absorb excess neutrons, Bush explained, reducing the chance that they would be injured. At 0700 hours on December 22 the twelve men assembled in the [redacted] reactor's antechamber. They passed one final review, and were led inside. Each man was strapped to a station within the reactor-chamber's core; the stations were lead-lined cells that would contain and focus the released energies. The men were given six final injections of a variety of [redacted] cocktails, before the doctors and attendants vacated the chamber. Fissioning of the [redacted] occurred within the core, bathing the men in [redacted] fire for several long minutes.

The energy was so powerful many of the monitoring devices failed. We had no idea what we would find once the doors opened. Bush unlocked the chamber to find a figure standing in the doorway ... Maxwell Liberty had torn free of his restraints and walked across the room! His body crackled with energy, which faded quickly. Lt. Liberty appeared dazed, and attendants led him to the recovery room.

Much to our dismay, Lt. Liberty was the only ... success. I have included a summary report for the other [redacted] men. Several died outright, while others were crippled by the radiation, and two are just gone! Bush is at a loss to explain the results, and suggested the radiation literally disintegrated them. I strongly propose the other eleven men be consigned as casualties of the war effort, and posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

We continue to keep Lt. Liberty under observation. He seems ... fine. Incredible, in fact. The procedure somehow revitalized Liberty's body, restoring him physically to the prime of his life, and quickening his body's capacity to heal. Liberty regained complete use of his legs, and while they are somewhat weak from disuse, the doctors believe they will strengthen quickly. His upper body seems much stronger, even bigger, and the doctors claim his mass has substantially increased. Liberty's hair returned to coal black, when it had been salted four days ago, and all his scars have vanished.

Mr. President, I confess I am unsure [redacted]. Restoring [redacted] patriot to health and vitality seems incalculable, but if the cost is [redacted] then it is too high. Bush wants to scout for a second batch of volunteers to enter the program in three months. Currently I have suspended that notion indefinitely. I will remain at [redacted] for several more days to observe Lt. Liberty, after which time I will make my final recommendations.

Respectfully yours,

L. R. GROVES
MAJOR GENERAL, USA

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PROJECT ANODYNE SUMMARY REPORT

DO NOT RELEASE

DESTROY

Office of Scientific Research and Development
1530 P Street, NW.
Washington 25. D.C.

Major Ronald Teather	Deceased
Captain Charles Blanco	Deceased (note: continued bioelectric activity)
Captain Jonathan Cisco	Survived (note: suffered extreme mutation)
First Lieutenant Keith Jackson	Survived (note: suffered extreme mutation)
First Lieutenant Tom Karro	MIA (note: presumed deceased)
First Lieutenant Maxwell Liberty	Survived (note: major success)
First Lieutenant Patrick O'Grady	Deceased (note: continued bioelectric activity)
First Lieutenant Mark Pourier	MIA (note: presumed deceased)
Second Lieutenant Vincent Saracino	Deceased
Second Lieutenant Robert Wallis	Deceased
Sergeant Major Louis Edwards	Survived (note: comatose)
	Deceased

TOP SECRET

ANODYNE / EYES ONLY

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Copy 1 of 1

MEMORANDUM

Office of Scientific Research and Development
1530 P Street, NW.
Washington 25. D.C.



DO NOT RELEASE

To: President Roosevelt
From: Major General Groves
Subject: monumental achievement!
Date: Dec 25, 1941

Dear Mr. President,

I wish I could simply say ignore my last letter. I wish the cost had not been so ghastly. Of course I cannot dismiss the horrible transformations the casualties underwent … but simultaneously we had no idea what we'd achieved. I do not believe Project Anodyne should be repeated, but I must tell you of our success.

Lt. Liberty has not slept much since the operation, although he does not appear hampered by the lack of sleep. This morning doctors began his physiotherapy at 0400 with an intense swim in Bikini Lagoon. Finishing his swim in record time, Liberty surfaced, breaking the water and **floating** in mid-air. I repeat, he floated in mid-air.

The station was quickly roused, and Dr. Bush ran a long battery of tests. Liberty has gained the ability to fly under his own power. Additionally, Bush conducted the first full tests on Liberty's rejuvenated body. He is not just a man in the prime of life, he is a superman! His strength is inconceivable — he quickly lifted the heaviest weights in the gym, and then moved on to lift a sailboat, and then a truck. Nothing was too heavy … he finally hefted a R3D-1 Douglas cargo plane above his head, with minimal effort. When asked how he felt Liberty replied, "I think I can lift a great deal more, sir."

There are still many, many unanswered questions. How does he fly? How fast, how high, and for how long? How strong is he? Is there any explanation for the strange energy that infrequently flares over his body?

My formal recommendation is included, but in brief I propose that Project Anodyne be terminated. Specific funds and select personnel should be set aside for a dedicated project, while surplus funds and personnel should be transferred to Opeinheimmer.

The plan I have in mind would see Liberty retrained as an elite soldier. I would like to contact Rear Admiral Abraham Shaw to take charge of Liberty's training in Project Sentinel, outlined herein.

We wanted a symbol to mobilize the troops, and God has given it to us.

Respectfully yours,

MPIRE TIME

Tuesday, January 27, 1942

AMERICA'S TRUE FLYING TIGER

America has beaten the German's to the punch by creating the first superman! Colonel Claire Chennault just deployed the red, white, and blue's newest symbol against totalitarianism, a man who can fly under his own power, without plane or aeronautical rig. "This is it boys," Chennault announced, "this is where we win the war."

Rear Admiral Abraham Shaw arrived at Rangoon last night with his staff, and one mighty specimen hidden beneath an overcoat and officer's cap. His name and rank were classified, and a section of the infirmary was cordoned off for his use.

The Flying Tigers of the 3rd Squadron, the Hell's Angels, assembled for take-off before sunrise. Shaw's men gathered on the tarmac with several cameras, focused solely upon their mystery man. He shed his overcoat and cap, handing them to a waiting private, and revealed a brilliant costume visible even in the pre-dawn. A long blue cape fastened at his shoulders, and a blue eagle stood emblazoned on his white shirt, while a red half-mask hid his identity. One could see he was ruggedly handsome under the mask, and tremendously fit. He clapped his gloved hands once, and then leapt up into the sky, soaring well above the ground to everyone's astonishment. He was flying! He circled once, saluted the officers, and then flew off so quickly he was soon lost in the clouds overhead.

A dozen P-40s took off, chasing after that streaming blue cape. Shaw only released the top-secret soldier's code name to correspondents, calling him "the American Sentinel." Shaw would not answer any questions about the man's abilities, only tersely stating, "Believe what you see."

The American Sentinel returned to R.A.F. Mingaladon a full hour before the P-40s. He dropped out of the sky suddenly and without formality, entering Shaw's command post immediately. When the P-40s came home, however, it was a different story. The pilots tripped over each other telling anyone who would listen how incredible the American Sentinel had been in the air. "Amazing," "bloody incredible," and "fantastic" were just a few words of praise lauded upon the silent marvel.

Apparently the pilots lost sight of him immediately and assumed him lost. Two hours later they engaged a flight of Japanese bombers near Lashio. "We thought we had them dead to rights, outnumbering them by four planes, when suddenly another squadron of Zeroes dropped in on us," commented Frank Adkins, Flight Leader for the 3rd Squadron, Hell's Angels. "We were in a bad spot. Then, from nowhere, our mystery man streaks over my cockpit right for those Zeroes. I lost sight of him, but Tex calls over the radio that the mask flew by the lead plane and tore a wing straight off!"

Within minutes, the men report, the American Sentinel had disabled or destroyed a full squadron of Zeroes. He literally ripped the planes apart with his bare hands. Between his strength and the machine guns of the Hell's Angels, not a single Japanese plane returned that day. The Flying Tigers are certainly impressed, and that is high praise indeed.

to steer clear of the war, he recognized America might not be able to avoid it. Two years later, in October 1941, Roosevelt gave the green light to two top-secret proposals.

The United States researched the potential of the atom in twin projects, both under the directorship of Major General Leslie R. Groves. The total budget was almost $4 billion, and involved four huge complexes: Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Richland, Washington; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and the Bikini Atoll. Dr. Robert J. Oppenheimer organized and led the Manhattan Project, with the goal of designing a superbomb, while Dr. Vannevar Bush headed Project Anodyne, which sought to infuse a man with limitless atomic energies. Both operations were cloaked in such secrecy that even Vice-President Truman was kept unaware until Roosevelt's death.

The December 7th attack on Pearl Harbour accelerated research to a frantic pace to achieve success before the Germans. Anodyne bore fruit far before Manhattan, but with limited success. The atomic bomb would not be successfully tested until July, 1945, three years later, while Bush achieved his radical vision within a scant three months.

The American Sentinel was the first documented metahuman, although that term would not come into common usage until after the war. He was called a superhuman or superman in the popular press, and he starred in numerous US Army propaganda films for the folks back home. His background and abilities were closely guarded secrets known only to the highest echelons, but the image of the American Sentinel standing watch or saluting in mid-air became as common as Uncle Sam. The people loved him.

America, however, would not maintain their lead in the superhuman weapons race for long. Other nations were also mustering masked adventurers and weird weapons. In the first months of the war, German archaeologist Milo Rauchenberger made a tremendous discovery. Deep below the North Sea he uncovered remains of the lost island of Thule. The find was kept secret to give them time to sift through the ruins searching for lost treasures. Eventually the operation was forced to halt due to the war in the seas. Before they suspended the dig, however, Rauchenberger retrieved fragments of a mystic suit of armour. Soon thereafter, with support from the SS, he appeared on the battlefield as the elemental wielding Kreuzritter.

In direct response to the Allies' costumed heroes, Hitler formed the *Übermensch*, an elite force of supersoldiers. They worked under the auspices of the *Waffen-SS*, and were sent wherever most needed. Among their ranks were Kreuzritter, Herr Crypitc, and Black Crow, a former member of the *Einsatzgruppen* extermination squads. Kreuzritter and Black Crow often clashed politically and strategically, each trying to influence their superiors. In time, Dover Angel would kill Black Crow, allowing Kreuzritter to become the uncontested battlefield commander.

Other reports from the front lines varied from reasonably probable to wildly outrageous. In 1942, the British transformed an artifact from the ironclad days into a walking war-machine. The automaton wrecked havoc in the German's lines until it went berserk due to a short-sighted programming error, and soon Kreuzritter and Herr Cryptic learned to lead it toward the Allied



...N TIM...

...lay, March 30, 1942

MALTA BESIEGED BY HITLER'S THUNDER GOD

The Krauts have responded to the American Sentinel with their own superman, a veritable Nordic thunder god. The Nazi übersoldier appeared at Malta and seriously weakened the Allied defense before he withdrew. Analysts suggest Hitler may be field testing him.

The small island of Malta, under constant bombardment since mid-December, has suffered Hitler's newest terror. Observers spotted the Italian battleship Littorio two days ago nearing the Grand Harbour. A number of German officers were present, visible on the foredeck. Amongst them was a soldier in unusual armour, appearing almost medieval.

The destroyer Kingston moved to intercept the Littorio, but before either ship could fire, the German knight raised his arms in a gesture of defiance. Suddenly, the calm waters in the harbour began to froth, forming a tremendous whirlpool. Before our eyes the destroyer Kingston vanished, torn apart by the terrible waves.

Pushing forward, the Littorio was met by three submarines of the 10th Flotilla. Again the figure signalled, palms down this time, and the waters seemed to shrink back and force the submarines to the surface. As the Littorio opened fire on them, the figure clenched his fists, and gouts of magma exploded from deep underwater to engulf the submarines. Completely untouched, the Littorio casually withdrew, leaving the world to wonder if the American Sentinel has a chance against this Nazi superman.

(story continued on A3)

defences in France, where it would ravage former allies. Iron Duke nearly broke the French 1st Army at Strasbourg, killing Dover Angel. The American Sentinel arrived to assist the troops, and reportedly destroyed Iron Duke.

Meanwhile, Russian spies from the NKVD had infiltrated Project Anodyne in its early days, and managed to smuggle many secrets back to Moscow when it disbanded. The appearance of the American Sentinel convinced Premier Stalin they needed to replicate the process. He ordered the secret facility in Arzamas-16 to improve upon the American's supersoldier. By the end of 1942 the Soviets were ready to initiate Operation Red Star under Marshal Nikolai Rodimtsev and Doctor Rodion Deriabin.

The Soviet scientists convinced themselves the greatest

INTERCEPTED MILITARY COMMUNICATION TRANSCRIPT

TO: Comrade Stalin I.V. Copy for STAVKA	SECURITY CLEARANCE: TOP SECRET
	DATE OF TRANSMISSION: 23 January 1943
ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION SENT BY: UNKNOWN (see case file XT-8652-9)	LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION: RUSSIAN
COMMUNICATION FORMAT: ENCRYPTED TELEGRAM	ORIGINAL MESSAGE FILE NUMBER: XT-8253-9B

MESSAGE:

Of the 50 men selected for the Red Star (CASE FOLDER RS) exercise, only one survived the ordeal unscathed. Lt. Anton Dragan (CASE FILE RS-0021-2A) has been fundamentally transformed. He shows evidence of somehow sensing and controlling the nature of gravity. Truly, this result is amazing! While potentially not as quick as the American Sentinel, Dragan can simulate flight; additionally, he can lighten any object he encounters so even a child could lift it. Deriabin (CASE FILE RS-0006-7) and Dragan are working closely to maximize his skills and learn his range.

Dragan suggested the code name Muzhik (CASE FILE RS-0021-2B) for his new role. He would like to be seen as a hero of the people. I have allowed him this concession.

As for the failures, they have lost all apparent trace of memory and identity. Only half even try to communicate, but they are incomprehensible. Currently they are secured. We could airlift them over the German positions, but I am afraid there is a good chance they will eventually run into our forces, and I am not sure we could contain them once again. I caution us not to repeat the mistake of the British with their Iron Duke (CASE FILE WR-9620-8A) last year.

DATE OF TRANSLATION: FEBRUARY 14, 1943	ORIGINAL MESSAGE TRANSLATED BY: AGENT JAMES DOWNS

American error was to use wounded soldiers. They believed such men would not normally have enough strength to endure the atomic energies. Thus they assembled a team of 50 of their physically and mentally best soldiers to subject to the process. Sadly, like the Americans, they had but one triumph. Many of their finest officers were sacrificed for one supersoldier.

Lt. Anton Dragan, a survivor of Stalingrad, was sent to Arzamas-16 in December of 1942. Dragan commanded the 1st Company, 1st Battalion, which held the main railroad station against the Germans until they were finally driven out of Stalingrad. His soldiers delayed and harassed the Germans for days, finally retreating when only six remained alive. For his heroism, Dragan was selected to participate in Operation Red Star.

Tragedy beset Red Star in its final stage. In their haste to assemble the facility, certain safeguards were not instituted. The nuclear reaction failed to shut down properly, and a terrible explosion tore through the complex.

Dragan emerged from the inferno of the nuclear chamber, remade beneficially by the radiation. The fires were eventually contained, but many lives were lost and much equipment was damaged beyond repair. The other men who survived the process suffered grotesque transformations. Rodimstev ordered these powerful aberrations sealed in deep vaults.

Rodimstev and Deriabin then turned to Dragan to determine exactly what had been accomplished.

There would be others. An unnamed hero, wearing a black mask and scarlet cloak, was rumoured to appear throughout France, helping the French Resistance. He (or she?) could supposedly walk through walls, and had a voice that would shatter glass. No further sightings were reported after the liberation of Paris, however.

In the Pacific, the Imperial Japanese Navy also sponsored an enhanced soldier program, although it did not produce results until late in the war, and was scrapped shortly thereafter due to limited resources. The ace of special attacks earned the code name Tokkotai; the last surviving mechanical soldier, he single-handedly sunk two submarines and one destroyer, and helped destroy the carrier Bunker Hill at Okinawa. He was eventually lost at sea in a battle with the American Sentinel.

The Axis and Allied supersoldiers duelled almost gracefully, as had the fighter pilots of the Great War. The American Sentinel and Kreuzritter fought Sentinel and Kreuzritter fought repeated stand-offs, struggling to win perhaps the most symbolic confrontation of the war. Their final battle occurred at the Elbe River, when Kreuzritter tried assassinating American General Courtney Hodges and Ukrainian Marshal Ivan Konev. The *Übermensch* assault was launched from Kreuzritter's supertank, the Brand Tiger, but the American Sentinel and Muzhik joined forces to shatter the Nazi attack.

The fight ended when Kreuzritter's mystic energy backlashed, supposedly killing him after a river of magma swallowed his Brand Tiger. Herr Cryptic was also lost in that encounter; the powers he had stolen from Dover Angel at her death were not enough to save him from Muzhik's gravity well. The remaining *Übermensch* scattered or surrendered, while the Allies grimly savoured a lucky victory.

With Berlin's fall, the war was nearly over. The American Sentinel was ordered on one final mission, to escort the B-29 Enola Gay as it dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and then again at Nagasaki. At the end of the war, President Truman recognized Liberty's contributions by granting him a secret honourable discharge, and awarding him the Medal of Honour for saving thousands of lives.

Post-War Era

The war's finale, twin atomic bombs, seemed to echo the message that began with the American Sentinel's creation — mankind had opened the door to the infinite, and it could not be shut again. The post-war years were initially quiet and hushed, as the horrors were still being accounted and the immensity of

Japan at War

The Oral Histories of Kasayama Saburo

Near the end of the war, I was still in university, but they changed the rules and drafted me. Because of my engineering background I was assigned to the Unit 909 as support staff. It was highly classified and no one else in my class even heard of it. After training, I would help ready and repair the Kikai Samurai. Their grace and power awed and terrified me, but I was lucky enough to be promoted to Tokkotai's personal engineer.

I remember him saying the moment you face an enemy you instantly know how good he is, whether he is an ace or a rookie. He said it was the same, whether you faced a plane, a ship, or a tank. You knew how likely you were to survive, and to kill the other man.

Although issued standardized rifles, most relied on their metallic arms and enhanced strength for direct assaults. They carried katana, but also had claws on the tip of each finger that could puncture metal. They had tiny rockets in their legs, allowing them to fly, or really just make big jumps. Tokkotai said they needed to calculate distance, wind, speed, everything in an instant, or they would miss a target and fall into the sea. They didn't have enough fuel to get back to the planes which dropped them, and the boosters often malfunctioned if they got too wet, so they had to be especially careful.

Tokkotai was presumed dead after the fight for the Marianas, in 1944. Badly injured, he survived and returned by launching himself at a fleeing Zero ... he actually intercepted the plane in flight, and latched on! The Zero took over 3 hours to return to its carrier; the pilot never knew Tokkotai hung to the body for the whole time. Upon returning, he wanted to be fixed up right away so he could return to his duty. He spent only a week recuperating, with me desperately repairing his frame, before heading into battle again.

When I heard Tokkotai fell into the sea after battle with the American Sentinel, I knew I would never see him again.

Thursday, May 12, 1949

AMERICAN SENTINEL STARES DOWN SOVIET BLOCKADE ENDS!

Berlin — The city breathed a sigh of relief as it was finally reopened, after a year of Soviet blockade. The Russian supersoldier, Muzhik, himself helped unload the first train shipment of food.

Nearly a year ago, on June 26, the Soviets closed Berlin to all rail, road, and barge traffic from the Western zone of Germany. For the past 321 days, the Berlin Airlift has brought food, clothes, fuel, and other essentials to the desperate Berliners, under the direction of General Lucius D. Clay. Two months ago, General Clay petitioned the American Sentinel for help, which he gave gladly, helping ease the pressure by flying in thousands of tons of supplies every day.

A week ago, when meetings at the United Nations groun to a halt, Muzhik suddenly appeared in Berlin. Panic near erupted as analysts feared Muzhik would use his gravi powers to completely close the city. Sentinel, witness report, spoke with Muzhik privately. Unconfirmed repo suggest the two patriots may have brawled briefly, but sett their differences quickly.

Muzhik allowed the airlift to continue for as lon negotiations were underway. Luckily, an agreement was reached at the United Nations, and Soviet authorities reopened the city to the West.

Empire Times - Dec 28, 1949

NO EVIDENCE OF SPACE LIFE

Dayton, Ohio — The US Air Force released a document today that concluded there are no flying saucers. Project Sign, often referred to as "Project Saucer," began on December 22 under Major General L.C. Craigie. 244 sightings were investigated and determined to be hallucinations, misinterpretations, hoaxes, and natural phenomena. "There is no evidence," General Craigie summed up at a press conference, "to substantiate an extraterrestrial origin for any metahuman, such as the American Sentinel nor Ema'Ge, nor even the mutant Haud. We have no proof of space life, and must reason that if any exists, it has not found a way to Earth."

KOREA CAPITAL CAPTURED

WHERE ARE THE BIG GUNS?

Associated Press, October 20, 1950

Pyongyang, Korea — US troops led the way into Pyongyang today for United Nations forces, capturing the capital. The war has moved into a new phase where the Americans are no longer solely defending South Korea, but are actively trying to overthrow the North Korean government.

Yet the question on everyone's minds is, "where are the big guns?" Since US forces invaded Inchon in September many observers have been keenly watching for any evidence of metahuman activity. To date, none has been reported on either the US nor the Communist side.

President Truman was asked by reporters about the likelihood of the American Sentinel making an appearance. Truman replied, "Sentinel has fulfilled his obligation to the US Army, and continues to help our country every day. We cannot ask more than he is willing to give, nor should we depend on a single man, no matter how powerful, to guarantee our interests. I'm sure that whenever he is most needed, Sentinel will be there." Some critics have suggested that both America and the Soviet Union have resisted deploying metahuman agents in order to avoid a war of escalation.

UNIT 909

Unit 909 was officially named the Kinzoku Bokko Samurai Unit, though often referred to as Kikai Samurai, "mechanical soldiers." It was directed by Navy Medical Admiral Suzuki Saburo, the Japanese Navy's foremost authority on prosthetics, and a pioneer of robotics. He proposed to unite man and machine, creating a fusion-soldier able to operate independently at sea or on land, each imbued with the strength of an entire squadron.

Suzuki's robotics research fell under the experimental warfare designation, classified top secret by the military. Its main research facility was built in 1937 on Okunoshima, a small island in the Inland Sea. The island was shrouded in secrecy, since it was also the location for large-scale poison gas production. Security was so tight the Japanese military removed the island from Japanese maps in 1938. It did not officially reappear until 1947.

Many of the earliest subjects were unwilling victims. Most often these were prisoners from China, although rumour said Allied POWs would find themselves at the mercy of Japanese scientists. The mortality rate was extremely high with the subjects' bodies rejecting the foreign implants. Mutilation was also common; scientists would operate routinely on eyes, ears, hands, and feet.

By late 1942, a process had finally been developed that resulted in successful transplants 76% of the time. Suzuki announced it acceptable, and they prepared their recruits. The first unit, 909-A, consisted of 25 men who survived the surgery; unfortunately in the field they often experienced problems ranging from minor malfunctions to entire system shutdown. Few saw real combat, yet the casualty rate of unit 909-A was 99%.

The Navy questioned the program's high cost in resources for little palpable gain. Suzuki convinced them to fund one more test-group. They reluctantly agreed, but limited the unit to only 10 men. 909-B saw tremendously improved results, but too late in the war for the Navy to allocate any more resources. Suzuki's 10 Kikai Samurai earned a devastating reputation, although all were dead by the end of the war.

reconstruction realized. The surviving heroes did not vanish back into the shadows as many did after the First World War. Instead, they continued to work hard, helping to rebuild what was destroyed. Their enduring presence, and the void left by so many deaths, inspired others to join their ranks.



Sentinel and Muzhik face off in Berlin

Silver Age Sentinels

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET / MAJESTIC EYES ONLY

SUMMARY REPORT OF INTERCEPTED MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS

REPORT SUBJECT:
Korabl 4C
Russian Mars Space Mission
OKB 1 Department 3
Space Projects

ORIGINAL MESSAGE CASE FILES
File # OK-9274-1
File # OK-2152-2
File # OK-6234-7A

SECURITY CLEARANCE:
TOP SECRET
MAJESTIC EYES ONLY
DO NOT DECLASSIFY

COMMUNICATIONS:

FILE #: OK-9274-1
Date of Messaage: October 1, 1958
For: Comrade Khrushchev [see case file OK-0382-82]
Subject: Space Projects Unit

Dr. Kazanstev's [case file OK-0029-2] team had a breakthrough revelation concerning the Tunguska alien pod [case file XO-0031-6]. It was a hibernation chamber, which held a half-dozen aliens in suspended animation. Unfortunately, at some point the chamber malfunctioned, and all perished.

It is difficult to estimate the age of the chamber. It appears to have lain dormant for hundreds of years, only to be uncovered and damaged, suggests Kazanstev, by the meteoric impact at Stony Tunguska River valley in Siberia, June 30, 1908 [case file AT-6849-5]. We must note, however, twenty-two years passed between the explosion and the initial recovery in 1930.

Kazanstev believes the technology can be replicated, and used to send our explorers on lengthy journeys, unharmed by the passage of time.

FILE #: OK-2152-2
Date of Message: November 28, 1960
For: Comrade Khrushchev
Subject: Space Projects Unit

The Mars-team [case file RM-0182-1] is prepared for tomorrow's launch of Korabl 4C [case file RS-9174-98]. The spaceship will be assembled in space out of individual segments launched into Earth's orbit. Within seven days, the Korabl 4C should be ready to begin its voyage.

The crew of four cosmonauts [IDENTITY OF COSMONAUTS ILLEGIBLE -- UNDER INVESTIGATIONS -- SEE FILE # OK 6234-1X], once underway, will retire to the hibernation chamber for the duration, awakening when they reach Mars. Five platforms will be delivered to the surface and then connected to form the Mars explorer train [case file RM-0182-2].

The first platform consists of the crew cabin, a manipulator, and soil drill. The second is a launch pad for the Mars flyer. The third and fourth platforms hold main and backup return rockets, for the eventual departure. The fifth and final platform is the nuclear-powered generator, supplying energy for the entire expedition.

The Mars explorer train will travel across the surface for a year, collecting samples. Data will be transmitted to the base craft, in orbit, and then relayed to Earth. Finally, at the end of the year, the cosmonauts will return to the base craft, turn towards home, and once again enter the hibernation chamber.

File #: OK-6234-7A
ODate of Message: October 17, 1961
For: Comrade Khrushchev
Subject: Space Projects Unit

We believe a tragedy [case file TK-0814-9] has occurred with the Mars explorer train, and crew of the Korabl 4C. It has been one full month since their last transmission. They arrived successfully on Mars, and set up the train without incident. Their first month was spent acclimatizing to the region. Having sent back comprehensive reports, they set off across the desert, towards Olympus Mons [case file SM-0003-1]. We have not heard from them since, although the base craft continues to send signals at regular intervals.

The explosion at Hiroshima was strong enough to disturb an alien cocoon, lying deep beneath the burial mound of Emperor Nintoku. Ema'Ge 412 of the Second Region, a humanoid from planet Parousia, woke from his regenerative sleep to explore his new world. He would not be the only alien from the Alpha Centauri system to appear on Earth in the late 1940s; rather, he would soon encounter pockers of the vile reptilian Haud, the oppressors of his people, scattered around the world.

A new balance of power emerged at the end of WWII. The United States and the Soviet Union each saw the other as its greatest, and perhaps only, rival. A Cold War developed, as each country struggled for political, military, and economic dominance. Many masked adventurers in this period identified strongly with national ideology, and former war-time allies now found themselves at odds. With the Iron Curtain stretched across Europe, few in the West had any real knowledge of emerging Eastern metahumans.

America was regarded as the land of the masked hero, for she had not only given birth to the first superman, but encouraged the reckless daring and bravado that led to costumed vigilantism. The developing suspicions accompanying the Cold War, however, led some to question and doubt these adventurers. American paranoia threatened to reach epidemic proportions when Senator Joe McCarthy released his "subversives list" in 1950, and accused people from all walks of life as being members of the Communist Party.

The House Un-American Activities Committee (H.U.A.C.) was permanently established in 1945, although it originally formed in 1938 to investigate Communist threats. Many were afraid to speak openly against the committee for risk of being branded subversives, and it gained strength through the late '40s. In 1947, Truman himself ordered all federal employees to be subjected to FBI loyalty checks, and hundreds of people were dismissed, charged as spies, Socialists, and Communists.

TOP SECRET

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SUMMARY REPORT OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

REPORT SUBJECT:
Majic Launch

ORIGINAL MESSAGE CASE FILES
File # MJ-0793-1A
File # MJ-0872-5

SECURITY CLEARANCE:
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DO NOT DECLASSIFY

COMMUNICATIONS:

File #: MJ-0793-1A
To: President Eisenhower
From: M1
Subject: Majic Launch [[DELETED FOR SECURITY]]
Date: September 15, 1955

Dear Mr. President,

I am delighted to inform you that Majic Launch [[DELETED FOR SECURITY]] is good to go. Captain John Douglas [case file ML-0378-9], decorated pilot of the Tuskeegee Airmen, was chosen to pilot the space-rocket Victory-Redstone [case file ML-0056-4]. Dr. [[DELETED FOR SECURITY]], from Project Paperclip [case file PC-0002-8], relocated from Redstone Arsenal to oversee the new launch site, at Canaveral.

We do not believe the Soviets will have an open launch until 1959 or 60. Our public space program should be well underway before then.

File #: MJ-0872-5
To: President Eisenhower
From: M1
Subject: Majic Launch 7
Date: September 23, 1955

Mr. President,

We have lost contact with Victory-Redstone. As you are aware, Captain Douglas launched successfully three days ago, en route to the Moon [case file ML-0381-7]. His last transmission was terribly distorted [case file ML-6849-2D], and we have had no contact for twenty-four hours.

As the search for "Reds" intensified, H.U.A.C. turned its attention to encompass any potential threat to the American way of life. Not only were government officials scrutinized, but so were union activists, writers, musicians, and many entertainers and movie-makers from Hollywood. H.U.A.C. summoned everyone they could to testify, and often pressured and browbeat witnesses into revealing names of anyone who might have Communist ties. Those who refused were often labelled treasonous. People found themselves blacklisted or jailed for Communist tendencies, whether real or fabricated. Then, in 1950, Senator McCarthy went after the superhero.

It was a dark time as America turned inwards, attacking some of her brightest. Attorney Irving Saypol said, "We in the government are not oblivious to the sinister attempts to undermine us and we shall continue aggressively and forthrightly to vindicate our laws and protect our country," and suddenly the masked adventurers who risked so much were doubted and put to question. H.U.A.C. issued summons, although few heroes remained visible long enough to receive them. The mysterious Corbae simply vanished, rather than be unmasked. Red Summer retired years previously, but responded to the summons with a public letter sent to several major newspapers, damning the Committee as a cruel farce. McCarthy replied in an attack, stating that "Red Summer was certainly red, all right," but without a real target nothing could be done.

Archer Gold came before the Committee and testified every mask he met was loyal and unwavering. Upon his refusal to name names, however, a scandal erupted, with people labelling him a patriot and a traitor in equal measure. By the time the Committee was finished, Archer Gold was devastated and humiliated. Shortly thereafter, he publicly retired.

When Flyer came before the Committee he refused to acknowledge their questions and vocally harangued them for the travesties committed against their own people. Officials could never catch Ema'Ge to serve him the Committee's summons. After his daring rescue of First Lady Mamie Eisenhower and the atomic Nautilus submarine from Communist spies, the public embraced him and the matter was quietly dropped. Finally, in 1954 McCarthy wildly threatened to summon the American Sentinel before H.U.A.C., and the public turned against him. McCarthy was condemned for misconduct in a Senate vote, and the pall of conspiracy slowly lifted.

Hope & Troubles

The early 1960s ushered in a new period of optimism and exuberance, beginning with the deliverance of a crippled airplane. On Christmas Eve, 1960, a United Airlines DC-8 caught fire over Empire City, but was saved by the appearance of a magnificent woman. Glowing with tremendous energies, Lady Starbright quelled the flames and guided the plane to a safe touchdown. The landing was caught by CBS News reporters, and Walter Cronkite pronounced her "a true Samaritan" on the evening news. Lady Starbright was just the first, and most televised, newcomer to the world of masked men and women. Starbright and Sentinel were darlings of the press, and the starstruck American people watched their every move. Although only seen together infrequently, speculation ran wild whenever they were spotted. Together they stood by President Kennedy during those terrible 13 days of the Cuban Missile Crisis. With regret, they also appeared together at John F. Kennedy's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery.

In London, England, masked crusaders and costumed villains thundered upon the scene. While rarely as flashy as their American counterparts, Tommy Gun's descendants kept the press and public on their toes. A Jack-the-Ripper impostor, Zachary King, scared decent Londoners into their homes, while the vigilante, Wrath, waged a war against the city's lowlife, and drove them underground. After narrowly escaping the authorities, King destroyed his civilian identity, and became the mask hunter, Janus. Wrath's body was left as a challenge to other heroes; Janus, however, was soon defeated by the modern knight, Caliburn.

Meanwhile, in Russia, Muzhik fought for the spirit of the country, but for many years his actions would be curtailed by the machinations of the NKVD secret police (this interference continued through every incarnation of the secret police, culminating in an almost continuous battle with the KGB up until the '80s). Muzhik constantly struggled to defend the people rather than fight for the Politburo.

CIA MK-ULTRA

On April 13, 1953, the CIA initiated MK-ULTRA, a project so top secret only the highest tiers of government knew of its existence. Led by Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, MK-ULTRA was an umbrella project with 149 sub-projects beneath it, whose goal was to explore the creation and control of metahuman agents.

The Agency employed a wide variety of tools in its study of metahuman abilities, including hypnosis, drug exposure, electroshock, lobotomy, sensory deprivation, and psycho-surgery. The drugs studied ranged from commonly found caffeine, to barbiturates, peyote, marijuana, and morphine, and eventually to hallucinogens, such as LSD, ketamine, and psilocybin.

MK-ULTRA attempted to create its own team of highly malleable supersoldiers. Some projects were geared towards mind controlled assassins, with multiple personalities, who would awake, strike, and then forget what they had done. It also developed truth serums and narco-hypnosis to use against enemy agents.

Subjects were often unaware of their "participation." The Agency experimented on prisoners (often only black inmates), soldiers, and random citizens. A crack team of agents and doctors (a "flying team") was formed to travel anywhere in the world, to study subjects, test new interrogation techniques, and reprogram victims to ensure no recollection of the events.

Gottlieb received tremendous co-operation from the US Army, and many experiments were conducted in the Vietnam War. It is believed several metahumans were field-tested there, including code names: Grey Wolf, Sleeper, and Stasis. The few who survived wound up in the CIA-run ELITE Operations in the mid '80s.

MK-ULTRA was eventually investigated by the Church Committee of the US Senate, after numerous complaints, and testimony from a "whistle-blower," former CIA Agent K— Hite. The CIA gravely ensured these experiments would be halted immediately.

Newspapers were flooded with reports of more and more ostentatious and sinister criminals, or so-called supervillains. Major Blake White turned traitor by stealing a top-secret experimental weapon; he became the Artificer, clad in futuristic armour and wielding unheard of weaponry. Artificer was sometimes accompanied by the mercenary, White Banner. US Military officials suspected Artificer generically enhanced her with his stolen technology, transforming her into a master of martial combat. Meanwhile, General Winter, a Russian monster, emerged from the icy heights of the Ural Mountains to put down the Czechoslovakian revolution in 1968.

The superheroes of the 1960s maintained much of their distance and solitude. The energy for change was subdued by the indelible fact that these great men and women could not save everyone. The American Sentinel and Lady Starbright mourned John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. Ema'Ge was spotted doing what he could to help when riots broke out in Detroit, Memphis, and Chicago. Even the most patriotic champions like Sentinel and Archer Gold (the second, rumoured to be the original's son) stayed well away from the war in Vietnam.

World Shifts

1971 began with a crisis that threatened to overwhelm Europe. An enormous eruption occurred in the North Sea, generating a powerful earthquake and an accompanying hurricane as a new island burst from the cold waters off the coast of Norway. The island of Thule emerged from the dark depths of history as storm winds battered Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the eastern coast of the United Kingdom. As the waters ran off, ruined cities encased in volcanic rock were revealed — and standing at the centre of the maelstrom was a man calling himself Kreuzritter, after the lost German soldier. Claiming to be the son of Milo Rauchenberger, the first Kreuzritter, Ernst Rauchenberger announced Thule's status as an independent and sovereign nation.

The world's heroes rushed to deal with the environmental disasters. The American Sentinel and Lady Starbright struggled to quell the tidal waves, while Ema'Ge rescued drowning sailors, and Caliburn helped evacuate Newcastle. As the masked adventurers strove desperately to contain damage and save lives, a delegation of powerful diplomats entered the United Nations building in Empire City, and declared Thule to be an independent kingdom with full sovereign rights.

When the tempest finally died down, Kreuzritter offered to negotiate payment for damages to those most directly injured. The rise of Thule unearthed valuable cultural and historical artifacts, lost for millennia. Kreuzritter kept tight control over what the world was allowed to see, but by doling out a fragment here and there, he established burgeoning treaties with a number of governments. Within a few months, Thule was recognized by a dozen countries, including the USSR, China, Singapore, and South Africa. By the end of the year, the United Nations acknowledged its existence (although it was not given formal membership).

In 1972, the Ascension Institute was established. It was a philanthropic foundation dedicated to the peaceful understanding of metahumans. AI worked with the Disaster Research Center to study the effects of Thule's rising on neighbouring countries. Their groundbreaking analysis helped shape future relations within the European community.

Meanwhile, as the American involvement in the Vietnam war drew to a close, the American Sentinel, Archer Gold, Lady Starbright, and even the mysterious new heroine, Red Phoenix, all strongly advocated peace. Over the last several years, a number of masked adventurers shifted from silently opposing US policy to openly criticizing the use of mines, napalm, defoliants, and "carpet-bombing."

Once again, the decade saw a significant rise in the number of metahumans and masked adventurers. The aforementioned Red Phoenix, a young woman with deadly weaponry, helped Lady Starbright battle a phantom navy near Thule. Kreuzritter, as monarch of that island, refused to comment. The Iron Duke, thought destroyed during WWII, returned in Red Phoenix's wake, even stronger than before. He wrecked havoc in Europe before making several appearances in the US. A third figure, Green Ronin, was occasionally spotted where Red Phoenix or Iron Duke were active; while Green Ronin bore some resemblance to Red Phoenix, her actions were notably more suspicious and nearly hostile.

Meanwhile, in New Orleans, a rash of murders perpetrated against Haitian refugees was halted by the Baron. Whispers along Bourbon Street described the Baron as an amalgamation of Voodoo drummer and Haitian Holy-man; a folk hero of the poor, he called upon the *loa* spirits to provide advice, heal hurts, and fashion charms. Soon after, Starbright again made the news when she stopped the Artificer from stealing top-secret blueprints from the Marshall Space Flight Center, in Alabama. This time Starbright was accompanied by the quiet grace of Mother Raven, a Canadian heroine renowned for her compassion.

The decade ended with a number of significant events. The British hero, Caliburn, relocated to Empire City, which also became home to Matthews GenTech, a cutting edge biotechnical company. Ema'Ge and Lady Starbright co-operated to rescue crews of collided oil tankers, the Atlantic Empress and the Aegean Captain, off Trinidad and Tobago, while the Magistrate became Canada's leading champion when he destroyed a secret Haud cell beneath the Parliament buildings in Ottawa. On the home front, Congress finally passed the Metahuman Crime Control Bill 1979 (the Super Crime Act), and converted the federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming, to incarcerate metahuman offenders (in time it would develop the nickname, "the Carousel," for its apparent inability to hold metahumans in lock-up, and its similarity to a merry-go-round).

Finally, a nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island was narrowly averted by the American Sentinel's quick intervention when he entered the hot reactor and prevented a meltdown.

1980 would end, however, in tragedy. A top-secret US Airforce operation, code named Project Sunbird, was investigating a recovered Nimbus scout ship. The study occurred at USAF Vulcan, a clandestine military research centre located at the nearly extinct Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington State. Kreuzritter desired the alien technology to transform Thule's military into one of the world's most dangerous armed forces. He enlisted the co-operation of Mister Matthews, who was young and eager to glean new secrets in his war against superheroes; and Iron Duke, who agreed to help in exchange for Kreuzritter's aid in restoring his lost memories. Together, they invaded Vulcan, and took the personnel hostage.

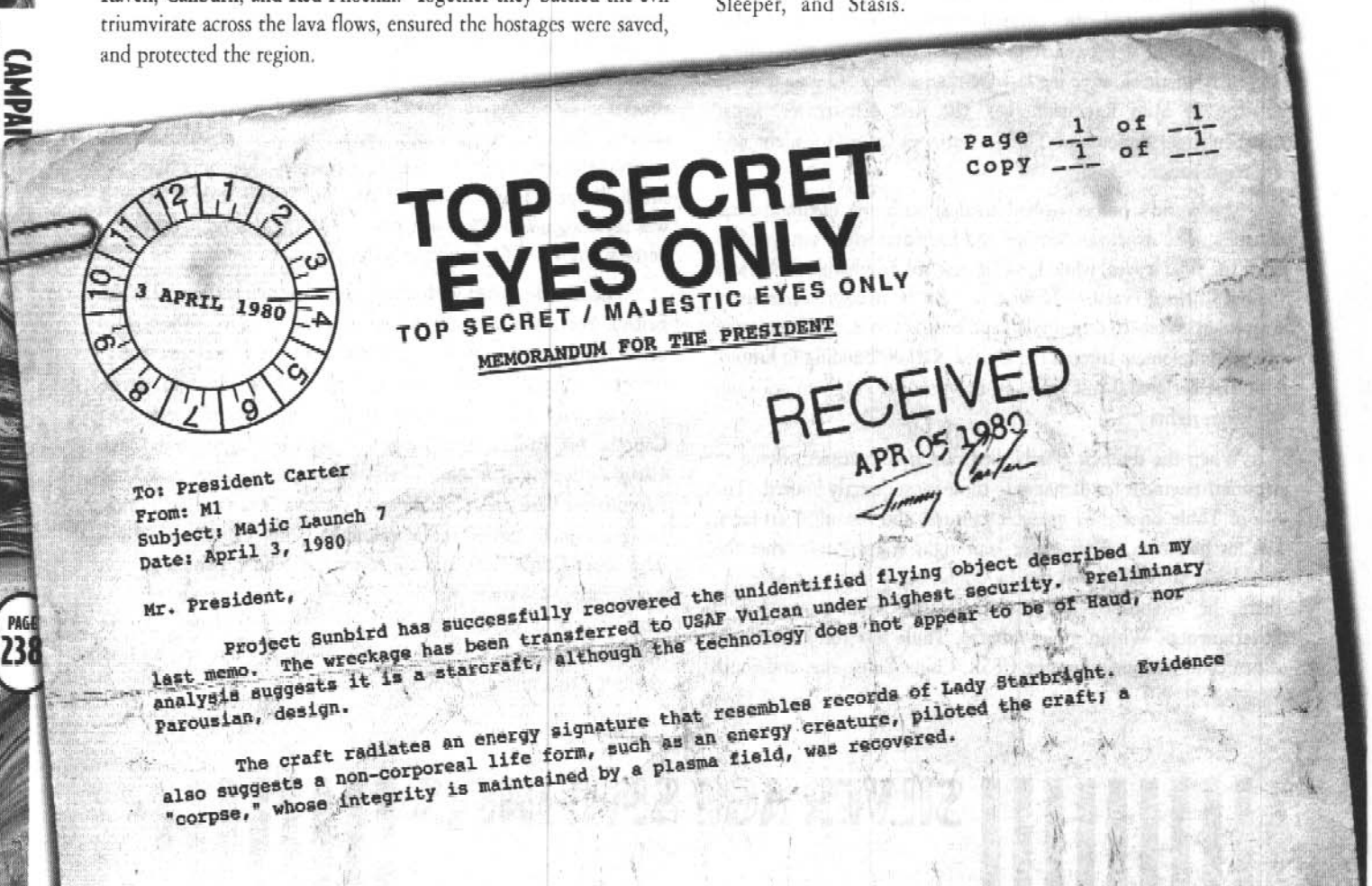
Lady Starbright rushed to intercede, but was ambushed by the villains. Kreuzritter drew upon the Earth's power to battle Starbright, and inadvertently destabilized the volcano. Clearly outmatched, Starbright called for help. Although badly injured, she could not wait, nor retreat, for the trio would certainly escape with the Nimbus craft. The villains launched the starship, and Kreuzritter unleashed the volcano to cover their tracks. Starbright marshalled her strength, however, and shielded the region from the worst of the eruption, while directing the blast at the escaping starship. It crashed back to Earth, nearly destroyed. Starbright toppled to the ground, as the villains emerged from the wreck, intent on vengeance. At that moment, help arrived in forms of the American Sentinel, Slipstream (Ema'Ge's new identity), Mother Raven, Caliburn, and Red Phoenix. Together they battled the evil triumvirate across the lava flows, ensured the hostages were saved, and protected the region.

In the end, the villains were defeated and captured. Nearly 60 people died in the disaster, but if Starbright had not contained the 120 megaton blast, the casualties would have been devastating. By the time the heroes arrived, Starbright had died ... but they swore to live up to her memory, and never let evil go unchecked. They banded together on that day as the Guard.

For the first three years, they operated on a casual basis. There was no permanent headquarters, and meetings were informal and at times tense. Most often each member lived his or her own life, and only gathered when a crisis emerged. In those years, they fought and triumphed over: the god-beasts of Mister Matthews; Iron Duke; Jade Naga and the Haud; Kreuzritter's Thulian army; Doc Cimitière; General Winter; and many more.

The Guard was an inspiration for other heroes to take up the call, and by the mid '80s a number of American cities found they had gained local champions. Not all regarded this as a blessing, but most costumed heroes did more good than harm. Washington, D.C., saw the return of Corbae, again focused on organized crime. While none could confirm a different man was beneath the mask, most assumed a younger man had taken up the mantle. The Amber Prince called Detroit his home (as did his regular nemesis, Tom Foolery). Anasazi travelled with Drifter along the West Coast, helping people and simultaneously avoiding publicity.

In 1983, the Guard almost disbanded after a near-defeat at the hands of ELITE Operations, a CIA directed black project. Certain forces in government believed the Guard was too dangerous to be left free, and ordered ELITE to "bring them in." ELITE was composed of: Deadly Silk, Green Ronin, Grey Wolf, Hellion, Sleeper, and Stasis.



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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

3 APRIL 1980

RECEIVED
APR 05 1980
Jimmy Carter

To: President Carter
From: MI
Subject: Majic Launch 7
Date: April 3, 1980

Mr. President,

Project Sunbird has successfully recovered the unidentified flying object described in my last memo. The wreckage has been transferred to USAF Vulcan under highest security. Preliminary analysis suggests it is a starcraft, although the technology does not appear to be of Haud, nor Parousian, design.

The craft radiates an energy signature that resembles records of Lady Starbright. Evidence also suggests a non-corporeal life form, such as an energy creature, piloted the craft; a "corpse," whose integrity is maintained by a plasma field, was recovered.

The Guard eventually broke free (with help from the rebellious Stasis), and turned the tables on their captors.

The clash with ELITE refuelled their desire to work together as a team, and the Guard recommitted itself to their principles. Shortly thereafter, they defeated Iron Duke's army of iron walkers, and Empire City welcomed them in whole-heartedly. Mayor Ed Koch gave them the key to the city.

A year later, Empire City was invaded by an army from the other side of the looking glass. A gateway to a parallel dimension opened within the Empire State Building, and the occupying force threatened to conquer Empire City. The Guard defeated them, and drove them back to their world (christened "Dark Empire"), but Empire State was heavily damaged in the conflict. Mayor Koch talked City Council into offering it to the Guard as their new headquarters. The Guard were deeply touched, and quickly set about renovating the building to new specifications. Max Liberty invested heavily in the project, and helped secure funding from numerous wealthy sponsors. Within six months, the building was completely rebuilt and renamed the Olympian Tower.

The late '80s saw White Banner lead a new mercenary group, Egide Ubiquiste ("the World's Shield"), in numerous hotspots around the world. ELITE Operations lost Stasis (he fled) and Hellion (he proved to be a Soviet spy), but gained Rain Killer, and Legacy. The Red Minstrel, a French thief, tried his luck in Empire City (without success). The Empire City Mafia began putting metahuman enforcers, such as Torque, on their payroll. Sometimes special help would be required, like hiring Alice, Queen of Hearts, to assassinate a number of informants. And yet another killer graced Empire City when Janus crossed the Atlantic to plague Caliburn once more.

In 1988, Kreuzritter, Iron Duke, and Alice took control of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, in Illinois, threatening to sell its secrets around the world. ELITE Operations was sent in, but the results were a fiasco. Sleeper was crippled and Grey Wolf was killed (though Legacy gained his powers), while Green Ronin and Deadly Silk were captured, and Rain Killer went AWOL. The Guard came to their rescue, and managed to chase away the villains with minimal damage to the facility. The government was so grateful that the Guard members were granted "special status;" they were recognized and had the full co-operation of all Federal law enforcement agencies. ELITE Operations, meanwhile, was disbanded in controversy and allegations of scandal, corruption, and misuse of funding.

The last decade has been a turbulent time for most of the world. The fall of the Soviet bloc meant a hundred hotspots ignited around the globe. New, menacing figures emerged to challenge the forces of good. Eastern European heroes, like Muzhik, travelled more freely, but so did threats of black market weapons, mercenary metahumans, and organized criminal syndicates. The US government returned to the idea of a Federally directed superteam, and put together the Order under the FBI. The Order was led by a Vietnam veteran, the Iron General, and responded to national-level threats and crises.

In the US, street kids from L.A. to Miami told stories about the dreadful Bloody Mary, and the heroic tricksters, Pan & Belle, but it was a nation-wide kidnapping spree in 1990 that made the general public aware. The FBI rescued a dozen children with help from Pan & Belle, and the Baron. All three would soon lose the public favour once more, however, due to their mysterious and troubling ways. Although they occasionally clashed with heroes, normally the conflicts resulted from misunderstandings.

Rain Killer was spotted most often in Empire City, waging a one-woman war against criminals. Her actions were drastic, however, and soon the authorities wanted to question her about the murders of Golden Angel and Witchlight. Caliburn stopped her on several occasions, but was never able to capture her.

Another oft maligned and distrusted group was led by Anasazi on the West Coast. The Untouchables were made up of those Anasazi thought deserved a second chance — Drifter, Legacy, White Hat, and Skybreaker; the law, however, saw them as fugitives. They finally proved themselves during the 1994 earthquake in L.A., saving lives and battling Alice, Queen of Hearts, and Mister Matthews's link-men. While many of them are still wanted, the people regard them as heroes.

In Empire City, gang wars broke out between different crime syndicates. Lady of the Lantern, the new defender of Chinatown, found herself targeted by Triads, Wiseguys, and Russian mafia. She'd often clash with the honourable "Gun Fu" enforcer, Wyatt Lee, and desperately battled the demonic Red Child on several occasions. The Empire City Police Department, meanwhile, put the first official metahuman officer on the streets; Officer Prometheus maintained his sterling reputation, and became the EPD's spokesman. He was additionally backed up by the first tactical squad devoted to metahuman conflicts, the EPD's Marvels Tactical Unit (MTU).

Janus eventually tried to challenge the Sentinel, plotting to drive him mad and expose him on national television. Janus had learned Sentinel's secret identity, and attacked him obliquely, through his personal life, loved ones, and enterprise. Yet Sentinel persevered, and turned the tables on Janus ... on live TV. Before Sentinel handed Janus back to the authorities, he unmasked himself. He showed the world he was Maxwell Liberty, in an attempt to become more accessible to those he was sworn to protect; and the world loved him for it.

By the end of the 1990s, the Guard had helped the United Nations on several occasions, and entered into an informal arrangement with them. While not an officially sanctioned UN organization, the Guard was granted "special status," and accredited as an ally and observer of the UN. They, in turn, transformed themselves into a more global organization, and made plans to expand their ability to serve.

Empire Times

Flurries, High 5° F, Low -12° F | Monday, January 1, 2001 | 50¢

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONRY TARGETED AT EIGHT WESTERN CITIES

Early yesterday morning, NASA and the European Space Agency confirmed sightings made by the International Space Station concerning an unidentified space platform. Observers aboard the ISS had noted peculiar transmissions for several days, starting on December 26, before spotting an unknown satellite on December 30.

NASA scientists co-operated with the ESA to locate the rogue satellite, which was in geosynchronous orbit over Greenland. Both reported their findings to their respective national security agencies, and world leaders were immediately briefed. "We are in constant communication with NASA and the ESA," White House spokesman, Secretary of State Madeline Albright stated, "and will let you know as soon as an identity is confirmed. It is possible that this is a hostile force; the President is in a closed meeting, deciding what precautions should be made."

Before any action could be taken, the satellite sent out a world-wide transmission, in a dozen languages: "People of the West, too long have you lorded over the smaller nations of the world, forcing your political agendas and imperialistic views; too long have you used technological and industrial advantage to coerce, exploit, and compel different cultures to adopt your ideology, decrying it 'morally superior' and 'socially enlightened.' You style yourself 'superpowers,' but have no true proper sense of responsibility, and too much hubris. We will show you how vulnerable you are, and give the rest of the world room to breathe, finally, and allow them the chance to make their own decisions. The next millennium will not be your playground." It is suspected that the speaker may have been Kreuzritter, King of Thule.

The next few hours were chaotic, as wide-spread panic hit different parts of North America and Europe; Millennial fever heightened as spots of violence broke out. Luckily, before the crowds got out of control, the Guard was spotted taking to the skies in their Mercury flyer. The fledgling UN superteam, Aegis JTF, assembled in Geneva. "My team is standing by to help out as needed," Commander Deva told reporters. "We will back the Guard up howsoever we can." The world waited ... a new day dawned on Pitt Island, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, but there were still no answers.

At 11:00 p.m., Greenwich Mean Time, a new, bright star could be seen over the Denmark Strait. The ESA announced this was the rogue satellite. Intensely brilliant lights flickered around the satellite for approximately fifteen minutes. Suddenly four missiles streaked towards the European side of the Atlantic, while four other missiles shot towards America's shores. The Mercury chased the Europe-bound rockets, and in mid-flight Slipstream leaped from the Mercury's wing onto the first missile. He disarmed it, dropping it harmlessly into the Norwegian Sea, and reboarded the Mercury in 19 seconds; he caught the second missile, and with the UK's Britannia, forced it into the English Channel. Slipstream then pushed himself as never before recorded, racing to Berlin in mere minutes to intercept the next missile, hoping that the UN's team could handle the one flying toward Geneva. As a flash of white lightning, he neutralized the third weapon, while the Aegis JTF managed to dismantle the last rocket over the Alps.

Meanwhile, Max Liberty raced after the missiles targeting Washington, D.C., Empire City, Miami, and Toronto. He shattered the propulsion system of the first one over Labrador with the Magistrate's help, and flew on knowing that the Canadian had the situation under control. Over Empire City, he removed the missile's warhead, and let the booster crash harmlessly into the sea. He disintegrated it with his Atomic energies, and then was off to Washington. The exact events in Washington are unclear, but reports suggest that another superteam was attempting to deal with that missile. Liberty fought briefly with the Order, so that they would not retain the weapon's technology.

Liberty flew on to Miami, but had lost precious seconds. He could not reach the missile before it detonated. He blasted it with his Atomic energies, but the missile exploded, spreading biotoxins through the air! A moment later, however, the arcane Pan & Belle were in the air with him. Pan magically contained the poisonous gas, while Belle transformed the lethal ash into harmless, glowing pixie dust, which fell among the streets of Miami this New Year's Eve, bringing magical light to the poor as well as the rich.

Back upon the satellite, Red Phoenix, Mother Raven and Caliburn were hard pressed to deal with these new self-styled equalizers of the world. It is still unclear what forces perpetrated this incident, and no persons have been taken into custody. The Guard have all been seen since, bruised and battered, but standing tall. Whispers abound as to who the villains were, suggesting a group known as the White Rooks. NASA and the ESA both report the rogue satellite is now gone. Toby Flinn of the ESA stated "The skies are clear now. The lovely lady Red Phoenix called us up, and said that all hazardous materials had been made inert, and that Liberty chap was dealing with the satellite." As with many of these secret wars, too many facts never surface. We must hope that the Guard will always be on watch.

ONLY THE END OF THE WORLD AGAIN

by Catherine d'Aulnoy

We survived the millennium. Again. Or another millennium, I can't really be sure. While not divinely ordained, we did pass a bit too close to Armageddon for my tastes; I admit being more than a little frightened when we actually witnessed the missile salvos launched towards us from orbit. No one has officially stated what the warheads contained, but anonymous sources in the military (who now have possession of the weapons) suggested that they may have been armed with biological agents. Military personnel have confirmed that Washington, D.C., Empire City, Miami, Toronto, London, Paris, Geneva, and Berlin were all targeted in the initial wave. There may have been as many as six salvos in the satellite. The in-flight missiles were destroyed, however, and Max Liberty, the Sentinel, spoke briefly to assure us that the remaining rockets had also been dismantled.

Sipping champagne and making resolutions, I wondered what our guardian angels wish for? Peace on Earth and goodwill towards Man, of course, but beyond the idyllic, how do they really feel, up there amongst the stars? Do they feel that they contribute and make a difference, or do they feel, like Atlas, that some days the weight of the world is far too much?

We sometimes forget what they sacrifice for our lives, seeing them so far above us. Our envy begets jealousy, fear and anger, none of which do us any good. We must remember that these superfriends are made up of people, like you and me, and that sometimes we make them feel very alone. A great deal is asked of them — to be perfect role models, more than any celebrity, politician, or sports star — and yet they are almost never thanked for putting everything on the line. I would like to personally thank them for making the world a better place, one that is not perfect, but where my children can dream, and aspire to a better day.

Timeline

480 • Parousian flyer and Haud destroyer crash-land on Earth
• Ema'Ge goes into suspended animation in Japan
• Haud survivors go into suspended animation across Asia

1906 • Debut of Frisco Flyer

1908 • Meteor crashes at Stony Tunguska River valley, Siberia

1914 • Tommy Gun fights unseen at Battle of Marne

1916 • Tommy Gun first spotted at Verdun

1917 • Dover Angel debuts in France
• Herr Cryptic is Germany's first Futurist-soldier
• Archer Gold debuts in Washington, D.C.
• Corbae first spotted in Washington, D.C.

1918 • Archer Gold enlists, goes to France
• Lt. Maxwell Liberty shot down
• Herr Cryptic seemingly killed in fight with Tommy Gun

1919 • Bloody race riots give birth to Red Summer

1920 • Thompson company ships gift of guns to Tommy Gun

1923 • Red Summer battles Imperial Wizard of KKK

1929 • Reverend Temperance appears, fights Chicago Mafia

1930 • Alien pod recovered from Tunguska River valley

1937 • Japan builds experimental robotics facility on Okunoshima

1939 • Milo Rauchenberger discovers lost island of Thule

1940 • Archer Gold stops two German saboteurs
• Tommy Gun assists Operation Dynamo
• US tries Project Speargun for one year; considered failure

1941 • The Manhattan Project and Project Anodyne both begin
• Lt. Liberty becomes the American Sentinel

1942 • American Sentinel debuts with Flying Tigers
• Kreuzritter first seen at Malta
• Russians initiate Operation Red Star
• Iron Duke unleashed at Germans
• Iron Duke goes berserk
• Japanese field first Kikai Samurai soldiers

1943 • Hitler fields supersoldier Black Crow
• Hitler forms *Übermensch*
• Lt. Anton Dragan becomes Russian supersoldier, Muzhik

1944 • Second generation Kikai Samurai debut, including Tokkotai
• Dover Angel accidentally kills Black Crow
• Unnamed French hero in scarlet cloak spotted

1945 • Iron Duke kills Dover Angel
• Iron Duke seemingly destroyed by American Sentinel
• Kreuzritter fights American Sentinel and Muzhik, reportedly killed in power backlash
• Tokkotai battles American Sentinel, and vanishes at sea
• American Sentinel flies escort as Hiroshima and Nagasaki are bombed
• Ema'Ge awakens, adopts identity of Johnny Smith, travels to America

1947 • American Sentinel battles Haud in Colorado

1949 • Ema'Ge debuts, battling Haud in Florida
• American Sentinel confronts Muzhik over Berlin Airlift

1950 • Senator McCarthy targets "superheroes" in H.U.A.C.
• Corbae vanishes from public eye
• Archer Gold testifies, but thereafter, retires
• Frisco Flyer verbally attacks the Committee
• McCarthy tries to summon American Sentinel, and is condemned by Senate

1953 • CIA initiates MK-ULTRA

1954 • Ema'Ge saves Mamie Eisenhower and Nautilus submarine

1955 • Captain John Douglas pilots space-rocket Victory Redstone towards Moon
• Contact with Victory-Redstone lost en route to Moon

1958 • Russian Space Projects Unit replicates Haud hibernation chamber

1960 • Space Projects Unit launches Korabl 4C Mars train
• Starship crashed near Cape Canaveral, covered up by military
• First appearance of the Artificer
• Lady Starbright appears over Empire City saving airliner

1961 • Korabl 4C arrives on Mars, exploration begins
• Contact lost with Mars explorer train
• Zachary King terrorizes London, becomes Janus
• Adam Sinclair becomes Caliburn
• Debut of vigilante, Wrath

1962 • Sentinel and Starbright stand by during Cuban Missile Crisis
• Janus kills Wrath
• Caliburn captures Janus

1963 • Sentinel and Starbright attend John F. Kennedy's funeral

1965 • Starbright and Slipstream fight Artificer and White Banner at Bonneville, Utah

1968 • General Winter stops Czechoslovakian revolution

1971 • Rise of Thule in North Sea, appearance of "new" Kreuzritter
• Thule recognized by the United Nations
• Mother Raven debuts, helping Starbright fight General Winter in Ontario

1972 • Strasbourg: Red Phoenix is born, as is Green Ronin; Iron Duke reawakened
• Red Phoenix helps Lady Starbright fight Kreuzritter's Ghost Fleet
• Samuel Matthews's mother is a casualty of Artificer
• Ascension Institute established
• Many heroes openly criticize Vietnam War

1975 • Doc Cimitière appears in New Orleans; serial killings stopped by the Baron
• Doc Cimitière returned from dead as zombie

1978
- Janus kills Caliburn's fiancée and badly wounds Caliburn
- Seawolf tries to steal AI submarine; defeated by Sentinel and Caliburn
- Seawolf conviction overturned by appeal; new trial ordered
- Seawolf escapes

1979
- Caliburn relocates to Empire City
- Magistrate appears in Ottawa, defeating a Haud cell
- Samuel Matthews opens Matthews GenTech
- Ema'Ge and Starbright rescue collided oil tankers in Caribbean
- Congress passes Metahuman Crime Control Bill (Super Crime Act)
- UN creates Working Group on Metahuman Issues
- Rock Springs, Wyoming, becomes first "super-penitentiary"
- Nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island averted by American Sentinel

1980
- US Airforce recovers a crashed Nimbus starcraft
- Kreuzritter causes Mt. St. Helens to explode, killing Lady Starbright
- Guard forms to defeat Kreuzritter, Iron Duke, and Mister Matthews
- Ema'Ge officially rechristens himself Slipstream

1981
- A second Corbae appears in Washington, D.C.
- Amber Prince, the hero of Detroit, debuts, fighting Tom Foolery
- Ghost Lions formed in UK

1982
- Anasazi and Drifter appear on West Coast
- Iara reported in Amazonian rainforests

1983
- Guard nearly defeated by ELITE Operations
- Iron Duke besieges Empire City with iron walkers; defeated by Guard
- Mayor Koch gives Guard key to Empire City

1984
- Ghost Lions dissolved; Alice, Queen of Hearts, flees
- Dark Empire invades Empire City; Guard drives them back
- Guard given Empire State Building to restore; reopened as Olympian Tower

1985
- Alice, Queen of Hearts, appears in Empire City, captured by Slipstream
- UN creates metahuman intelligence and monitoring division, called Aegis

1986
- White Banner establishes Egide Ubiquiste
- Janus comes to Empire City
- Tom Foolery kills hostages, including Gillian Rivers's parents; defeated by Amber Prince
- ELITE Operations loses Stasis and Hellion, gains Legacy and Rain Killer
- Torque appears, working for Empire City Mafia
- Red Minstrel appears

1988
- Kreuzritter, Alice, Iron Duke fight ELITE; cripple Sleeper, kill Grey Wolf
- Guard rescue ELITE, defeat villains
- Guard given "special status" with US government; ELITE is disbanded

1990
- Bloody Mary's kidnapping spree stopped by Pan & Belle and the Baron

1992
- Rain Killer kills Golden Angel, fights Caliburn
- Temple of Mars steals Olympus Diamond from secret US space program
- Anasazi begins forming the Untouchables

1993
- Rain Killer kills Witchlight
- Rain Killer kills the American, fights Caliburn
- Aegis splits into intelligence and peacekeeper training divisions
- Red Minstrel steals Olympus Diamond from Temple of Mars
- Red Minstrel transformed into an avatar of wild, chaos forces

1994
- Untouchables help victims of L.A. earthquake; fight Mister Matthews's link-men and Alice
- The Order established by FBI, as metahuman flying squad
- Lady of the Lantern debuts, fights Triad metahuman, Wyatt Lee

1995
- Untouchables fight Red Minstrel in Empire City; birth of Prometheus
- Empire City initiates Marvels Tactical Unit (MTU)

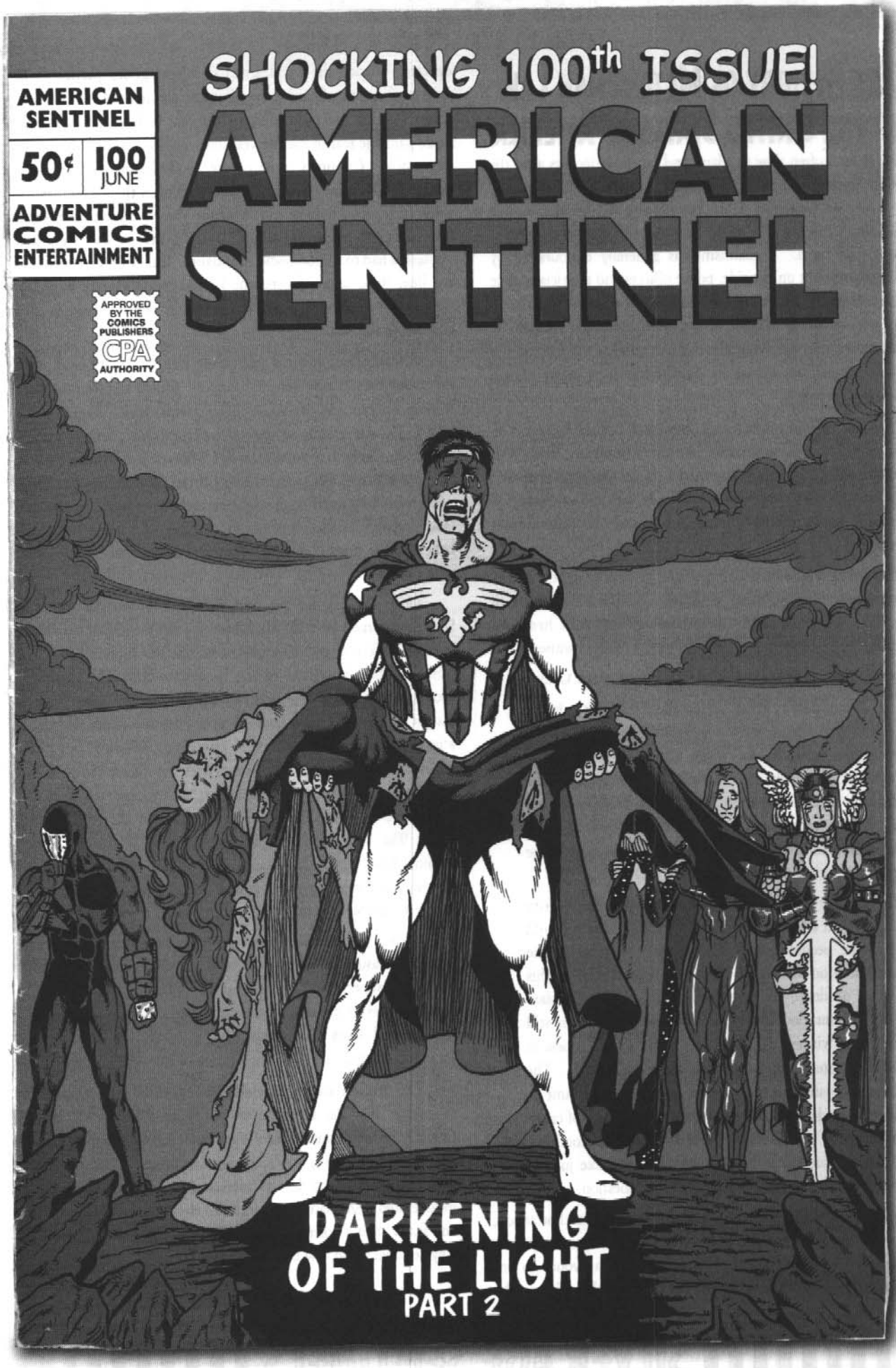
1996
- Sentinel humiliates Janus on live TV, and then unmasks himself before the world
- Aegis JTF, UN metahuman peacekeepers, begins development

1997
- UN enters into force International Convention on the Rights of All Metahumans

1998
- Triads arrange for Red Child to assassinate Lady of the Lantern; Baron saves her
- Kreuzritter, Alice, Jade Naga try to summon Haud fleet; stopped by Guard
- Guard given "special status" by UN
- Aegis JTF finally initiated

1999
- Kreuzritter forms White Rooks, including Iron Duke, Mister Matthews, Janus, and Alice
- Tokkotai was recovered from Pacific Ocean, and revived

2000
- White Rooks launch biological weapons at major Western cities; stopped by Guard



GEOPOLITICAL OVERVIEW

The History of Metahuman Law in the United States of America

The Law is often slow to adapt, and for three decades after the American Sentinel's appearance, it changed little to adjust to the presence of metahumans. Until the passing of the Metahuman Crime Control Bill in 1979, masked adventurers were dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Vigilantism was generally discouraged by official agencies, but on the side, police officers and politicians alike were pleased by the help they received. This was doubly true when dealing with grand or bizarre threats, from prototype weapons of mass destruction to terrifying Haud monstrosities. As long as the heroes did not get overzealous, local authorities were happy to help and look the other way.

The first officially sanctioned hero was Archer Gold. The Empire City Police Commissioner, Arthur Woods, deputized him after Archer Gold successfully captured a ring of German-saboteurs. In exchange for entrusting the city officials with his true identity, Archer Gold was given the power to arrest, and to testify in court while masked.

This ruling would be challenged, and eventually upheld by the Supreme Court (United States v. Weber, 247 US 403 (1918)), in which Hans Weber argued his Sixth Amendment right had been violated by an inability to properly confront a masked witness.

> Mr. Justice McKenna delivered the opinion of the Court:
>
> Respondent's rights under the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause were not violated by the *in camera* discussion in which the judge took judicial notice of Archer Gold's identity. Rather, by guaranteeing the character of a masked adventurer, through the submission of documentation and by the sworn testimony of a recognized authority, an enormous amount of wasted time may be avoided in the courtroom.
>
> Neither does the process of ascertaining the identity of a masked adventurer, who risks life and liberty should his name become public knowledge, run afoul of the Confrontation Clause of the Sixth Amendment. This process of identifying a masked witness does not violate the Confrontation Clause because the accused can still confront a witness. A masked witness must still appear in the courtroom, and answer questions under oath. The minutia details of a witness's life, such as a real name or place of residence, are irrelevant for the purposes of cross-examination. It is enough that a judge feels confident enough about the identity of a witness to take judicial notice that he or she is the individual in question.

Masked men who operated without any kind of authorization, such as Corbae, Red Summer, or Reverend Temperance enjoyed no such acceptance. Quite often, criminals they caught would go free if evidence was insufficient, or illegally obtained. Those who operated outside the law learned to adapt; guilty parties would receive a measure of justice, even if it was not delivered by the state. These masked adventurers struck the fear of God (and often the more palpable fear of themselves) into villains, ensuring they could never hide. Criminals faced risk of bodily harm, confiscation or destruction of property, and no sympathy from the authorities. In some cases, after dealing with a villain, these dark avengers would not bother to turn him or her over to the police. Yet these vigilantes had to respect some boundaries. If they ever stepped over the line, those same officers who looked the other way would be forced to intervene. Thus was struck a delicate balance that endures to this day.

Official sanction could take many forms. Archer Gold, with the strong federal governmental support, argued and won the right to keep a secret identity while enlisted with the US Army, during WWI. He was initially recognized as Private Gold, Archer, with his records available only to the Army's Military Intelligence Branch. He kept his costume, rather than wear the standard issue uniform. Archer Gold received no special treatment from being singled out (and probably had a rougher time because of it), but he rightly believed that news of his presence on the battlefield would boost men's morale.

Little changed for the next decades. When the American Sentinel returned after WWII, however, a few farsighted individuals realized society would eventually confront the supercriminal, and wondered how would he or she be dealt with? The system, of course, would not change without being forced to, and thus was caught unprepared when Sentinel would capture Haud soldiers, or science-criminals. The laws were grudgingly adapting, but in the meantime, Sentinel called in favours with the military to confiscate deathrays and mind-control helmets, or to cage mindless and destructive beasts. The politicians needed to decide important issues: Was it illegal to read someone's mind? What jurisdiction's criminal laws were violated when one tried to destroy the world? Whose jurisdiction reigns supreme when someone is acting in multiple jurisdictions at once?

In the '60s, the justice system finally began to recognize that specific measures might be needed to deal with metahuman criminals ("supervillains"). Metahumans presented special problems at trial: masked witnesses; strange powers; unusual abilities; and jurisdictional issues all had to be dealt with. A completely separate set of issues concerned the incarceration of convicted criminals.

The Artificer was apprehended and convicted several times, but no matter that his advanced weaponry was confiscated, or how carefully he was searched, he always managed to escape with some hidden futuristic tool, and reclaim his armour. The issue became more complex when his partner-in-crime, White Banner, was incarcerated. She had been surgically altered to be much stronger and faster than a normal human; while she could not tear steel the way Sentinel could, she certainly tested her jailers to the limit.

The public began to question whether local law enforcement could handle these superhuman threats. There were legal issues, such as: How should society regard an "eye-blast?" Was an eye-blast any less dangerous than a gun? Or was it of greater concern, because the "owner" could not be disarmed? Was a metahuman automatically considered to be carrying a concealed weapon? Even if they had no choice?

There were also logistical issues. Prison officials would trip over themselves whenever a supervillain was sent their way. How could they ensure he or she could be controlled, and would not cause injury nor escape?

In 1974, Iron Duke was finally captured and deactivated after an attempt to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge. The local authorities did not really want to deal with the automaton, and the various federal law enforcement agencies could not resolve differences of opinion on jurisdiction and competence. The courts eventually ruled that, since the machine appeared intelligent, self-aware, and possessed free will, it was therefore a sentient creature (and ruled to be a "he," based on Iron Duke's self-identification), with the same set of basic rights as any human being.

In the end, because, as best as anyone could ascertain, he was technically a citizen of a foreign power (the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), he was handed over to agents of the US Department of Justice's Immigration & Naturalization Service (INS). INS became something of a dumping ground for any person, creature, or thing that could be labelled "foreign." Whether they were foreign nationals, or interdimensional travellers, INS took charge of these illegal immigrants, often holding them indefinitely in administrative detention if extradition proved impossible.

This effectively passed on some of the headache to INS, who had to determine how to detain these superpowered individuals. Attorney General William B. Saxbe helped INS arrange a deal with the Bureau of Prisons, where Prisons designated one federal penitentiary as the holding pen for INS's "special detainees." With assistance of Wyoming Senator Louis Steadman, funding was obtained to modify one wing of the federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming, for new technology and staff training, in order to handle these cases.

While a partial solution, it did not, of course, resolve the question of native-born metahumans. In 1978, Charles D. Dagon, an American citizen code named Seawolf, used his metahuman powers in an attempt to steal a prototype nuclear submarine, the Nemo, developed by the Ascension Institute. Before the American Sentinel and Caliburn were able to capture Seawolf and his crew, five people were killed and hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage was inflicted. The local authorities had proven completely incapable of containing a threat of such magnitude, and once the crisis was over, the state was at a loss for how to deal with Seawolf. The prosecution was jeopardized on many levels, including issues of mishandling of evidence and allegations that Dagon's right to effective assistance of counsel was denied by his drugging. For security reasons, the local authorities, unable to restrain him due to his immense strength, had heavily sedated him for the duration of the proceedings.

Despite these apparent flaws at trial, Seawolf was convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment, although everyone knew Empire City's penitentiary, the Tombs, could not hold him. His lawyers appealed on the grounds that his rights under the Fifth and Sixth Amendments had been violated, and that he had been unconstitutionally denied the ability to mount an adequate defense due to his constant, heavy sedation. A unanimous panel of the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit agreed, reversing the conviction and remanding for a new trial with instructions that the dosage of sedative be reduced to a level allowing effective participation in his own defense. Unfortunately, there was no precedent for Seawolf's physiology, and once the dose was lessened Seawolf escaped his restraints, broke free, and vanished into the East River.

The public reacted with a tremendous outcry of fear and anger, demanding the federal government deal with the situation. The Department of Justice worked with Congress and the White House to hammer out the Metahuman Crime Control Bill 1979 (The Super Crime Act). After being hotly debated in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, it was swiftly signed into law by President Jimmy Carter.

The Super Crime Act 1979 stated, that when an individual committed a crime of violence with the use of superpowers, it was deemed the use of a weapon of mass destruction, violating federal law. Such cases therefore fell under the purview of federal law enforcement agencies, chief among them the FBI and the ATF. Underlying this result were several rationales: local authorities were often perceived as ill equipped and untrained to deal with metahumans; normal citizens could not be expected to differentiate between a deadly metahuman and a harmless metahuman when threatened with superpowers; and convicted metahumans were extremely difficult to detain, requiring expense and expertise far beyond that available to most local justice systems.

The Super Crime Act 1979 still holds true today, and has been the basis for metahuman criminal litigation in several other countries, including Canada, the Republic of Costa Rica, the French Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In the US, however, local municipalities faced with a disproportionately high number of metahuman incidents have initiated emergency response units trained to deal with superpowered individuals. The longest running, and most successful, is the Empire City Police Department's Marvels Tactical Unit (MTU), although the Los Angeles Police Department has initiated the CAPE Units (Crisis Assist for Parahuman Entities), and Miami's Metro-Dade Police Department recently started the SuperBlue division of SWAT.

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The World Today

Today's world is a rapidly changing place, where dramatic technological advances, passionate political movements, and an infinite variety of metahuman abilities compete to influence the shape of tomorrow. *The Aegis World Factbook* is a guide to international affairs, politics, economic and cultural history, and recent events, covering the 189 member states of the United Nations, plus 29 other countries. It is designed as a resource for private individuals and governments alike.

The Aegis World Factbook is published annually by the United Nations, prepared by the UN/Aegis Department of Public Information, in association with Aegis Intel Corps, and the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Intelligence Cycle

The "Intelligence Cycle" is the process by which raw data is gathered and transformed into a usable form ("intelligence") for policymakers. Basic information is simply raw data that may come from any source. It is often: fragmentary, unreliable, ambiguous, contradictory, misleading, or even wrong. Once this information has been examined, organized, analyzed, and interpreted, it becomes "finished intelligence."

"Finished intelligence" is classified into one of three types: basic, current, and estimative. Basic intelligence, the least ambiguous sort, lays the foundation of knowledge, built from factual reference, on an issue. Current intelligence forms the most up-to-date reports on new developments, and monitors changes as they happen. Estimative intelligence analyzes predictable and probable outcomes.

Each type of intelligence supports and strengthens the others. Basic intelligence forms the building blocks used in the construction of current and estimative intelligence; current intelligence continually adds to the basic level, updating the database of knowledge; and estimative intelligence comprehensively examines what is believed to be known, and offers alternative interpretations to revise basic and current intelligence. *The Aegis World Factbook* is an example of basic intelligence, the *UN Security Council's World Report* is an example of current intelligence, while the *24 Hour, 48 Hour*, and *8760* reports are all examples of estimative intelligence.

World Overview: The Metahuman Report

Since the United Nations came into existence in 1945, it has actively monitored the issue and presence of metahumans in international affairs. It has worked hard for the protection of basic human rights for all humans, especially where minority groups are concerned. "Metahumans" have been classified as a worldwide minority group, a phenomenon that may occur within any race, ethnic group, culture, or strata of society. Because metahumans appear so infrequently, and are most often isolated even from their own community, the United Nations has paid close attention to their situation as individuals, and as a people.

Working Group on Metahuman Issues (1979)

In 1979, the United Nations established a special working group devoted to monitoring the metahuman issue. It reached several broad conclusions, suggesting:

- Metahumans, while a fraction of the population, do not appear to be an isolated event; the world needs to prepare itself for the appearance of more metahumans.
- Metahumans, simply because they have extraordinary abilities, must not be exploited by any private group or state government.
- A convention to guarantee the rights of metahumans globally must be enacted.
- State bodies should be monitored in regards to how they deal with emerging metahumans.
- The United Nation must consider how metahumans may affect peacekeeping.

Aegis

In 1985, an active monitoring and intelligence gathering division was created under the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Called Aegis, its focus was the status of metahumans worldwide. It maintained a confidential database on incidents of human rights abuses against metahumans, and worked to mobilize local human rights organizations to aid metahumans in distress.

In 1993, Aegis expanded into an intelligence division (Intel Corps), and a training division (Metahuman Crisis Intervention Training, or MCIT), which ran a series of courses advising UN Peacekeepers on how best to handle metahuman incidents. While generally well regarded, the supervisory Committee realized Aegis was not doing enough, and in 1996, Aegis was reorganized again. The Intel Corps and MCIT programs were maintained, but a new, proactive response force was developed: the Aegis Joint Task Force (Aegis JTF).

Aegis JTF, which took over two years to organize properly, finally opened its doors in 1998. It was a small, dedicated unit of metahuman peacekeepers from around the globe. The Aegis JTF would intervene in situations desperate for UN intervention, but where normal peacekeeping operations proved ineffective.

International Convention on the Rights of All Metahumans (1997)

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Metahumans and Members of Their Families, which had been adopted in 1992, entered into force in 1997 when the requisite number of States (60) deposited their instruments of ratification with the UN. The Committee on the Rights of All Metahumans, established under the Convention, held its first meeting in December, 1997. This "treaty body" is composed of 19 independent experts who monitor the implementation of the human rights provisions contained with the treaty. The committee members are of recognized competence in the field of human rights and are nominated and elected by State parties. The Committee is serviced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva.

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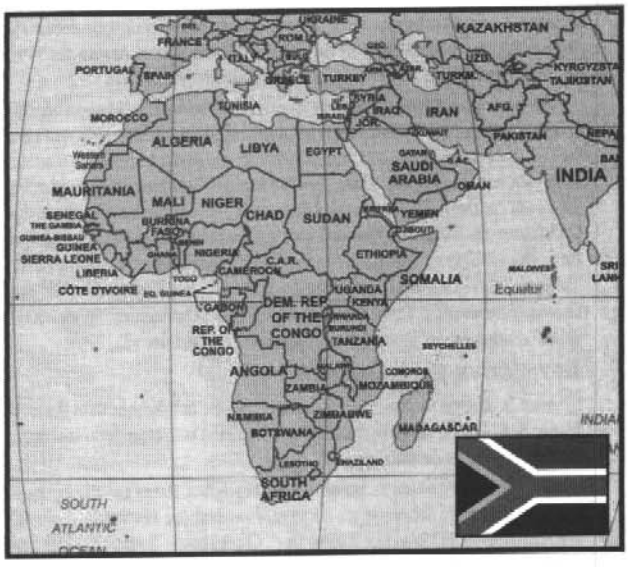
Africa

Africa: Country Report

Africa is a widely chaotic continent, still heavily troubled by appalling poverty, regional and tribal wars, racism, sexism, high crime, corruption, and political instability. Most countries have been struggling for decades, since the withdrawal of colonial powers.

Political instability is endemic to the Continent. Border wars as well as civil wars have resulted in the deaths of millions, and have additionally created a vast population of refugees. Corrupt leaders have stolen national riches, and exploited natural resources to fund their regimes, while simultaneously ignoring their peoples, who are often suffering from widespread famine caused by recurrent droughts and crop failures. Pandemics, such as AIDS, run unchecked in many countries.

Metahuman activity is extremely scarce, due to intense discrimination, high death rates, and rampant abuse. Local experience with metahumans is very rare, and while names of North American heroes may be as common as Coca Cola, most who encounter a metahuman have no context for the experience; emotions like fear, anger, and hatred run high. When a metahuman is discovered, he or she is normally expelled from home, or drafted into military service, if not both.



South Africa

Focus: South Africa (Republiek van Suid-Afrika)

Basic Intelligence

South Africa is Africa's most developed economic power. It is a capitalist industrial society, with enormous commercial interests. It has fully developed manufacturing, mining, agricultural, and service sectors, is the world's largest producer of gold, and is a vital source of chromium, adamantine, and gem-quality diamonds.

In the past 10 years, South Africa has undergone revolutionary changes with the abolishment of apartheid, and the transformation to a multiracial democracy. Although reports of metahumans had been very rare, they were still more common than anywhere else in Africa. During the apartheid years, non-white metahumans were outlawed in South Africa, and if discovered, they were forced to serve an indefinite jail term.

The South African Bill of Rights, adopted by President Nelson Mandela's new government in 1996, guarantees some of the broadest liberties in the world, protecting freedom of speech, movement, political activity, the right to adequate food, housing, water, education, and health care, to all citizens, no matter their colour, background, sex, or whether they are metahuman.

Current Intelligence

South Africa is not free from troubles, of course. There is still deep racism, rising inflation, high incidence of crime, and a serious AIDS crisis. The new government has welcomed metahuman refugees from elsewhere in Africa, realizing their potential for the country.

There has been some concern over the international mercenary organization, Egide Ubiquiste, which has a headquarters in Johannesburg. Reports of heavily armed soldiers, and possible metahuman recruits, however, have proved unfounded to date.

Estimative Intelligence

South Africa still has a long road ahead in the upcoming days. Metahumans throughout Africa may flock there, due to its extremely liberal and welcoming immigration policies (where they are concerned). The government is relatively stable, but crimes of history may resurface.

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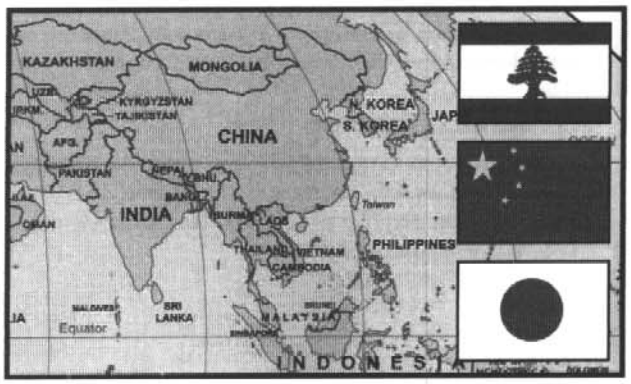
Asia

Asia: Country Report

Asia, today, consists of several tiers. At the top are the "great Asian dragons," of China and Japan, followed by the established and still-climbing "little dragons:" Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong (although returned to China, it is still estranged), and Singapore. Finally, there are the up-and-coming "little tigers:" Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Each tier, and of course, each country, has its own agenda concerning the metahuman issue, but only the highest echelons have had the resources to actively pursue a course of action.

Metahumans, as a general rule, are regarded differently in Asian society. As the people tend to be more shy and withdrawn, so too are metahumans, even in countries with open policies. They downplay their abilities and maintain a low profile. Certain governments have also introduced extremely oppressive measures, which also keeps the visible metahuman population hidden. Because of this, and due to the remoteness and rural conditions prevalent in many countries, it is hard to estimate with any certainty how many metahumans exist throughout Asia.

NOTE: The broad scope of this report does not allow for differentiation within even such a vast category as "Asia." Clearly, Asia also encompasses the Indian subcontinent, sections of the Pacific Rim, and much of the region described as the Middle East. Metahumans are often regarded with caution and suspicion, and most states have strict policies in dealing with them. Both independent and state-sponsored metahumans are most frequently found in major urban centres, resource rich areas, or in military hotspots. Please see the reports, *Aegis: Middle East FOCUS*, and *Aegis: Pacific Rim FOCUS*, both available through the UN/Aegis Department of Public Information.



Bekaa

FOCUS: Bekaa (Jumhuriat al-Bekaa)

Basic Intelligence

Bekaa, Islam's contemporary Camelot, was initially a part of Lebanon as the Bekaa Valley. The predominantly Shiite population, however, fought to join Islamic Syria rather than remain part of Maronite-ruled Lebanon. During Lebanon's civil unrest in 1958, Bekaa seceded before American troops landed to quell the fighting. Lebanon, already weakened, realized that forcing Bekaa to rejoin would only aggravate the already volatile situation between local Christians and disfranchised Muslims. They allowed Bekaa's secession. Surprisingly, Bekaa did not join Syria. Uncomfortable with Syria's recent socialist-appointed government and her ties to Russia, Bekaa became a new Islamic state ruled from the capital, Ba'Labak.

Current Intelligence

Although an initial proponent of the *Jihad*, Bekaa has recently embraced the pursuit of knowledge as championed during Islam's Golden Age. Ba'Labak, filled with its ancient Roman and Greek sites, is a perfect backdrop for a renaissance in Islamic law, art and sciences.

Bekaa's attitudes towards metahumans runs counter to that of many fundamentalist nations. Rather than support Iran's strong anti-metahuman doctrine (expressed in a *fatwa*), the scholars of Bekaa's *Qarawiyyin* school, who are in the process of exploring and redefining Islam against a contemporary context, support metahumans on two grounds:

1) The Koran speaks of *jinn*, beings created from smokeless fire. Like man, they can be good or evil, believers or heretics. While Bekaa theologians do not consider metahumans to be *jinns*, they do believe the *jinn* were the precursors of metahumans. As such, the Koran provides for their existence and treatment as individuals and not a species.

2) A growing trend in Bekaa is reviving the precepts of the *Mutazila*. Islam preaches the notion of *maktub* ("it is written") or predetermination where Allah knows a man's fate through the course of his life. This thought fuels many terrorists who believe their actions are known and sanctioned by Allah. Therefore it is not them committing murder, but Allah's will that they be His instrument of destruction. The *Mutazila*, however, argued that if Allah knew the fate of men, then men were not free because Allah had already judged them. This establishes a contradiction in Islam, which doesn't believe in the original sin. The *Mutazila* held that man's fate is not predetermined, and thus, is not capable of sin until he consecrates his crime. To the Bekaa enclave, this means that metahumans are not evil either, because being evil by virtue of existence implies they lack free will.

Estimative Intelligence

Bekaa is, and will continue to be, a haven of sorts for metahumans throughout the Middle East. As such, of course, it also becomes a political hotspot, and potential target, for more militant fundamentalists.

Bekaa will soon convene an Islamic summit of scholars, *imams* and theologians to hammer out a unified decision on the existence of metahumans. Leading the conference are Waraqa "al-Amin" Sa'ad (the Trusted One), Chadi Thomas (Islamic advocate from Canada), and Magen Yisrael (the Shield of Israel).

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China

FOCUS: China (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo)

Basic Intelligence

China has never shown favourable policies towards metahumans. It has dealt with them through secret decrees and hidden military action in most cases. Although China has no official public policy where metahumans are concerned, factual evidence has been collected of covert metahuman education centres, located deep in the countryside. Many humanitarian agencies believe metahumans in China must either work for life for the military, or are executed.

There is limited information concerning the organized crime societies of the Chinese, the Triads. They are believed to seek out metahumans for various roles in their organizations, using them as couriers, enforcers, and assassins.

Although China officially endorses no religion, much of society is Confucianist, Buddhist, or Taoist; these philosophies lend to an ideology that considers metahumans not mutations or aberrations, but blessed (such as by Buddha), or empowered through mysticism. Unfortunately, the state regime ensures the people do not display such feelings openly.

Current Intelligence

Metahumans are feared and oppressed in China. There is a small human rights movement working to bring their plight to the attention of the international scene. China has been very resistant to the formation of the Aegis JTF, and has not provided any direct support.

There have been numerous descriptions of Haud sightings in China over the years, but the government has never officially reported any of them. It is suspected that several important pieces of Haud technology have been recovered and are being studied.

Estimative Intelligence

It does not seem likely that China's policies will change in the near future. There is some concern that China may be amassing a metahuman special forces unit, to use both in defense and for an aggressive agenda (especially where Taiwan is concerned). If this is the case, they are being highly secretive, for no hard evidence has been reported. Information is extremely suspect, however, and must be assumed to be highly inaccurate.

Japan

FOCUS: Japan (Nihon)

Basic Intelligence

Japan, since its industrial rebirth in the latter half of the 20th century, has been one of the most economically influential countries in Asia. Japan has a long history of dealing with metahumans, and conducted several experiments during WWII to try to reap the benefit of having enhanced soldiers. Their special attack units (the Kikai Samurai) were an immensely costly endeavour, however, and none survived their highly dangerous missions. Thus, in the immediate post-war period, Japan had no metahumans.

The economic resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s led many sectors, both private and governmental, to once again consider the question of the training and development of metahumans. There were a few, scattered reports of citizens displaying metahuman abilities in the 1970s, and they were tolerated in the society. Japan has never had forced service for metahumans, although there is legislation requiring registration of all metahumans. Societal pressure causes most metahumans to comply (although it is suspected some, possibly due to fear and shame of having such abilities, hide and repress their powers).

Current Intelligence

Today, there is strong acceptance of metahumans. They are seen as a valuable commodity, and many private organizations are conducting metahuman research. The government is vigorously debating what checks and restrictions should be put on this type of development work. Few successes have been reported, and the failure rate is quite high.

A research vessel recently discovered the most famous Kikai Samurai soldier, Tokkotai, in stasis, but alive. He was retrieved from within a strange technological device, and has made an astounding recovery. The government is currently touting him as the reborn warrior-son of Japan, but he has said very little since his revival.

The younger generation is in love with metahumans, whether local or international. They are a new pop icon, as popular as the hottest movie or music celebrities. There is a large consumer market for licensed merchandise, as well as cheap knock-offs imported from the rest of Asia. The two most popular heroes are Shinsekai ("the New World electric man") and Zoge no Kitsune (Ivory Fox).

Estimative Intelligence

While very progressive and extremely cutting edge, Japan's haste may lead to dangerous results. There have been several incidents where companies did not comply with even minimum safety standards, both at the private and governmental level, resulting in terrible disasters. Japan is currently wrestling with issues of limits; how far should such research be pushed, and should it be controlled?

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Central & South America

Central/South America: Country Report

The countries of Central and South America have been plagued by corruption, strife, poverty, underdevelopment, and civil unrest for decades. Imperial powers, guerrilla wars, military coups, and the drug trade have left most of these countries scarred and unstable. While there has been a shift in recent years towards fair and free elections, there is history of oppression and exploitation to overcome. Most regimes looked unfavourably at the emergence of metahumans, and many countries still have discriminatory laws, sentencing metahumans to mandatory military service, or a lifelong prison term, or permanent expulsion. There are a few countries where this is not the case, such as Argentina or Costa Rica, where metahumans are well regarded. States with the most unforgiving laws, like Colombia or Haiti, have simply driven metahuman heroes into the underground.



Brazil

FOCUS: Brazil (República Federativa do Brasil)

Basic Intelligence

Brazil, the largest and most populous country in South America, experienced more than five decades of military intervention and dictatorship before reinstituting a civilian president in 1985. Brazil is one of Latin America's leading economic powers, but it is marked by a terrible disparity between a very rich minority, and an overwhelmingly poverty-stricken majority. Recent years have been plagued by high unemployment, urban labour conflicts, spiralling crime rates, and land seizures by poor peasants.

Brazil has never had an official metahuman policy. Unofficially, however, the military has always been extremely afraid of the power they posses. Sanctioned paramilitary forces used to patrol the countryside for any signs of metahuman activity; when encountered, metahumans would most often be disappeared. Simultaneously, private police forces were employed by private companies as "street cleaners," a thinly veiled euphemism for arbitrary imprisonment and murder of poor and homeless metahumans (especially street children) throughout the cities.

Current Intelligence

The situation in Brazil has not improved much, even today, but there is change. While the private security forces still menace both the urban and rural landscapes, there have been strong movements calling for protection of the defenseless, the poor, the homeless, the indigenous, the metahumans, and the environment.

There are also several notable metahumans who continue to fight against the odds, in a society that gives almost no support. Escaramuça (Skirmish) is a protector of the people of Campo Grande, who is never seen, but often heard. Iara, a goddess of the rainforest, has been spoken of for years; she teaches children the secrets of the world, and then returns them to civilization in order to pass on the knowledge. Finally, the government has received much criticism for the first officially sanctioned superhero, Vortex, the protector of São Paulo.

Estimative Intelligence

Brazil is on the cusp of potential reform, but it is a process that could easily be derailed. Pessimistic observers suggest that it is nearly impossible for the poor of Brazil to raise their standards of living in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso has given large tracts of land to the indigenous peoples, and has reversed certain anti-metahuman policies. It is now trying to battle inflation, corruption, class discrimination, and racism.

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Costa Rica

FOCUS: Costa Rica (República de Costa Rica)

Basic Intelligence

Costa Rica is one of the success stories of Central America. Since an early civil war, the country has had no national army, only a small civil guard. In the 1980s, President Oscar Arias Sánchez settled escalating strife with both Nicaragua and El Salvador, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Afterwards, Arias instituted a number of policies to protect native metahumans, in addition to an open-door policy for metahuman refugees.

Current Intelligence

In order to address growing violence at home, and in neighbouring countries, in the early 1990s, the government established an education and training centre for metahumans. Designed as a branch of the Fuerza Publica (the Ministry of Public Security), it created a small, organized task force to help provide general peace and security. The force was called the Special Support Police (although it is often referred to as the Mountain Force, because its main facility is located atop an extinct volcano), and consists of approximately half-a-dozen metahumans at any given time.

The Mountain Force was instrumental in helping with the clean-up after Hurricane Caesar, in 1996. It has also regularly clashed with a number of metahumans involved with the international drug trade.

Estimative Intelligence

Costa Rica will continue to stand as an example to how humans and metahumans can live together peacefully. As more metahumans emerge in this part of the world, greater numbers will be drawn to Costa Rica in an attempt to escape societies that are learning acceptance far too slowly. The State may also become a target, due to its permissive ideology, or because of its aid to the US against drug traffickers.

Haiti

FOCUS: Haiti (Repiblik Dayti)

Basic Intelligence

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere, having been crushed by three decades of dictatorship, followed by a series of military coups. Under President François "Papa Doc" Duvalier (ruled 1957 - 1971), a tremendously racist anti-metahuman policy emerged. Duvalier claimed metahumans were an affront to the Voodoo religion, and had his secret police (the Tontons Macoute) imprison or execute all metahumans. His son and successor, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, maintained similar policies of fear and terror. President Jean Bertrand Aristide, the first popularly elected President after the flight of Baby Doc to France, was initially forced from office by military *coup d'état*. After he was finally reinstalled in 1994, however, he instituted major social and economic policy changes. Although Haiti has never shown much metahuman activity, it has been a hotspot for strange occurrences, perhaps best defined as "supernatural." Unusual energies and unexplained events have been recorded, and these phenomena have been increasing in number since the end of the Duvalier rule. It is believed that the Baron and the villainous Doc Cimitière (both of whom operate in the US), hail from Haiti.

Current Intelligence

Haiti appears to be a nexus for faith-based abilities, although whether these are a simple manifestation of metahuman powers, or "real magic" is beyond the scope of this document. A handful of supernatural individuals have been identified, including: Georges Bien-Aimé (Hougan Asye, the Blacksmith Voodoo), a renowned steel drum sculptor who shapes metal by will; the Invisible Scorpion King (rumoured to be ex-secret police), a cult figure living in the mountains, who claims to channel the new *loa*; and Toy Soldier, an older folk hero, who makes children's toys from pieces of scrap, and then breathes life into them.

Estimative Intelligence

Haiti will be in dire straits for the foreseeable future; there simply are not enough resources, or sufficient international interest, to stabilize the country quickly. There are many factions wrestling for political control, and the spirit of "Papa Doc" Duvalier still lingers over the people. There is, however, a hope with this new regime that has not been felt in years. It remains to be seen if Aristide can garner the trust and loyalty of his people, and whether he recognizes the potential good that metahumans can do for this impoverished country.

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Europe

Europe: Country Report

Europe is still split between West and East, although with every passing year this difference is becoming more muted. Western Europe has often heralded metahumans as wonders and heroes, much as they are regarded in North America, although there is a greater propensity for government-sponsored adventurers. The Eastern European bloc maintained utmost secrecy on metahuman information throughout the Cold War. Real numbers are still almost completely unknown, since many of those records have yet to surface. With the opening of borders, however, metahumans from Eastern Europe have begun to emerge, some travelling far from home for the first time, while others do what they can for their families and countrymen.



Russia

Focus: Russia (Rossiyskaya Federatsiya)

Basic Intelligence

Russia, no longer the parallel superpower to the US, has struggled economically and politically for the past decade, but still has vast impact on the world scene. Through the Cold War, Russia, as the USSR, struggled to keep pace with the US, including the sponsorship of a top-secret metahuman weapons race. Dozens, if not hundreds, of state sponsored experiments were conducted, including secret space programs, rampant chemical testing, and early genetic manipulation, however, very little confirmed evidence remains linked to these programs. Most were failures, and almost all attempts by international forces, as well as grass-roots human rights organizations, to secure evidence has failed.

It is known that metahumans living within the USSR were compelled to register with the government, and then serve in a military capacity for a 10-year term. Those who refused were often imprisoned indefinitely in penal mental institutions. This atmosphere lasted until Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee (and later become President of the Soviet Union); amongst his many changes was a lifting of the registration act.

Current Intelligence

Muzhik has been a champion of the new order, and has encouraged many young metahumans to take up the roles of protector and defender for their people. He works tirelessly for the success of the new Russia, and his actions have inspired several new heroes, like Snow Girl, and the technomancer, Saturn.

President Vladimir Putin, elected in 1999, is known to keep detailed records on known metahumans. He is normally accompanied by three metahuman bodyguards: Skymarshal Khristian Antares, Skymarshal Kayl Antares, and Skymarshal Iosif Grey. It is also believed that he has strong connections to a pool of KGB-trained metahumans, including the spy who infiltrated the CIA's ELITE Operations (once called Hellion, he is now known as Ugrian).

Estimative Intelligence

Russia may have lost much of her status, but she still is still a country to be reckoned with. Putin will try and consolidate his resources, and may use any means necessary to control chaos within Russia's sphere of influence (such as the war with Chechnya), and stabilize the economy. Putin will, of course, be watching the future Bush administration very closely; he has been cautiously supportive of the Aegis JTF program.

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Thule

FOCUS: THULE (KÖNIGREICH VON THULE)

BASIC INTELLIGENCE

The nation of Thule came into existence in 1971, at the centre of a terrible storm, and it has been the heart of turmoil affecting Europe and the rest of the world since its inception. The lost island of Thule was raised from beneath the ocean by Ernst Rauchenberger, the second Kreuzritter. As soon as the island had stabilized, Kreuzritter moved a large population to inhabit it, while he simultaneously engaged in a diplomatic struggle within the United Nations for Thule to be recognized as a sovereign state.

A dozen countries recognized Thule's independence immediately, including China, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, and the USSR. Thule opened its doors to anyone of Germanic or Nordic ancestry, and quickly established a number of industrial sectors. Within a year, the United Nations acknowledged Thule as a nation, and allowed it to send a permanent observer, which is the status it maintains to this day.

While no official anti-Semitic policy has ever been confirmed, for many years it was believed that Ernst Rauchenberger, son of the Nazi *Übermensch*, Kreuzritter, upheld his father's Aryan ideology. This may have lessened in recent years, as Thule has opened its borders to more and more immigrants. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a flood of former Soviet scientists and ex-military officers flocked to new opportunities on Thule. Thule has always welcomed metahumans, although it is believed the government keeps detailed records on all visitors and immigrants, especially where metahuman are concerned.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

Today, Thule is home to a number of private companies involved in production of electronics and chemicals. Thule does not enforce many of the restrictions that most world-nations have in place to safeguard against the research and development of advanced technologies or metahuman exploration. Likewise, Thule has always been a site of strange happenings; although Kreuzritter has only allowed a handful of national treasures outside of his country, those that have been examined demonstrated unusual energies. Thule may be a hotspot for meta-radiations.

Over the years, a large number of terrorists and paramilitary organizations have received funding, equipment, and training from Thule. Kreuzritter maintains that these are but a small, renegade faction of his people, and that none of them have official sanction or support. When such criminals are discovered and caught, Thule has always paid reparations to all injured parties.

Thule's most eminent metahuman is certainly Kreuzritter. Thule has been home and shelter to many metahumans over the years, most as personal guests of the King of Thule. Recently, a man known only as Miolner has been identified, and is believed to have some connection to Kreuzritter. Similarly, Kreuzritter recently provided refuge to a number of European pagan eco-terrorists, called the Sisters of the Wolf.

ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Thule will continue to play an important part in the role of metahumans throughout the world. While Kreuzritter remains in power, it is unlikely that Thule will become part of the European Union. Should he or a subsequent leader choose to fall into alignment with the Continent, however, the European community would probably embrace Thule for its historical and scientific knowledge. For the foreseeable future, Thule will continue to be a rogue state, trying to learn where it fits in a well-organized world.

United Kingdom

FOCUS: UNITED KINGDOM (UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND)

BASIC INTELLIGENCE

The United Kingdom has had the longest history of metahuman activity, next to the US. Some further argue that masked adventurers and "weird science" first appeared in Britain, such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel's fantastic Iron Duke. With the first appearances of Tommy Gun and Dover Angel, the people fell in love with the superhero. Dover Angel was the first state sanctioned masked adventurer, initiating a practice that the government has maintained with variable success over the years.

In 1981, the government initiated a clandestine metahuman special operations unit, codenamed the Ghost Lions. Then, in 1982, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher officially sanctioned a special metahuman group to be attached to the Royal Navy, named the Sea Kings. The Sea Kings accompanied a Royal Navy force sent to quell an invasion of the Falklands by the Argentinian military. Unfortunately, the Ghost Lions would be dissolved in 1984, and criminal charges laid, once light of their illegal activities was made public. The Sea Kings disbanded after the death of Jeremiah Storm (Kraken), in 1986.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

The government has tried to maintain several official heroes at any given time. The concept of registering metahuman abilities has come up in Parliament on several occasions, most often after a crisis is initiated by an empowered individual. While no such law has been passed, the UK does have a very strict policy against vigilantism; only sanctioned heroes are welcomed. The most prominent heroines operating in the UK today are Britannia, the renowned psychic, and Stone Angel; both often work with New Scotland Yard.

ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Prime Minister Tony Blair has indicated a willingness to support the Aegis JTF, although there is currently no representation from the UK. Likewise, Blair has been involved in discussions with the EU concerning a European Defense Force — all developments will be carefully monitored.

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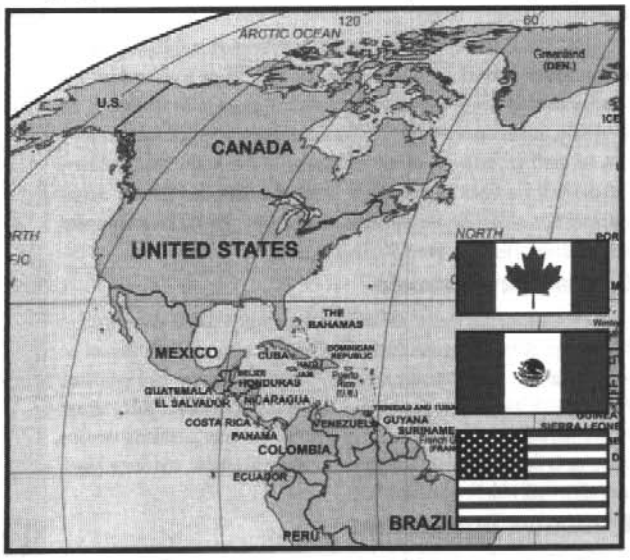
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North America

North America: Country Report

North America is home to the greatest percentage of metahumans, with about 43% of the world's metahuman population. More than 70% of these dwell in the US. On average, metahumans in North America are considered to have amongst the most freedoms and highest standards of living of the world. The US and Canada have always held very similar beliefs and policies concerning metahumans. In Mexico, however, this has not been the case; until July 2000, Mexico's treatment of metahumans has paralleled the majority of Latin American countries, with fear and exploitation running rampant.



Canada

FOCUS: Canada

Basic Intelligence

Canada is even more protective of metahuman rights and freedoms than the US. There is only a very small documented population of metahumans throughout Canada, however, mostly concentrated in large urban centres such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. Interestingly, although firearms and other weapons are far more heavily restricted in Canada than the US, the question of registering metahumans because of their abilities rarely comes up in Parliament, perhaps due to the low rate of incidents.

Current Intelligence

Canada is home to several prominent superheroic metahumans, including Livewire, the Magistrate, and Mother Raven (of the Guard). Although the border with the US is normally very open, in times of crisis known or suspected metahuman travellers face much stricter scrutiny. Canada's peacekeeping forces work closely with Aegis, and the Department of Defense runs a training program at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, in Clementsport, Nova Scotia.

Estimative Intelligence

The federal government is currently debating a proposal for a joint North American metahuman penitentiary. The Liberal government, under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, has introduced the notion of locating this prison on Resolution or Bylot Island.

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Mexico

FOCUS: MEXICO (ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS)

BASIC INTELLIGENCE

Metahumans in Mexico have not had the same freedom or safety as elsewhere in North America. For the past several decades, metahumans have generally been persecuted and forced to serve in the military; those who avoided military service were often discovered by the drug cartels, and pressed into a different kind of service. The most notorious organizations were those of Amezcua-Contreras, Guzman-Loera, Tijuana, Cali, and Medellín. Metahumans were used to smuggle drugs, act as enforcers, assassinate rivals, and wage war on law enforcement agencies and other cartels.

Some metahumans have found sanctuary with the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Chiapas, including the Silver Saint (El Santo de Plata), and Obsidian Butterfly (Itzpapalotl). They struggle with their revolutionary brothers and sisters against the corrupt forces of Mexico, whether military, paramilitary, or organized crime.

A few others have crossed the US border illegally, such as Paulo Ramirez (the first El Gigante), or Marcelo Dimas (Rapier); they then often try to hide, or are caught and usually returned to Mexico.

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

Vincente Fox was elected in 2000, and is the first sign of change to come to Mexico in decades. He promised to be open to all honest people, no matter their political allegiance, and claimed to have no tolerance for corruption. He has spoken at length of instituting laws to protect metahumans, and has appointed a Minister of Human Rights, but has met strong opposition from the military lobbyists.

The largest drug cartels have been reduced in power and their leaders arrested or killed, but it is believed that dozens of smaller organizations have sprung up in their place. Many are still using, hiring, or blackmailing metahumans when the opportunity arises. The Tijuana cartel is believed to employ at least two, El Gigante (the second of the name), and Nagrita (Black King Snake). While the drugs and violence still have an enormous impact on the country, these organizations have much less influence on the new government.

ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

Mexico will continue to struggle to become a more significant part of North America, while trying to shed its Latin American roots. Fox's position is admirable, and he has made much progress with the Zapatistas. Fox's stance is also precarious, however, and if he does not make strong moves to solidify his power base, he may find himself ousted by pro-military forces. Fox has been involved in discussions to create a joint North American metahuman penitentiary, and has expressed considerable interest in this idea.

The cartels have not given up, and while generally smaller, they have become more specialized. Many have even increased their operations, and will undoubtedly struggle to reassert their supremacy over the next year.

United States of America

FOCUS: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BASIC INTELLIGENCE

The United States of America has always been one of the most open and welcoming countries towards metahumans, in part because, with the loyalty of the Sentinel (previously the American Sentinel), they have always led the "metahuman race." Government attempts to regulate or restrict the rights of metahumans have been hotly contested by numerous civil rights lobby groups, and have never proven very successful. The metropolis of Empire City seems to draw a disproportionate number of metahumans, but outside of Empire City, the population is evenly spread throughout the country, with slightly higher concentrations located at major urban centres.

The US has the longest running history of dealing with metahumans of any country, and has the most established metahuman oriented legislation and procedures in place. In general, law abiding metahuman citizens are left in peace; on the other hand, metahuman criminals are considered federal offenders, and incarcerated at the federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming, known as "the Carousel."

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

The federal US government has excellent relations with organizations such as the Guard — groups that are easily accessible and considerably transparent to scrutiny. The government, however, has also tried to organize several federal funded metahuman agencies, with limited success. Their most recent attempt, the FBI's arm labelled the Order, was established (approximately) in 1994, and has achieved a solid reputation.

Empire City is also home to the headquarters of the Ascension Institute (AI), a philanthropic organization dedicated to the study of metahuman abilities, and a peaceful co-existence.

ESTIMATIVE INTELLIGENCE

George W. Bush won the 2000 Presidential election and will take office on January 20, 2001. He plans to raise certain questions. Should metahumans be registered because of their abilities? Can a greater military budget be introduced to both respond to metahuman crises, and to establish a special force of metahuman soldiers? What are the limits of genetic experiments regarding metahumans?

The Department of Justice has acknowledged many problems with the federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming, and is discussing a new facility designed exclusively for metahuman prisoners. Due to the extreme cost, and low numbers, a proposal for a jointly operated prison is under discussion with the Canadian and Mexican governments.

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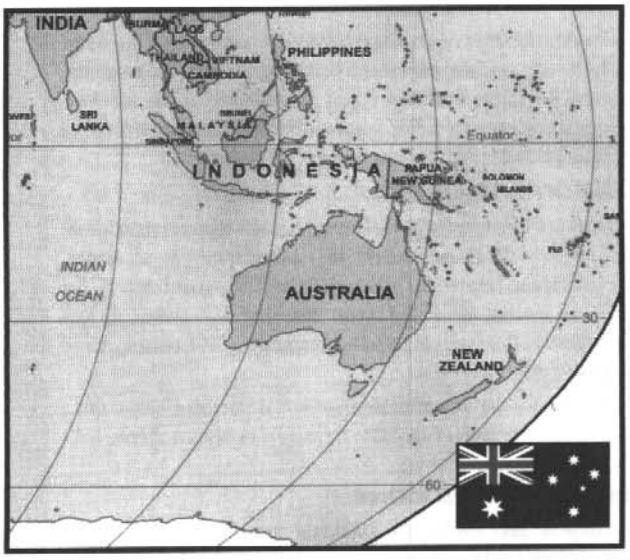
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Pacific Islands & Australia

Pacific Islands & Australia: Country Report

Metahuman activity is nearly unheard of through the islands of the South Pacific, only being reported in the largest population centres. Australia tends to dominate the region politically and economically, but the area is also heavily influenced by Asia. There are a high number of incidents of metahumans fleeing more repressive governments, and making a new home for themselves in Australia.



Australia

Focus: Australia (Commonwealth of Australia)

Basic Intelligence

Australia has been very open with regards to metahumans of a European descent. North American and European heroes are very popular, and well received when they chance to visit. The general populace is more suspicious and wary of Asian metahumans, many of whom are refugees seeking asylum. The government has welcomed a number of these, however, in exchange for service with a special crisis unit, a division of the SASR, called the Metahuman Tactical Assault Group (M-TAG). Finally, there is the aboriginal population in Australia, which continues to face appalling discrimination; the few metahuman aboriginals are doubly discriminated against.

Current Intelligence

In addition to the government sponsored M-TAG division, a small, private group of metahumans has recently made their name in Melbourne. Known as the Southern Cross, the team has helped in a number of environmental disasters, as well as focused on crime throughout the region.

The northeastern state of Queensland has recently become home to a liberation movement, called the Queensland Tigers. Made up of metahumans, primarily of aboriginal background, the group has stated that they are fighting for the rights of native peoples, and for the protection of the environment. Their activities have included attacks on industry, and they have clashed with M-TAG on several occasions.

Estimative Intelligence

Due to the remoteness of Australia, much of the Western world leaves it alone. This will probably continue into the foreseeable future, however, the Aegis JTF should prepare to assist Australian peacekeepers in regions such as East Timor and North Korea, as situations warrant.

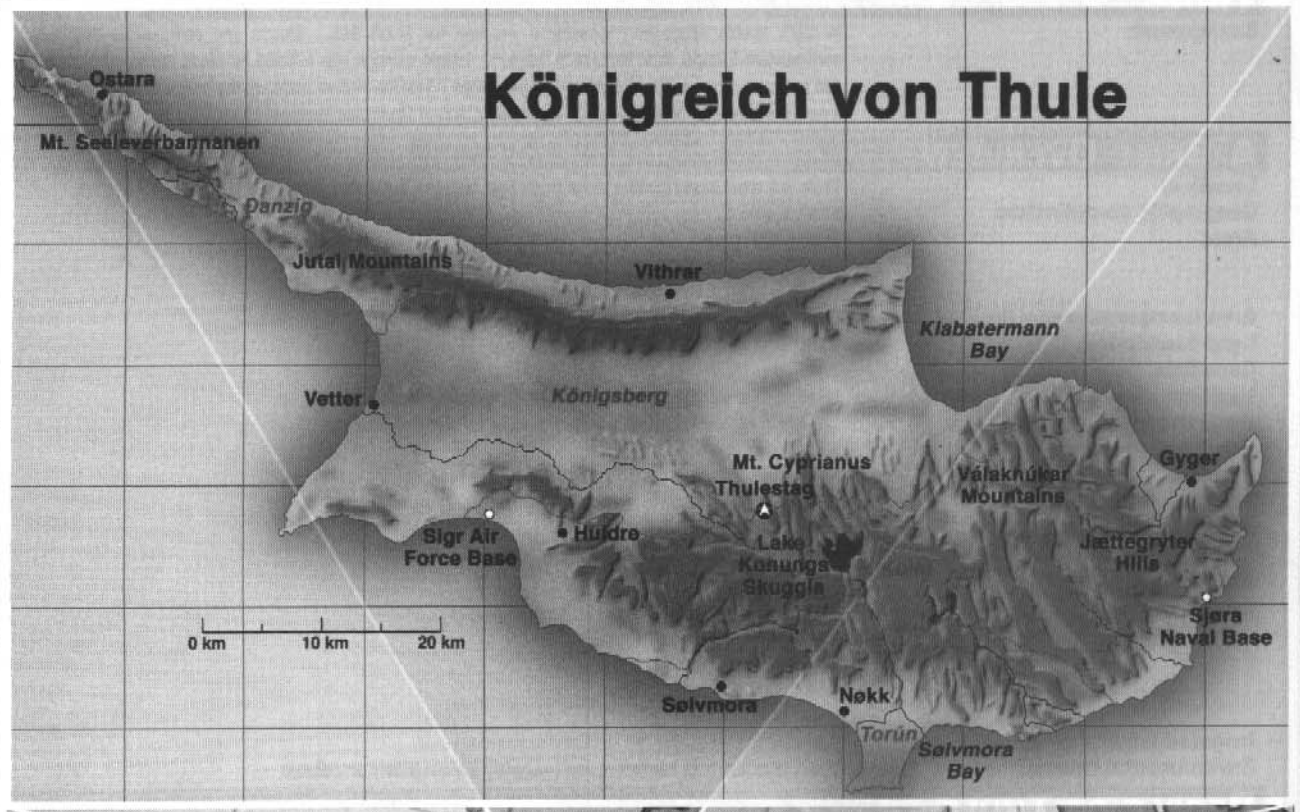
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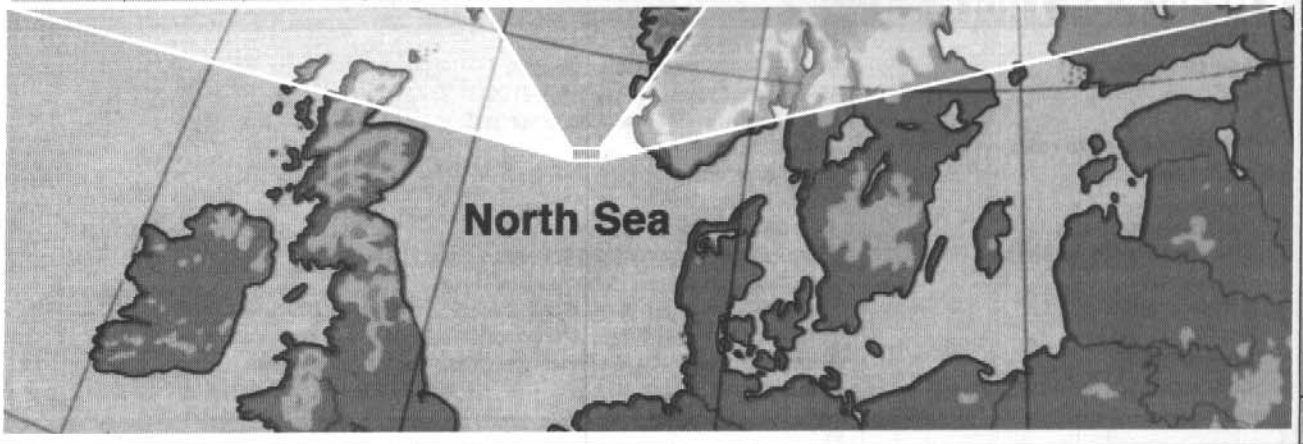
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Thule

Background: In 1971 terrible floods and windstorms wracked the North Sea. Storms and earthquakes threatened northwestern Europe, from Norway to Belgium. Untold damage was inflicted by winds roaring at more than 435 kph, and a series of earthquakes that measured 7.0 on the Richter scale. At the centre of the tempest was a new island, risen from the depths. The ancient land of Thule was restored.

A Brief Overview

Location:	Thule is a small island located in the North Sea, between the United Kingdom and Norway.
Geographic co-ordinates:	57.00 N, 5.45 E
Area:	Total: 1,399 sq km Land: 1,399 sq km Water: 0 sq km (some small lakes and streams)
Area (comparative):	Eight times the size of Washington, D.C.
Land boundaries:	0 km
Coastline:	1,117 km
Maritime claims:	Continental shelf: 200 NM or agreed boundaries or median line
Exclusive fishing zone:	200 NM or agreed boundaries or median line
Territorial sea:	3 NM
Climate:	Mild winters, cool summers; usually overcast; foggy, windy
Terrain:	Rugged, rocky, cliffs along most coast, high peaks towards centre
Elevation extremes:	Lowest point: North Sea 0 m Highest point: Mount Seeleverbannen 2,900 m
Natural resources:	Fish, hydropower
Land use:	Arable land 6% Permanent crops: 0% Permanent pastures: 0% Forests and woodland: 0% Other: 94%
Irrigated land:	0 sq km
Environmental issues:	Waste disposal (both household and industrial); transboundary air pollution

People of Thule

Population:	79,997 (January 2000, est.)
Age structure:	0 - 14 years: 12% (male 4790; female 4630) 15 - 64 years: 73% (male 37473; female 21123) 65 years and over: 15% (male 8388; female 3593)
Population growth rate:	0.28% (2000, est.)
Birth rate:	7.2 / 1,000 population
Death rate:	6.1 / 1,000 population
Net migration rate:	1.7 / 1,000 population
Life expectancy at birth:	Total population: 86.4 years; Male: 81.5 years; Female: 91.3 years
Nationality:	Noun: Thulian (singular and plural); Adjective: Thulian
Ethnic groups:	German 84%, Norweigian (Nordic, Alpine, Baltic) 12% , Swedes 3%, Other 1%
Religions:	Protestant 33%, Roman Catholic 30%, Evangelical Lutheran 15%, unaffiliated and other 22%
Languages:	Three official: German, English, Faroese (derived from Old Norse); Norwegian
Literacy:	Total population: 100%

Sat 3:41 PM | Web Browser

ook -- Thule

e As Mail

Previous Page Views

Government of Thule

Country name:	Kingdom of Thule Conventional short form: Thule
Government type:	Enlightened Monarchy
Capital:	Thulestag
Administrative divisions:	None; there are no first-order administrative divisions as defined by the US Government, but there are four quarters (or Ballei): Danzig, Torún, Kulm and Königsberg.
Independence:	1971, when Thule was raised from the sea
National holiday:	November 29 (Thule's Rebirth)
Legal system:	Civil law system with Roman law origin; judicial review of legislative acts by the Supreme Court; separate administrative and civil/penal supreme courts; has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction; has not ratified the Rome Treaty, and does not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC)
Suffrage:	18 years of age; universal
Executive branch:	Chief of state: King Ernst Rauchenberger (Kreuzritter) Head of government: Minister of State Lukas Hertzog Cabinet: Council of Government is under the authority of the monarch Elections: None; the monarch is hereditary; minister of state appointed by the monarch
Legislative branch:	Unicameral National Council (18 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)
Judicial branch:	Supreme Court (judges appointed by the monarch, with recommendations by the National Council)
Diplomatic representation in the US:	Thule does not have an embassy is the US; the Thulian Consolate General is in Empire City
Diplomatic representation from the US:	The US does not have an embassy in Thule; the US Consulate General is in Thulestag
Flag description:	Black field with a red cross that extends to the edges of the flag; the vertical part of the cross is shifted to the hoist side (like the other Nordic countries); with a golden eagle atop the centre of the cross

Economy of Thule

Economy overview:	The Thule economy has had a strong performance since it first opened its doors to business in 1973. Thule is blessed with a highly developed and successful free-market economy, a remarkably open and corruption-free business environment, and stable prices. Exports, particularly in electronics and chemicals, and services are the main drivers of the economy. Mainly because of robust exports, especially electronic goods, the economy grew a roughly estimated 10% in 2000. While Thule has nearly no tourism or natural resources, sitting outside the European Union has allowed it to remain a "tax haven" both for individuals who have established residence and for foreign companies that have set up businesses and offices. The state retains monopolies in a number of sectors, including government-linked companies (GLCs) — particularly in manufacturing — that operate as commercial entities. Living standards are extremely high, amongst the highest in Europe. As Thule looks to a future increasingly marked by globalization, the country is positioning itself as a technology haven and high-tech hub. Thule does not publish national income figures; the estimates below are extremely rough.
GDP:	Purchasing power parity: $54 billion (2000 est.)
Population below poverty line:	NA%
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	NA%
Unemployment rate:	2.1%
Budget:	Revenues: $6.5 billion Expenditures: $6.2 billion, including capital expenditures
Industries:	Electronics, chemicals, financial services, biotechnology
Currency:	Thulian mark (TM)

Personalities at Ascension Institute

The Ascension Institute is run by a devoted, passionate staff. Although some of their work can be dangerous, it is a constantly challenging environment filled with exciting opportunities, and a real sense of tangible accomplishment at the end of the day.

Crispin Jacobs

Crispin Jacobs grew up in Geneva, living through WWII. As a child he was awestruck by the American Sentinel and Dover Angel, and morbidly fascinated by the Axis *Übermensch* and *Kikai Samurai*. He desperately wanted to follow his heroes, don a uniform, and help protect the night. He was a brilliant child, with a sharp understanding of science and a strong compassion for the arts. He also trained regularly, running, playing sports, and learning to box. Unfortunately, at age 15, Jacobs contracted polio, and was permanently paralyzed from the waist down. Although he would never wear a mask, he dedicated his life to studying metahumans.

Jacobs first studied law and physics at ETH Zurich, followed by doctorate work at the Institute for Theoretical Physics of the ETH Zurich. He received his Ph.D. with a dissertation on "The Quantum Field and Metahuman Evolution." Jacobs then took monies he inherited and won from academic prizes, and travelled the world, observing the metahuman spectacle wherever he found it. He even married a like-minded woman, Sacha Escher. During this time, Jacobs began outlining the institution he desired to create; he conceived of an academy that would co-operate with metahumans to help them understand and cope with their abilities. A broader goal of this project was to investigate the ways in which metahumans fit within the larger global society.

Jacobs's proposal was endorsed by both ETH Zurich and Empire University, and the Ascension Institute was established in 1972.

Jacobs still works diligently to protect his vision of AI, and personally approves all members of AI's excellent staff. Tragically, Sacha was killed in 1987 during Kreuzritter's attempt to steal AI's classified prototype technologies. Since then, Jacobs has raised their twin daughters, Alessia and Katja, by himself. Both girls, now 18, are very intelligent, beautiful, and extremely faithful to their father's vision.

Alessia Jacobs

Alessia is following her father's footsteps as a scientist, and has already completed her Master's of Science (with a specialization in Organic Chemistry) at EU. While doing her doctoral work, she works at the labs at AI headquarters. Alessia is strong willed, organized, and dedicated to her pursuits. Unlike her sister, Katja, Alessia is somewhat shy around strangers, whether or not they are metahumans. Jacobs is grooming her to eventually lead the research department of AI.

Katja Jacobs

Katja is Jacobs's wilder, more adventurous daughter. She has always been the curious one, the traveller and explorer. Like her sister, Katja is extremely smart and advanced for her age; she has just completed a Master's of Arts (with a specialization in Archaeological Anthropology), and is currently involved on a project tracing the "hidden history" of metahuman development in Asia. Katja's project is sponsored by AI, although she is in the field quite often. Jacobs worries Katja's wild and reckless streak.

Devinder Singh

Devinder Singh is Jacobs's top researcher, and the head of Research & Development at AI. Although born in India, Singh was educated in London, received his B.S. (with honours) from Cambridge, and his Ph.D. from Oxford. Singh is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the Indian Academy of Sciences, and the Royal Society of London. Singh's dual specializations are in metahuman genetics, and quantum physics.

Timeline of the Ascension Institute

- Founded in 1972
- Worked with Disaster Research Centre (DRC) to study the effects of Thule on neighbouring countries
- Developed first working Nullifier model for the US Government in 1974
- Recovered Haud hibernation pod in 1976
- Examined the American Sentinel after his intervention at the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster; ensured his complete health
- Recovered a fragment of a Nimbus starcraft in 1980
- Advised federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming ("Carousel") on procedures to detain Doc Cimitière
- Helped the Guard close a portal into the parallel universe of "Dark Empire;" consulted with the Guard on the security of the new Olympian Tower
- Advised federal penitentiary at Rock Springs, Wyoming on methods to incarcerate the escape artist, Witchlight
- Analyzed several of Iron Duke's "iron-walkers," in conjunction with US Military and British Royal Navy, leading to the creation of the Hellion-prototype units
- Consulted by Empire City's Police Department on the creation of the Marvels Tactical Unit; helped design more mobile Nullifiers
- Assisted United Nations development of "Peacekeepers" international law enforcement agency

Egide Ubiquiste

In 1992, White Banner helped co-found a mercenary organization called Egide Ubiquiste (roughly translated as "the World's Shield," or the "everywhere shield"). Her partner was a man called Brunet, a former French Foreign Legionnaire. Brunet was the administrative and strategic head of Egide, while White Banner served as trainer and tactical field commander.

Ascension Institute

Silver Tower. 110 Bleeker. Empire City. New York

The Ascension Institute (AI) is a resource for innovative people and organizations worldwide. The mission of AI is to:

- Advance human achievement.
- Study the metahuman experience.
- Investigate alien science and technology.
- Encourage international co-operation.
- Strengthen values of justice.
- Promote the rights of all sentients.
- Chronicle the history and philosophy of the metahuman experience.

AI has been committed to these goals for over 30 years and become the premier organization devoted to understanding and accepting the metahuman evolution.

Since the birth of the first superman, the world has faced unprecedented challenges to all aspects of life. The question of the metahuman must be understood and explored in a way that promotes peace and the sustainability of the fragile environment on which all life on Earth depends. We believe the best way to meet this challenge is to encourage scientific, educational, and charitable projects concerned with the safe development of metahuman abilities and their integration into larger society. In addition, AI strongly supports collaborations with non-profit, government, and business sectors involved with metahumans, the metahuman community, or elements of alien technology. These diverse communities must work together to promote global welfare and security. In our experience, such partnerships build unity, improve collective understanding, heighten excellence, and reinforce the moral foundation of society.

The History of the Ascension Institute

The Ascension Institute was founded in 1972 by Crispin Jacobs, an independently wealthy philanthropist from Switzerland. With co-operative funding from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich) and Empire University, a joint project was established with researchers from both institutions. Since its inception, it has been an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization with worldwide accessibility. The Institute's funding comes from various sponsors, both governmental and non-governmental, who acknowledge AI's specialization in metahuman studies and advanced technological research. In turn, AI works hard to disseminate the discoveries it makes through open door policies to prevent an "arms race" build-up through the abuse of metahumans and super technology. The Institute does not profit from its innovations, and it ensures that no one organization, institution, or national entity monopolizes or benefits exclusively from its advances.

Grants and Funding

The Ascension Institute has approximately a $1 billion (US) operating budget per annum, much of which is available in grants and loans to organizations and individuals. An oversight board and a separate ethics committee convene three times a year to review new applications, and to assess ongoing projects.[1] To qualify for funding, an application must comply with AI's mission statement, as well as ethically and altruistically represent the spirit of the institution. Programme officers in the United States, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, Central and South America, and the Middle East explore opportunities to advance the Institute's goals, formulate strategies, and recommend proposals for funding.

1 The Oversight Board is involved in day-to-day logistics (i.e. executive branch) while the Ethics Committee is responsible for monitoring adherence to AI's policies and mission statement (i.e. legislative branch or political head).

EGIDE UBIQUISTE

Egide Ubiquiste is a private military company that focuses on conflict resolution. We operate worldwide, and are staffed by highly trained professionals with years of operational experience within first world armies.

Egide Ubiquiste specializes in problem resolution and the provision of associated consulting services.

Established in 1992 to fulfill a gap left in the wake of the Cold War, our purpose is to offer governments and other legitimate organizations specialist military expertise at a time when active support from Western governments has decreased to an all time low.

Egide Ubiquiste is a privately owned and independent business, incorporated in the Bahamas, with representative offices in: London; England; Empire City; USA; Paris; France; and Johannesburg, South Africa.

POLICY

Egide Ubiquiste only undertakes projects that it believes will improve security, stability, and quality of life in client countries.

To this end, Egide will only accept contracts with:

- Internationally recognized governments (preferably democratically elected)
- Globally accredited institutions
- Authentic, internationally acknowledged liberation movements

Egide will not accept contracts involving:

- Terrorism
- Drug cartels
- Organized crime syndicates
- Weapons of mass destruction (biological, nuclear, or chemical)
- Illegal arms market
- Blockaded states
- Activities in violation of the basic Law of Armed Conflict

Egide recognizes that there are no international regulations governing private military organizations, and thus employs a self-regulatory mechanism.
Egide will never deviate from these policies, in order to maintain its reputation of excellence.

WHY CHOOSE EGIDE?

- Is your national security or stability at risk?
- Do you require an independent, comprehensive analysis of a problem?
- Are your local services insufficient?

BECAUSE EGIDE:

- brings its forces to supplement your own.
- enhances your national capacity to handle crisis.
- advises you on the most effective and appropriate actions to take.
- can act immediately and decisively.
- is an expedient and cost-effective solution.

http://www.egide-ubiquiste.com

Day on the Job

Part II

3:42 PM

It all happens so fast. Iron Bow fires a depleted uranium arrow, but by the time I turn my head, Slipstream has already knocked it from its flight. It sinks a foot into the concrete. Caliburn is looking around for something, but he's still in the action; he reaches into his waist pouch and tosses three gray spheres high into the air. They detonate into a cloud of black sparkling smoke, right in Cloud Racer's path. She veers hard up, slowing her down enough for Sentinel to wind up and score a cracking punch.

Cloud Racer's force field flares up in a shower of sparks, but it holds. The blow, however, sends her straight into a parked car. The car's frame twists around her, pinning her down. That's when I realize Iron Bow's, Rapier's, and Thunderclap's force fields light up as well.

That's what Red Phoenix was talking about ... they're all drawing from a central power source and Caliburn is looking for the transmitter.

Rapier's grin is visible even through the glow of his force field. He's clearly enjoying the duel with Red Phoenix; they seem evenly matched, micron-filament blade sparking against energy sword. She's much taller than Rapier, and makes him look almost tiny in comparison. Red Phoenix tries to use her strength to bully him and pin him down, but Rapier's too fast for that — he constantly weaves and sidesteps, forcing Phoenix to chase him.

Thunderclap frees his arms from the concrete. He strides forward, his armour's actuators and micro-servos whining in protest, and slaps his gauntlets together. They generate a concussive snap that deafens almost everyone in the area and shatters any surviving windows.

I can't hear a thing anymore....

***

9:00 AM; 6 Hours, 22 Minutes earlier.

I had breakfast with the Sentinel.

I ... had breakfast ... with the Sentinel.

I'm still reeling from all this, and I'm pretty sure that upon looking back on this tonight, I'll feel like an idiot for saying half the things I did.

"My pops and I used to watch *The Sentinel Atomic Action Hour,* when I was a kid...."

I'm trying to keep it cool and act nonchalant, but its not working.

"... I mean, of course I know it wasn't actually you, but back then, as a kid, I thought it was."

I'm even wincing while making the damn comments.

"Did you ever watch the show?"

Why the hell can't I shut up?!

Sentinel smiles and shakes his head to my question, "But," he says, saving me from embarrassment, "my father and I visited the park every Sunday for the puppet shows."

Then it hits me. The Sentinel's older than television, older than radio. That's when I shut up and listen.

"I've never felt very comfortable with the idea of merchandise. I know it's out there, from t-shirts and lunchboxes to action figures and fridge magnets, but I try very hard to ignore it. I did once meet Harry Martin in person, though. I'm told he did a great job as my namesake on the *Sentinel Hour*, and he seemed like a good man."

We spend the morning touring Olympian Tower, from Slipstream's high tech labs to Red Phoenix's dojo. I'm amazed at how accessible the Guard makes themselves to the public. By 9:30 AM, I'm touring the Guard Public Museum before it opens. All the items on display are harmless originals or replicas of magical/technological devices. There's also a shrine to Lady Starbright, adorned with fresh tulips ... her favourite. I heard Sentinel collects them every morning from Holland. I wasn't going to ask him if it was true, though.

On the replica side are wax statues of the Guard's major adversaries, including one scary rendition of a life-size Iron Duke smashing through a brick wall. There's also an assortment of resin and balsa-wood weapons and equipment. Here are copies of Haud Particle Phase Pistols, Artificer's cuff-blasters, Battalion Mark Robots, and an assortment of other gear.

The real deals, however, are upstairs.

Before being allowed into the secure upper levels, I'm given a thorough once-over by the Guard's private security team. It's not nearly as invasive as even a simple pat down, yet my skin breaks into gooseflesh at the thought of all those scanners and deep sensors. Sentinel explained there were different levels of clearance, but since we'd be touring the full expanse of the Tower I needed the full treatment.

Security Agent Nikki Mitchell grins at my slight apprehension to the probe. She tries to reassure me, insisting the machinery is harmless to man, machine, and film alike. I'm unconvinced, and reflect momentarily on my chances for children while she scans me for hidden weapons, energy signatures, and a thousand other dangers. Within a few moments she happily declares me safe, and hands me a visitor's badge.

By 10:15 AM, I'm standing in the Guard's private Trophy Room. All the tech and magic here are originals, and there's enough stuff to stock at least a dozen criminals for new careers as supervillains. Here's where I find a wrecked Parousian escape pod, one of Red Minstrel's key-gate masks, a suit of Thulian Storm Armour, and the Olympus Diamond, to name just a few. There's another door in the trophy room, but the Sentinel tells me that's where they keep the really dangerous items. Somehow, I'm not comforted.

At 10:40 AM, the Sentinel leads me into the "Arena." It's five stories high, with an exercise room filled with an assortment of magnetic-resistance weights, a sparring arena with a force field containment system, and a jogging track. Standing in the sparring

arena is Caliburn.

We walk in and Sentinel introduces us.

Caliburn nods; I can't read his reactions behind the mask, but I notice he's wearing sparring pads. He motions to the adjoining locker room and says in a slight Welsh accent "Ask the gym manager for a combat suit."

"What for?" I say, with no small suspicion.

"For our sparring session," he says.

I can't read this guy, so I look at Sentinel who smiles reassuringly.

"Don't worry, son," he says.

Don't worry? Don't worry! Before I know it, I'm standing in front of Caliburn, wearing articulated hard-point protection over every square inch of my body like I'm a condom's answer to armoured cars.

"The point of this exercise," Caliburn says, "is to give you an idea of what it's like to face a mask."

I nod.

"No bravado here," he says. "I've seen too many cops overestimate their skills, or underestimate their opponent's powers."

I've been through "Pit Bull" Harris's hand-to-hand training program at the academy and with the ESU. I'm also a brown belt in karate. I know enough to know Caliburn is going to beat me rotten. I can see it in his step. I've seen combat demonstrations at Empire City's Annual Metropolitan Tournament of Martial Arts and at the Armed Forces Martial Competitions. I've seen the best fight, but I've rarely seen them this up close.

Doesn't mean I'm not going down without swinging, though. Caliburn is fast, fast enough to commit me to an attack off his faint. He darts in with a backfoot lunge, breaking my comfort zone. I throw a straight punch, but he already darts back out again, leaving me off balance. On the way out, he grabs my punching wrist before I can snap it back, and pulls me into his snapping front kick.

It's not a hard kick, but he nails my rib cage under my arm. He could have snapped a couple of ribs.

Fortunately, Caliburn isn't trying to embarrass me, so he doesn't press the attack. Instead, he waits. I go on the offensive.

I lunge forward a foot, snapping out with a forward arm backfist. Caliburn slaps it away, but doesn't budge or attack.

I follow the backfist with a straight punch off my back hand. Caliburn intercepts the punch with his forearm, forcing my arm and momentum downward. My head's open and I'm two feet away.

I bring the other hand up to protect my face, but Caliburn's punch already snaps in and out, hitting the protective mesh at the bridge of my nose. I'm still following my momentum down. I throw my shoulder towards the ground, committing myself to a roll that'll bring my right leg over my body into an axe kick ... theoretically.

Caliburn sidesteps the rolling axe kick, and instead uses his forearm to clothes-line me on my way up.

The sparring match continues for a couple more minutes before Caliburn helps me back up for the twentieth time. I'm more than a little sore.

"Are we finished?" I ask between ragged breaths.

"Almost," Caliburn says before tossing me a plastic pistol. The barrel hides a laser pointer.

Caliburn waits patiently, giving me a long moment to recover. When I nod that I'm ready, Caliburn calls out to the Delphi Oracle computer system, "Street Scenario 12."

A holographic projection of a busy, downtown Manhattan street overlays the sparring mats. Holographic people appear along the street, and mill around, as if going about their business. No one notices Caliburn or me, yet. Caliburn takes several steps back from me and says, "Arrest me."

The academy taught us that 15 feet should be the maximum distance you allow a dangerous perp to approach you. By this point, your gun should be out of the holster and trained on the suspect. Otherwise, the perp can rush you before you draw your piece.

"Arrest me," Caliburn repeats. The illusionary crowd suddenly acknowledges the two of us. Many gape openly, several scream in panic, and a handful jostle forward trying to watch the show. Luckily, none have run between us — the street is still wide open from me to him.

I draw a bead on Caliburn's chest and shout, "Hands on your head. Get down on the ground, now!"

Caliburn puts his hands on his head. Only too late do I realize he has access to a couple of wrist pouches. Before I can yell freeze, he throws a flashbang to the ground, blinding and deafening me in the process. A second later, Caliburn strips me of my piece. By the time I recover my senses, Caliburn shot 11 holograms. The final bullet is for me.

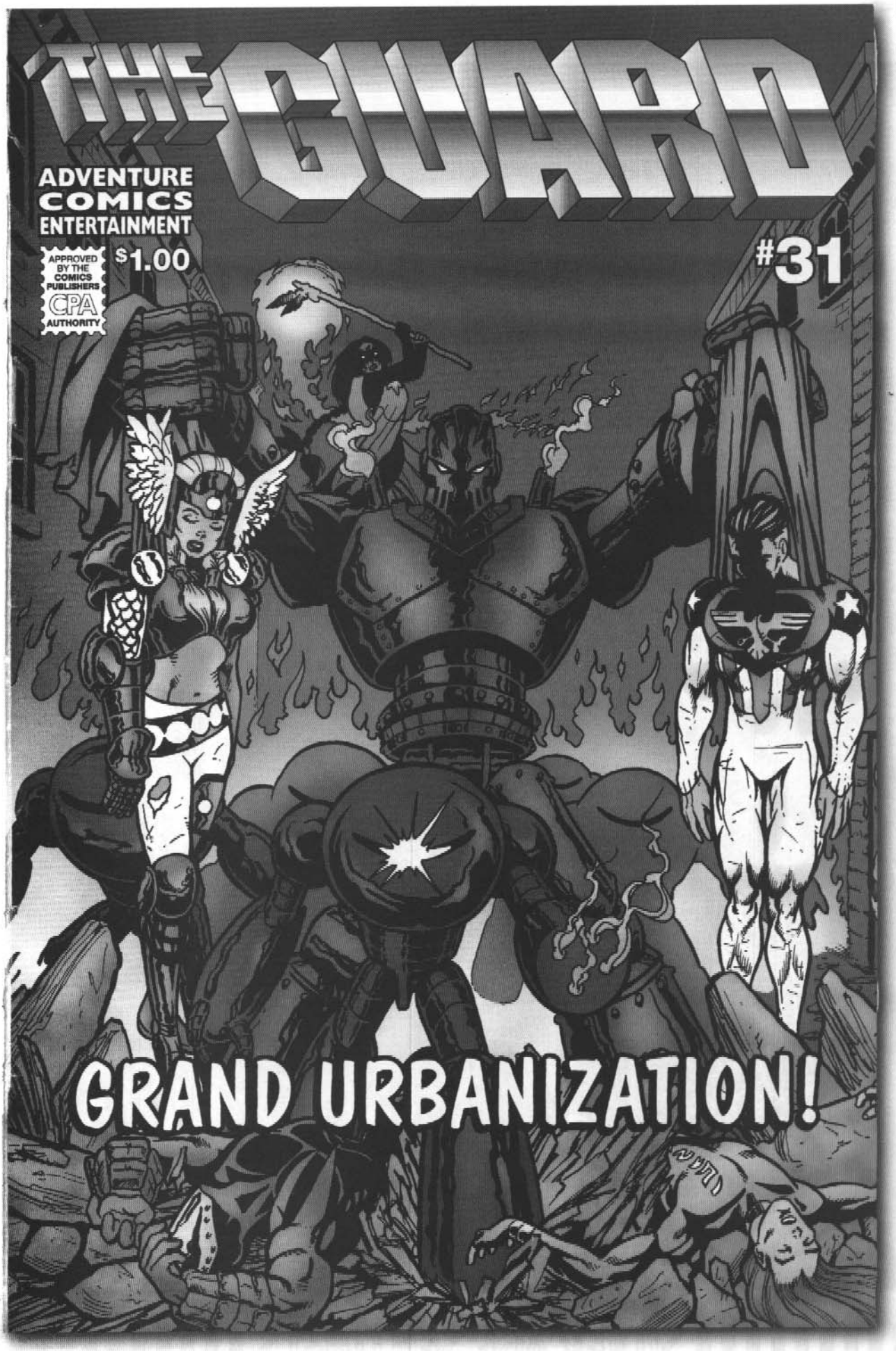
"That's why we need the Marvels Tactical Unit," Caliburn says, helping me to my feet. "To prevent these mishaps. Most officers don't have the training to handle these situations. Or they misread them."

I nod, but I'm ticked with myself. I was stupid and careless.

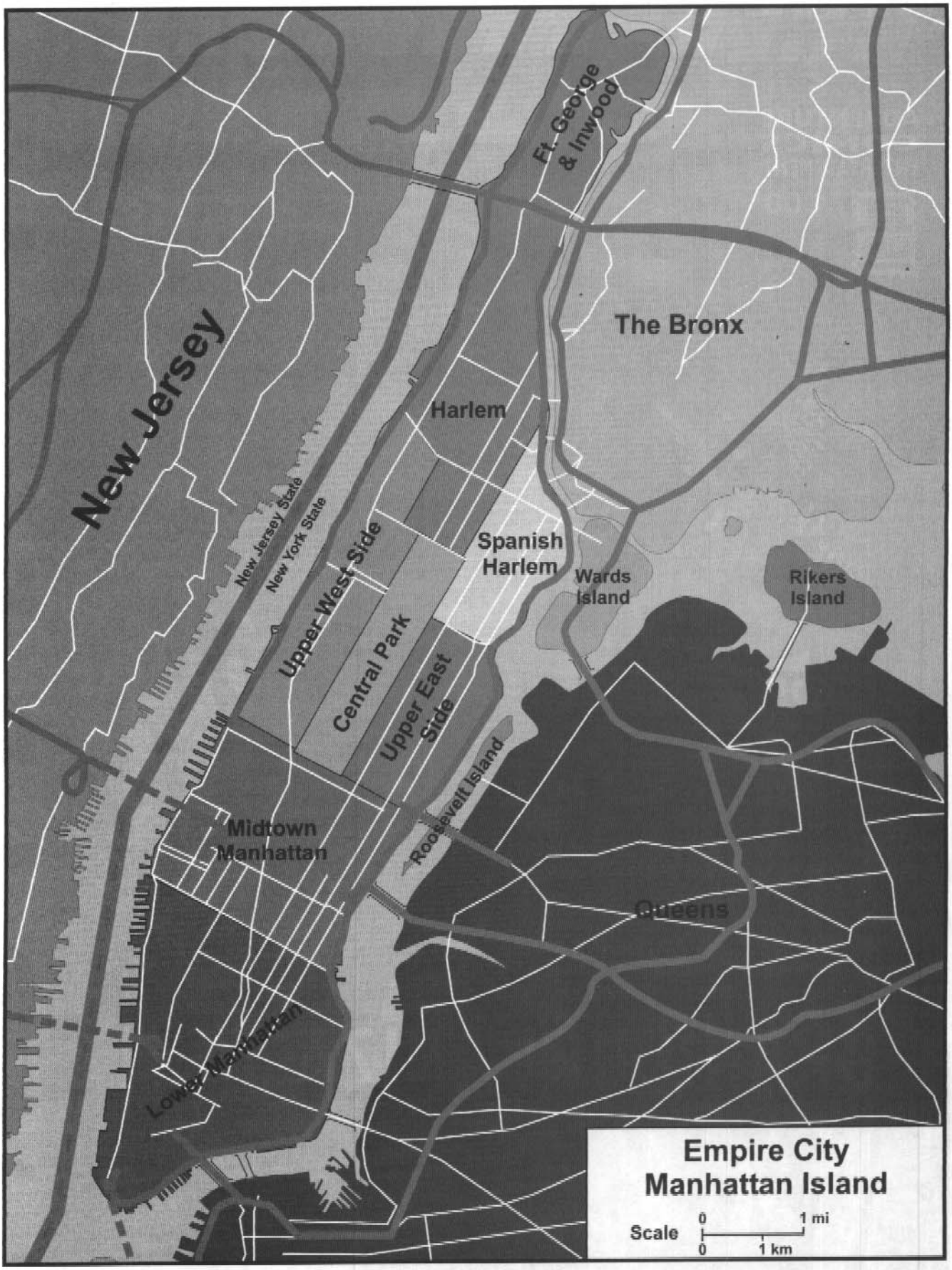
"Officer," Caliburn says, "you did better than most. Many of your fellow officers squeezed off a shot when the flashbangs went off. Almost all of them struck a civilian. Only one tagged me."

I nod again, still angry that I didn't account for Caliburn's pouches. Before I can thank Caliburn, though, the klaxons go off....

Bank robbery in progress.


THE GUARD
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GRAND URBANIZATION!

EMPIRE CITY


Ft. George & Inwood
The Bronx
New Jersey
Harlem
New Jersey State
New York State
Upper West Side
Spanish Harlem
Wards Island
Rikers Island
Central Park
Upper East Side
Roosevelt Island
Midtown Manhattan
Queens
Lower Manhattan
Empire City
Manhattan Island
Scale
0
1 mi
0
1 km

Empire City

How does one take the measure of Empire City? Long term residents unquestionably realize it to be unique in the world, while even a nonchalant visitor will see and sense that it is different. Its buildings soar higher, sparkling pristine with their polished glass, steel, and chrome faces. Its pace and hum are quicker, the streets and sidewalks busier, and it is more crowded than most other cities.

Then there are the metahumans. No other place in the world has such a congregation or diversity of the superhuman, fantastic, and esoteric. This is not to suggest you will run into metahumans on every street corner. The percentage of metahumans is a mere fraction of one percent; yet these men and women walk tall as giants. Observers who spend a week, or even a simple afternoon, gazing skyward are rarely disappointed.

As a model, it is the least American of cities, while as a symbol, it *is* America.

Manhattan Island, or "The City"

Empire City is made up of five boroughs (The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island), and stretches for 16 to 32 km. The central point is the island of Manhattan, called simply, "the city." The island is 21.5 km long and 3.7 km wide at the centre.

Manhattan can roughly be divided up into six large districts (containing many smaller neighbourhoods): Lower Manhattan, the Lower East Side, Midtown, the Upper East Side, the Upper West Side, and Harlem. Southern Manhattan tends to be narrow and twisting, laid out in the earliest days of the city. A detailed grid plan was used for later expansion, and everything north of Houston to the northernmost tip of the island is laid out in a waffle-iron pattern.

While there are certainly exceptions, in general:

- Avenues run north to south.
- Streets run east to west
- East vs. West: the dividing line is Fifth Avenue. All addresses on the east side of Fifth begin at 1 East, while those west of Fifth run from 1 West.

Helicopter Flight Services

Helicopter Flight Services charges $595 (higher outside of normal business hours; call for current fares) to reach any of the three local airports. Each helicopter can carry four people with one checked bag, and one carry-on each. Arrangements should be made a day in advance. Travel time is approximately 10 minutes. Helicopters leave from West 30th St, East 34th St, and the Wall Street heliport.

Public Transportation

There are three public transportation systems in Empire City.

Subways

Subways, the native choice, are the fastest way to get around. They are quite safe, although you should always be alert (especially for pickpockets at rush hour, and late at night). $1.50 will take you the length of the city, including stops at both baseball stadiums, the two city airports, and Coney Island. The subway system operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Buses

Buses are much slower than subways, but more frequent stops allow for greater coverage. Buses cost the same as the subway, and give you a better view of the street scene.

Taxis

Taxis are faster than buses, and weave more easily through choked traffic. There are taxi stands at the airports, bus, and train stations; taxis also cruise looking for customers. Yellow cabs are regulated by the city (meter starts at $2), and are thus a safer bet than unmarked gypsy cabs (which may or may not offer a better fare).

To hail a cab, stick your arm out and all the way up, and yell, "Taxi," if needed. This is Empire City — no one will look at you oddly for shouting.

Lower Manhattan

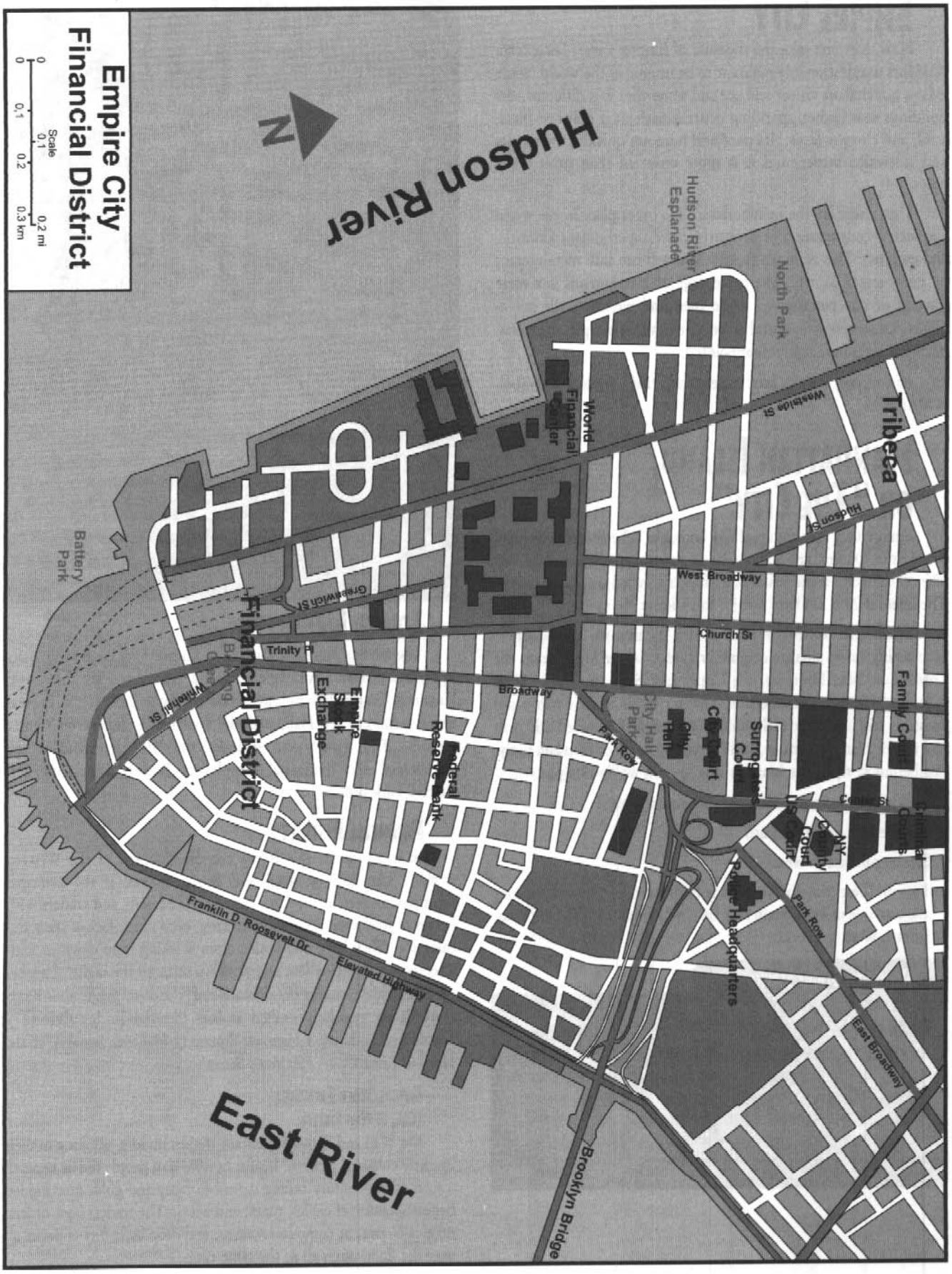
The famous Financial District of Empire City covers the lower tip of Manhattan. Amongst its many institutions are the World Financial Center, the Empire Stock Exchange (ESE), the Federal Reserve Bank, City Hall, and the courthouse district on Center Street. The region also includes the Brooklyn Bridge, the commercial and residential complex of Battery Park City, and Battery Park proper.

Financial District

In many ways, this is the economic capital of the Western world. The ESE, at Wall and Broad Streets, is the principal securities market in the US. Iron-willed bankers and traders with nerves of steel keep the money flowing, even in the face of crisis and calamity. They keep odd hours, often working from dawn to mid-afternoon, or starting late and working through the night. Lunches are rarely taken, except in celebration of "the deal," while after-hours martinis are regularly swilled at bars like the Bridge Café (279 Water Street), Harry's Hanover Square (1 Hanover Square), or the Hudson River Club (250 Vesey Street).

Empire Stock Exchange (ESE; 11 Wall Street)

On Wall and Broad Streets the traders huddle, smoking in their brightly coloured jackets. Inside, hundreds of people hustle beneath a turn-of-the-century ceiling carved in ivory and gold, now hidden beneath a maze of cables, pipes, and wires. The traders bark orders, take calls, peer at computer screens, and drop little bits of paper all over the floor, often all at the same time.


Empire City
Financial District
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 km
0 0.1 0.2 mi
N
Hudson River
Hudson River Esplanade
North Park
Tribeca
Financial Center
World
Battery Park
Financial District
Greenwich St
Trinity Pl
Broadway
West Broadway
Church St
Hudson St
Chambers St
Park Row
City Hall
City Hall Park
Surrogate's Court
Family Courts
Criminal Courts
NY Supreme Court
Police Headquarters
Federal Reserve Bank
Empire Stock Exchange
Franklin D. Roosevelt Dr
Elevated Highway
East River
East Broadway
Brooklyn Bridge

Federal Reserve Bank of Empire City
(35 Liberty Place)

A few blocks north of the ESE lies the Federal Reserve Bank of Empire City. This government bank regulates US currency, supervises commercial banks, and exerts tremendous influence on money supply and interest rates. It also stores approximately 40% of the world's gold supply (or about $100 billion in gold ingots) for 80 countries in its vast, underground vaults, five stories beneath Liberty Street.

Three thousand employees work out of the rusticated limestone building. It was built like a Florentine Renaissance palazzo, and covers a trapezoidal city block.

Civic Center

The Civic Center lies on the northern side of Lower Manhattan, south-west of Chinatown. It includes: City Hall; Police Plaza Headquarters; US District Courthouse; US Southern District Court; US Court of Appeals; Empire County Courthouse; Empire City Criminal Courts; and the Manhattan House of Detention ("the Tombs").

City Hall
(Broadway and Chambers Streets)

The City Hall building was completed in 1812, as an amalgamation of French Renaissance and Federal design. Its cupola once commanded spectacular views of the countryside, but surrounding towers now dwarf the building. The mayor and the city legislature currently use it for offices and legislative chambers only. Atop City Hall is a statue of Lady Starbright. City Hall Park, across the street, leads to the entrance of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani does maintain a hotline to Guard headquarters, although it is only used in the most dire emergencies. Giuliani has done much to promote good will towards superheroes whose methods are not too extreme. His office has excellent relations with the Guard, and has vouched for Archer Gold and Livewire; however, relations with mysterious loners, like the Baron or Lady of the Lantern, are much more icy.

Manhattan House of Detention
(The Tombs; 100 Center Street)

Built in 1902 (on the site of an earlier prison that had sunk into swampy landfill), and styled after an Egyptian mausoleum, the Tombs is a ghastly prison, forced to deal with the city's convicted criminals. Recent renovations have done little to improve the dank and miserable state of the prison, except to increase its capacity to more than 400 inmates.

Metahumans are almost never incarcerated in the Tombs, although the US Marshals Office has arranged for several cells to be equipped to restrain metahuman prisoners detained during trial proceedings (they are even equipped with zappers — Nullify: Drain, Level 6). Staff and correctional officers have considerable experience dealing with masked adventurers from non-powered criminals to the superheroes who turn them in.

1 Police Plaza

1 Police Plaza is the headquarters of the Empire City Police Department (EPD). Police Commissioner William Bratton's offices are here, and it is the central office for the 75 precincts of Empire City. Press conferences, awareness programs, and safety workshops all take place here, and locals and tourists are welcome to visit. There is a small police museum, recounting the tumultuous history of the EPD. It includes exhibits on: leadership, forensics, tools and weapons of famous criminals (such as Willie Sutton's lockpicks, the machine gun used by the Al Capone gang to murder Frankie Yale, and a pair of now-harmless Iron Walkers), and transportation (with a 1972 Plymouth Fury Radio Car, one of the last squad cars to be painted black, green, and white, and a new model of the Marvels Tactical Unit ERV).

Officer Prometheus is based out of 1 Police Plaza, and the Marvels Tactical Unit is also headquartered here. Although metahuman offenders are rarely detained here for long, there are two holding cells equipped with zappers (Nullify: Drain, Level 6), which can double as interview rooms.



Sentinel soars over Empire City, keeping its citizens safe

Marvels Tactical Unity

The 1980s and 1990s were filled with administrative nightmares on how best to handle a metahuman threat. Initially, the Empire City Police Department Emergency Services Unit (ESU) was handed the task of dealing with costumed criminals because no one else wanted it. Tragically, poor funding and insufficient training for the complexities of a metahuman crisis resulted in several bungled incidents. In 1995, Police Commissioner William Bratton acquired the funding for a new attempt at metahuman crisis management.

The Marvels Tactical Unit is a division under the aegis of ESU designated to handle distress calls involving metahumans and/or masked adventurers in any aspect. The primary areas of duty involve: metahuman conflicts, barricaded suspects, hostage situations, and major catastrophes caused by metahuman activity up to and including building collapses, bridge destabilization, and airplane or train crashes.

MTU is headquartered at 1 Police Plaza. There are currently three squads of MTU agents — one each in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx. Each squad consists of 30 officers divided into 10 man shifts, all under the direction of a Captain and Vice-Captain.

There is no recruitment program for the MTU; all candidates are volunteers. Potential applicants must have a perfect record spanning at least two years of service with the EPD, and then must pass a series of interviews, psychological and medical tests, and then physical tests. If approved, applicants must then wait on stand-by until vacancies occur or their specialities are required. All newly assigned MTU officers receive a four-week basic training course at the FBI Metahuman Crisis Research and Training Center (MCRTC), at Quantico, Virginia. This is followed by intensive on the job training and formal classes on a daily basis, in such areas as rappelling, gas and electric emergencies, ice and water rescue, crowd control, firearms training, acetylene instruction, radiation testing, tear gas operations, and advanced first aid. Once a year, all MTU members return to the MCRTC for a weeklong refresher and update training course.

MTU Equipment

MTU officers are the best equipped in the city, because sometimes top-notch gear is the only thing saving their skin. All officers are outfitted with standard issue riot armour; the standard sidearm is the Heckler & Koch USP Tactical .45 calibre pistol, while some officers carry an H&K MP-5 in 9mm. Officers also have access to H&K 53 and Colt M-16 rifles in .223 calibre. Sniper agents use Remington 700 rifles chambered for .308 and 300 Win Mag. Meanwhile, the ERV assault truck carries 37mm launchers for teargas rounds, and other non-lethal munitions.

Currently, the MTU is field-testing portable zappers. These are designed by Bofors Defense, based on technologies developed by the Ascension Institute. The portable zappers have an extremely heavy power pack, and generate a limited charge. Previous to this, officers had to rely on the zappers built into the prisoner transport trucks (which only generated a field inside the truck, so one had to get a metahuman into the truck before his or her powers would be affected).

Zappers, ERV Transport: Nullify (Drain) Level 5

Zappers, Portable: Nullify (Drain) Level 4, Area 2, Duration 4, Range 1, Targets 1, Limited Use (Instantaneous) 1 BP

United States Courthouse
(Southern District; 40 Center Street)

The US Courthouse was built in the 1930s, a Classical Revival skyscraper topped with a golden pyramid. It is the most important federal court in Empire City, and governs affairs over the southern half of the state. Over the course of its history it has governed cases covering: obscenity and indecent materials; accidents at sea; corporate law; antitrust law; bankruptcy; tax evasion; patent law and copyright infringement; sedition; perjury; and espionage. Fritz Kuhn was prosecuted here, as was the perjury trial of Alger Hiss, and the espionage trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

Since the passing of the Metahuman Crime Control Bill 1979, the US Courthouse has been the site of numerous supervillain trials. During the course of a metahuman trial, if the defendant is detained, the US Marshals bed them at specially designed cells in the Tombs, and transport them to and from the courthouse in a heavily armoured truck, equipped with a nullifier (see MTU, above).

Weekly Watchers Chronicle Building
(25 Park Place)

Empire City's premier weekly tabloid was founded in 1946, when the American Sentinel returned to the US, and appeared to make Empire City his home. From conception, its focus was the strange and heady world of masked adventurers, full of galvanizing tales of peril and righteousness. The writing was characterized by breeziness, puns, and pithy satire, but quickly succumbed to exploitive stories and sensational headlines. The heroes of the city were generally reserved and difficult to approach for information, so the Chronicle simply made things up. This spread misinformation and scandal, and vocal critics attacked the Chronicle. Much of the city was exceptionally curious about its most remarkable few, however, and circulation has almost always been strong. It suffered heavily in the early '90s when gimmicks and variant editions were used to inflate sales, but under the careful touch of a new chief editor, Joe Q. Knight, it has regained its weekly circulation of 1.5 million.

Statue of Liberty (Liberty Island)

Lady Liberty, as she is known, is perhaps the most enduring image of what Empire represents. She is associated especially with immigrants, and as the protector of a new world of opportunity and safety.

The statue, standing 46 metres from her toes to the top of the torch, rests on a 46-metre-high pedestal. 354 steps lead to the statue's crown, commanding a sweeping view. The statue was built on Bedloe's Island (renamed Liberty Island), and completed in 1886.

The American Museum of Immigration is located in the statue's base. Sentinel is often seen here, pausing for a moment to watch the sun rise.

Greenwich Village

Greenwich Village is one of the most historic neighbourhoods in lower Manhattan. Early on, residents wanted to preserve the feel of the area, and successfully resisted the grid plan of 1811, keeping many of the streets narrow and curving. Through the middle decades of the 19th century, the area was home to wealthy members of recognized society, as exclusive as the elite sections of London and Paris. The nature of the area changed significantly at the end of the century, as German, Irish, and Italian immigrants moved in to work in the warehouses, breweries, and coal and lumber yards near the river. Older residences were subdivided into smaller and smaller units, and the genteel crowd moved uptown.

As early as WWI, Greenwich Village was seen as a bohemian enclave with affordable rents, quiet and secluded side streets, and a tolerance for unfamiliar customs, radicalism, and strangeness. While the population remained heavily working class, artists and writers arrived, bringing small press publishing houses, art galleries, and experimental theatre. The economic situation of the area changed rapidly, becoming very well-to-do after the war, then crashing with the Depression. Over the next decades a strong historical preservation movement sprang up, forcing the city to maintain and protect many of its landmarks.

In the 1950s, the Village was a centre for the beat movement, attracting a new generation of writers, actors, musicians, painters, and dissidents. It was exciting and vivacious, as galleries, coffee houses, and storefront theatres sprung up everywhere. In the '60s, a large gay and lesbian population moved in, centring on Christopher Street; the general community was widely tolerant, although the police were less so. In 1969, a riot started when the police and patrons of the Stonewall Inn clashed. "The Stonewall Rebellion" was a turning point in the nationwide movement for gay and lesbian rights. In the '70s and '80s, the Village saw strong movements against war, for AIDS education, and for further landmark protection, such as for the waterfront.

Today it is a mix of professional and artsy, recent immigrants and local families. Attractive residences are nestled alongside art galleries, Italian markets, music clubs, bookshops, juice bars, and "headshops." The annual Halloween costume parade and the Gay Pride March draw enormous numbers of participants and observers.



Officers of the Marvels Tactical Unit escort the captive Jade Naga to his cell

Empire University
(EU; Information Centre, 40 Washington Square South)

Empire University was founded in 1831 as a private institution to provide practical education for those who could not afford an expensive college. By the 1890s most of the students came from Empire City, and reflected its heterogeneous air. It experienced rapid growth through the years, and created the Empire University Press in 1916.

The buildings of EU, marked with violet flags, sprawl through Greenwich Village, although the de facto centre of the campus is Washington Square Park. Offices, student centres, dorms, and libraries surround the park. The current enrolment, throughout the many schools, is approximately 17,000 undergraduates and 18,000 graduate students.

Professors of Note at EU

Bloom, Harold — Professor of English (Shakespeare, originality, gnosticism, poetry)

Burrows, William E. — Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication; Director of Science and Environmental Reporting Program (air, space, national security reporting)

Gebhart, Sarah — Professor of History (ancient European, modern Germany)

Keeley, Laird — Professor of Physics (applied mathematics, magnetohydrodynamics, plasma physics)

Martin, Emily — Professor of Anthropology (science and power)

Centaurus, Ralph — Assistant Professor of Psychology (metahuman psychology and behaviour)

Smith, Johnny — Physics Department Head (theoretical physics, biomechanics)

Stone, Jane — Assistant Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication (investigative reporting, legal journalism, television writing and production)

Suzuki, Wendy A. — Professor of Neural Science (brain basis of memory function)

Yap, Chee K. — Professor of Computer Science (numerical robustness, computational geometry, computer algebra, visualization, algorithmic robotics)

Washington Square Park

Once a marsh, used as a potter's field and for public hangings until 1826, the city acquired the land in 1827 and set it aside as a public park. It was heavily improved in the last decades of the 19th century, with a Central Fountain, monuments to Giuseppe Garibaldi and Alexander Lyman Holley, and the large, marble Washington Memorial Arch, commemorating George Washington's inauguration.

The park was closed to street traffic in the '60s, and is a public meeting place for folk musicians, performers, local residents, and scores of students from Empire University. Chess tables are set up in the south-western corner of the park, and see some of the city's best players; matches are often bet on, either by players, or by nearby observers.

There is something of a haunted feel to the park, late at night, when it is deserted. There are numerous stories about the supernatural haunting the park, from the Baron of New Orleans, to the fairylike Pan & Belle. The gallows tree still stands, and many of the old graves have remained undisturbed.

Ascension Institute
(Silver Towers; 110 Bleecker)

The Ascension Institute (AI) is a philanthropic foundation devoted to studying and accepting the metahuman evolution. It was established in 1972 by Crispin Jacobs, with funding from ETH Zurich and Empire University. Its headquarters (colloquially known as the Silver Towers) is located in Empire City, near the EU campus in Greenwich Village. Three narrow skyscrapers house labs, research facilities, offices, lecture halls, test chambers, and some of the world's most technologically advanced developments.

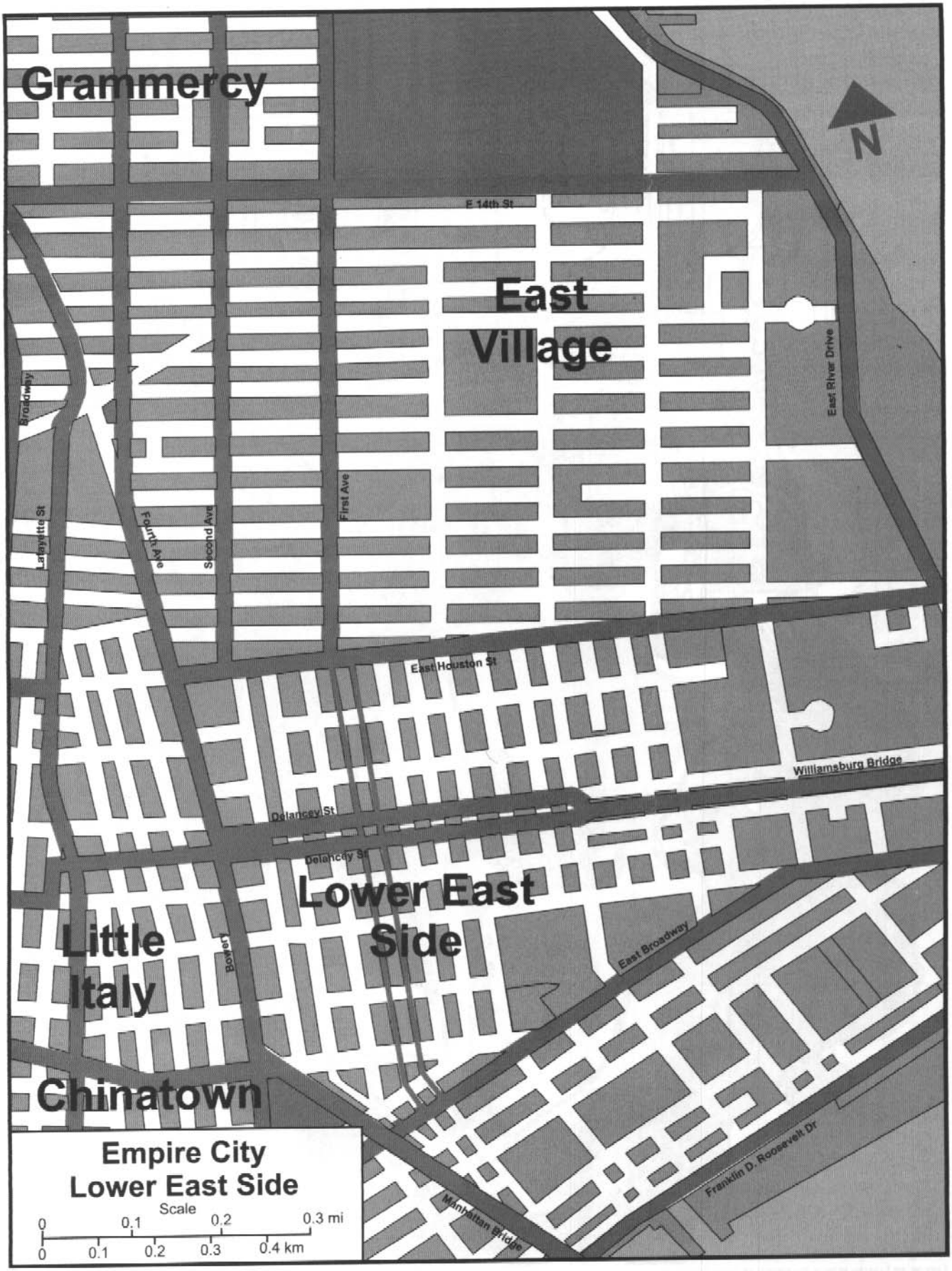
Several thousand employees work out of the three, 50-story towers, and many work peculiar hours; some of the brightest apparently staying over several days for critical projects. The Silver Towers each have a cafeteria, locker room and shower facilities, a small gym, and several lounges. Visitors range from high school field trips and EU graduate students, to top military officers and superheroes from around the world. Security in many sections is extremely tight, and no sections are ever completely open to the public. Each rooftop supports a small heliport, and there is an extensive underground parking lot for staff, and for deliveries.

Lower East Side

The Lower East Side is not just one neighbourhood, but a collection of diverse cultures and communities, encompassing the East Village, Chinatown, and Little Italy. The first tenements went up in 1833, and by the 1880s there was a huge influx of European immigrants: Italians, Jews, Russians, Romanians, Hungarians, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Greeks, and Poles. Unfortunately, the constant population increase and the lack of wealth turned the area into a large slum. Tens of thousands continued to pour in through the early decades of the 1900s, despite unprecedented crowding and terrible outbreaks of tuberculosis and cholera.

Following WWII, this was the first racially integrated section of the city, as thousands of blacks and Puerto Ricans moved in. In the '50s and '60s, many of the Jews and eastern Europeans moved out as the neighbourhood continued to decline, plagued by constant poverty, crime, and drugs.

In the 1980s, the Lower East Side finally achieved some progress, as cheap housing brought in students and the middle class. There has also been a surge of immigrants from China, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, India, and Bangladesh.


Grammercy
East Village
Lower East Side
Little Italy
Chinatown
N
E 14th St
East Houston St
Delancey St
Broadway
Lafayette St
Fourth Ave
Second Ave
First Ave
East River Drive
Williamsburg Bridge
East Broadway
Bowery
Franklin D. Roosevelt Dr
Manhattan Bridge
Empire City
Lower East Side
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 mi
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 km



Lady of the Lantern keeping the streets of China Town safe

Chinatown

35 blocks of the Lower East Side has become the greatest Chinese community in the western hemisphere. Its population is listed as 150,000 documented residents (with many more unofficial inhabitants), about 75% of whom are Chinese, with immigrants from Bangladesh, Vietnam, and the Philippines making up much of the rest.

Over the years, Chinatown emerged as a bustling community fighting to preserve its delicate balance. When immigration restrictions lifted in the late '60s, the population skyrocketed. Wealthy investors from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia flocked to Empire City, but so did poor families looking for a new start. Many immigrants felt alienated, unable to speak English, and were forced to take unskilled jobs. Work was often found in the garment industry, hand laundries, or in restaurants. Opportunities were limited, and the neighbourhood became insulated; many teenagers, out of synch with American life, drifted towards the criminal Triads or joined violent street gangs. This segregation has protected much of the Chinese culture, however, and given rise to Chinese-language newspapers, radio, and television stations, a half dozen movie theatres, and a fantastic festival for the Chinese New Year.

The Lady of the Lantern has become Chinatown's resident superheroine. Few have actually seen her, but there have been many stories of her kind words, wise actions, and blinding strikes.

Peking Duck House (22 Mott Street)

The *Empire Times* praised the Peking Duck House (and its sister restaurant, the Maple Garden Beijing Duck House) as having "one of the world's most spectacular Peking duck preparations." Unlike the Maple Garden, the Peking Duck House does not appear extraordinary, or even fancy, on the outside. It is very crowded and definitely non-Western — great for the authentic feel.

The backrooms of the Peking Duck House are also alleged to be the unofficial offices of the On Leong Triad, the most powerful criminal organization in Chinatown. *Dai Lo* Simon Cheng reportedly conducts all of his business from here.

Harmony Palace (98 Mott Street)

Harmony Palace is an extravagant dim sum restaurant, designed in the Chinese pagoda-style. It seats 400 in its enormous red and gold dining room, and specializes in Cantonese cuisine, with a focus on seafood.

Wing Yeung Chan, the *Dai Lo* of the Ghost Shadows Triad, owns Harmony Palace. His upstairs offices overlook the dining room through one-way mirrors. Additionally, rumours suggest a large gambling parlour is operated out of the basement.

Organized Crime in China Town

On Leong Triad

On Leong is led by *Dai Lo* Simon Chang, known as the unofficial mayor of Chinatown. It is believed On Leong is the most powerful Triad in Empire City, although very little is known about their day-to-day operations. They occasionally arbitrate over the conflicts of other groups, and are universally feared and respected. The On Leong Triad has extensive contacts back in China, and often hides behind the face of the legitimate On Leong Chinese Merchant's Association (which supposedly helps establish immigrants).

Chang is well-respected businessman in the community; his bodyguard, Wyatt Lee (a Red Pole enforcer) often accompanies him. Lee is a metahuman marksman, who wields twin irons reputed to have belonged to the gunslinger, Wyatt Earp.

Ghost Shadows Triad

The Ghost Shadows, led by *Dai Lo* Wing Yeung Chan, are the second most powerful organization in Chinatown, and are much more visible than On Leong. They have extensive dealings in the drug trade, racketeering, and illegal gambling operations.

Wing Yeung Chan is a quiet, mild-mannered businessman. He started working in America as a grocery clerk, and now runs one of the most vicious criminal organizations in the country.

Wing Yip Chan, arms the Ghost Shadows by running guns up the East Coast from New Orleans.

Wing Wah Chan, oversees the Triad's many gambling operations, including the tables in Harmony Palace.

Wing Lok Chan, the youngest brother, is the street boss, directing crew chiefs of the street gangs. He is also the flashiest of the brothers, driving expensive cars and often seen entertaining a bevy of models.

Hip Sing Triad

One of the oldest Triads in Chinatown, Hip Sing's power has decreased substantially over the years. Normally a state of truce exists between them and groups like the Ghost Shadows and On Leong, but many think the leaders of Hip Sing are simply biding their time, waiting for a chance to reclaim their status. It is run by the wily *Dai Lo* Sun Siju.

Tung On

Tung On Triad is a powerful Triad with designs on replacing the Ghost Shadows as the number two force. Turf wars are common, although truces and partnerships also occur frequently. *Dai Lo* Paul Lai, a young, but ambitious gambler, leads Tung On.

Flying Dragons

The Flying Dragons are a street gang led by Shui Bao. They will work for whomever pays highest, and have often changed allegiances over the years.

Green Dragons

The Green Dragons, a notoriously violent street gang, heavily traffic in heroin and cocaine. They normally work for On Leong. Phil Mak leads the Green Dragons.

White Tigers

The White Tigers are a street gang with close ties to the Ghost Shadows. They tend to work as enforcers, messengers, "tax-collectors," and on occasion, hitmen. Karen Chen leads them.

Little Italy

South of Houston, east of Broadway, west of Mulberry, and ever shrinking north from Canal Street lies Little Italy. The Italians first came to Empire in the later half of the 19th century, dominating the Lower East Side and Greenwich Village. Over the next decades, the Italian population of Empire rose sharply, reaching half a million by 1910, but then slowly diluted as Italians moved elsewhere in America or returned home. The homogenous neighbourhood of Little Italy, little more than an overpopulated slum at the turn of the century, turned into a respectable working-class area by the '30s. Little Italy would grow smaller through the '50s and '60s, however, continually losing ground to the swelling community of Chinatown. The old Canal Street boundary has long vanished.

By the 1980s, more than half of the one million Italian residents of Empire City lived in Brooklyn and Queens, ensuring no matter how small "Little Italy" proper becomes, the Italians will continue to play a big part in the life of Empire City.

La Cosa Nostra

La Cosa Nostra, or the American Mafia as it's garishly known, grew to prominence during the Prohibition years. Its origins lie in the first generation of Italian and Jewish gangsters who dominated the streets at the turn of the century. One of the first, and most notorious, gangs of Empire was Paul Kelley's Five Points Gang, whose membership included Al Capone, Lucky Luciano, Frankie Yale and Johnny Torino. During the Prohibition years of the '20s, crime became much more sophisticated, as local bosses became national leaders of racketing operations that spread throughout the country. Five families rose to power in Empire City, and they all exist in some form today: Bonanno, Genovese, Gambino, Lucchese, and Profaci (now known as Columbo).

Over the decades, the power and influence of Cosa Nostra has waxed and waned. Their heyday was in the '30s and '40s, buying politicians and legitimate business outright, or frightening them to powerlessness with groups like Luciano's gang of hitmen, Murder Incorporated. In the '50s and '60s, organized crime was targeted by local and federal authorities, and suffered many setbacks and loses. Leaders were arrested, informants finally broke the code of silence (the *omerta*), and the gangsters killed each other. There has been no shortage of replacements, however, and new leaders have consistently emerged to maintain control over Empire City.

The current leaders of Cosa Nostra have proven themselves smart, intelligent, and capable. All of these are vitally important in the struggle to guard their domains against the influx of Chinese, Hispanic, and black gangs, as well as the more and more regular interference of superheroes. A truce and co-operation pact lies between the families, but no one ever knows how long it will last.

Bowery

The Bowery is Empire's, and perhaps the country's, most infamous skid row. The street runs for about 1.6 km through lower Manhattan, and was once part of the highway to Boston. For the first half of the 1800s it was wealthy and successful, with many theatres, taverns, and restaurants. After the Civil War, however,

La Cosa Nostra – The Ruling Families

Gambino

The Gambino family was, until recently, the most powerful of families. In the last decade its leadership has suffered tremendous blows, with the convictions of John Gotti, and John Gotti, Jr. It is still believed to have between 400 and 500 members, plus another 3,000 affiliates. They are rumoured to make more than $100 million, annually, and have controlling interests in construction, trucking, the garment industry, and waste disposal.

The newest don is John senior's older brother, Peter Gotti, a former sanitation worker. It is believed, however, that even confined to a wheelchair in prison, in Marion, IL, John, Sr. still pulls the strings.

Genovese

Although smaller than the Gambino family, the Genovese have historically been the richest family in Empire City (if not the country), and only slightly less powerful. Currently, they have a membership of nearly 250.

The Genovese don, Michelangelo ("Mickey the Saint") Saracino, is relatively young at 38, but extremely sharp and well bred. While he enjoys luxury, he maintains a subdued and reserved demeanour. The Genovese were the first family to employ metahuman enforcers, like Torque.

Luigi Saracino is Mickey's right hand and the family's most feared assassin. He recently recreated the legendary Murder Incorporated. The new group of hitmen is made up of elite soldiers and street hardened metahumans.

Dominick (Quiet Dom) Cirillo, plays the role of the older, wiser Mafioso. He is also the Genovese street boss, insulating the leaders from much of the day-to-day activities. Quiet Dom shuns telephones in favour of "walk talks," holding discussions on public streets rather than in clubs.

Bonanno

Joseph Massino, released after several years in prison, is firmly in charge of the Bonanno family. They have about 110 members, and have been keeping a low profile over the last few years. They are La Cosa Nostra's primary source for illegal drugs.

Columbo

The Columbo family was torn apart by an internal war through the '90s. It ended with Carmine Persico's forces in control of the family, but Persico is in jail (serving 139 years), as is his son, Alphonse. The acting boss is John "Jackie" DeRoss.

Lucchese

The Lucchese family is currently in disarray. The last major boss was Anthony "Tony Ducks" Corallo, who received a 100-year prison term in 1987. Since then, the family has endured more than a decade of arrests, convictions, and turncoats, splintering its power base.

Broadway became the main commercial zone, while 5th Avenue was the new fashionable place to live. The Bowery was now home to cheap museums and sideshow freaks, to cheap lodgings, missions, late-night bars, and an overabundance of brothels.

Into the 20th century, the Bowery continues to be a place of squalor and wretchedness, so vile at times that even the prostitutes have moved on. In 1907 the population, on an average night, throughout the flophouses, hostels, and missions, was estimated at 25,000 lost souls. Empire has continuously fought to reclaim the area, but rarely is the effort sustained to effect real change. In the last few decades, many of the homeless have been pushed out, and the Bowery has taken on the feel of a ghost town. Some say Bloody Mary lurks here, flitting from mirror to mirror, searching for runaway children to steal away back to her shadowy Hell.

East Village

In the '60s, the East Village saw a rush of intellectuals, musicians, artists, and radicals, moving from Greenwich Village in search of cheap rents. The population was extremely diverse, and many coffee shops, poetry houses, and booksellers sprang up. The '70s, conversely, saw a significant decline in the standard of living and a tremendous spike in crime. Alphabet City, the blocks running from Avenue A to Avenue D, became home to heroin and crack dealers.

Fierce turf wars have broken out over the years, most often between police and the seedier elements, including the squatters who lived in Tompkins Square Park until recently. The gentrification of the past two decades has driven the standard of living up, with former crack houses transformed into upscale bakeries, and tenements broken up into yuppie cells (closet-sized studios wired for high speed internet connections). The East Village has become a kind of post-punk neighbourhood, where one can get a tattoo while sipping a cappuccino.

Midtown

Midtown Manhattan spans three distinct areas, north of the lower neighbourhoods of the island, and beneath Central Park. It runs the gamut of commercial and residential zones, and from elegant luxury to terrible poverty. Midtown East is home to the jet set and international clique of the United Nations; it is possibly Empire's most cosmopolitan area. In the centre of Midtown (often confusingly referred to as Midtown West) lies Times Square, the "crossroads of the world;" Midtown West, from the '30s to the '50s, was packed with more to see and do than anywhere else in Empire. West of Times Square is the impoverished neighbourhood of Clinton, better known as Hell's Kitchen.

Midtown East

Directly east of Times Square is Empire City's most sophisticated and urbane district. It is home to the city's greatest collection of businesses and corporate headquarters, and some of its most impressive buildings. The historic Grand Central Terminal remains one of the world's busiest train stations, with half a million travellers daily. The Chrysler Building, the Citicorp Center, the Seagram Building, the GenTech Building, and the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel are all here, as are St. Patrick's Cathedral and the United Nations. Shopping ranges from the high-end Bloomingdale's and F.A.O. Schwartz to the higher-end Saks Fifth Avenue, Henri Bendel, and Takashimaya Empire.

GenTech Building
(200 Park Avenue)

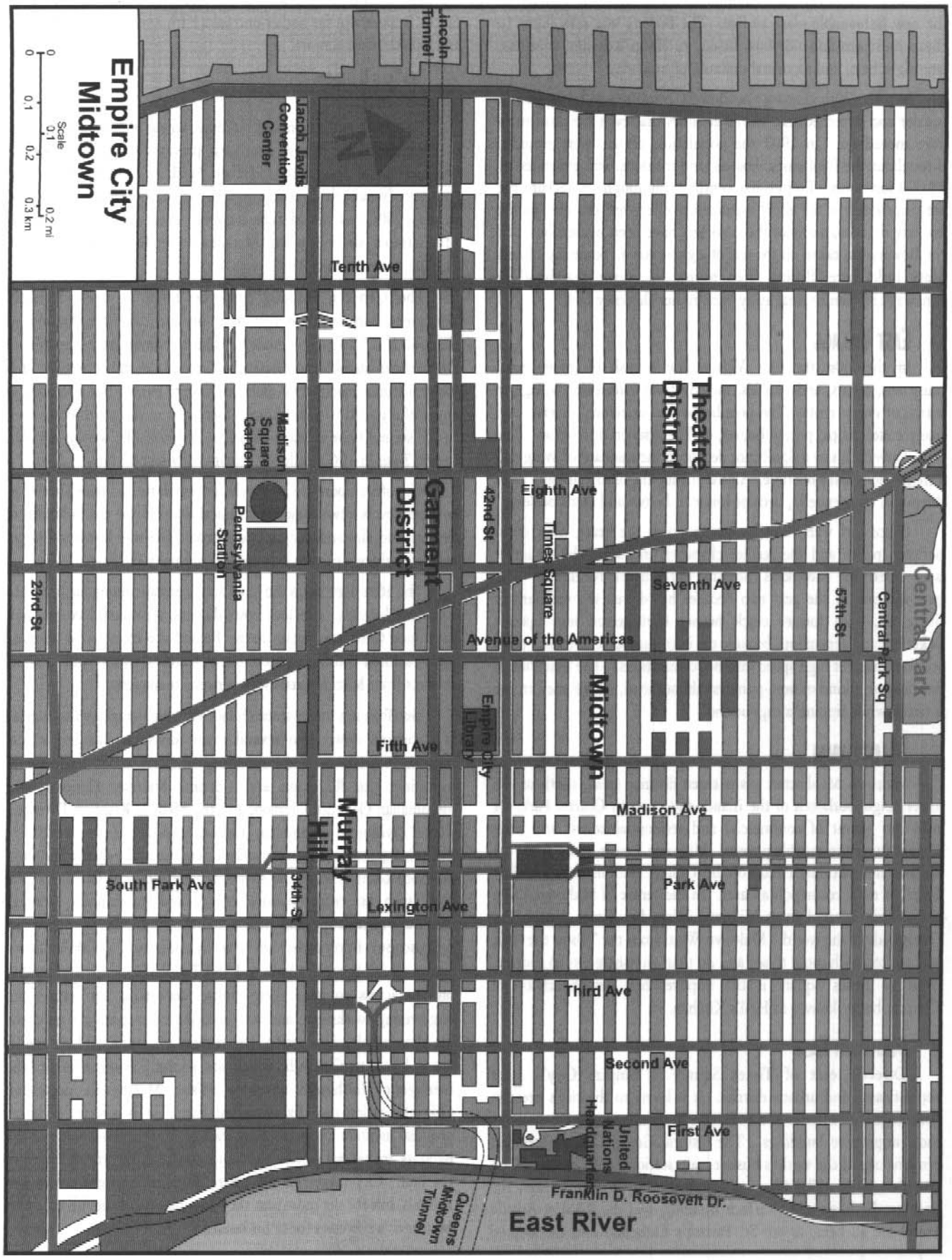
This 59 floor (246 metre) building, whose enormous structure blocks much of the Park Avenue view, previously was the corporate headquarters of Pan Am, and then MetLife. Metropolitan Life Insurance bought the building from the financially troubled Pan Am in the 1980s, but the MetLife logo was eventually removed from Manhattan's skyline when Matthews GenTech purchased the building from them in 1992.

The GenTech Building may be Empire's most detested skyscraper, hated since it first went up and cast Park Avenue in shadow. It is, however, a model of robust engineering in the way in which the main lobby connects with Grande Central Terminal. The lobby features unattractive, polished granite panels, but also hosts a wonderful gilded wire sculpture. Escalators in the main lobby lead to the second floor elevator banks. Ada Huxtable, writing for the *Empire Times* in 1963, called it "gigantically second-rate."

The office floors are larger than normal, to minimize shuttling between levels. Two major mechanical floors house the bulk of the heating and air-conditioning equipment. The roof features a large heliport, where a private helicopter is normally stationed.

The 56th floor holds the Sky Club, a private dining facility with a spectacular view. GenTech hosts dinners, occasional lectures, and its annual Christmas party there. Behind the main bar is a large, glass-enclosed habitat, which often features exotic and unique animals from Mister Matthews's personal menagerie.

GenTech is a major research facility, which employs thousands. It is broken down into several major divisions, each of which contains a fully staffed laboratory and research department, including: the Radiation and Genome Stability Division, the Mammalian Genetics Division, and the Medical Research Division. These divisions combine to form a unique centre for multi-disciplinary research in mammalian genetics and genome stability. GenTech offers a wealth of specialized services and facilities to its staff, such as: comprehensive library and information services; confocal microscopy and flow cytometry; histology and electron microscopy; fluorescence *in situ* hybridisation (FISH); image analysis; high bandwith links to JANET and SERC supercomputers; on-line access to gene data banks; mechanical and electronics engineering workships; and advanced digital recording equipment for photography, illustration, and computer graphics. There are 15 lower levels to GenTech, which are jokingly referred to as "the menagerie" (although never in Mister Matthews's presence). Officially called the "Experimental Farm," it is a series of large, artificial habitats for an amazing variety of creatures. Some of the habitats are several stories high, and may span the entire length of the hall. City inspectors are aware that GenTech deals with live animals, but for the most part they are unaware of the full extent of Matthews's successes (or of his failures).


Empire City
Midtown
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 km
0 0.1 0.2 mi
Lincoln Tunnel
Jacob Javits Convention Center
Tenth Ave
Madison Square Garden
Pennsylvania Station
23rd St
Garment District
42nd St
Eighth Ave
Times Square
Theatre District
Seventh Ave
57th St
Central Park
Central Park Sq
Avenue of the Americas
Midtown
Empire City Library
Fifth Ave
Madison Ave
Murray Hill
34th St
South Park Ave
Lexington Ave
Park Ave
Third Ave
Second Ave
First Ave
United Nations Headquarters
Franklin D. Roosevelt Dr.
Queens Midtown Tunnel
East River

St. Patrick's Cathedral
(Fifth Avenue at 50th Street)

St. Patrick's, or "St. Pat's" as it is affectionately known, is the Roman Catholic cathedral for the Archdiocese of Empire. Many view it as the centre of Catholic life in America. It was based on the great cathedral in Cologne, Germany, and the 100 metre spires were finished in 1888; additions were added over the years, including the central portal's great rose window, bronze doors of the 5th Avenue side, and a choir loft elevator. The cathedral, 120 metres long and 53 metres wide, seats approximately 2,400.

United Nations
(First Avenue from 42nd Street to 48th Street)

The UN headquarters and grounds are on a strip of international territory, running along the East River. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. donated the 7-hectare (17-acre) site in 1946. The headquarters are actually made up of three interconnected buildings: the boxy Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the glass tower of the Secretariat Building, and the adjoining domed General Assembly. Flags from all member states are flown along First Avenue.

There are 189 member states with missions to the UN, as well as several missions from non-member states. Empire City provides police protection for, and grants tax exemptions to, diplomats. The grounds are not considered part of the US, and thus not bound by any federal, state, or city law. The UN has its own police, fire department, and postal service.

Times Square
(Midtown West; Broadway and 7th Avenue, and Broadway and 42nd Street)

Originally known as Long Acre Square, a commercial centre and site of William H. Vanderbilt's American Horse Exchange, Times Square has seen its highs and lows over the years. Through the middle of the 19th century it was a posh neighbourhood, invaded slowly by discreet, "silk hat" brothels. When the *Empire Times* moved into a building on 43rd Street, in 1904, the area was renamed Times Square. The paper's publisher staged a New Year's Eve extravaganza, to commemorate the new site, and the tradition has continued ever since, a fabulous celebration at the crossroads of the world.

By WWI most theatres had moved from the Bowery to the new theatre district along the Square, running along Broadway (and "off-Broadway"). It was the centre of Empire during the 1920s, as throngs of tourists and locals packed into restaurants, dance halls, cabarets, and bars. The stock market crash of 1929 radically changed the district, however. No new theatres were built, and many older ones were turned into "grinder" houses during the Depression, offering peep shows and "nudie" films. Movies replaced theatre, and the streets filled with cheap diners, penny arcades, and dime museums. When WWII interrupted Broadway productions, nothing was left to check Times Square's slide into pure vice. Servicemen on leave came to the Square looking for erotic entertainment, while hustlers (both men and women) called it home.

Nothing really changed for the next 40 years. Times Square was the source for sin and debauchery. By the early '80s, however, things began to change. As the Guard moved into Olympian Tower, the pall began to lift. Porn theatres started to close and the dealers vanished from the streets. Unfortunately, many of them simply moved west, into Hell's Kitchen, but Times Square was clean and prosperous again. New businesses moved in, and the locals and tourists returned.

Now, Times Square is a favoured spot for people watching. Buskers, gawking-out-of-towners, and hard-boiled men and women of the city all congregate here, in part because it's known as one of the best places for "supers-watching."

Empire Times Building
(43rd Street between 7th and 8th Avenue)

The *Empire Times*, a daily newspaper, was launched on September 18, 1851. The paper struggled through its first decades, but finally achieved success under Adolph S. Ochs, who controlled the paper from 1896. Ochs's paper did not resort to the yellow journalism of his competitors, and lived by his slogan, "All the News That's Fit to Print." It moved just after the turn of the century to Long Acre Square, which was soon renamed Times Square after the paper. In the 1920s it moved again, to its current location.

Rockefeller Center
(Between 48th and 52nd Streets, and Fifth and Seventh Avenues)

Slightly north and east of Times Square, you will find Rockefeller Center, a complex of 19 commercial buildings that was the brainchild of John D. Rockefeller. The area incorporates buildings, stores, theatres, and public spaces, and has become a landmark of Empire City.

The Rockefeller Center, amongst its many buildings, includes: Radio City Music Hall; a sunken plaza that hosts an outdoor café in summer, and a skating rink in winter; NBC Studios; the G.E. Building; and the Rainbow Room. Rockefeller Center hosts the city's great Christmas tree annually, and invites a different superhero each year to place the star.

Underground corridors link the Center with the subway at 47th and 50th, and are lined with shops and services, making it a haven for shoppers year round. A second underground system provides off-street truck loading and deliveries, creating a convenient way to keep the area traffic free.

- **Radio City Music Hall**

Radio City Music Hall opened on December 27th, 1932. It is the largest and most famous theatre in the US, seating 5,874 inside the opulent, art deco hall. The ceiling, 18 metres high, is painted like sunset, and the stage is hung with drapes that reach the floor. Ornate mirrors and long slender chandeliers complete the image. The hall has staged many shows, but is the permanent home of the Rockettes, a troupe of 36, long-legged, bejewelled dancers.

- **Rainbow Room**
  (30 Rockefeller Plaza; 65th floor of the G.E. Building)

In 1934, Empire's first skyscraper club opened atop the RCA Building (now the G.E. Building). The Rainbow Room hosted one of the city's most elegant restaurants, complete with a revolving dance floor, and a commanding view of the city's skyline. The club's name came from a beautiful organ that translated music into shifting colour patterns. Many of the city's most prestigious performers have appeared there, and it is still one of the 10 most exclusive spots in Manhattan. Sentinel and Red Phoenix have been known to wine and dine visiting dignitaries and international superheroes here.

Guard Headquarters: Olympian Tower

The Olympian is a striking tower of concrete and glass, built to the same height and general outward appearance as its predecessor, but there the similarities end. It is privately owned by the Guard, donated to them by several contributors who financed the buildings reconstruction. Stewardship of the building was originally entrusted to Maxwell Liberty, a smokescreen designed to ensure the Guard would be beholden to no corporation or industry mogul. Today, it is the strategic and tactical headquarters of the Guard, but also acts as the offices for their public face, and as a home for several of them.

The outer plaza is elegant and simple, with oak benches scattered for public use. At each of the plaza's four corners is a classically styled fountain, each bearing one of the words of the Guard's motto: Liberty, Justice, Security, Peace. Perched above the immense glass entrance is a marble statue of Lady Starbright.

The main lobby opens up into a 10-metre-high atrium, which contains a reception and information desk, the entrance to the Guard Public Museum, and a security station. Beyond the security gate lies a bank of elevators of varying clearance levels. Most visitors are only allowed up to the 20th floor.

The west wing of the building, up through level three, is the Guard Public Museum of Peace. It is open to the public (Tuesday to Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., free admission), and has exhibits commemorating many of the various victories pf the city's heroes. The displays include harmless originals as well as replicas. Currently on display are: the Flyer's original flying rig, Tommy Gun's twin machineguns, Haud particle phase pistols, Battalion Mark Robots, and wax statues of the Guard's major enemies. There are educational exhibits on war, terrorism, and land mines, and the Guard encourages local schools to visit and learn about their world. At the entrance to the museum is a small shrine to Lady Starbright, adorned with fresh tulips every morning.

Above the museum is a two-level advanced medical facility. There are four full operating theatres, twenty private recovery rooms, offices, and a physical therapy centre. As well, there are isolation units, a dentistry module, and a fully equipped laboratory.

Levels 6 through 15 offer a comprehensive library, computer workstations, and a documentation centre. Although this section is closed to the public, they often share information with law enforcement agencies, researchers, and other important visitors.

The 16th through 20th floors are for employees and volunteers. The Guard operates a media watch/clipping service and press office. Chester Dancey is the public relations/brand manager, and is the contact person for appearances, endorsements, and speaking engagements. They also have part-time staff to manage the Guard fan club, run by Alexandra Merrick.

Levels 21 and up are heavily restricted. 21 is nothing more than a well-staffed security checkpoint; visitors are thoroughly scanned for potential weaponry, unusual energy signatures, and so forth.

Levels 22 through 24 are offices, boardrooms, and large meeting spaces. They are used to receive important visitors in a less-restricted zone. Any Guard member can book a meeting room at any time.

The tower is structurally reinforced at level 25 and again at every 10th floor from that point up.

The training centre runs from levels 26 through 34. The first five levels are known as "the Arena." The edges have an assortment of magnetic-resistance weights, and a jogging track, but the real attraction is the sparring ring that dominates the centre of the room. A force field containment system surrounds it, and it hosts holographic projectors, combat bots, and an intricate scenario simulator. Above the arena are a number of smaller weight rooms, an Olympic length (and three storey deep) swimming pool, target ranges, saunas, hot tubs, and the showers.

Levels 36 and 37 contain holding cells outfitted with power-suppressers (Nullify: Drain Level 7), and interrogation rooms.

Levels 38 through 44 contain a series of advanced laboratories and research units. Slipstream arranged these floors to his specifications, and he is the undisputed administrator here.

Levels 46 and 47 are general storage.

Levels 48 through 53 are guest quarters and residences for staff and long-term visitors. All quarters are furnished tastefully.

Level 54 is a gourmet-dining hall, with an on-staff chef, Rabih Shwayri, who ensures the Guard and staff all eat very well.

Levels 56 through 64 are the suites of the Guard members. All five members have their own rooms, although Mother Raven and Red Phoenix rarely stay the night. Each member has decorated to suit his or her particular preferences over the years, and members may, of course, stay indefinitely.

Level 66 is the Guard's armoury, containing everything they might need at short notice.

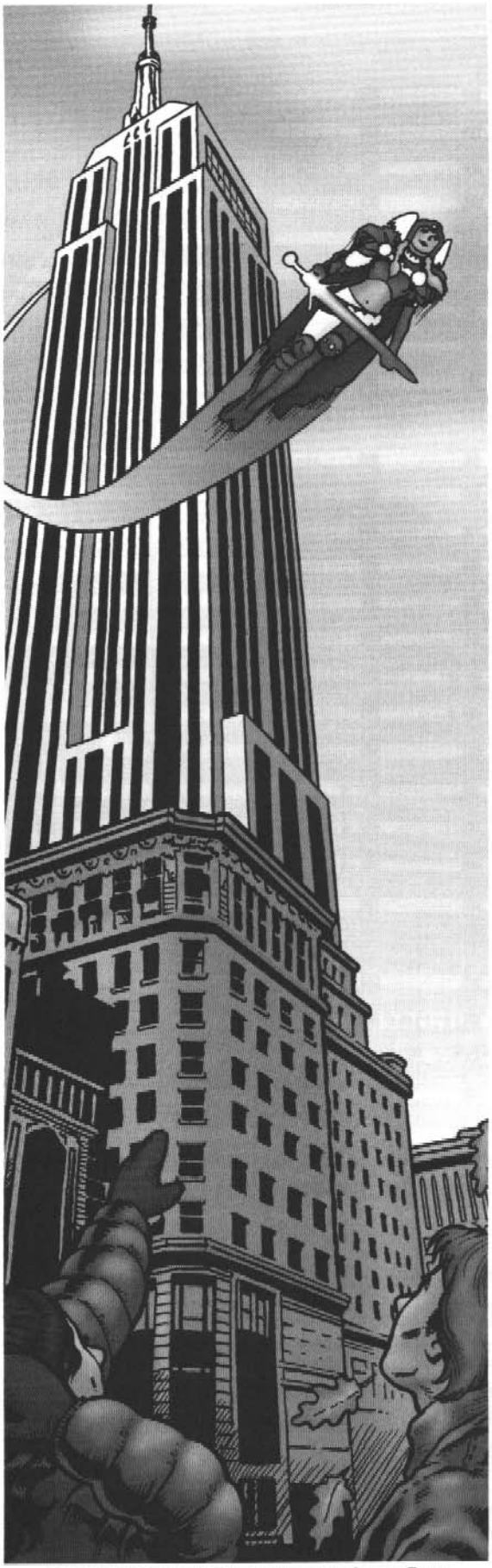
Level 67 and 68 are the Vault, where the truly dangerous artifacts are locked away. Inside the Vault, there is a door that should lead straight outside the building, to a 68-storey drop. It is locked, and barred, but it does not lead outside, nor can it be destroyed. It is a gateway into a twisted and cruel world known as "Dark Empire," and it must remain closed at all times.

Levels 69 through 74 contain the Briefing Room, the War Room, and the Observatory.

Levels 76 through 84 contain the Mercury Jet hangar bay. There are three jets, in total, and two are always fuelled and ready to go. The jets fly out the side of the building, and then engage vertical thrusters to quickly climb above the tower.

Above the 85th floor is an observation deck, a small terrace garden, Red Phoenix's dojo, and a vast array of antennae.

Meanwhile, the Olympian Tower's foundation sinks 45 metres down into bedrock, firmly anchoring the building. There are ten sublevels here; sublevels 1 and 2 are used by the maintenance staff and contain the main generators, while sublevels 3 and 4 are used as freight docks and storage facilities. An underground railroad spur is located on sublevel 5, and allows for the movement of enormous masses of freight without impending street traffic. There are secure access tunnels to the city's subway lines and sewer system. Sublevels 6 through 9 are highly restricted, and hold the emergency generators, data-storage back-ups, and environmental machinery. Sublevel 10 holds a submarine pen, which connects to the Hudson River by an underground tunnel.



Tourists catch sight of Red Phoenix as she exits the Olympian Tower

Olympian Tower
(Former Empire State Building; 350 Fifth Avenue)

The building formerly known as the Empire State Building was, and continues to be, the most famous skyscraper in the world. At 381 metres, it was the world's tallest building until the 1970s. It was built at record speed and under budget. On October 1st, 1929, they demolished the existing building, the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, and by May 1st, 1931, they held their opening ceremonies. The Depression killed the market, however, and the building remained half-empty (derogatorily named "Empty State") until after WWII.

The skyscraper, described as 102 stories tall, contained 85 stories of usable space, plus the equivalent of another 16 stories used for an observation deck, and a metal-and-glass spire, intended as mooring mast for dirigibles.

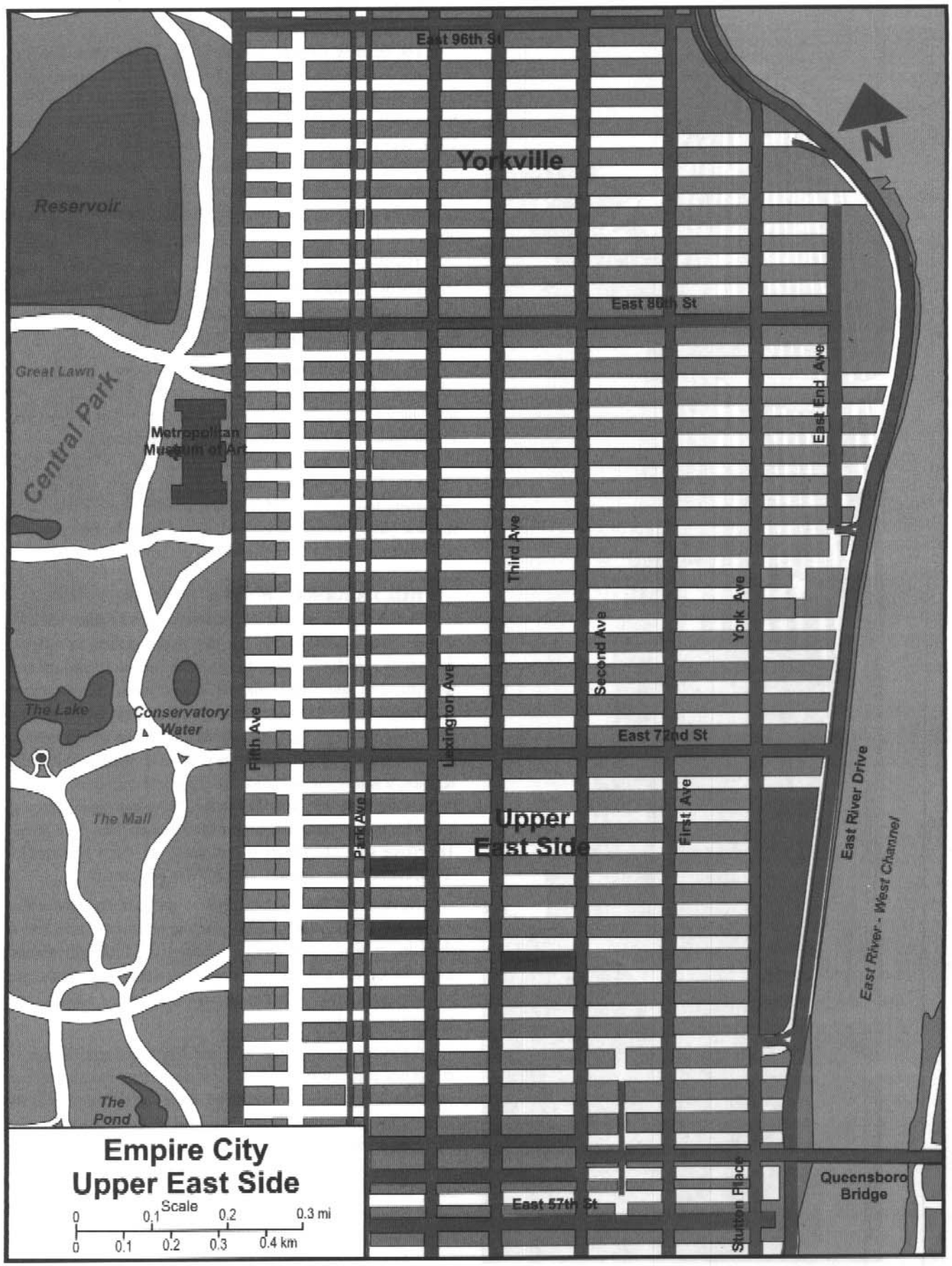
In 1983, the Empire State Building became a gateway into what some described as a parallel world, called "Dark Empire." An invading force used the building as a base from which to launch an assault upon all of Empire City. The Guard defeated the armies of Dark Empire, but the building had been gutted. Mayor Ed Koch and City Council offered the real estate to the Guard for a permanent headquarters. Max Liberty was the primary investor to the new project, in association with several large contributors, and within six months the Olympian Tower was completed.

Hell's Kitchen (Clinton)

Technically, the neighbourhood west of Times Square has been named Clinton since 1959, but it's never shaken its original description as Hell's Kitchen. In 1851, the railroad opened the area to settlement, and slaughterhouses, lumberyards, and tenements quickly sprang up. The largest immigrants were the Irish, but there were also many Scots, Germans, and blacks. It was always working class and tough. By the 1870s, the police had nicknamed it Hell's Kitchen, a simmering waterfront of crime and corruption, and the name stuck. One story says "Dutch Fred," a veteran policeman, and his rookie partner were watching a small riot on West 39th Street. The rookie said, "This place is Hell itself," to which Fred replied, "Nah, Hell's a mild climate. This is Hell's Kitchen."

However the name came about, no one questioned the rule of the vicious gangs. They lorded over the tenements, grog shops, abattoirs, railroad yards, and gas works. The Irish had to make room for Greeks and eastern Europeans in the early 1900s, and southern blacks and Puerto Ricans in the 1940s, but it never became any less poor or desperate.

Today, warehouses, Irish bars, and dilapidated tenements see a mix of just about everyone. It is one of the poorest and most violent areas of the city, and it has degraded in the last fifteen years as the seedier elements of Times Square travelled west and moved in. The Irish gangs are still dominant, although perhaps just barely. The most notorious today is a new incarnation of the old Dead Rabbits; Mary O'Rourke, known as "Hell-Cat Mary," leads them. Caliburn, Hell's Kitchen's local bogeyman, tempers the actions of the Dead Rabbits and the other gangs.


East 96th St
Yorkville
Reservoir
East 86th St
Great Lawn
Central Park
Metropolitan Museum of Art
East End Ave
Third Ave
Second Ave
York Ave
Lexington Ave
Fifth Ave
Park Ave
East 72nd St
The Lake
Conservatory Water
The Mall
Upper East Side
First Ave
East River Drive
East River - West Channel
The Pond
East 57th St
Sutton Place
Queensboro Bridge
N
Empire City
Upper East Side
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 mi
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 km

Upper East Side

The Upper East Side is home to a tremendously diverse population: Christians, Jews, and Muslims; Hispanics, Asians, blacks; east and west Europeans. What so many have in common is wealth. When Central Park opened in 1860, it drew the successful and well-to-do into the area. Mansions sprang up along 5th Avenue and Park Avenue, while respectable brownstones lined the side streets.

Wealthy industrialists and magnates strove to outdo each other, and left a legacy of opulent townhouses and palatial homes. The post WWI years saw apartments become fashionable, but the brownstones were left for immigrants. In the '70s and '80s, however, skyrocketing prices made everything desirable in the Upper East Side, and even the brownstones commanded record prices. The last decade has seen a new rush of extremely wealthy immigrants to Empire City, and many have ended up here.

The Upper East Side is home to some of the best-known cultural institutions in the world. "Museum Mile" is a section of Fifth Avenue where the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Jewish Museum, and El Museo del Barrio can all be found.

Private Clubs

Exclusive clubs were established in the early days of the neighbourhood, catering to their wealthy clientele. These private clubs are housed in historical buildings, though many have moved several times in their earliest days.

Colony Club (62nd Street and Park Avenue)

The first social club for women was formed in 1903, modelled after the private men's clubs. The building is twelve stories, and contains many bedrooms, a swimming pool, a roof garden, a gymnasium, squash courts, a card room, a smoking room, a cocktail bar, several dining rooms, servant's quarters, and a room for pets. While men are now welcome to visit, membership is extended only to women of high society.

The current president of the club is the woman described as the Empress of Empire Society, Diana Krandall (who has been 35 for the past five years). Other prominent members include Carly Fiorina; Alessia and Katja Jacobs; Karen Katen; Sarah Gebhart; Martha Stewart; and Louise Kitchen.

Harmonie Club (6 East 60th Street)

Harmonie Gesellschaft founded this club in 1852, for a select German Jewish membership. Its official language is German. It was the first men's club to invite women to dinner.

The club has been struggling with inner politics for over a decade, as certain individuals want to extend membership to citizens of Thule, while others argue that anti-Semitism runs strong amongst the rulers of that island nation. Michael Wiegel leads the pro-Thule crusade; his power base jokingly refers to itself as Harmonious Thule. Meanwhile, Albert Rifkind, the ageing club president, vehemently opposes any relationship with Thule.

Knickerbocker Club (2 East 62nd Street)

The Knickerbocker Club was formed by 18 of the most powerful men of Empire in the late 1800s, unhappy with the mood and policies of the Union Club. Its original founders included: August Belmont, John Jacob Astor, Alexander Hamilton, and Moses Lazarus. It was only open to men descended from the colonial families of Empire — known as the Knickerbockers.

These men believed the Union Club was trying to influence the development of Empire too slowly, and too subtly. The Knickerbockers stood for proactive change, and all had significant impact on the history of Empire.

Today, there are approximately 800 members. The current club president, William Conner Belmont, was ecstatic to learn that longtime member Maxwell Liberty was actually the American Sentinel! The club's status has increased tremendously, although Liberty has always been a most infrequent visitor. Still, he is fond of Belmont, and therefore has appeared at several dinners.

Lotos Club (5 East 66th Street)

This is one of the oldest literary clubs in the country, and continues to host readings, art exhibitions, musical recitals, and guest speakers. Women were not admitted until 1976, but now contribute heavily to the benefit of all club members. Many of Empire's literati are either full time members, or, at worst, occasional visitors.

Metropolitan Club (1-11 East 60th Street)

J.P. Morgan initiated the Metropolitan Club for his friends who could not attain membership in other circles. The club's $2 million building was paid for by its seven hundred initial members, including the Morgans, Vanderbilts, Hamiltons, and Roosevelts. Both men and women were eligible for membership. The club has several dining rooms, a library, 34 bedrooms, and a bowling alley in the basement.

Union Club (69th Street and Park Avenue)

The oldest men's club in the city, formed in 1836. Its membership is the most exclusive of any of Empire's private clubs, and former members have established many of the city's younger clubs.

The Union Club, in some form or another, has actually been in existence almost as long as Empire. Much of the city's old money has a linkage to this group, and no new families have been accepted since 1920. The Representative Committee, led by a Chairman, runs the club and they hammer out policies, regulations, and general goals. There are rumours that the Representative Committee is, in fact, a much more sinister and focused group, and that the Chairman is the most powerful member of the Union Club through blackmail and extortion. Non-members are not allowed in, and the identities of the Representative Committee are not known outside of the club.

Gracie Mansion
(88th Street at East End Avenue)

Gracie Mansion was completed in 1804 for Archibald Gracie, as a country-style home that was distant from the noise of the city. In 1942, it became the mayoral residence. It is open to the public two days a week.

Temple Emanu-El
(1 East 65th Street)

The Temple Emanu-El holds the largest Jewish congregation in the US, and is one of the largest synagogues in the world. This stunning temple is a fantastic limestone Moorish-Romanesque building, completed in 1929. It surpasses many European cathedrals by sheer size, and magnificent beauty. The sanctuary is decorated with brilliant stained glass windows, colourful mosaics, and has a luminous bronze ark. The temple seats 2,500.

Consulate General of the Kingdom of Thule
(800 United Nations Plaza)

The Consulate General of the Kingdom of Thule in Empire City is the official representative in Empire of the Thule Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is the only permanent mission from Thule in the United States, offering assistance to Thulian citizens on American soil. It also serves members of the general public in matters pertaining to travel and residence in Thule, provides information on Thule, and promotes the development of trade with the US.

The current Consul General is Lukas Albrecht. The Consulate General of the Kingdom of Thule, Empire is open to the public Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., but is closed for US and Thulian Holidays.

Central Park

Central Park is Empire's greatest (but not largest) public park. It covers 340 hectares (843 acres), and was the first landscaped public park in the US. The park's construction was perhaps the most extensive public works project achieved in Empire during the 19th century. 1,600 residents were displaced from shantytowns (many ended up in what would become the Upper West Side), and 20,000 workers blasted ridges, removed 2.3 million cubic metres of soil, and planted 270,000 trees and shrubs. The park opened in the winter of 1859.

The architects, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, created the illusion of an immense, tailored countryside, by carefully constructed visras and curving paths. From no side of the park can you see any other. Every square foot was planned to mimic nature, and some have described the park's virtual reality as a model for Walt Disney's parks. Today, Central Park is both a symbol of urban revival and of counter-culture. It is used daily by thousands, including: bicyclists, joggers, roller-bladders, softball players, birdwatchers, children, dogs, and nature lovers. While it is a safe place most of the time, visitors are strongly encouraged not to travel through the park alone at night. Many of the city's gangs like to use the park to troll for unsuspecting targets, or to conduct business away from the eyes of the city. The gangs are regularly disturbed by Caliburn, Slipstream, and Officer Prometheus, however, and are slowly shifting away from the park, towards the poorer neighbourhoods like Harlem, Hell's Kitchen, and the Lower East Side.

Balto
(East Drive at 66th Street)

This bronze statue is the only one of an animal in the park; Balto was a heroic Siberian husky who travelled through a blizzard to bring diphtheria antitoxin to Nome, Alaska.

Belvedere Castle
(Mid-park at 79th Street)

Belvedere Castle is pure Victorian, gothic fantasy. It has a commanding view of the park and houses the Henry Luce Nature Observatory. Its primary function, however, is as the home of the Empire Meteorological Society, founded in 1868. They watch the skies for any disturbances, and have produced several theoretical papers on life beyond Earth.

Central Park Wildlife Center
(Central Park Zoo; East Side 63rd to 66th Streets)

The Central Park Zoo was created in the 1860s as a menagerie to house animals given to the park. There are three regions — Arctic, rain forest, and temperate — which each feature animals in naturalistic settings. Of special note are the polar bear lair, where you can view them swimming underwater through an observation room. Matthews GenTech sponsors the polar bears and temporary animal exhibits.

Cleopatra's Needle
(The Obelisk; East Side at 81st Street)

Cleopatra's Needle is a 3500-year-old stone obelisk that originally hails from the city of Heliopolis, Egypt. A large, bronze sea crab (massing several hundred kilograms) sits at each corner, supporting the monument.

Loeb Boathouse
(East Side, 74th - 75th Streets)

The Loeb Boathouse is a congregation point for bird watchers. A loose-leaf notebook is left out for people to record their sightings. Wildflowers are grown here to attract butterflies, and more than 26 species visit. Inside is an elegant restaurant, Park View at the Boathouse.

Ramble
(Mid-park 73rd - 79th Streets)

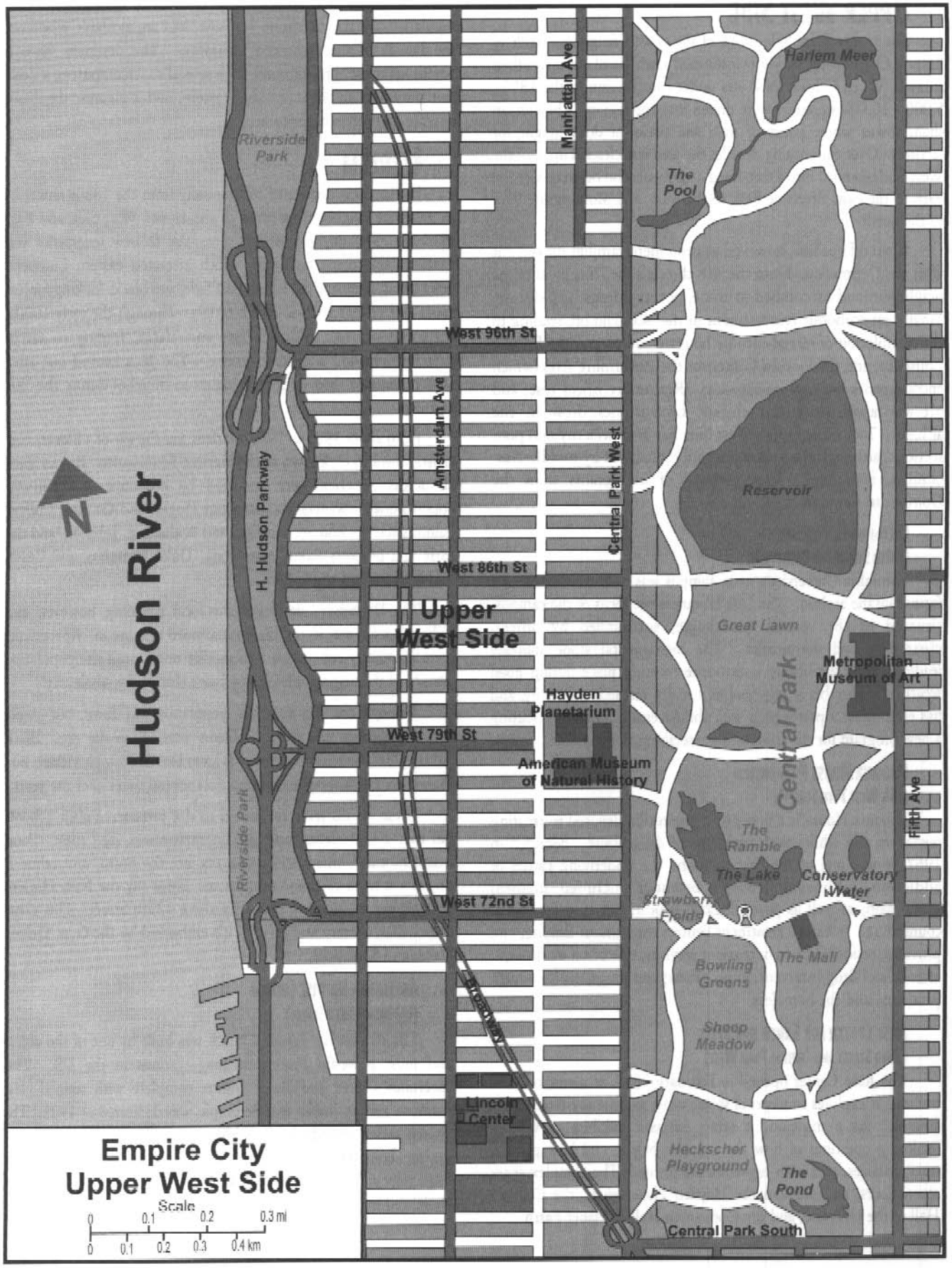
The Ramble is a 15-hectare (38-acre) sprawl of paths, cliffs, trees, and streams designed to be a "wild garden." Perhaps the best place for bird watching in the park, it is also the easiest place to get lost.

Starbright Memorial
(East Side at 84th Street)

A graceful fountain bears a small plaque, inscribed to the memory of Lady Starbright. This small garden features flora from a dozen different worlds and dimensions, all provided by the Guard and the Ascension Institute. It is also home to a bird sanctuary.

Strawberry Fields
(West Side, 72nd Street)

Yoko Ono established this one-hectare (2.5-acre) garden as a memorial to John Lennon. The "Garden of Peace" has plants from every member state of the UN, as well as a star-shaped mosaic with the word "Imagine," which was a gift from Naples, Italy.


Hudson River
N
Riverside Park
H. Hudson Parkway
Riverside Park
Manhattan Ave
Amsterdam Ave
Central Park West
West 96th St
West 86th St
Upper West Side
West 79th St
Hayden Planetarium
American Museum of Natural History
West 72nd St
Broadway
Lincoln Center
Harlem Meer
The Pool
Reservoir
Great Lawn
Central Park
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Ave
The Ramble
The Lake
Conservatory Water
Strawberry Fields
Bowling Greens
The Mall
Sheep Meadow
Heckscher Playground
The Pond
Central Park South
Empire City
Upper West Side
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 mi
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 km

Upper West Side

The Upper West Side is one of the newest neighbourhoods of Empire City, having slowly transformed from farmland into urban sprawl. When Central Park was under construction in the 1850s, 5,000 - 10,000 squatters were driven into the region. They set up shantytowns where packs of men and packs of dogs fought for territory. Over the ensuing decades the area was cleaned up, and the West End bloomed into a tree-lined neighbourhood between Central Park to the east, Riverside Park to the west, and Morningside Park to the north.

It would not last, however, as prominent families moved out after the Depression. From the '40s through the '70s, parts of the neighbourhood succumbed to crime, poverty, drugs, and disease. Finally, an economic reinvestment in the '80s paid off, leading to the completion of mixed-income housing complexes, the Empire Coliseum, and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (which encouraged a cultural renaissance). Real estate prices rose, and pre-war apartments and elegant brownstones drew in the affluent. Today, the Upper West Side has both wealthy and poor sections, although the area is primarily inhabited by middle-class families, including a large number of immigrants from the Dominican Republic.

Columbia University
(116th Street and Broadway)

Columbia University's main campus was built on the site of a former insane asylum. The Low Library is the focus of the campus, situated in the central quadrangle, surrounded by offices, classrooms, and dormitories. The monumental stone staircase leading up to the library is favourite meeting place during good weather. Columbia is regarded as a major research university, and has established a partnership with the Ascension Institute, creating a new program for the study of the metahuman experience.

Phoenix House Foundation
(164 West 74th Street)

Phoenix House is a non-profit institution devoted to treating teenagers and adults with problems of drug abuse. Founded in 1967, it was one of the first to probe the underlying causes of addiction. Phoenix House's methods included medical supervision, as well as psychological, educational, and vocational counselling. It has 10 treatment centres throughout Empire, and provides: residential and outpatient services; education workshops; after-school drug intervention programs; and programs for adults, prisoners, and the homeless.

Rose Center for Earth and Space
(79th Street and Central Park West)

The Rose Center opened in February 2000, at a cost of $210 million. It explores concepts of space, time, and the mysteries of the cosmos. As a museum, it offers fantastic exhibits to visitors, exploring questions of how the universe began, and how planets, stars, galaxies, and even universes are formed. The complex spans seven floors, and includes the Hayden Planetarium, the Cullman Hall of the Universe, and the Gottesman Hall of Planet Earth.

The technicians and researchers of the Rose Center collaborate regularly with the Ascension Institute, and are available whenever the heroes of the city need assistance. The designers have a wondrous celestial playground, with several supercomputers, a Zeiss star projector, an advanced laser system, and a gigantic database, and are more than eager to help.

Harlem

Harlem was developed substantially from the 1880s onwards, as were the neighbouring areas of the Upper West Side and East Harlem. German brownstones gave way to new tenements and spacious apartment buildings, which attracted eastern European Jews trying to escape the Lower East Side, and blacks looking for less racist and violent areas in which to live. Through the early 1900s, there was a huge influx of Jews and blacks, leading to severe overcrowding and a general decline. The Jews moved out after WWI, and sold their large synagogues to churches during the '20s and '30s.

From about 1925 to 1929, Harlem was the site of a literary and artistic revolution, known as the Harlem Renaissance. Blacks from all across America were attracted by economic and cultural opportunities. Writers like Langston Huges, and Coutnee Cullen, painters such as Romare Bearden, and William H. Johnson, and the early jazz pioneers, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellingron, and Bessie Smith all flocked to Harlem.

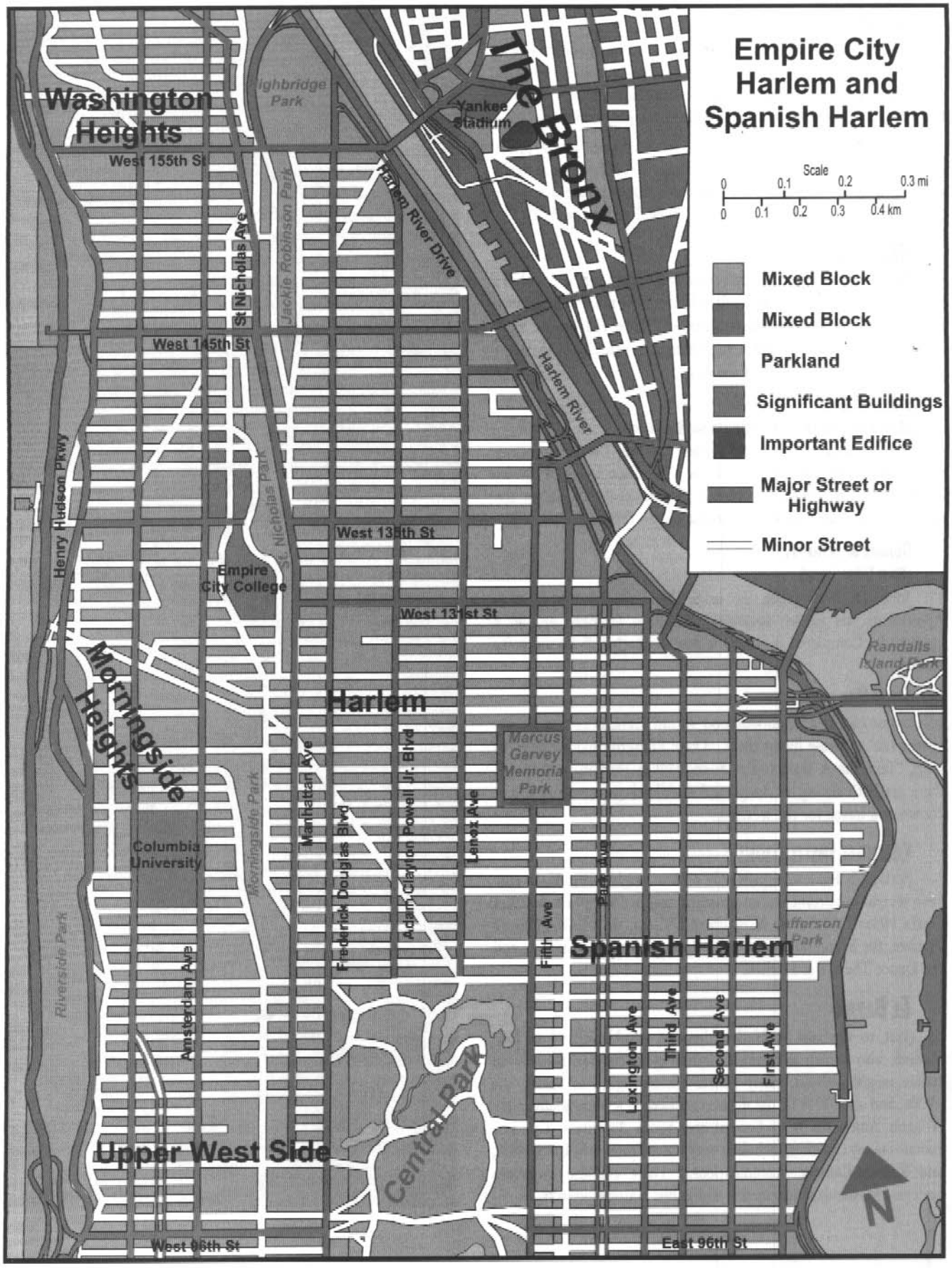
The Depression destroyed the local economy, however, and although work was scarce, blacks continued to move in. Apartments were constantly subdivided into smaller units, until the population density of the neighbourhood was twice that of the whole city.

Through the '40s and '50s, population was down, but crime, heroin addiction, and social problems were all on the rise. Black cultural life began to move towards areas like Greenwich Village, and the region's tension exploded into riots several times over the years.

These trends have continued to the present. Public schools fail to teach students, and the unemployment rate rises. Poor, single mothers, many still teenagers, are the norm, and crime is one of the most common professions. Some say the New Harlem Renaissance has started, primarily along 125th Street. This time, rather than literary and artistic, it's embodied by the Gap, Disney Store, and Starbucks.

Abyssinian Baptist Church
(132 West 138th Street)

The Abyssinian Baptist Church was built by one of the oldest and most powerful Protestant congregations in the US. This cavernous Gothic and Tudor edifice, complete with stained-glass windows and an Italian marble pulpit, was dedicated in 1923. The church serves thousands of parishioners weekly, and is so popular during holidays that tourists often have to be turned away (especially at Easter). The church is especially known for its gospel choir, and its 67-rank organ.


Empire City
Harlem and
Spanish Harlem
Scale
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 mi
0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 km
Mixed Block
Mixed Block
Parkland
Significant Buildings
Important Edifice
Major Street or Highway
Minor Street
Washington Heights
West 155th St
Yankee Stadium
The Bronx
Harlem River Drive
St Nicholas Ave
West 145th St
Harlem River
Henry Hudson Pkwy
West 135th St
Empire City College
West 131st St
Morningside Heights
Harlem
Marcus Garvey Memorial Park
Columbia University
Manhattan Ave
Frederick Douglas Blvd
Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd
Lenox Ave
Fifth Ave
Spanish Harlem
Amsterdam Ave
Central Park
Upper West Side
Lexington Ave
Third Ave
Second Ave
First Ave
West 96th St
East 96th St
N

Apollo Theatre
(West 125th Street)

The Apollo Theatre is Harlem's most prominent stage. It was built in 1914, but rose to prominence in the '30s and '40s with performances such as: Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's tap dancing, Billie Holiday's singing, and Duke Ellington's jazz orchestra.

The Apollo was converted into a movie theatre in 1975, for nearly ten years, and then renovated again in 1983, to once again serve as a venue for live performances. Concerts are a regular feature, as are broadcasts of the series "Show Time at the Apollo."

Harlem's Elite

While Harlem is primarily a poor neighbourhood, it does have sections where successful and wealthy blacks have made their homes. Strivers' Row, the Dunbar Apartments, and Sugar Hill are the most exclusive spots, maintaining a high property value and an air of prestige renowned throughout the city.

Strivers' Row
(West 138th and 139th, between 7th and 8th Avenue)

Strivers' Row was a model of fine housing, 130 brownstones that were developed in the late 1890s. These spacious row houses became the most elegant residences for successful blacks in the neighbourhood, after WWI, and remain so to this day.

Dunbar Apartments
(West 139th Street)

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. originally financed the Dunbar Apartments, six garden apartment buildings arranged around a courtyard. Completed in 1928, it was the first such complex for blacks.

Sugar Hill

Sugar Hill is a neighbourhood within Harlem named for the "sweet life" of those living there. Duke Ellington named it in his song, "Take the A Train (up to Sugar Hill in Harlem)." Although there are both strong working- and middle-class populations, it is known as a haven for the wealthy.

Cultural Institutions

Although Harlem is primarily a poor neighbourhood, it does have several important cultural institutions, including: the Harlem Opera House, the Studio Museum of Harlem, the National Black Theatre, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

El Barrio

Just to the east of Harlem lies the neighbourhood of East Harlem, also known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio. Initially an Italian neighbourhood, many Puerto Ricans moved in during the 1920s, and after WWII, the region experienced a tremendous influx of Latin Americans from Central and South America. The area contains many churches, including very active Protestant, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic denominations. There are also numerous bodegas, substandard tenements, and public housing projects.

Outer Boroughs of Empire City

Brooklyn

Brooklyn, situated on the south-western tip of Long Island, is the most heavily populated borough of Empire. It lies across the East River from Manhattan, and still remains a strong metropolitan centre. Brooklyn has experienced periods of phenomenal growth, and been devastated by dizzying decline. These sharp changes have allowed it to grow in peculiar ways, maintaining much of its heritage. Currently, Brooklyn is home to many immigrants, including a huge Italian population. It is in an economic upswing, in part due to an infusion of big business over the last decades. In the mid 1990s, Matthews GenTech opened a huge research complex (GenTech Centre), employing thousands of workers downtown. Brooklyn's institutions and attractions include: the Brooklyn Botanical Garden; the Brooklyn Children's Museum, which the Guard visits several times a year; and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Bronx

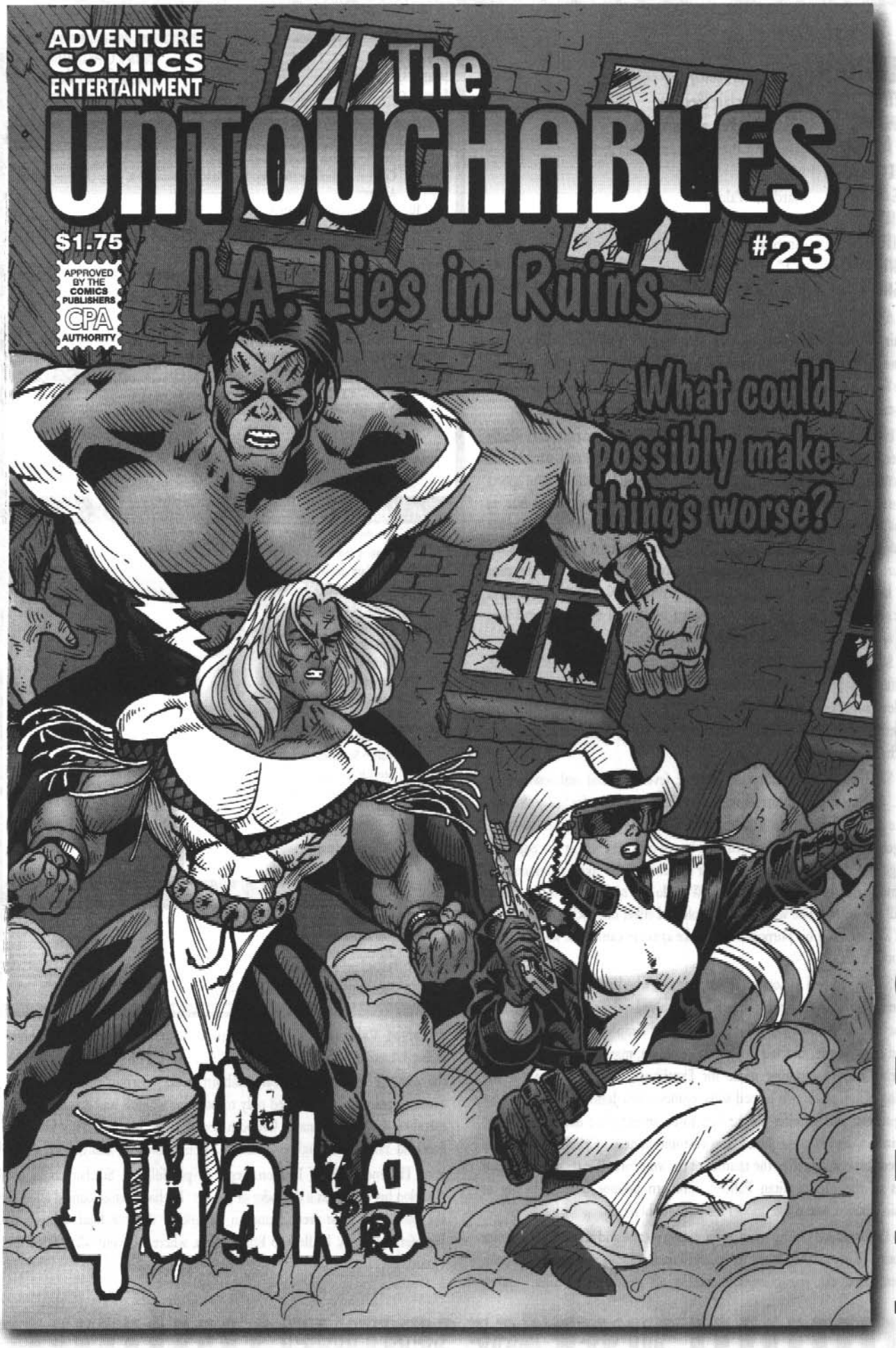
The Bronx, the most heavily trafficked area of the US, is the most northern region of Empire, with Long Island Sound east of the Bronx River. Its population is about a third black, a third Latin American, and a third white and Asian. Some academics believe salsa music and break dancing started here. The Bronx is home to eleven colleges and universities, including the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University. It has both very wealthy regions, to the north, and very poor neighbourhoods, in the south. Famous attractions include the Bronx Zoo, and the Empire Botanical Garden.

Queens

Queens is the largest borough of Empire, making up 57 percent of the greater city. Its borders are East River to the north and west, Nassau County to the east, Brooklyn to the south-west, and the Atlantic to the south. About 36% of Queen's population is immigrant, the highest of any of Empire's boroughs. About a third of that number is Asian, and another quarter is Latin American. Queens's industrial centres are Long Island City, Maspeth, and College Point. Queens is also home to the Aqueduct Race Track, St. John's University, and the Gateway National Recreation Area.

Staten Island

Staten Island has long been the most geographically distant, economically homogenous (white, middle-class families), and politically anxious region of Empire. It is the farthest point from Manhattan, and reachable from there only by the Staten Island Ferry, a 25 minute ride. The Verrazano Narrows Bridge connects the island to Brooklyn. Staten Island is home to: the Port Authority's Hook Marine Terminal; Historic Richmond Town; Gateway National Recreation Area; the Greenbelt, Empire's largest municipal park; Clay Pits Ponds State Park Preserve; and the landfill site, Fresh Kills.



MAJOR PERSONAE

Caliburn (125 Character Points)

Identity: Adam Sinclair (Secret)
Occupation: Crime-fighter, archaeologist
First Appearance: Amazing Presentations, Vol. 2, #1
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Cardiff, Wales
Affiliation: The Guard
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'1" (185 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 250 lbs. (114 kg) **Hair:** Black

Adam Sinclair was the child of an upper, middle-class family. When Sinclair was 10 his father passed away, leaving Sinclair to care for his mother, who was bedridden with cancer. Between school and caring for her, his only solace was in the heroic figures of myth, especially the chivalric Arthurian knights.

His mother's death, though unfortunate, ended her pain and finally liberated Sinclair. His high grades enabled him to attend Oxford for archaeology and medieval history, where he involved himself in team sports like rugby, and even joined the fencing team. Classmates knew him as serious and quiet, but extremely sharp. He continued on to do his doctorate at Oxford, investigating archaeological sites for historical evidence of King Arthur; he wanted to prove the legends were real. This was also the time when he met Jennifer Randall, a young detective at New Scotland Yard, at a fencing match. The two shared a similar lifestyle of hard work and long days, and soon found themselves engaged.

Sinclair was often in the field, investigating ancient sites. Meanwhile, Jennifer was appointed as junior detective to a case where the Ripper murders were being repeated. Sinclair was away when the case broke, and the detectives learned the killer's identity: Zachary King, an independently wealthy dilettante.

Sinclair, in the countryside, dreamt feverishly and unknowingly of King. He saw King ambush the detectives and hurt Jennifer badly. Sinclair awoke before dawn, filled with dreadful knowledge. His camp, however, was gone, and the forest obscured by a heavy mist. He was at the edge of a strange lake. Feverishly thirsty, Sinclair drank from the lake's water and saw a woman's face beneath the surface. "Why do you seek justice in the past?" was all she asked. The waters had a profound effect on Sinclair, clearing his mind and focusing his purpose. He awoke again in camp, not knowing if it had been a dream.

Sinclair rushed to London to see Jennifer, who had been stabbed in the abdomen and slashed across the face. He resolved to help her, and explained his newfound purpose. No longer would he simply study heroes — he would become one. Sinclair dressed as a modern, masked knight and called himself Caliburn (another name for Excalibur), before hunting for the missing King. Caliburn helped solve crimes when Jennifer was bound by due-process, and Jennifer taught him to be an excellent detective. King, meanwhile, had become Janus, the costume-hunter. Caliburn eventually tracked Janus down after the murder of the vigilante, Wrath, and delivered Janus to the Metropolitan Police. Caliburn became a staunch ally of Britain's police, and a role-model for younger heroes.

Unfortunately, King managed a daring escape and returned to murder Caliburn. They clashed many times, until finally, Janus snapped completely. He escalated the engagement, breaking all gentlemanly rules. Janus uncovered Caliburn's identity, captured Jennifer, and lured Caliburn through London. The trail ended at Whitechapel, with Jennifer's corpse. In the ensuing battle Janus beat Caliburn badly, scarring his face with a fireplace poker. Caliburn fled only to bind his wounds and acquire a new, metal mask. In the rematch Caliburn bested Janus, but would not kill him. Scotland Yard had enough evidence to lock him away for many, many years.

The memories of London were too painful, but Sinclair could not abandon his calling as a defender of justice. He had met costumed allies in the past, and most were found in America. After a final farewell to Jennifer's memory, he flew to Empire City, where he eventually joined the Guard.

Body	12	Attack Combat Value	14
Mind	9	Defense Combat Value	13
Soul	9	Health Points	105

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery
5	5	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Blind Fighting, Concealment, Judge Opponent, Portable Armoury)
5	10	Defense Combat Mastery
2	2	Divine Relationship
5	10	Gadgets (Various grenades weapons, B&E tools, police kit)
4	4	Heightened Awareness
10	10	Highly Skilled
4	4	Organizational Ties (New Scotland Yard)
2	2	Organizational Ties (Empire City PD)
6	6	Organizational Ties (The Guard)

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	4	Invisibility (Partial; Sight, Hearing)
	-1	* Restriction (Invisibility; for Sight must have shadows)
1	1	Jumping
4	4	Mind Shield
1	4	Sixth Sense (Truth; Area 3)
	2	* Concentration (Sixth Sense)

Lvl	Pts	Skills
1	6	Acrobatics (Tumbling)
1	1	Boating (Small Boats)
2	6	Burglary (Breaking & Entering)
3	10	City Knowledge (Empire City, downtown; London, downtown)
5	10	Cultural Arts (Archaeology)
2	4	Driving (Motorcycle)
2	8	Interrogation (Psychological)
4	12	Intimidation (Street)
3	3	Languages (English, French, Gaelic, Latin, Welsh)
1	3	Law (Criminal)
1	4	Mechanics (Locksmith)
1	4	Military Sciences (Tactics)
2	8	Police Sciences (Forensics)
2	6	Stealth (Camouflage)
1	2	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
1	3	Urban Tracking (Underworld)
2	16	Thrown Weapons (Grenades)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
2	16	Unarmed Defense (Holds)

Pts	Defects
2	Famous (Caliburn)
-2	Marked (Facial scars)
-3	Nemesis (Janus)
-1	Physically Unappealing
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity)

Lady of the Lantern (150 Character Points)

Identity: Michelle Lee (Secret)
Occupation: Student, adventurer
First Appearance: Tales from the Street #59
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Hong Kong, China
Affiliation: None
Territory: Empire City, Chinatown
Height: 5'5" (165 cm) **Eyes:** Green
Weight: 120 lbs. (55 kg) **Hair:** Black

Michelle was born to a prestigious family in Hong Kong, in 1977. Her father, Lee Kar-Fai, was a Triad leader, the *Dai Lo* ("Elder Brother") of the White Lotus Society. Samantha Banks, Michelle's mother, was a British fashion model who ignored much of Lee's business. Although involved in illegal actives, the White Lotus Society was seen as a "good Triad," more businessmen than gangsters.

Michelle showed much promise as a child, and was sent away to private school. She studied Wu Shu and Tai Chi Chuan, excelled at both, and won many competitions. Her teachers emphasized balance, defense, and performance over aggression. They were amazed the day Michelle awoke, glowing, on her 16th birthday. Her teachers called it the Buddha's blessing; Michelle was a lantern to blind evil. She learned to control her powers with their help.

When Lee learned of his daughter's abilities he grew concerned. The early '90s were a bad time as many fled Hong Kong, and White Lotus became vulnerable due to the instability. Lee planned to send Michelle to America so his enemies would not learn of her powers. Unfortunately, Lee's right hand and confidante believed Lee intended to abandon Hong Kong, which he could not abide. Wong Siu Tung, the *Yee Lo* ("Second Elder Brother") of White Lotus decided to usurp the *Dai Lo*.

Wong acted quickly and struck on the eve of Michelle's departure. Wong's men attacked the Lee household, killing Lee's guards and Samantha. Lee was grievously wounded, but escaped and warned Michelle. He gave her money and instructed her to leave immediately. Michelle's escort, Master Cheng, promised Lee she would ensure Michelle's safety; with that reassurance, Lee died.

Wong's men chased Michelle and Cheng through the city, culminating in a spectacular battle outside of Hong Kong International Airport. Michelle was forced to use her powers to blind the gangsters, then Cheng led them astray. Michelle bought a ticket and boarded a plane for Empire City, often looking over her shoulder.

Michelle was met at JFK International by her grandfather, Lee Kar-Leung. He had learned what happened, and comforted Michelle as best he could, assuring her she was now safe. He helped Michelle deal with the tragedy, and she slowly adjusted to life in Empire City. Her fear abated, she enrolled at Empire University in English Literature.

One month after her arrival, Wong's men found Lee Kar-Leung and demanded to know about Michelle and the "lantern woman." Michelle overheard, and realized they did not know she was the one with powers. Quickly disguising herself, she attacked the men and drove them away, warning them White Lotus had no sway here. The Lees were under protection of the Lady of the Lantern.

Body	10	Strength 7	Attack Combat Value 10
Mind	11		Defense Combat Value 16
Soul	10		Health Points 100

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
3	3	Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes)
8	16	Defense Combat Mastery
1	1	Divine Relationship
3	9	Extra Defenses
2	2	Features (Appearance)
7	7	Highly Skilled

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
2	13	Mind Control (Area 4; Targets 3)
	-1	• Detectable (Mind Control; Bright coloured lights, electromagnetic signature)
		• Reduction (-2; Mind Control; Beguile / dazzle only)
5	25	Projection (Area 4; Duration 3; Range 3)
	-1	• Detectable (Projection; Electromagnetic signature)
	-2	• Restriction (Projection, Visual only)
1	5	Sensory Block (Sight; Area 4)
	-1	• Detectable (Sensory Block; Strobe blast, electromagnetic signature)
4	16	Special Attack "Flash-Blind" (20 Damage, Flare x7, No Damage, Limited Shots x2, Short Range)
	-3	• Maximum Force (Special Attack)
4	4	Special Attack "Blinding Aura" (40 Damage, Area Effect x2, Aura, Flare, No Damage, Melee)
	-3	• Maximum Force (Special Attack; cannot use Levels 1-3)
2	2	Special Defense (Own Attributes x2)
4	4	Special Movement (Balance, Cat-like, Swinging, Wall-Bouncing)

LVL	PTS	Skills
4	24	Acrobatics (Tumbling)
2	6	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)
2	6	City Knowledge (Empire City, Chinatown)
2	4	Cultural Arts (Literature)
2	6	Disguise (Costume)
1	2	Foreign Culture (Hong Kong Chinese)
2	2	Languages (Cantonese, English, Mandarin)
1	3	Medical (Emergency Response)
3	6	Performing Arts (Dance)
1	8	Power Usage: Projection
2	6	Stealth (Camouflage)
1	2	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
1	3	Urban Tracking (Residential)
2	14	Melee Attack (Staff)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)

PTS	Defects
0	Famous (Lady of the Lantern)
-3	Nemesis (Triads)
-1	Nemesis (Wyatt Lee)
-1	Less Capable (Strength)
-1	Significant Other (Grandfather)
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret Identity)
0	Wanted (As Lady of the Lantern, for questioning)

Since then, Michelle has taken up the mantle regularly, finding she cannot sit back when innocents are threatened. She defends the people of Chinatown, primarily, but will act wherever required. She battles the local Triads, but understands most are not evil; yet no matter how honourable they may be, their actions are often wrong. One day, she will return to Hong Kong to deal with Wong for good.

Mother Raven (150 Character Points)

Identity: Katherine McCloud (Secret, known to Anisinabe)
Occupation: Teacher, speaker, writer, painter, adventurer
First Appearance: Amazing Presentations, Vol. III, #45
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Sunset Lake Reservation, Ontario, Canada
Affiliation: The Guard
Territory: Empire City
Height: 5'8" (173 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 160 lbs. (73 kg) **Hair:** Black

The old ways had been abandoned in Sunset Lake Reserve by the time Katherine McCloud was born; it was a familiar story in Northern Ontario. The Ojibwa sank into despair, suffering from poor diet, sedentary lifestyle, and rampant diabetes. The ancestors and spirits of the world were all but forgotten to gambling and alcohol.

Katherine excelled in school, but the instability of her home life took its toll. Her father was often gone for months, and they had to take in her mother's mother. Both parents were alcoholics, but her mother would try putting life in order each time father left. Yet whenever he returned Katherine's mother would take him back, beginning anew the cycle of abuse.

By high school, Katherine turned to drinking and drugs as a panacea for the pain and anger she felt, and for the strange visions that plagued her dreams. She dismissed her grandmother's foolish talk of spirits, and refused to admit she was spiralling out of control; Katherine could no longer ignore life when she discovered she was pregnant at 16. She exhibited a supreme effort of will to finally live clean, which her grandmother noted proudly.

Without the alcohol, her grandmother made sense, and Katherine turned to her grandmother's spirits to ease her burden. Drumming circles and sweat lodges brought the image of the Raven, growing ever stronger. As she neared her delivery date, grandmother sent her on a vision quest into the wilderness. The Great Raven appeared, speaking of the need for change. Katherine's role was to become a symbol for her village, for her daughter, for all Anisinabe — the people of the land. She awoke in her mother's house, now a mother herself. Her grandmother taught her to be a good parent, see the spirits, and represent her people. In time, she became a powerful teacher herself, reaching out as a writer, painter, and speaker.

During Katherine's 20th summer, Lady Starbright pursued General Winter across Ontario, until Winter knocked the hero unconscious and deep into Sunset Lake. Katherine desperately struggled to save her while the General's wake turned the village from summer to winter. Raven helped Katherine save Starbright, before both women co-operated to drive Winter off.

Starbright liked Katherine immediately, and offered to teach her. Katherine accepted, knowing she had a greater responsibility. She left her daughter with grandmother, and let Starbright show her the world. Starbright introduced Katherine, now Mother Raven, to the American Sentinel, Slipstream, and others, while Raven guided Katherine's abilities, teaching her to draw from his power, to create shadows, and cast visions.

An early mission with Starbright against Artificer resulted in tragedy; Artificer lashed out indiscriminately and killed a young Ms. Matthews. Her son, Samuel, forever blamed the women, calling them false heroes; his hatred grew over the years, turning him into Katherine's frequent enemy.

Raven still whispers secrets in his hoarse caw; Katherine learned to take strength from sorrow, and thus faced Starbright's death by joining the Guard. Raven even taught Katherine to touch the sun, as he once did to bring fire to mankind, but only at great need, and at great cost. Now, she travels to protect and teach, but always returns to the one who needs her most: her daughter.

Body	5	Attack Combat Value	9
Mind	9	Defense Combat Value	10
Soul	15	Health Points	100

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
3	6	Defense Combat Mastery
2	2	Divine Relationship
1	1	Features (Appearance)
4	4	Highly Skilled
4	4	Organizational Ties (The Guard)

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
9	81	Alternate Form ("Mother Raven")
	0	• Special Requirement (Raven's staff needed to transform)
1	1	Heightened Senses (Sight)
2	2	Mind Shield
4	8	Sixth Sense (Astral, Evil, Illusions, Magic; Area 4)
	-2	• Concentration (Sixth Sense)

Lvl	Pts	Alternate Form "Mother Raven" Attributes
3	12	Block Power (All powers)
		• Reduction (-2; Block Powers; Not vs. Special Attacks)
2	6	Environmental Influence (Darkness, Light; Area 3; Duration 1)
	-1	• Concentration (Environmental Influence)
3	9	Flight (Cannot hover)
4	29	Illusion (Soul based; Area 5; Duration 4; Targets 4)
8	24	Mass Decrease ("Living Shadow" form)
	-7	Maximum Force (Mass Decrease)
3	17	Pocket Dimension (Raven's lands, accessible through any shadow; Area 5)
	-4	• Activation Time (Pocket Dimension)
	-2	• Restriction (Pocket Dimension; Can only stay in Raven's lands for 1 hour at a time)
3	12	Special Attack "Sun's Kiss" (100 Damage, Drain Soul, Flare, Homing, Spreading, Backblast x2, Limited Shots x3, Static)
	-3	• Backlash (Special Attack: suffers 20 Damage)
	-2	• Maximum Force (Special Attack)

Lvl	Pts	Skills
2	2	Boating (Small Boats)
2	7	City Knowledge (Sunset Lake; Empire City, waterfront)
2	2	Controlled Breathing (Cyclic Breathing)
2	4	Cultural Arts (Oral History)
2	2	Domestic Arts (Cooking)
2	4	Foreign Culture (Ojibwa)
3	3	Languages (English, Chippewa, Crow, Ojibwa, Tlingit)
1	3	Medical (Homeopathy)
1	2	Navigation (Wilderness)
2	4	Performing Arts (Public Speaking)
3	3	Swimming (Free Diving)
2	2	Wilderness Survival (Forest)
2	2	Writing (Poetic)
3	30	Special Ranged Attack (Sun's Kiss)

Pts	Defects
0	Famous (Katherine McCloud)
-2	Famous (Mother Raven)
-2	Nemesis (Mister Matthews)
-2	Recurring Nightmares (Life without Raven)
-2	Significant Other (Daughter)
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)
-3	Special Requirement (Raven's staff to focus all Alternate Form Attributes)

Officer Prometheus (175 Character Points)

Identity: Steven Davis (Publicly known)
Occupation: Police officer
First Appearance: The Untouchables #29
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Empire City
Affiliation: Empire City Police Department
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'0" (183 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 200 lbs. (91 kg) **Hair:** Black

Steven Davis grew up in Harlem in the 1970s. His father, Luther, was an infantryman in Vietnam who volunteered for a classified CIA-run supersolider program. The process was a marginal success in Luther's case; he emerged with slight increases to his strength and speed, but never told anyone.

Luther returned to his young wife, Nancy, and in 1970 Steven was born. Luther took his army experiences and put them into law enforcement, becoming an excellent beat-cop. Steven saw his Dad as the greatest hero, even compared to the most powerful masked adventurers.

In 1983, Luther gave his life in the line of duty. Iron Duke's army of iron-walkers plunged Empire City into chaos, resulting in wild panic and relentless firestorms. Luther helped hundreds survive the rain of fire by guiding them into the shelter of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, but himself collapsed to smoke and heat; he never awoke.

Steven was determined to follow in his father's footsteps. He studied criminology in school, and enrolled in the Police Academy when he turned 21. Officer Davis strove to live up to the "serve and protect" motto of the department. He made an effort to befriend the residents of his beat, and was liked and respected. Steven could be strict and fierce, but was exceptionally fair and understanding. He knew the system was sometimes wrong and went to great lengths to help people pull themselves together, rather than just sending them to jail.

In 1995, Steven was the first on scene at a climatic battle at the Apollo Theatre between Red Minstrel and several members of the Untouchables: Anasazi, White Hat, and Drifter. Ushering the crowd to safety, Steven was caught in a wave of Red Minstrel's chaos energies, and blacked out in pain from the witchfire.

Steven awoke, moments later, still burning, but no longer in any pain. The glowing flames danced with his own movements, rising and falling with his breaths. He ran into the theatre to see if anyone was trapped; Steven noticed as he brushed burning areas he was absorbing the fire. Inside, Red Minstrel had the upper hand, but Steven discovered how to unleash the energy he had stored, and soon the heroes were victorious.

The department was thrilled with Steven's performance. The commissioner propositioned him to become the first public metahuman officer, acting as a role-model and spokesman for the police. Steven briefly considered resigning, but realized it was more important to continue in his father's path. He believed he could do more good with the force, helping them deal with superhuman crimes, and teaching society to accept metahumans.

The department helped Steven practice the use and control of his powers, and he earned a promotion to Sergeant. The Public Affairs office developed his look and the code name Prometheus. Steven's role was one of the most stressful, sent to the worst incidents coupled with being on call for public events. While sometimes overwhelmed by the job, Steven regularly saw good things come about from his actions, giving him the courage to continue.

Prometheus maintains a sterling reputation, and has earned the respect of numerous heroes in Empire City. Last year, at the Policeman's Ball, he met a young architect, Elizabeth Ray. They have recently become engaged.

Body	10	Attack Combat Value	13
Mind	8	Defense Combat Value	10
Soul	10	Health Points	120

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery
4	4	Combat Technique (Accuracy x2, Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent)
3	6	Defense Combat Mastery
2	6	Extra Defenses
3	6	Gadgets (Police kit, tactical armour)
	-1	Conditional Ownership (Gadgets; Property of EPD)
3	3	Heightened Awareness
7	7	Highly Skilled
4	8	Organizational Ties (Empire City PD)
1	2	Tough

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
7	14	Damage Absorption (Normal)
		• Reduction (-6; Damage Absorption; Only absorb fire/heat attacks)
1	8	Environmental Influence (Heat; Area 3; Duration 4)
	-1	• Detectable (Environmental Influence; Glows with witchfire)
1	1	Heightened Senses (Infravision)
3	20	Nullify (One; Drain; Area 3; Duration 1; Range 2; Targets 2)
	-1	• Detectable (Nullify; Glows with witchfire)
		• Reduction (-6; Nullify; Only fire/heat based Attributes)
4	16	Special Attack "Roman Candle" (80 Damage, Flare, Burning, Short Range, Low Penetration)
4	4	Special Attack "Fire Strike" (60 Damage, Area Effect x3, Burning, Flare, Backblast x2, Limited x2)
	-3	• Maximum Force (Fire Strike)
4	4	Special Attack "Blazing Aura" (60 Damage, Aura, Burning, Melee)
2	2	Special Defense (Own Attributes x2)
3	12	Telekinesis (Fire; Area 4; Range 2)
	-1	• Detectable (Telekinesis; Glows with witchfire)

LVL	PTS	Skills
3	9	City Knowledge (Empire City, Harlem)
1	2	Cultural Arts (Literature)
1	5	Demolitions (Bomb Disposal)
1	4	Interrogation (Psychological)
2	6	Law (Criminal)
1	3	Medical (Emergency)
3	12	Police Sciences (Forensics)
1	6	Powerlifting (Humans)
2	16	Power Usage: Nullify
1	2	Social Sciences (Social Work)
2	4	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
1	1	Writing (Technical)
1	8	Gun Combat (Pistol)
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Flame Blast)
1	12	Ranged Defense (Personal)

PTS	Defects
-2	Famous
-1	Ism (Known metahuman, cop)
-1	Owned (EPD)
-2	Red Tape
-1	Significant Other (Fiancée Elizabeth Ray)
-2	Vulnerability (Water, drenching; acts as 1 BP because it is so common)

Red Phoenix (250 Character Points)

Identity: Sarah Gebhart (Secret)
Occupation: Adventurer, history professor at EU
First Appearance: Lady Starbright #88
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Berlin, West Germany
Affiliation: The Guard
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'2" (188 cm) **Eyes:** Hazel
Weight: 210 lbs. (95 kg) **Hair:** Red

Sarah Gebhart, a bright and exceptionally athletic girl, was plagued by never-ending nightmares when she turned 16. She continually dreamed of birth through fire, or death in darkness. It affected her studies and health, and no doctor or medication seemed able to help. Eventually, her parents took her on an extended vacation to a friend's country estate in southern Bavaria.

In late summer, when Sarah felt stronger, several classmates visited and took her on day trips. The last excursion was to Strasbourg, and a ruined castle from when the French crossed the Rhine in WWII. Dover Angel was killed there when the American Sentinel and she clashed with Iron Duke and Herr Cryptic.

That night, Sarah's dreams returned. She rose in a dreamlike trance, dressed, and left the hostel. She walked to the ruin well past midnight, followed by a shadow. Her waking dream revealed a hidden shaft, leading to a lost, underground chamber. Looming above her was a huge, iron man, covered with dust. A shining bayonet protruded from the automaton's chest. Sarah slowly advanced, while the shadow following her descended.

Sarah cautiously touched the blade, and was overwhelmed by an explosion of memories: it was nameless and ageless, passed through generations of sister-warriors; each was a champion of justice in her own time, shaped from contemporary dreams; as one died another was born. The last hero had been Dover Angel, slain by Iron Duke.

Rachel Wilde, a relic thief long hunting for this mystic weapon, landed beside Sarah and rushed to grab the blade. Sarah realized her intent and wrestled for control of the weapon. The artifact suddenly began to melt! Liquid silver flowed over them while they fought for power and dominance. The tie was broken when Iron Duke's motionless body absorbed the last fragment of the weapon. A tremendous thunderclap threw them apart. Sarah had gained the greatest portion, partially cloaked in armour and holding a brilliant energy blade. Wilde held the second most, armoured in a green battlesuit. Iron Duke soaked up but a fraction, but more than enough to reawaken him and greatly increase his strength. The weakened ruins unexpectedly collapsed upon them, ending the battle prematurely.

Sarah emerged, filled with fragments of past lives. She knew she had been chosen to stand against darkness and injustice. The nightmares stopped and she returned to school with the knowledge that she could manifest the mystic armaments with but a thought; bookish Sarah would vanish, to be replaced by the Amazonian Red Phoenix.

Red Phoenix befriended Lady Starbright and the American Sentinel in Europe. Sarah soon travelled to America to study history at EU, in part because the city was a centre of metahuman activity. She has lived there for many years, and eventually became a professor of history. Sarah strove to learn more about her incarnations, and tried several times to retrieve the stolen armour from Wilde. Iron Duke was a constant nemesis, and Wilde, as Green Ronin, became an infrequent but difficult opponent. Red Phoenix joined the Guard as a full member in remembrance of her close friend, Lady Starbright.

Body	8/15	Attack Combat Value	9/14
Mind	7	Defense Combat Value	7/14
Soul	12	Health Points	100/195

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
5	5	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Blind Fighting, Block Ranged Attacks, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes)
2	2	Features (Appearance)
2	2	Heightened Awareness
11	11	Highly Skilled
18	72	Item of Power (Armour; 90 points)
	2	Only usable by Chosen One
6	6	Organizational Ties (The Guard)
4	4	Organizational Ties (EU History Department)

LVL	PTS	Item of Power's Attributes
6	16	Armour (Unprotected area)
7	14	Enhanced Stat (Body)
3	12	Flight
3	14	Force Field (Stops 40, Blocks Incorporeal, Area 2)
4	4	Immovable
8	32	Special Attack "Phoenix Blade" (100 Damage, Affects Incorporeal, Muscle Powered, Penetrating Fields x3, Melee)
	-2	• Maximum Force (Phoenix Blade)

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
6	54	Alternate Form ("Red Phoenix")
1	35	Dynamic Powers (Magic, major; Area 4; Duration 5; Range 3; Targets 3)
1	4	Reincarnation (16 years, difficult to stop, must kill next heir with Phoenix Blade)
	-3	• Restriction (Reincarnation, takes 16 years minimum)
8	8	Special Defense (Ageing, Disease x2, Hunger, Pain, Poison x2, Sleep)

LVL	PTS	Alternate Form "Red Phoenix" Attributes
3	9	Attack Combat Mastery
5	10	Defense Combat Mastery
1	8	Extra Attacks
2	6	Extra Defenses
1	1	Special Movement (Balance)
5	20	Superstrength
3	6	Tough

LVL	PTS	Skills
2	12	Acrobatics (Flexibility)
3	9	City Knowledge (Berlin, downtown)
3	6	Cultural Arts (History)
2	6	Disguise (Make-up)
1	1	Etiquette (Upper Class)
3	6	Foreign Cultures (Austrian, German, Italian, Spanish)
2	6	Intimidation (Street)
5	5	Languages (Most European languages)
2	6	Medical (Emergency Response)
2	8	Military Sciences (Tactics)
2	4	Navigation (Air)
4	8	Social Sciences (Anthropology)
2	2	Wilderness Survival (Forest)
2	4	Wilderness Tracking (Forest)
1	7	Archery (Bow)
1	7	Melee Attack (Sword)
1	7	Melee Defense (Sword)
1	12	Ranged Defense (Personal)
1	8	Thrown Weapons (Blades)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
1	8	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

PTS	Defects
-2	Famous (Red Phoenix)
-2	Nemesis (Iron Duke, Green Ronin)
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)

Sentinel (300 Character Points)

Identity: Maxwell Liberty (Publicly known)
Occupation: Adventurer
First Appearance: War Stories #20 (Max Liberty crippled), War Stories #23 (Reborn as Sentinel)
Former Aliases: The American Sentinel
Place of Birth: Boston, Massachusetts
Affiliation: The Guard
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'4" (193 cm)
Weight: 350 lbs. (159 kg)
Eyes: Blue
Hair: Black (Slightly greying)

If any one hero defines the struggle against tyranny and fear, it is the Sentinel. He has always stood for the mythic America, an ideal land of freedom, safety, and opportunity. He strives for peace, and is its foremost defender.

Maxwell Liberty, a young Ace in WWI, was tragically shot down and crippled by Manfred von Richthofen, "the Red Baron." Paralyzed below the waist, Liberty returned home to manage business properties inherited from his father. When WWII broke out, however, he turned away from commercial enterprise and became a civilian instructor for the military, where his sharp and tactical mind earned the respect of colleagues and students. His patriotism, heroism, and sincerity led Major General Groves and Dr. Vannevar Bush to select him for the top secret Project Anodyne, an attempt to create a universal panacea by atomically energizing the human body.

The project injected chemical cocktails into a dozen patriotic men, no longer able to serve, then subjected them to atomic fire. Liberty alone walked out, crackling with energy, physically and mentally unscathed. His body had healed and rejuvenated to prime condition; he looked half his age. Further experiments revealed tremendous abilities: flight; superstrength; increased mass density; invulnerability; and the ability to generate atomic energies, harmful and benign.

Liberty was transferred to Project Sentinel and trained by Admiral Shaw to become an elite soldier. Shaw garbed him in a brilliant costume to inspire the troops and code named him the American Sentinel. Initially, Sentinel flew with the Flying Tigers in China. In Europe he encountered his first strong opposition, metahumans and weird weapons produced by desperation and Nazi ingenuity. No enemy was more vicious or stalwart than Kreuzritter. They fought to repeated stand-offs until Sentinel, with Muzhik, defeated the Nazi *Übermensch* at Elbe. Kreuzritter was driven into his own lava flow and died.

After Germany's defeat, Sentinel escorted the B-29 Enola Gay on its atomic bombing runs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As the President's eye-witness, he was the first American to see the destruction, but after reporting to Truman, Sentinel requested a discharge — the devastation had been too terrible. Sentinel could not be responsible for more death, and knew that as a soldier he would be commanded to act against his beliefs. Truman recognized Liberty's contributions and granted him a secret honourable discharge.

Liberty decided to start again. He transferred most of his holdings to Empire City, relocating to the greatest of metropolises. Several trusted managers ran his business while he explored the world. Through the '50s, Sentinel learned the streets and made alliances with adventurers such as Slipstream and Lady Starbright. He opposed Soviet agents globally, even clashing with former ally Muzhik. The '60s and '70s brought a wave of menacing metahuman villains. The nation of Thule rose under direction of the second Kreuzritter, and Lady Starbright died. Sentinel helped found the Guard to protect Starbright's memory, and keep the dark forces at bay. By the '80s Sentinel was an international hero, and officially dropped the "American" from his moniker. Finally, in the '90s, the difficulty maintaining a civilian life reached a climax when Janus discovered Sentinel's identity. Sentinel not only embarrassed Janus on live television, but unmasked himself as Max Liberty, in the hope of becoming more accessible to the common man.

Body	12	Attack Combat Value	17
Mind	12	Defense Combat Value	12
Soul	15	Health Points	195

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery
4	4	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes, Steady Hand)
1	2	Defense Combat Mastery
1	1	Divine Relationship
1	8	Extra Attacks
2	6	Extra Defenses
2	2	Features (Appearance)
5	5	Heightened Awareness
12	12	Highly Skilled
8	8	Organizational Ties (The Guard — Chairman)
3	6	Tough
3	9	Wealth

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
2	2	Adaptation (Radiation, Vacuum)
6	18	Armour
7	28	Flight
	-1	• Detectable (Radiation signature, bright glow, hum)
3	16	Healing (Area 2; Targets 2)
	-1	• Detectable (Radiation signature, bright glow, hum)
	-2	• Concentration (Healing)
5	5	Heightened Senses (Sight, Hearing, Gamma Vision, Telescopic Vision, Ultravision)
3	3	Immovable
8	32	Special Attack "Atomic Thunder" (100 Damage, Area Effect x2, Flare, Long Range, Penetrating Armour x2, Penetrating Fields x2, Backblast, Inaccurate x2, Limited Shots, Slow)
8	8	Special Attack "Atomic Gaze" (80 Damage, Accurate, Burning, Penetrating Armour x3, Short Range)
6	6	Special Attack "Atomic Fire" (80 Damage, Penetrating Armour, Penetrating Fields)
10	10	Special Defense (Ageing, Disease x2, Hunger, Own Attributes x2, Oxygen, Poison x2, Sleep)
9	36	Superstrength

LVL	PTS	Skills
1	6	Acrobatics (Flexibility)
1	4	Biological Sciences (Physiology)
3	9	City Knowledge (Empire City, Manhattan)
3	6	Cultural Arts (History)
2	10	Demolitions (Artificial Structures)
3	3	Etiquette (Upper Class)
2	6	Intimidation (Street)
3	3	Languages (English, Cantonese, French, German, Russian)
2	7	Law (International, US Criminal)
2	2	Management and Administration (Executive)
2	6	Medical (Emergency Response)
3	12	Military Sciences (Strategy)
2	4	Navigation (Stars)
4	8	Performing Arts (Public Speaking)
1	12	Ranged Defense (Personl)
2	20	Special Ranged Attack (Atomic Fire)
2	16	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
2	16	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

PTS	Defects
-1	Achilles Heel (Extreme cold attacks)
-1	Bane (Extreme cold, -100 °C or lower)
-3	Famous
-2	Nemesis (Kreuzritter)
-2	Nemesis (White Rooks)
-1	Red Tape (Spokesperson for the Guard)
-1	Special Requirement (Radiation/sunlight needed to recharge)
-2	Vulnerability (Extreme cold)

Slipstream (175 Character Points)

Identity: Johnny Smith (Secret)
Occupation: Adventurer, scientist, physics professor at EU
First Appearance: Science Unbound #2
Former Aliases: Ema'Ge 412 of the Second Region, Ema'Ge
Place of Birth: Alpha Centauri system, planet Parousia, Gal'Leal City
Affiliation: The Guard
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'5" (196 cm)
Weight: 220 lbs. (100 kg)
Eyes: Pale blue
Hair: Brown

Early in the 5th Century, two starships from the Alpha Centauri system ventured into Sol space. High above Earth, the attacking Haud destroyer crippled the fleeing Parousian flyer. Preferring death to recapture, the Parousians rammed their ship into the destroyer, and both plummeted through the planet's atmosphere to destruction, crashing into what would become Japan.

Ema'Ge 412 of the Second Region was the sole surviving refugee from planet Parousia. He sought safety deep underground and passed into a regenerative sleep for over a thousand years. Ema'Ge awoke as atomics exploded at Hiroshima. He emerged from his protective cocoon to find a bizarre and peculiar world moving in slow motion. His Parousian metabolism was highly accelerated compared to an Earthling's, and he realized he moved much faster than the people around him. He had to force himself to slow down in order to interact with others.

US military personnel found Ema'Ge while he was trying to decipher his new environment, and transferred him to a military hospital for injured soldiers and rescued P.O.W.s. Ema'Ge learned quickly, picking up a working vocabulary of both English and Japanese. As comprehension grew, he realized he had to see America. It promised to be everything his home planet was not: free and accepting. He adopted the name Johnny Smith and took leave of the military's hospitality. Johnny journeyed to Empire City where he fell in love with the myth of America. Yet in his travels he also saw cruelty, animosity, oppression, and tragedy.

Johnny knew in his heart that he could help; he looked to the American Sentinel as a beacon of hope and realized he too must aid wherever he could. As Ema'Ge, cloaked in a white bodysuit, he fought crime, disasters, and the abuse of power. He was infrequently seen, but well-liked during these early years. Sometimes his passions would get the better of him, especially when the strong oppressed the weakest of society. His occasional allies, Sentinel and Lady Starbright, were a calming influence, helping him keep perspective. Whenever he encountered the Haud on Earth, however, he became relentless.

Johnny established himself as a professor of theoretical physics at Empire City University. His research revealed he was slipping out of time as Earthlings knew it because his speed was increasing. As his time diverges from Earth-time it becomes harder and harder to interact with the normal world. Johnny retired to develop a suit that could withstand the widening timeslip effect.

Body	9	Attack Combat Value	13
Mind	10	Defense Combat Value	8
Soul	9	Health Points	130

lvl	pts	Characteristic Attributes
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery
4	4	Combat Technique (Block Ranged Attacks, Lightning Reflexes x2, Steady Hand)
2	2	Features (Appearance x2)
1	2	Defense Combat Mastery
3	24	Extra Attacks
4	12	Extra Defenses
1	1	Gadget (Time-suit)
4	4	Heightened Awareness
6	6	Highly Skilled
8	8	Organizational Ties (The Guard)
6	6	Organizational Ties (Department Head Physics, EU)
2	4	Tough

lvl	pts	Power Attributes
2	2	Mind Shield
1	6	Regeneration
2	2	Special Defense (Ageing, Disease)
3	3	Special Movement (Balance, Light-Footed, Untrackable)
3	30	Speed
	-2	• Maximum Force (Speed)

lvl	pts	Skills
2	8	Biological Sciences (Xenobiology)
3	9	City Knowledge (Empire City, Manhattan Island)
2	4	Climbing (Walls)
1	4	Computers (Programming)
1	4	Electronics (Computers)
1	2	Foreign Culture (Parousian)
4	4	Languages (Parousian, Cantonese, English, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish)
2	6	Medical (First Aid)
3	6	Navigation (Space)
5	25	Physical Sciences (Physics)
3	6	Piloting (Space)
2	4	Social Sciences (Psychology)
2	4	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
2	2	Swimming (Free Diving)
2	2	Writing (Scientific Papers)

pts	Defects
-1	Nemesis (Alice, Queen of Hearts)
-2	Nemesis (Jade Naga, All Haud)
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)
-2	Special Requirement (Time suit needed to move at normal speed)

The Sentinel encouraged Johnny to return to duty after he had fashioned a temporary solution (he needs to wear the time-suit to slow down to "normal speed"). Rechristened Slipstream, Johnny officially joined the Guard at Lady Starbright's death, and was granted American citizenship by the President for his service.

Recently, Slipstream has been targeted by the femme fatale Alice, Queen of Hearts. They have battled several times due to her association with the Jade Naga. As the only hero to actually apprehend her for the authorities, however, he has earned her complete enmity and hatred.

The Baron

The Baron is a mysterious figure who primarily operates along the southeast coast of the United States. Often regarded as sinister and suspicious, those who can see beyond his ghoulish façade realize his actions are just and honourable. He champions the causes of his "family," practitioners of Voodoo, but on days he feels generous anyone can be a little brother or little sister.

Baron was born William Cross, son to a strict Protestant Minister — but William was chosen by the Voodoo *loa*. The Bible only speaks of brimstone, while the *loa* threaten to kill you if you refuse them. William didn't really think he had a choice.

William initially kept his conversion a secret, and traveled to Haiti to see the land of his ancestors. He learned his family's name changed when his parents moved to America. William studied the people, the culture, the religion ... and the music. A gifted musician, his talent bloomed under the tutelage of Haitian drummers. Once the drumbeat started, so too did the visions.

William Cross left, but Guilliame LaCroix returned, drummer, mystic, and healer. The *loa* have commanded him to help his people. He is to be the voice, the hand, and the rhythm of the gods in "Amurca." As the Baron he channels all aspects of the *loa*: Legba, guardian of the crossroads; Ghede, clown and king of the cemetery; Samedi, judge of the soul; Ogoun, gangster hero; and many others, for the sake of his people.

Lady Starbright

Lady Starbright debuted in a splash of energy, catching a crippled DC-8 with her energy web and slowly bringing it to Earth. Starbright was the first new superhero to appear after the McCarthy hearings ended, and she was accepted with cheers and open hearts. Her mercy, compassion, and beauty won over people throughout the world.

Angela Douglas was born in 1945 to a mixed family. Her childhood in Florida was difficult, but she learned proper decorum from her mother while her father, John, taught her to fight. John's service in WWII with the Tuskeegee Airmen landed him a test-pilot position in a secret rocket program based at Cape Canaveral in 1949. In 1955, John vanished during a mission and was presumed dead; Angela was 10. He returned five years later, riding the tail of a falling starship.

Angela discovered the crash-site near Canaveral, where John lay dying. John explained he was chosen by an ancient race that dwelled amongst the stars, the Nimbus, who strove to protect all life. There were many evils on Earth and in space, such as the invading craft he had just stopped. The Nimbus made John into a universal champion, but now Angela had to take up his duty, to keep the darkness at bay.

As John died his powers passed to Angela. She learned to control starlight, shaping semi-solid shields, tools, and weapons as needed. She flew through the sky and space, and to the stars. As Lady Starbright she defended the Earth time again from alien threats like the Haud, Red Minstrel, and from human menaces like Artificer and Kreuzritter.

Starbright's death at the hands of the White Rooks was as tragic as Kennedy's, Monroe's, or King's. America mourned and felt lost. The heroes who survived her formed the Guard in her memory, promising never to let the light burn out.

Magistrate

Magistrate is a man somewhat out of his time. He lost 25 years to alien surgery, which transformed him into a metamorph, able to mould his body into any shape or form. Now, he struggles to adjust to his new life, living the superhero role he envied as a child.

Daniel Fischlin grew up in Montreal, and attended McGill University for criminology and law. He then joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to be one of the good guys. In 1954, Fischlin was posted far north, to the town of Aklavik, Northwest Territories.

Fischlin often acted as policeman, postman, and judge in the region. Many of the people lived far outside of town, coming to Aklavik for supplies or to sell furs. The natives told stories about strange lights and mysteries about the Mackenzie River, but most townies assumed it was local superstition.

That winter, Fischlin went to check on the missing Lane family. Their cabin was long deserted, but while investigating the area, Fischlin crashed through the ice. He discovered the entrance to an underground alien enclave, completely protected from the elements. Unfortunately, the Haud found him, too....

Captain Zin'Tor Jahn experimented on humans to determine their worth as a vassal race. Fischlin was imprisoned and constantly operated on for years. They rewrote his genetic code, redesigning him hundreds of ways. They built him out of lithium, sodium, and potassium; nickel, silver, and mercury; chlorine, bromine, and iodine.

Somehow, Fischlin survived, and retained each form. He mastered the ability to change states, and finally escaped, destroying the base. Returning to the world was difficult, but he chose to return as a hero and start anew. No longer a Mountie, he still protects Canada, in the cities and the wild north, always on guard.

Muzhik

Lt. Anton Dragan was a hero, and more importantly a survivor, of Stalingrad. He proved himself an inspired commander, and a valiant guerrilla fighter, tying up the Germans for days. Dragan was chosen for the secret Operation Red Star, in December, 1942.

At Arzamas-16, the project leaders, Marshal Nikolai Rodimstev and Doctor Rodion Deriabin, subjected the men to a process based upon the American supersoldier program Anodyne. This project also ended in tragedy. Dragan was trapped by debris until a strange force lessened the weight of fallen beams, allowing him to easily free himself. The radiation changed Dragan, enabling him to sense and control gravitational forces.

Dragan felt blessed, for surviving, and immediately accepted his responsibility as the Soviet supersoldier. Dragan made only one request, that his code name be "Muzhik," a Russian peasant. He did not voice inner thoughts, but he did not want the people to associate him as a weapon of the Red Army, or worse, the secret police. He vowed to be a hero of and for his people.

Muzhik fought the Germans on many fronts until they fell at Berlin. For the next forty years he would struggle to maintain his vow. Throughout the Cold War he would face off with former allies, but remained honourable and just, while at home he would refuse immoral or unethical orders, keeping his actions just shy of treason. With the fall of the USSR, Muzhik has found new freedoms, and simultaneously new responsibilities.

The Untouchables

The Untouchables are a myth of the West Coast, a rumour exploited in tabloids and scrawled in graffiti. Not all metahumans have the luxury and support of groups like the Guard. Many feel trapped and confused, and either slip through the cracks, run away, or turn to crime. The Untouchables might be a way to start over.

The group centres on Anasazi, a Navajo of untold years, who believes metahumans deserve a life bereft of persecution and hatred. He seeks those whom he feels would benefit from a second chance, those teetering on the edge between freedom and damnation, and assists them in finding the road again to continue the journey. He takes the role of wise elder and teaches his new brothers and sisters to use their abilities responsibly.

They live like nomads or vagabonds, often helping others only to be feared or hunted. Yet they endure, travelling the West Coast, striving to make a difference.

Currently, there are five metahumans in Anasazi's family:

Anasazi

An ancient Native American, Anasazi traces his heritage to the Navajo tribe. It is unknown exactly how old he is, but he has made oblique comments to the fall of the Canyon de Chelly and the Long Walk. Anasazi has taken the role of the elder, the wise one who is there to direct the next generation. Not only an excellent warrior and strategist, he is also the physical and spiritual centre of the Untouchables.

Anasazi appears wizened, but is still very strong and sinewy, capable of remarkable feats of strength, dexterity, and endurance. He has the power of density manipulation, able to make himself strong and heavy, or light and nimble. He can even meld into the ground, phasing through objects.

Drifter

Drifter has travelled with Anasazi the longest; his old friend is Drifter's only constant anchor to this Earth. Drifter side-steps across dimensions, brilliant scarves streaming, and returns with wondrously strange gadgets. He refuses to speak about his past, although one can see a great sadness in his eyes (on those rare occasions he removes his mask and scarves). While Drifter maintains an upbeat demeanour, his friends realize he carries a great burden upon his soul.

Skybreaker

Skybreaker, Paulo Ramirez, was born with the ability to grow enormously tall. The authorities in Mexico have a strong anti-metahuman policy, and once his powers became publicly known, he was wanted equally by drug cartels, as an enforcer, and by the Mexican army, as a soldier. He did the only thing he could, and sneaked across the border into the US, heading toward Los Angeles. He lived by his wits and as a fugitive for some time, engaging in petty larceny to survive. Ramirez made a few friendly acquaintances with other homeless and runaways, keeping his powers to himself, until forced to reveal himself to save a friend. Before he knew what was happening, a local cartel leader had pressed him into service. His brief involvement with the Mexican mafia resulted in only one good thing: a custom set of storm-bracelets designed by the Artificer. Things were spiralling out of control when he met Anasazi; when offered a new life, Ramirez jumped at the chance.

White Hat

White Hat, Tammy Wiseberg, is wanted in her home of Austin, Texas, for numerous computer crimes. She is a natural technomancer, gifted with an unearthly mastery over technology; Tammy is able to communicate with machines, and jury rig components by asking them nicely. She constructs and tinkers with a wide array of highly sophisticated tools, used to enhance her abilities. At 18, Tammy hacked into the FBI's headquarters and discovered certain top-secret programs were being bankrolled by organized crime. Unfortunately, the government's own watchdogs caught sight of her — she barely got out of her apartment before agents were breaking down the door. On the run, and unable to turn to any of the authorities, she was comforted and reassured when Anasazi found her, and invited her to join a new family.

Legacy

Legacy, an older war veteran and one-time member of ELITE Operations, joined after helping Skybreaker and White Hat escape the Order. His tactical knowledge, combined with enhanced strength and speed he inherited from the deceased Grey Wolf, make him second only to Anasazi. Legacy appears youthful and strong, although both his words and his wisdom make people assume he has seen and done more than he admits. Although Drifter may look more like a contemporary of Anasazi's, Legacy is better able to relate to the old man's life.

Raze

Raze, Andrea Bhalla, is the newest member, named for her destructive and wild kinetic energy bolts. She was born in Las Vegas, to an East Indian animal trainer, and a Portuguese cocktail waitress. A rebellious teen, Andrea's petty crimes became more serious when her powers manifested, chaotic energies that allowed her to fly and hurl forceful blasts. When she was arrested at 16 for breaking and entering, she was smart enough to conceal her powers. Her juvenile record was sealed at 18, but that taste of jail was enough for her. Anasazi found her and was able to convince her not to begin a true life of crime. Now, she is trying to make a difference, even though her impatience and temper get the better of her.

Pan (& Belle) (175 Character Points)

Identity: Unknown
Occupation: Adventurer, trickster, defender of children
First Appearance: Tales from the Street #1
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Unknown, believed to be somewhere in the USA
Affiliation: Belle (sidekick)
Territory: Wanders, most often Eastern seaboard of USA
Height: 4'10" (147 cm) **Eyes:** Violet
Weight: 90 lbs. (41 kg) **Hair:** Blonde (often dyed)

In a world of wonders, children still have the capacity to imagine the most fantastic dreams. Between piano lessons and street hockey, they tell tales about a girl who never grows old. The stories swell both among the privileged and the impoverished, all wishing to catch a glimpse of the forever child who stands up against the forces of evil and adulthood.

Born with powers, the girl called Pan flew to the stars and stole a handful of stardust, filling a pocket with magic and eternity, or so one story goes. She would never tell, for that would ruin the mystery. Pan has always been a trickster, a daring thief and bold-faced liar, cheered by her peers while enduring the scowls and anger of authority. Yet she was never malicious, nor cruel, and was honest after a fashion; she claimed to represent the helpless, the young, the innocent and the no-longer innocent, that too many forget.

The first credible reports of Pan's existence were made in winter, 1990, when a nationwide child-kidnapping epidemic was finally broken. The FBI documented assistance from the Baron in locating the kidnapper, the vicious Bloody Mary, who had taken a dozen children from across the country to an abandoned lighthouse in the Florida Keys. During the battle, a terrible storm tore apart the building, yet when the FBI finally reached it, they found the children safe. They had been freed, and were smiling and laughing, as a young girl cheerfully floated amongst them. As soon as she noticed the FBI she vanished.

Over the years, a girl of the same description would appear time and again. Most often the stories painted her as a young heroine, trouncing wrongdoers and saving boys and girls from horrible ends. Some reports were more troubling, however, when a child she visited often would suddenly vanish, never to be heard from again. Perhaps, in those cases, the danger lay within the home or from inside a guardian.

Pan encountered several superheroes over the years, and although most simply shook their heads in frustration, a few tried to capture her (but none have succeeded). They describe a girl who has not aged a day in twenty years, always seeming about 11 or 12.

Pan is often accompanied by a younger girl, named Belle. As often as the moon is blue, Pan will "adopt" a rescued girl who has nowhere to return. Pan takes the girl under her wing and gifts her with a piece of magic; sometimes Belle can fly, shrink, glow, turn invisible, or anything else! The two flit from posh suburban condominiums to inner-city ghettos, engaged in their personal crusade.

Body	13	Strength	4			Attack Combat Value	12
Mind	7	Memory	1	Savvy	1	Defense Combat Value	14
Soul	10					Health Points	85

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
2	6	Attack Combat Mastery
6	12	Defense Combat Mastery
4	4	Divine Relationship
1	3	Extra Defenses
3	3	Features (Cute)
3	3	Highly Skilled
10	10	Sidekick (Belle)

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	12	Block Power (All)
1	26	Dynamic Powers (Fairy Tale Magic, major; Area 3; Duration 3; Range 2; Targets 3)
3	12	Flight
1	6	Force Field (Stops 40; Full Impact; Area 2)
2	9	Healing (Targets 1)
6	18	Mass Decrease
1	6	Regeneration
4	4	Special Defense (Ageing x2, Disease x2)
3	3	Special Movement (Balance; Dimension Hop: Neverland; Light-footed)

Lvl	Pts	Skills
5	30	Acrobatics (Tumbling)
2	2	Animal Training (Birds)
3	9	City Knowledge (Miami, slums)
2	6	City Knowledge (Empire City, Hell's Kitchen)
2	2	Gaming (Shell games)
1	2	Street Sense (Gang Activity)
3	9	Urban Tracking (Underworld)

Pts	Defects
-1	Famous
-2	Ism (Ageism, homeless)
-3	Less Capable (Strength)
-1	Less Capable (Memory)
-1	Less Capable (Savvy)
-1	Marked (Ageless child)
-2	Nemesis (Bloody Mary)
-3	Phobia (Growing up, "losing" magic)
-3	Significant Other (Belle)
-2	Wanted
-3	Not So Tough

The stories speak of different Belles over the years. One Belle, Belle-Dani, gave her life to save 100 children from Bloody Mary and the Temple of Mars. The current Belle, Belle-Catherine, was rescued when Pan led child-workers in a revolt against a sweatshop owner. Unlike Pan, Belle will grow up ... though what happens once these girls become teenagers is unknown. Perhaps they become crime-fighters in their own right, or pass into a world of eternal youth, finally able to enjoy childhood.

Rain Killer (125 Character Points)

Identity: Gillian Rivers (Secret, known to US government)
Occupation: Vigilante, adventurer
First Appearance: Caliburn #48
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Detroit, Michigan
Affiliation: None (Formerly with ELITE Operations)
Territory: Empire City
Height: 5'10" (179 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 140 lbs. (64 kg) **Hair:** Black

Gillian Rivers has felt like a victim throughout her life; only recently has she taken control, and with a vengeance. Her mother used to say rain was the tears of Heaven crying for all the bad in the world. Gillian became Rain Killer in order to punish those who cause the tears.

Gillian's powers stem from her father's history. Keith Rivers, an unemployed factory worker, left Detroit in 1967 for Vietnam. For two years he dumped Agent Orange II ("super orange"), and the experimental Orange III, into the jungle. Constant proximity to the powerful defoliants caused several bouts of sickness, and he was sent home in 1969.

Rivers married his high school sweetheart, Denise Beaulieu, and in 1970 Gillian was born. Gillian was a sickly child, often in hospital, but no one linked her condition to Rivers's service until years later. Her parents cared deeply for her, but money was tight and doctors were expensive. Gillian felt guilty when she fell ill, and hated being a burden. Gillian struggled to make her parents proud. They were overjoyed with Gillian's acceptance to the University of Michigan; she would be the first Rivers to go to university.

Tragedy struck in Gillian's final year. Tom Foolery, Detroit's worst supervillian, attacked the First National Bank, and killed the hostages, including Gillian's parents, as a display of his psychotic lunacy. Gillian took no solace in Tom Foolery's capture by the Amber Prince, for such evil always seemed to return with frightening regularity. On the brink of success, Gillian's life crumbled. She hated those who committed crimes, especially the arrogant hubris of the "supervillain." She could not decide if the "superheroes" were any better, for the criminals constantly returned to ruin more lives. Gillian collapsed, furious at the imbalance in the world.

Gillian awoke in a private hospital ward to find a CIA official waiting to speak with her. Martin Hughes offered condolences. He then explained her illness resulted from Keith's war-time exposure. She was born metahuman, but could not properly metabolize her own energies; when they built up too much, she got sick.

Hughes offered her a position in a new government program to train and help metahumans. Gillian agreed on the condition they were proactive ... she wanted to hurt the world's bastards. Hughes transferred Gillian to the burgeoning ELITE Operations. Their scientists explained she was a power-dampener, but unable to achieve full potential. Medication helped control her sickness, and a prototype suit of power armour was configured to amplify her powers.

Yet Gillian, now Rain Killer, chafed under the administration, and felt ELITE was used too rarely and ineffectively. Criminals were stopped, but status quo was maintained and no real change occurred. She rarely got along with teammates, and often clashed with superiors. Finally, when ordered to bring in a ruthless killer alive, Gillian had enough. She vanished during the mission, taking the armour with her.

Body	9	Strength	6	Attack Combat Value	11
Mind	13			Defense Combat Value	8
Soul	8	Empathy	2	Health Points	85

Characteristic Attributes

1	3	Attack Combat Mastery
1	8	Extra Attacks
1	1	Features (Appearance)
2	4	Gadgeteer
1	2	Gadgets (Tools)
5	5	Highly Skilled
14	56	Item of Power (Power Armour)
	1	Usable only by those for whom it is configured
	-4	Activation Time (Item of Power; +1 can pause)
	-1	• Detectable (Item of Power; Electromagnetic pulse, hum)
	-3	• Limited Use, Ongoing (Item of Power)
	-2	• Unique Defect (Item of Power; Maximum use of 1 hour before recharge)

Lvl Pts Item of Power's Attributes

2	6	Armour
4	16	Flight
	-1	• Detectable (Flight; Jet rockets)
	-2	Restriction (Flight; 30 minutes of flight before fuel cell drains)
7	31	Force Field (Stops 140; Block Teleport, Regenerating, Both Directions, Full Impact; Area 3)
	-1	• Detectable (Force Field; Glow)
	-2	• Restriction (Force Field; Unstable underwater and in extreme cold)
1	15	Power Flux (Force Field and Nullify; Duration Reversed 10)
2	8	Superstrength

Lvl Pts Power Attributes

1	13	Nullify (Drain; Duration 2; Targets 1)
	-1	• Backlash (Nullify; Disorientation)
	-1	• Detectable (Nullify; Blue energy glow)

Lvl Pts Skills

1	4	Computers (Programming)
1	4	Electronics (Robotics)
1	2	Driving (Car)
2	8	Forgery (Electronic)
1	4	Mechanics (Armourer)
1	4	Military Sciences (Intelligence Analysis)
1	2	Piloting (Jet)
2	16	Power Usage: Nullify
1	12	Ranged Defense (Personal)
2	16	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
1	8	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

Pts Defects

-1	Blind Fury (When criminals escape)
-1	Less Capable (Empathy)
-1	Less Capable (Strength)
-1	Physical Impairment (Constant headaches, bouts of nausea when Nullify used too often)
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Evidence of murders)
-2	Skeleton in the Closet (Secret identity)
-1	Unappealing (Cold and rude)
-3	Wanted (By CIA for theft of ELITE Armour)
-2	Wanted (Rain Killer; By police on outstanding warrants)

Rain Killer, now in hiding, emerges regularly to prey on the underworld. She will assail "normal" criminals, but prefers to target supervillains, for she is particularly effective against their ilk. She does not kill needlessly, but believes in an eye-for-an-eye, and punishes accordingly. Rain Killer is believed to have killed Witchlight and Golden Angel, and crippled The American. She has also clashed with several heroes, such as Lady of the Lantern, Prometheus, and Caliburn, who oppose her philosophy.

Iara

Iara is a metahuman who has been spotted throughout the Americas, although her primary home is the rainforests of Brazil. She has been called a mermaid, siren, or water snake, and even a goddess figure, "mãe d'água" (mother of the waters). No matter what she really is, all observers have described her as a gorgeous, blonde, nymph-like figure.

Iara sings men to sleep with a musical voice, and lures them into the forest with bird songs. She is also said to be responsible for several children who have gone missing, only to reappear years later, having touched something strange. Those who have returned from the forest appear as medicine-men, or shamans; they live on the fringes of society, and are more concerned with nature than civilization.

Some regard Iara as a mystical, eco-terrorist. Others, as something far greater, akin to an elemental force, or a spirit of the rainforest itself. Iara is a master of plant and herb lore, and friendly with the local fauna. Birds especially flock to her presence, but she is often visited by snakes, bats, monkeys, and toads.

Iara has never involved herself much with the bustling metahuman world. She claims to have known Lady Starbright (and respected her), and has spoken with the Baron, and Pan. She is content to interfere in small, discreet ways, changing the world slowly.

The Order

The Order is America's newest official response to the "metahuman issue," a fully sanctioned body under the direction of the FBI. It finally came into existence in 1994 as a special squad, or "flying squad," within the National Security Division. The Order is seen as the active arm of the NSD, responding to crisis-level threats related to national security and international terrorism.

Initially, the Order was intended to be a transparent organization in touch with the public, in order to distance itself from the CIA's scandalous ELITE Operations team of the 1980s. Assistant Director Hank Cohn, however, argued relentlessly for secrecy on grounds of national security, and an unrestricted mandate. When Attorney General Janet Reno finally initialized the Order, few supporters of either side were happy. The details of day-to-day operation, including membership, abilities, and budget, remained highly classified. Their jurisdiction, however, was tightly controlled, to ensure proper accountability and direction.

While the Order was created to correspond to a military special forces unit, members, as FBI agents, can make arrests, testify in court, and are instructed in the legal and constitutional implications of their actions. As a flying squad, charged in capturing unusually dangerous federal criminals across the country, they are based out of FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C., able to travel as needed.

The current roster of the Order includes seven full time members, all employees of the FBI.

Iron General

The leader of the Order, Ryan Charleston established himself in the jungles of Vietnam as a Green Beret, working in the most vile conditions. Charleston was a draconian leader, earning the nickname "Iron General," but he got his men in and out of some of the most godawful situations ever encountered — and they trusted and admired him.

Charleston remained enlisted after the war, continuing on several tours of duty wherein he performed black operations all through the '80s. From the early '90s on, he found himself behind a desk, teaching other soldiers what he had done. When the Order was conceived after the debacle concerning ELITE Operations, the top brass immediately wanted him considered as operations leader. Charleston had the background, attitude, and leadership qualities.

Charleston adopted his old nickname, the Iron General, as a code name for field operations. Additionally, he used extensive contacts in the military to acquire certain top-secret prototype equipment and weaponry. The Iron General customarily outfits himself with: a power-gauntlet, a laser pistol, and an energy sabre. For special missions he may access new types of armament.

All he needed was a team and a plan to deal with metahumans on their own terms.

Agent Zero

Kurt Dawson, a former bank robber, volunteered for CIA's MK-Ultra to obtain early parole. He gained fantastic powers, manipulating the realm of order. Dawson served in ELITE Operations, as Stasis, but hated the life. During a fight with the Guard, he fled and went into hiding with his family. Dawson was eventually tracked down, and reluctantly agreed to serve with the Order. To ensure his good behaviour, the government has disappeared his family for the term of his service.

Grey Ghost

Amanda Donatelli, a test pilot in the US Air Force, miraculously survived the explosion of a prototype based on Haud technology. Donatelli was transformed by its unique energies into the stealth flyer, Grey Ghost. She is a superb scout, able to travel at high speeds, while nearly invisible to both physical and electronic detection measures.

Hellion

Hellion is a modern, artificial man built by the US Military in conjunction with the R&D arm of the British Royal Navy. Using the schematics of Brunel's Iron Duke, they have created a cutting edge, artificially intelligent, war machine. The original Hellion, who served with ELITE Operations, turned out to be a Soviet spy, also known as Ugrian.

Omega

Aslan Basaev, a Chechen born metahuman, fought against Russian troops in the mid '90s. He used his teleportation power to commit sabotage and assassinations. When targeted by the Russian military, he fled to the US, seeking asylum. Sanctuary was offered on the condition he work for the government for a period of 15 years.

Sister Tiamat

Sister Tiamat is the powerhouse of the Order, and the deputy field leader. Sharon Gold, an Israeli archaeologist, discovered the Babylonian Tablets of Destiny. Touching it gifted her with superstrength, invulnerability, flight, and the ability to hurl destructive chaos blasts.

Sleeper

Sleeper was created by CIA's MK-Ultra psycho-surgery and intensive experimental drugs. He was permanently crippled during his time with ELITE Operations, and was confined to an awkward, support harness whenever he wished to leave the hospital. Sleeper's most frightening power is erasing identities and programming new personalities into his pawns.

Alice, Queen of Hearts (175 Character Points)

Identity: Alice Kitterling (Known to British security agencies)
Occupation: Former operative of Ghost Lions, now mercenary for hire
First Appearance: Slipstream #77
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Liverpool, United Kingdom
Affiliation: White Rooks
Territory: Mobile
Height: 5'9" (175 cm) **Eyes:** Green
Weight: 130 lbs. (59 kg) **Hair:** Black (dyed)

Alice Kitterling was born in Liverpool, England, to a struggling, working-class family. Although she demonstrated tremendous talent in painting and dance, her parents did not encourage such nonsense. Through childhood, Alice was afflicted with migraines. By high school, Alice would drift into daydreams, or even black out, to escape the pain. Sometimes she would awaken like a sleepwalker in strange places. Neither parents nor teachers could cope, and she soon fell in with a delinquent crowd.

At 15, Alice was assaulted by an older teenager at an after-hours rave. Her head exploded with pain, and she somehow smashed a bottle into the boy's face ... with her mind. Alice was arrested and taken to Liverpool jail, where she lit her cell on fire without matches or lighter. Weirdness followed her; guards would forget about her for hours, or fail to see her sitting in her cell, and everyone but Alice was relieved when a government man arrived with papers authorizing her transfer.

Sir Robert Freeman, the director of the Defense Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA), recognized Alice was an awakening metahuman. Although raw and unfocused, she had tremendous potential and Sir Robert offered to train her. She would become a well-paid secret operative in defense of England, and her record would be cleared. Alice said yes.

Alice became the youngest member of the Ghost Lions, a clandestine metahuman group operating for Queen and country. Classified as a low-level omni-psychic, Alice was taught to augment her physical prowess with her powers. Physical and mental training shaped Alice into an accomplished martial artist and a deadly marksman. As her powers developed so did her focus; her headaches even vanished. Although young, Alice strongly complemented the team.

Scandal erupted when a Parliamentary commission reviewed the activities of the Ghost Lions; Sir Robert, the commission found, had acted for his own interests rather than for England. Reports of his pet metahuman black-ops were leaked to the media, which described a long list of crimes in detail. Sir Robert was arrested, and warrants issued for the members of the Ghost Lions. Alice killed several police officers from the squad sent to arrest her, and fled England.

Alice was alone again, but now had confidence in her ability to survive the world. She travelled constantly, hiring herself out as a mercenary for virtually any job. Her deadly skill and preference for subtlety kept her a step ahead of the authorities. Alice gained a world-renowned reputation as a hitman ... but the British government continued to dog her.

In time, Alice arrived at Empire City, where she was hired to assassinate a witness testifying against the Mafia. The attempt was foiled by Slipstream, however, the only hero to capture her. During her incarceration at the Carousel, Alice developed a hatred for the speedster.

Alice escaped with Kreuzritter's help, and through him has become associated with the White Rooks, often battling the Guard. She also works for any who will pay, including Jade Naga and Artificer, but her ultimate goal, of course, is to best and humiliate Slipstream once and for all.

Body	9		Attack Combat Value 14
Mind	5		Defense Combat Value 11
Soul	10	Composure 4	Health Points 95

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
6	18	Attack Combat Mastery
9	9	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Block Ranged Attacks, Concealment, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes, Portable Armoury, Steady Hand, Two Weapons, Weapons Encyclopaedia)
5	10	Defense Combat Mastery
1	8	Extra Attacks
2	6	Extra Defenses
2	2	Features (Appearance x2)
3	6	Gadgets (Weapons)
2	2	Heightened Awareness
16	16	Highly Skilled

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	4	Flight (Skimmer)
	-1	• Concentration (Flight)
	-2	• Dependent (Flight; Special Movement Dimension Hop)
1	6	Force Field (Soul based; Shield; Stops 80; Area 2)
3	9	Invisibility (Sight, Hearing, Mental)
3	6	Massive Damage (Short-ranged attacks)
3	3	Mind Shield
1	5	Sensory Block (Telepathy; Area 4)
2	6	Sixth Sense (Emotions, Telepathy, Area 4)
	-1	• Concentration (Sixth Sense)
5	5	Special Movement (Balance, Cat-like, Dimension Hop: Astral Form, Light-Footed, Untrackable)
2	11	Telekinesis (Soul based; Area 3)
	-2	• Restriction (Telekinesis; Crude shaping)
2	7	Telekinesis (Soul based; Fire, can create small flames; Area 3)
	-2	• Restriction (Telekinesis; Crude shaping)
4	13	Telepathy (Humans; Area 3; Targets 2)

Lvl	Pts	Skills
4	24	Acrobatics (Balance)
2	6	City Knowledge (Empire City, downtown Manhattan)
3	9	Burglary (Hot-wiring)
3	6	Driving (Motorcycle)
2	8	Electronics (Security)
2	6	Intimidation (Street)
2	8	Mechanics (Gunsmith)
3	6	Performing Arts (Dance)
3	9	Seduction (Male)
2	4	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
4	12	Urban Tracking (Underworld)
2	4	Visual Arts (Painting)
3	24	Gun Combat (Pistol)
2	16	Thrown Weapons (Blades)
2	24	Ranged Defense (Personal)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
2	16	Unarmed Defense (Holds)

Pts	Defects
-2	Famous (Master assassin)
-1	Less Capable (Composure)
-1	Marked (Tattoos)
-2	Nemesis (Slipstream, the Guard)
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Former member of Ghost Lions)
-2	Unique Defect: Massive Damage, Special Movement, Force Field, Jumping all based on passive Telekinesis
-2	Unique Defect: Attack Combat Mastery, Defense Combat Mastery, Invisibility all based on passive Telepathy
-1	Unique Defect: Attack Combat Mastery, Defense Combat Mastery, Invisibility, will not work against Telepaths of higher level
-3	Wanted

Bloody Mary (175 Character Points)

Identity: Unknown
Occupation: Child hunter, would-be conqueror of spirit world
First Appearance: Tales from the Street #1
Former Aliases: La Llorona
Place of Birth: Unknown
Affiliation: None
Territory: Miami, Hell dimension
Height: 5'6" (168 cm) **Eyes:** Green
Weight: 125 lbs. (57 kg) **Hair:** Red

There are many strange and terrible things in the world, but few target innocence so ruthlessly or cruelly as the monstrous Bloody Mary. She has been called demon, fiend, and vampire, but is she truly otherworldly, or just an example of human capacity for evil?

Bloody Mary was first reported as the perpetrator in a nation-wide kidnapping case, where a dozen children from across the United States were abducted. Street kids were whispering, "Bloody Mary got 'em," weeks before the FBI had a name. The Baron recognized something supernatural was involved, and helped the FBI. Mary's plans to use the children as livestock were upset by the Baron, the FBI, and the appearance of Pan & Belle. Mary was defeated, but escaped.

The story of Bloody Mary, however, was told by street kids for years, but no one ever believed them. She was first called La Llorona by children of Mexican immigrants, and known to stalk children through mirrors. Haitian kids knew she could reach through the tinted windows of Jeeps. She was a demon, or a spirit possessing an evil woman, or even a corruption of the Virgin Mary; she fought with angels, and used children for slaves, living off of their blood and fears.

Blood Mary has been seen several times since then. Mother Raven and Lady of the Lantern teamed up when Mary invaded Empire City, once more chasing her away. Some children say she is building an army of demons, a hellish warmachine powered by the souls of children, to conquer the spirit world. Others believe Mary is mad, perhaps driven insane at the loss of a child, and simply trying to restore her old life. Finally, a few believe she is pure evil, hunting children because she loathes their innocence and can feed off their souls. Many children believe once she's seen your face, Mary can track you to the ends of the Earth.

In 1997, a doomsday cult in San Francisco, the Temple of Mars, summoned Bloody Mary to tear apart the dimensional veil. They offered 100 refugee children as sacrifice. Whatever they intended, few seemed to realize the horror they were dealing with. Many died as Mary opened a hellgate, but Pan & Belle appeared and drove her back. Meanwhile, Mother Raven and Slipstream arrived and dealt with the demons ... but during the fight, one incarnation of Belle gave her life to keep the children safe.

The FBI does not know how to deal with Mary, and calls in help whenever she is believed to be involved. The Baron clashes with her whenever their paths cross, but she tries to avoid his territory. He does not know if she truly travels between Heaven and Hell, but has seen her vanish into the spirit realms, and has even seen her personal, nightmare dimension. Mary barely acknowledges these forces, except when they directly interfere with her machinations. She sees most superheroes as bothersome distractions, but regards a few (like Red Phoenix and Sentinel) as hated angels.

Pan & Belle most often crop up wherever Mary is spotted, and much bad blood lies between them. Mary is the embodiment of everything they oppose. She eagerly anticipates the day they, and all the children of the world, lie chained at her feet.

Body	6			Attack Combat Value	12
Mind	8			Defense Combat Value	8
Soul	16	Composure	4	Empathy	4	Health Points	110

lvl	pts	Characteristic Attributes
2	6	Attack Combat Mastery
1	8	Extra Attacks
3	3	Features (Appearance)
1	1	Highly Skilled

lvl	pts	Power Attributes
3	9	Alternate Form (Partial powered; Cat)
3	9	Alternate Form (Partial powered; Crow)
2	6	Alternate Form (Partial powered; Snake)
1	3	Alternate Form (Partial powered; Spider)
4	13	Environmental Influence (Cold, Dark, Heat, Light; Area 3; Duration 4; Range 2)
	-1	• Detectable (Environmental Influence; Spiritual)
2	2	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Ultravision)
4	21	Mind Control (Soul based, vs. Soul; Area 3; Targets 2)
	-1	• Detectable (Mind Control; Spiritual)
		• Reduction (-1; Mind Control; Negative emotions only, such as hate, fear, anger)
5	5	Mind Shield
	-2	• Restriction (Mind Shield; Mind is only relevant Stat)
4	23	Pocket Dimension (Badlands; via tinted glass, or mirrors; Area 3; Duration 3; Targets 1)
	-1	• Detectable (Pocket Dimension; Spiritual)
	-2	• Restriction (Pocket Dimension, To pull someone into the Badlands, Mary must touch them)
1	4	Reincarnation
2	7	Sixth Sense (Innocence, Magic; Area 3)
4	16	Special Attack "Spirit Bleed" (60 Damage, Burning: Slow, Drain Mind, Soul Attack, Vampiric: Health Points for Drained Mind, Limited Shots, Melee, No Damage, Slow, Static, Toxic)
4	4	Special Attack "Soul Wound" (40 Damage, Soul Attack, Limited Shots, Short Range, Toxic)
2	2	Special Movement (Dimension Hop x2: Heaven and Hell)
4	4	Special Defense (Hunger x2, Sleep x2)

lvl	pts	Skills
2	4	Foreign Culture (Latin American, Caribbean)
5	5	Languages (Spanish, Creole, English, French, Latin, Portuguese)
2	16	Power Usage: Mind Control
5	15	Urban Tracking (Streets)

pts	Defects
-2	Achilles Heel (Holy / Blessed objects)
-2	Bane (Sacred ground)
-3	Cursed (Fallen from Grace)
-1	Famous (Nationally, but only with children)
-2	Less Capable (Composure)
-2	Less Capable (Empathy)
-2	Marked (Looks supernatural, aura of energy, black tears)
-3	Nemesis (Pan, Baron)
-2	Phobia (Heaven, Angels)
-2	Unappealing (Psychotic and weird)
-3	Wanted

Cat

Body 11 **Mind** 3 **Soul** 1

Features (Fur, tail) lvl 1, **Invisibility** (Sight, Hearing) lvl 2, **Jumping** lvl 1, **Natural Weapons** (Claws) lvl 1, **Special Movement** (Balance, Cat-like, Untrackable) lvl 3

Diminutive 2 BP, **Less Capable** (Strength) 2 BP, **Less Capable** (Manual Dexterity) 1 BP, **Marked** (Red cat) 3 BP, **Physical Impairment** (Mute, no thumbs) 3 BP, **Physically Unappealing** (Appears bewitched and dangerous) 1 BP

Crow

Body 4 **Mind** 4 **Soul** 1

Features (Feathers) lvl 1, **Flight** (Cannot hover) lvl 4, **Animal Summoning/Control** (Crows; Supernatural, Duration 3) lvl 2, **Activation Time** (Crows arrive slowly over 10 minutes) 4 BP, **Special Movement** (Balance, Dimension Hop: Dreamlands) lvl 2

Diminutive 2 BP, **Less Capable** (Strength) 1 BP, **Marked** (White crow) 3 BP, **Physical Impairment** (Mute, no thumbs) 3 BP, **Physically Unappealing** (Appears bewitched and dangerous) 1 BP

Spider

Body 6 **Mind** 1 **Soul** 1

Features (Eight legs, compound eyes) lvl 1, **Special Attack** (100 Damage, Burning: Slow, Drain Mind, Limited Shots, Low Penetration, Melee, No Damage, Toxic) lvl 1, **Special Movement** (Wall-crawling) lvl 2, **Superstrength** lvl 1, **Restriction** (Superstrength; No damage bonus) 2 BP

Diminutive 6 BP, **Marked** (White spider) 3 BP, **Physical Impairment** (Mute, no thumbs) 3 BP, **Physically Unappealing** (Deadly spider) 3 BP

Snake

Body 9 **Mind** 2 **Soul** 1

Features (Tongue, scales) lvl 1, **Natural Weapons** (Fangs) lvl 1, **Special Attack** (20 Damage, Accurate x3, Burning: Hourly, No Healing, Limited Shots, Low Penetration, Melee, Toxic) lvl 1, **Special Movement** (Slithering) lvl 1

Diminutive 2 BP, **Marked** (White snake) 3 BP, **Physical Impairment** (Mute, no thumbs) 3 BP, **Physically Unappealing** (Poisonous snake) 3 BP



Doc Cimitière (200 Character Points)

Identity: Lucas Duvalier (Public believes him to be deceased)
Occupation: Former psychiatrist, former advisor to secret police, Voodoo priest, would-be world conqueror
First Appearance: Amazing Presentations, Vol. III, #39
Former Aliases: White Doctor
Place of Birth: Port-au-Prince
Affiliation: None
Territory: New Orleans (But roams widely)
Height: 5'9" (175 cm) **Eyes:** Brown
Weight: 115 lbs. (52 kg) **Hair:** Grey (mostly bald)

Lucas Duvalier left Haiti in 1960 to study law and medicine in France. Although raised in a house that mixed Catholicism and Voodoo, while in Europe he abandoned religion for science.

When Duvalier returned in 1967, President François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, his cousin, awarded him a special advisory position to the secret police, the Tonton Macoute. He was initially displeased that Papa Doc played the part of a Voodoo spirit, *loa* Baron Samedi, to control his people. Duvalier scoffed at the fetishes and drumming until Papa Doc proved it was more than chicanery.

The Tonton Macoute had killed a guerilla during interrogation, and at a midnight mass, Papa Doc animated the corpse, turning him into a *zombi* in front of an astonished Duvalier. To further convince his cousin, Papa Doc summoned the snake *loa* Simbi to mount Duvalier, revealing the spirit world. Tasting such power converted Duvalier instantly.

Duvalier chafed at the notion of always being subservient to the gods. He became drunk on the energy, but simultaneously hated the gods possessing him ... Duvalier wanted to dominate the spirit world. He secretly used the Tonton Macoute to learn more about Voodoo, pilfering relics and interrogating priests. The people feared "the White Doctor," so called for his foreign education; it was said those who refused him in life were killed, and raised as subservient *zombis*. They whispered Duvalier wanted to chain the *loa*, a notion most Haitians found abhorrent.

Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" became president when his father died in 1971. Duvalier struggled to survive a political war, as Baby Doc replaced his father's men with his own. Duvalier tried to poison the new President, and fled when the attempt failed.

Duvalier escaped to New Orleans in the United States. He hunted exiled Haitians, especially *hougan* priests and *mambo* priestesses. Duvalier questioned them, often mesmerizing them with luxuries they could no longer afford. When their answers proved insufficient, however, he would abuse them physically and mentally until they gave in, confessing their secrets.

Duvalier eventually found a descendant of Marie Laveau, Voodoo Queen of New Orleans. Marie-Michelle knew little of her ancestor's power, but Duvalier did not need her knowledge. He kidnapped her and spilled Marie-Michelle's blood to raise Laveau's spirit. The *loa* were furious at Duvalier's vainglory and appalled by his obscene actions. They sent the Baron, an untried but powerful mystic, to intervene.

The battle was furious, each *hougan* calling upon the *loa* for his own ends, but in the end the Baron triumphed. Duvalier was killed, and Marie-Michelle saved when the Baron asked *loa* Ghede to bring her back from death's door. The Baron refused to release Duvalier's spirit, however, animating Duvalier as a *zombie* in punishment.

Body	4	Speed	1			Attack Combat Value	7
Mind	11	Memory	5			Defense Combat Value	7
Soul	14	Charisma	5	Empathy	2	Health Points	90

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
3	3	Divine Relationship
1	8	Extra Attacks
	-1	• Restriction (Extra Attacks; Only for Power Flux or Mind Control)
3	3	Highly Skilled

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
4	8	Gadgeteer (Magical)
9	54	Mind Control (Area 4; Targets 5)
	-1	• Detectable (Mind Control; Spice aroma)
3	3	Mind Shield
5	81	Power Flux (Voodoo charms; Duration Reversed 8)
	-2	• Dependent (Power Flux, on Mind Control; Must dominate *loa* in order to change powers)
	-1	• Detectable (Power Flux; Spice aroma)
2	8	Reincarnation (*Loa* must accept his spirit)
11	11	Special Defense (Ageing x2, Disease x2, Hunger x2, Low Oxygen, Pain, Poison, Sleep x2)
1	1	Special Movement (Dimension Hop: Astral Form)

LVL	PTS	Skills
1	4	Biological Sciences (Botany)
2	2	Domestic Arts (Cooking)
3	3	Etiquette (Upper Class)
1	2	Foreign Culture (Haitian)
3	3	Gaming (Gambling)
2	2	Languages (French, Creole, English)
3	9	Law (International)
3	9	Medical (Psychiatry)
4	8	Occultism (Voodoo)
2	8	Poisons (Natural)
3	6	Social Sciences (Theology)
1	1	Wilderness Survival (Tropical Forest)
3	3	Writing (Academic)

PTS	Defects
-1	Achilles Heel (Magic weapons)
-3	Cursed (Dead)
-1	Famous
-6	Inept Attack
-1	Ism (Haitian Voodoo priest)
-3	Less Capable (Charisma)
-2	Less Capable (Empathy)
-1	Less Capable (Memory)
-1	Less Capable (Speed)
-2	Marked (Looks dead)
-3	Nemesis (Baron, *loa*)
-3	Physically Unappealing
-3	Vulnerability (Anything that disrupts ability to think clearly)
-3	Wanted (Many different authorities)

Duvalier writhed in agony, yet his proximity to the spirit world taught him much. He learned to force certain *loa* to his will ... and broke his spiritual shackles. He escaped the Baron, plotting vengeance. Duvalier's body was still dead, however, frozen in a permanent state of decay. Now known as Doc Cimitière, he continues to seek dominion over the spirit and physical world, and to take revenge on all who have opposed him.

General Winter (250 Character Points)

Identity: General Winter (Generally considered a myth)
Occupation: Self-proclaimed master of Russia
First Appearance: Lady Starbright #34
Former Aliases: Grandfather Frost, General Frost
Place of Birth: Unknown, claimed to be somewhere in the Ural Mountains
Affiliation: None
Territory: Russia
Height: 10'0" (305 cm) **Eyes:** Dark blue-grey
Weight: 3,000 lbs. (1,364 kg) **Hair:** Silver-white

The greatest Russian general was said to have defeated not only Hitler's *Wehrmacht*, but also Napoleon's *Grande Armee* more than a hundred years previously. The people called him General Winter, Grandfather Frost, and the spirit of the Russian winter. They told stories of a terrible giant, living alone in a beautiful ice castle,

A furtive figure throughout this century, Winter claimed he knew the first Romanov's, four hundred years ago. His actions during WWII were never properly documented, and most thought him nothing more than a myth. In August of 1968, however, incontestable proof was acquired when Soviet tanks rolled into Prague to quell an uprising in Czechoslovakia. Before shots could be fired, a tremendous blizzard swept through the town, burying buildings and armour alike in a mountain of snow.

Lady Starbright is believed to have sparred with Winter to a stand-off. She reluctantly agreed to leave him free when he promised to stop any bloodshed. When the winds died down, a tremendous giant, 200 feet tall, was seen striding across the streets of Prague. He spoke in a gruff voice, stating they were all his people, and these actions were fruitless ... when the winds cleared the tanks of snow, the soldiers found the revolution had ended. Although glad no one was hurt, Starbright was unsatisfied with the encounter, and would challenge Winter several more times.

While Winter was seen as a hero to some Russians, many more found him an unstoppable and insufferable tyrant. He was as constant and unyielding as his namesake. His actions may have indicated a fondness for "his" people, but he protected them like an owner would guard charrel. His definition of identity seemed to shift with Russia's influence, and a recent study published by the Ascension Institute speculated he actually was the *spirit* of Russia, tied inexplicably with the geography and ideology of the country.

Winter always acted on his own, without counsel or consideration for others. He always paid scant attention to the government of Russia, except to inform them when they acted contrary to his wishes. The government, however, regarded him as a constant aggravation and regular menace. He usually kept within the sphere of the Soviet Union, and was almost never spotted outside of Russia. Even then, his only explanations were by direct action: destroying an ill-planned facility; attacking foreign intruders; or even coming to blows with the Red Army. Winter was rumoured to be responsible for the crash of a foreign, civilian aircraft in 1978, followed by a clash with the American Sentinel.

Body	15	Agility	4	Speed	9
Mind	10				
Soul	15	Empathy	3		

Attack Combat Value 13
Defense Combat Value 13
Health Points 190

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
1	1	Combat Technique (Judge Opponent)
2	4	Defense Combat Mastery
1	8	Extra Attacks
1	3	Extra Defenses
1	1	Features (Appearance)
2	4	Tough

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	6	Armour
3	9	Armour (Optimized vs. Cold)
10	30	Creation (Ice/snow; Duration 7; Range 3)
8	80	Grow
3	3	Heightened Senses (Sight, Hearing x2)
4	10	Sensory Block "Blizzard" (Sight, Hearing, Radar, Radio; Area 6)
	-2	• Activation Time (Sensory Block)
	-1	• Concentration (Sensory Block)
	-2	• Detectable (Sensory Block; Magic, Sight, Hearing)
8	8	Shrink
	-4	• Activation Time (Shrink)
6	6	Special Defense (Ageing x2, Disease x2, Hunger, Sleep)
5	17	Telekinesis (Ice/snow; Area 4; Range 3)

Lvl	Pts	Skills
2	4	Cultural Arts (Russian Art History)
3	3	Etiquette (Upper Class)
2	6	Intimidation (Political)
2	8	Military Science (Strategy)
5	5	Languages (Russian, Abkhaz, Byelorussian, English, French, Georgian, Kazakh, Polish, Ukrainian)
2	2	Seduction (Female)
1	2	Wilderness Tracking (Mountain)

Pts	Defects
-1	Awkward Size
-2	Famous
-3	Less Capable (Agility)
-2	Less Capable (Empathy)
-1	Less Capable (Speed)
-2	Nemesis (Muzhik)

While Winter claimed he would never harm his own people, his code of honour seemed extremely flexible and as slippery as ice. He would fight if attacked, and while he has never directly killed his own people, casualties have been left in his wake. In 1980, Winter interfered with a number of KGB agents in the city of Azramas-16. Muzhik meddled, and the two fought until several deep cells, holding mutations from Project Red Star, were accidentally uncovered. They grudgingly co-operated to deal with this new crisis, until Winter decided he had enough, and left Muzhik to cope with the aftermath.

Winter makes his home, a magnificent palace of ice and snow, somewhere deep in the Ural Mountains. He can be, in equal measures, charming, cruel, amicable, or rude; and while he may show gratitude, he never expresses indebtedness.

Iron Duke (200 Character Points)

Identity: Iron Duke (Publicly known as an automaton)
Occupation: Former mechanical-labourer in British Royal Navy
First Appearance: War Stories #7 (Unnamed), War Stories #35 (Stolen by Kreuzritter)
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: Built in Portsmouth Royal Dockyard
Affiliation: White Rooks
Territory: Mobile
Height: 10'0" (305 cm) **Eyes:** Black
Weight: 8,800 lbs. (4,000 kg) **Hair:** None

Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the last secret engineer for the Victorian British Navy, theorized he could build a functioning mechanical brain. This analytic engine, developed from Charles Babbages's designs, could be designed to replicate the human mind. Unlike Babbage, Brunel worked in miniature, fashioning as many logic gates as possible to reconstruct the complexity of human thought. The Navy's proposal was to insert the analytic engine into the frame of a giant automaton, a huge, metal man to work heavy labour in the dockyards.

The automaton, 10 feet tall and fashioned from four tonnes of iron ore, was powered through a coal furnace, and had the strength of ten men. The analytic engine was a wonder — nothing so intricate had ever been built. Self-impressed with his creation, Brunel's intentions changed. The machine-man would not be the Navy's servant ... it would instead become Brunel's new body, ensuring his mind would live forever. Brunel hooked himself to an apparatus that would record electrically stimulated brain patterns upon the engine, and then applied tremendous current to his temples.

It worked, partially. Brunel died, yet the automaton could move, react, and think. Brunel miscalculated the intricacies of the human brain, however, for the analytic engine could utilize less than a tenth of Brunel's brain. Brunel lived on as little more than a simpleton in a gargantuan's body. The Navy took charge of the automaton, and found he could follow facile instructions. They put him to work at the Royal Portsmouth Dockyards helping build the great ironclads. The workmen nicknamed him "Iron Duke, master of engineering."

During the Second World War a British think-tank was established to brainstorm radical ideas to oppose the Nazi threat. One involved Iron Duke. The analytic engine was reset to wipe out Brunel's personality, and reprogrammed to respond to threat; in addition, he "learned" the profile of German weaponry and was instructed to seek and destroy. Iron Duke was inserted in France, and worked wonderfully as a walking dreadnought, until a terrible accident occurred. Iron Duke, encountering confiscated German artillery, could not determine that operators were French and attacked them. Observers reported Iron Duke had run amok; attempts to stop him only incited retaliation.

In time, Kreuzritter and Herr Cryptic learned they could simply lead Iron Duke towards the Allies, for chaos would ensue. Iron Duke almost broke the French push across the Rhine, killing Dover Angel. In that encounter, however, he was seemingly destroyed by the American Sentinel.

Body	7	Attack Combat Value	14
Mind	4	Defense Combat Value	3
Soul	6	Health Points	205

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
9	27	Attack Combat Mastery
2	2	Combat Technique (Blind Fighting, Judge Opponent)
2	16	Extra Attacks
6	6	Highly Skilled
7	14	Tough

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
9	27	Armour
4	8	Flight (Skimmer)
7	7	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Vision, Infravision, Radar Detection, Radio Reception, Sonar Detection, Ultrasonic Hearing)
7	7	Immovable
4	8	Sensory Block (Electric Fields, Heat, Radar, Radio; Area 4)
14	14	Special Defense (Ageing x2, Disease x2, Hunger x2, Pain x2, Poisons x2, Oxygen x2, Sleep x2)
10	40	Superstrength

Lvl	Pts	Skills
3	15	Demolitions (Artificial Structures; with Superstrength)
2	6	Intimidation (Street)
2	8	Mechanics (Armourer)
2	8	Military Science (Tactics)
1	5	Physical Sciences (Engineering)
2	24	Ranged Defense (Personal)
1	8	Thrown Weapons (Improvised)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
1	8	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

Pts	Defects
-1	Awkward Size
-1	Achilles Heel (Magnetic Attacks)
-3	Marked
-2	Nemesis (Red Phoenix)
-3	Wanted

Years later, Sarah Gebhert and Rachel Wilde discovered Dover Angel's mystical weapon imbedded in the derelict Iron Duke. As they battled for control of the weapon, part of the mystical energy flowed into Iron Duke. It supercharged the analytic engine, reinstating many of the forgotten protocols of Brunel's personality. Much of his genius and morality were lost, but his arrogance, ego, and desire to survive lived on. It created a magic mirror matrix around the engine, allowing it to run numerous parallel applications — in essence, gaining sentience and free will.

Awake again, with a near-limitless supply of power and strength enhanced 1,000 fold, Iron Duke walks the Earth like some derelict war machine of H.G. Well's fancy. He has often battled Red Phoenix (Gebhert) and Green Ronin (Wilde) for the mystic armour, believing it will restore his genius. Although most often alone, he occasionally sides with the White Rooks for his own self-interest.

Jade Naga, Haud Lord (225 Character Points)

Identity: Zin'Ser Jahn of the Fifth Ring (Publicly known)
Occupation: Admiral in Imperial Army, former Master Colonizer, would-be world conqueror
First Appearance: Science Unbound #2
Former Aliases: Lizard King, Smiling Lizard
Place of Birth: Tetragen Isle, Fifth Ring
Affiliation: Haud Empire
Territory: Operates worldwide
Height: 7'0" (213 cm) **Eyes:** Red-gold
Weight: 300 lbs. (136 kg) **Hair:** Green scales

Zin'Ser Jahn of the Fifth Ring was feared as a brutal warmaster in the Haud Empire. He was born to the noble Jahn family, and excelled as a military strategist. He made his name as Master Colonizer, breaking the will of native populations, and earned a quick promotion to admiral. His reputation was put at risk, however, when a group of Parousian slaves escaped in a stolen starship. Zin'Ser had no choice but to give chase.

The pursuit was long and gruesome. The fleeing Parousians flew through a jump point in their attempt to escape, but Zin'Ser followed them to the farthest reaches of the Empire, to the Sol system. The Parousians were finally caught above Earth, yet they refused to surrender even though their ship was damaged. The Parousians rammed the Haud ship, causing both crafts to plummet through the atmosphere and crash, hundreds of miles apart.

Many of the Haud survived, including Zin'Ser, six of his noble brothers, several Pin'to harem concubines, and a handful of soldier-drones, although many were badly injured. While the craft was severely damaged, many of its internal components survived, and the crew slid into hibernation chambers for restorative sleep. They would awaken every few years, but no help ever came to their signal beacon. As the decades passed, Zin'Ser realized they might never be found. He knew the primitive peoples surrounding them would be of no use in repairing the craft, but he reasoned more advanced civilizations might be found elsewhere.

Zin'Ser spawned soldier-drones with the surviving members of his harem, to explore the planet. He sent out many small groups, seeding the world with pockets of Haud. They would hibernate as needed, and years could pass before they reported or returned. Every few decades, Zin'Ser would repeat this process and send out another cell.

The soldier-drones lived and died, watching human civilization develop. Zin'Ser stayed asleep, and only fully awoke in the 20th Century. He watched the technological progress of the war machine, the rocket, and the atom. He thought perhaps they could finally leave this world, and schemed to gain control of the human's resources. Yet Zin'Ser's soldiers were defeated that time, and every time he sent them forth, by humanity's superheroes. The Haud have tried to hijack space shuttles, steal powerful communications relays, and even bribe (or subjugate) governments in an attempt to be rescued, all in vain. Most galling of all, one of the Parousian refugees who caused them so much grief survived, and has thwarted them as the self-styled hero, Slipstream.

Zin'Ser railed at each defeat, furious so limited a people continually thwart him. The extensive network of cells spread across the globe has given him limitless fallback positions, however, and many noted the impossibility of completely eradicating the Haud. Zin'Ser Jahn's minions are scattered over the Earth, and will one day succeed in contacting the Haud Empire. When that day comes, the Earth shall tremble at the sight of their warships, and finally be subjugated as a colony world.

Body	14	Attack Combat Value	11
Mind	11	Defense Combat Value	9
Soul	9	Health Points	115

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
2	6	Armour
2	2	Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes x2)
2	16	Extra Attacks
2	6	Extra Defenses
10	20	Gadgets (Haud technology)
	-1	• Conditional Ownership (Gadgets; Haud)
1	1	Features (Secondary eyelids)
9	9	Highly Skilled
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, Tail)
10	10	Organizational Ties (Haud Empire on Earth)

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
1	1	Adaptation (Noxious Gases)
4	4	Heightened Senses (Sight, Smell, Taste, Infravision)
3	6	Invisibility (Partial; Sight, Hearing, Infrared)
3	3	Jumping
5	33	Mind Control (Area 3; Targets 5)
1	6	Regeneration
2	8	Special Attack "Euphoric Toxin" (40 Damage, Drain Mind, Drain Soul, Linked to Fangs, Limited Shots x2, No Damage, Toxic)
1	1	Special Attack "Fangs" (20 Damage, Penetrating Armour x2, Melee)
6	6	Special Defense (Ageing, Hunger, Oxygen, Poison x2, Sleep)
3	3	Special Movement (Cat-Like, Slithering, Wall-Crawling)
2	12	Speed
	-3	• Restriction (Speed; Maximum of 10 continuous minutes)
3	12	Superstrength
6	22	Telepathy (Haud only; Area 5; Targets 5)

LVL	PTS	Skills
4	16	Biological Sciences (Genetics)
2	8	Computers (Programming)
4	8	Cultural Arts (Haud Art)
2	2	Controlled Breathing (Slow Heart Rate)
2	8	Electronics (Computers)
3	3	Etiquette (Upper Class)
4	8	Foreign Culture (Human, Parousian, other conquered races)
1	4	Interrogation (Drugs)
5	5	Languages (Many Earth and Alien)
1	3	Law (Haud)
1	3	Medical (Surgery)
1	5	Military Sciences (Strategy)
1	5	Physical Sciences (Biochemistry)
2	2	Swimming (Deep Sea Diving)
3	24	Unarmed Attack (Holds)
2	16	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

PTS	Defects
-1	Achilles Heel (Cold attacks)
-1	Awkward Size
-2	Famous (Haud)
-3	Ism (Specism)
-3	Limited Use, Instantaneous (Mind Control)
-3	Marked (Haud)
-3	Nemesis (Slipstream, many Earth governments)
-3	Owned (Haud Empire)
-3	Unappealing
-3	Vulnerability (Cold)
-3	Wanted

Janus (125 Character Points)

Identity: Zachary King (Secret, the general populace believes Zachary King to be deceased)
Occupation: Professional criminal, mask-hunter
First Appearance: Amazing Presentations, Vol. 2, #1
Former Aliases: Zachary King
Place of Birth: London, England
Affiliation: White Rooks
Territory: Empire City
Height: 6'0" (183 cm) **Eyes:** Green
Weight: 180 lbs. (82 kg) **Hair:** Red

Zachary King was born into a family of prestige and tradition ... sadly, bought at the expense of others. Privateers, slave-traders, gun-runners, have all carried the King blood, and Zachary is the product of their exploits.

King grew up as a privileged child, enjoying a lavish and self-indulgent life. James, King's father, was a proud and arrogant man, who tried teaching his son to take what he wanted from life. The Kings had money and power enough to abuse those around them without concern. James would take Zachary on illegal safaris to hunt white rhinos in central Africa, and to visit the slave markets in Asia. When King turned 13, James took him on a trek across the Himalayas as a right of passage. James's constant abuse of the Shirpa guides, however, left the Kings stranded in the barren cold, without food or proper shelter. Although they found a cave, the cold and hunger worsened, and James feared they would not survive — he planned to eat his own son to stay alive. King, however, got the better of his father and killed him. When rescuers found King, he was silent and withdrawn, but suspiciously healthy. He whispered only that his father had gone off one day, to look for help, and never returned.

King became as cold as the mountains. He thrilled at the bloodletting, and enjoyed the role of "master of the house." Over the next few years, his insanity and brilliance grew hand in hand; a series of "accidents" followed, ensuring he was the last King descendent. He inherited everything.

Delighted by his wit but bored without challenge, King decided to test London society. He became a copy-cat of the most infamous killer, Jack the Ripper. Although successful in frightening Londoners, King failed to erase his traces completely, and the investigators discovered his identity. Having planned for all contingencies, however, King ambushed the investigating detectives, grievously wounding Detective Jennifer Randall before fleeing.

Still free, King believed he had "won," and it was time to move on. He eradicated all records of his existence — the family estate was burned, bank accounts liquidated, and files vanished. He would build himself anew.

King needed a new type of challenge, and turned to the masked adventurers appearing more often in the headlines. What was the Ripper compared to the American Sentinel or Lady Starbright? He adopted a god's name, Janus the two-faced Roman, but would not hide — his mask would be the face of normality.

Janus debuted with spectacle, slaying the British vigilante, Wrath. Immediately thereafter, he was attacked by the heroic knight, Caliburn, whom King had unintentionally helped create. Bested by Caliburn, Janus was arrested and jailed ... but prison could not hold him. Janus and Caliburn clashed many times, in a vicious, unbreaking cycle, until Janus managed to discover Caliburn's identity. He would force the game to change.

Janus drew Caliburn into a trap by kidnapping, and killing, Jennifer Randall. Janus unmasked Caliburn and badly scarred his face with a fireplace poker. Caliburn defied death, and returned to defeat Janus and lock him away. Caliburn left London for Empire City, unaware that Janus would soon be free to follow.

Body	6	Attack Combat Value	9
Mind	11	Defense Combat Value	6
Soul	3	Health Points	45

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
3	9	Attack Combat Mastery
4	4	Combat Technique (Portable Armoury, Weapons Encyclopaedia, Concealment, Judge Opponent)
2	4	Defense Combat Mastery
9	9	Divine Relationship
2	6	Extra Defenses
3	3	Features (Appearance)
1	2	Gadgeteer
4	8	Gadgets (Weapons)
3	3	Heightened Awareness
4	8	Henchmen
21	21	Highly Skilled
10	10	Sidekick ("Badgirl;" Always has a femme fatale at his side)
4	12	Wealth
	-3	• Restriction (Various identities needed to access Wealth)

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
3	3	Mind Shield

Lvl	Pts	Skills
1	2	Architecture (Skyscrapers)
2	4	Artisan (Metalworking)
1	4	Biological Sciences (Physiology)
1	1	Boating (Small boats)
2	6	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)
3	10	City Knowledge (London, downtown; Empire City, downtown)
1	4	Computers (Intrusion/Security)
4	8	Cultural Arts (Music)
1	5	Demolitions (Safe Cracking)
3	9	Disguise (Prosthetics)
1	4	Electronics (Computers)
4	4	Etiquette (Upper Class)
4	8	Foreign Culture (Various African, Asian)
2	8	Forgery (Paper Documents)
2	2	Gaming (Simulations)
1	4	Interrogation (Drugs)
1	3	Intimidation (Business)
5	5	Languages (English, Afrikaans, Arabic, Creole, French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Nilotic, Russian, Zulu)
1	3	Law (Trade)
2	8	Mechanics (Traps)
1	4	Military Sciences (Hardware Recognition)
2	4	Navigation (Urban)
2	4	Performing Arts (Drama)
1	2	Piloting (Light Airplane)
2	8	Poisons (Synthetic)
1	4	Police Sciences (Forensics)
3	9	Seduction (Female)
2	6	Stealth (Silent Movement)
2	4	Street Sense (Influential Individuals)
1	2	Social Sciences (Psychology)
2	6	Urban Tracking (Corporate)
2	4	Visual Arts (Photography)
3	3	Wilderness Survival (Mountain)
3	24	Gun Combat (Rifle)
2	14	Melee Attack (Improvised Weapons)
2	24	Ranged Defense (Personal)
2	16	Unarmed Defense (Holds)

Pts	Defects
-2	Blind Fury (When faced with "bad luck")
0	Marked (No fingerprints)
-3	Nemesis (Caliburn)
-3	Recurring Nightmares (Of father)
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (Evidence of crimes)
-3	Wanted

Kreuzritter (275 Character Points)

Identity: Milo Rauchenberger (Publicly known, presumed dead)
Occupation: Former archaeologist, former Nazi metahuman soldier, monarch of Thule, would-be world conqueror
First Appearance: War Stories #30, The American Sentinel #1 (Returned)
Former Aliases: Ernst Rauchenberger
Place of Birth: Nuremberg, Germany
Affiliation: White Rooks
Territory: Thule
Height: 6'2" (188 cm) **Eyes:** Black
Weight: 375 lbs. (170 kg) **Hair:** Black

Milo Rauchenberger was a founding member of the Thule Society, a Germanic organization comprised of Bavaria's social and intellectual elite. The Thule Society formed after WWI in response to the Treary of Versailles; it espoused theories of Nordic superiority as exemplified by the mystical island of Thule, the Aryan equivalent to Atlantis. Although Thule's mix of occult and racial superiority would influence some echelons of the Nazi party, Hitler disbanded the society as a threat to his power base.

Milo, a renowned archaeologist with the Thule Society, and a near-mentor figure to Heinrich Himmler, survived thanks to the SS whose support he enjoyed. In turn, the SS funded his expeditions to uncover Thule in the North Sea, which Milo eventually accomplished. During the subsequent underwater dig, Milo discovered a partial suit of armour virtually untouched by the freezing saltwater. Covered in Nordic runes, the armour seethed with power — Milo was forced to don it, lest the SS or demagogue Hitler claim it for themselves. Milo became the elemental-wielding Kreuzritter ("Crusader"), a hero of the Nazi regime.

Kreuzritter was promoted to the front lines as the first metahuman SS-soldier. It was only inevitable he would face the American Sentinel, fighting a hundred wars across the battlefields of the Second World War. Kreuzritter often teamed with Herr Cryptic to lead the *Übermensch* into battle. The pair was also responsible for leading the rogue Iron Duke on many rampages.

Just prior to the fall of Berlin, Kreuzritter led one last assault on the Russian and American forces, trying to assassinate General Hodges and Marshal Konev. He was opposed by Sentinel and Muzhik, the Hero of Russia; in the battle Kreuzritter's elemental powers backlashed and he seemingly died when a magma fountain engulfed his Brand Tiger.

Kreuzritter, however, lay dormant deep within the earth, sustained by his armour while the world passed him by. His body was permanently transformed to survive the elements. He reawoke two decades later, but remained hidden, re-acclimating to this new world. He gathered his strength, resources, and support from secret Nazi caches and SS survivors. In 1971, before the world could react, he used a tremendous portion of his armour's energy to raise Thule from the depths of the North Sea. As neighbouring countries contended with massive flooding, Kreuzritter's envoys registered the island with the United Nations as the new nation-state of Thule. Kreuzritter, claiming to be Milo Rauchenberger's son, Ernst, declared himself monarch.

Kreuzritter stated he is not a Nazi, but supports certain Nordic ideals. From Thule's founding, Kreuzritter opened its shores to anyone of Germanic or Nordic ancestry, but with the fall of the USSR, he extended the invitation to many former Soviet scientists and military forces. Thule has become a major industrial power, especially for companies wishing to remain close to Europe yet be unhindered by EU restrictions.

Raising Thule cost Kreuzritter far more power than he cares to admit. Partially because of this, he maintains a fairly low profile. He has clashed with Sentinel and the Guard at various times since his return, although even with the White Rooks he often stays behind the scenes, plotting for more power. Sentinel and several government officials believe "Ernst" is really Milo, but so far have been unable to bring him before the world court.

Body	14	Agility	8	Speed	8
Mind	10				
Soul	9				

Attack Combat Value 15
Defense Combat Value 10
Health Points 235

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
4	12	Attack Combat Mastery
1	2	Defense Combat Mastery
3	3	Divine Relationship
	-2	• Restriction (Divine Relationship; Only to escape death or capture)
23	92	Item of Power (Thulian Armour)
	-5	• Activation Time, +1 BP can pause (Item of Power; Must put armour on)
1	8	Extra Attacks
3	3	Heightened Awareness
10	10	Henchmen (Diplomatic Staff and Spies)
12	12	Highly Skilled
10	30	Organizational Ties (Monarch of Thule)
6	12	Tough
10	30	Wealth

LVL	PTS	Item of Power's Attributes
5	14	Armour (Partial)
5	100	Dynamic Powers (Elemental Control, major; Area 5; Duration 8; Range 4; Targets 8)
	-3	• Backlash (Dynamic Powers; Drains 2 Body)
	-1	• Detectable (Dynamic Powers; Magical)
	-1	• Limited Use, Ongoing (Dynamic Powers)
	-3	• Restriction (Dynamic Powers; Maximum 2 hours continuous use per day)
5	5	Immovable
	-1	• Restriction (Immovable; Must be in contact with Earth)
3	3	Mind Shield

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
2	2	Adaptation (Cold, Extreme Pressure)
2	6	Armour (Optimized vs. Heat)
8	8	Special Defense (Ageing, Disease, Hunger, Oxygen, Own Attributes x2, Pain, Sleep)
2	8	Superstrength

LVL	PTS	Skills
1	2	Architecture (Ancient)
3	6	Artisan (Restoration)
4	12	City Knowledge (Thulestag — capital of Thule, royal quarter)
3	3	Controlled Breathing (Slow Heart Rate)
5	10	Cultural Arts (Archaeology)
4	4	Etiquette (Upper Class)
4	8	Foreign Culture (American, British, Russian, Japanese)
2	8	Interrogation (Psychological)
2	6	Intimidation (Political)
4	4	Languages (German, Czech, Dutch, English, French, Japanese, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish)
2	6	Law (International)
3	3	Management and Administration (Government)
1	4	Military Sciences (Strategy)
1	2	Navigation (Wilderness)
3	30	Power Usage: Dynamic Powers
2	4	Social Sciences (Politics)
1	12	Ranged Defense (Personal)
1	10	Special Ranged Attack (Dynamic Powers)
1	8	Unarmed Attack (Strikes)
1	8	Unarmed Defense (Strikes)

PTS	Defects
-3	Famous
-2	Less Capable (Agility)
-1	Less Capable (Speed)
-3	Marked (Lava skin)
-3	Nemesis (Sentinel, the Guard)
-3	Recurring Nightmares (Reliving death)
-3	Skeleton in the Closet (True identity as Milo)
-3	Unappealing
-1	Wanted (For questioning in many countries)

Mister Matthews (150 Character Points)

Identity: Samuel Andrew Matthews (Publicly known)
Occupation: Scientific mastermind, CEO Matthews GenTech, criminal strategist
First Appearance: Amazing Presentations, Vol. III, #3 (As teen), #88 (As Mister Matthews)
Former Aliases: Doctor Matthews
Place of Birth: Near Huntsville, Alabama
Affiliation: White Rooks
Territory: Any GenTech facility, but primarily Corporate HQ in Empire City
Height: 5'11" (180 cm) **Eyes:** Blue
Weight: 160 lbs. (73 kg) **Hair:** Grey

Samuel Andrew Matthews was born in a small cottage near Yellowhammer, Alabama. In 1959 his mother, Betty Matthews, was something of a rebel as an unmarried, single mother who wrote for a living. She disliked cities and distrusted the government. She was a bright lady who chose to home-school Samuel rather than subject him to the mediocrity of the school system.

Samuel demonstrated exceptional intelligence from a very early age. By three he was reading, and by ten had read everything in the Yellowhammer Library. Betty realized he would need opportunities to broaden his knowledge, and sent him to a private institution for gifted children in Huntsville, two hours away.

At 13, everything changed. Samuel received an acceptance letter to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on the day Betty was murdered in a metahuman battle. Artificer and White Banner had stolen top-secret blue prints from the Marshall Space Flight Center, but were pursued by Lady Starbright and an inexperienced Mother Raven. The adventurers eventually disabled Artificer's Spectre-jet, but his indiscriminate missile fire carved a deadly swath through the countryside. The women tried unsuccessfully to contain the damage.

Samuel got off the bus to find Betty killed and the house destroyed. He refused to call for help, knowing the adventurers would not care. Samuel turned the wrecked cottage into a funeral pyre, burning it to the ground, before walking back to Huntsville. He bought a train ticket to Boston, angry that his one friend had been taken from him by these so called "heroes."

Samuel earned a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry at 17, and a second Ph.D. in mammalian genetics by 19. In addition to his academic studies, he also grew fascinated with the fringe science of alchemy, and delved into unorthodox research.

Samuel, now Dr. Matthews, started an advanced genetics research company, Matthews GenTech, to study the effects of metallic gene-inhibitor concoctions on the predisposition of mammalian behaviour. A failed experiment with a grizzly bear, where the metallic serum increased the bear's aggression and strength, resulted in a loose beast that mauled Matthews's face. The reconstructive surgery put his face back together, but he was permanently scarred and aged prematurely. Public reaction to his research was not favourable, and the Board of Directors at M.I.T. publicly reprimanded Dr. Matthews for irresponsible research. Samuel rejected his two Ph.D.s and refused to consider himself a Doctor.

Mister Matthews became a 25 year old billionaire when GenTech went public. Now in a position of power, Matthews privately orchestrated revenge on the "superheroes" of the world. Many resources were channelled into radical science, spawning monstrous hybrids and obscene homonculi. He rarely enters battle personally, preferring to hire mercenaries or organize strike forces, such as White Banner's Egide Ubiquiste. If personally threatened, however, Matthews normally has several powerful serums at hand (for example, giving himself a chimpanzee's agility, a cheetah's speed, or even the combined strength of 10 grizzlies). Additionally, Matthew's mutated grizzly bear bodyguard, montgomery, is usually nearby. Although he hates all false heroes, Matthews especially loathes Mother Raven and despises the memory of Starbright.

Body	4	Attack Combat Value	6
Mind	15	Defense Combat Value	5
Soul	6	Health Points	50

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
4	8	Gadgets (Scientific equipment)
9	9	Henchmen
7	7	Highly Skilled
12	12	Organizational Ties (CEO Matthews GenTech)
11	11	Sidekick (Chimerical mutant bodyguard — Montgomery)
9	27	Wealth

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	14	Animal Summoning / Control (Mammals; Area 4; Duration 8)
2	27	Dynamic Powers (Mammalian Abilities, minor; Duration 5; Targets 2)
2	2	Mind Shield

Lvl	Pts	Skills
4	4	Animal Training (Primates)
5	20	Biological Sciences (Genetics)
4	4	Computers (Programming)
2	4	Electronics (Sensors)
2	8	Languages (English, Japanese, Russian)
3	9	Law (Medical)
4	4	Management & Administration (Big Business)
4	12	Medical (Vet)
2	8	Occult (Witchcraft)
4	20	Physical Sciences (Chemistry)
3	6	Social Sciences (Politics)
1	1	Writing (Technical Papers)

Pts	Defects
-2	Inept Attack
-1	Inept Defense
-3	Marked (Scarred face)
-2	Nemesis (Mother Raven, the Guard)
-3	Physically Unappealing
-3	Skeleton in Closet (Illegal experiments)
-3	Special Requirement: Control Serums (For Dynamic Powers)

Montgomery – Mister Matthews's Mutant Bear Sidekick (55 Character Points)

Body	13	Agility	7	Dexterity	7	Attack Combat Value	8
Mind	3					Defense Combat Value	4
Soul	2					Health Points	75

Lvl	Pts	Characteristic Attributes
2	6	Attack Combat Mastery
1	1	Features (Fur)
2	4	Massive Damage (Claws)
2	2	Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs)

Lvl	Pts	Power Attributes
2	6	Armour
2	2	Heightened Senses (Hearing, Smell)
1	6	Regeneration
2	8	Superstrength

Pts	Defects
-1	Awkward Size
-2	Blind Fury (When injured; Needs injection to calm down)
-3	Ism (Mutant animal)
-2	Less Capable (Agility)
-1	Less Capable (Manual Dexterity)
-3	Marked (Ursine Beast)
-1	Special Requirement (Weekly injections)
-3	Unappealing

White Banner (150 Character Points)

Identity: Chisa Amano (Publicly known)
Occupation: Mercenary
First Appearance: Lady Starbright #3
Former Aliases: None
Place of Birth: San Francisco, CA
Affiliation: Egide Ubiquiste (Also with Executive Outcomes, and Sandline International)
Territory: Operates worldwide
Height: 5'7" (170 cm) **Eyes:** Black
Weight: 130 lbs. (59 kg) **Hair:** Grey

White Banner, a professional soldier for 40 years, is a renowned strategist and tactician. Long ago, she gave up all ties to nation and family, preferring to work against governments rather than for a ruling regime. Although she harbours special hatred for America and Japan, in truth White Banner has become lost in her role as the guerrilla fighter, and her battle never seems to end.

In 1937, the Amano family emigrated from Japan, in opposition to their country's military actions in China. They travelled to San Francisco and began a new life in "Little Tokio." In 1938, Chisa was born into a society that would soon turn on the Japanese. Executive Order No. 9066, signed by President Roosevelt on February 23, 1942, empowered the US military to remove all persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast. The Amano family, forced to abandon possessions and property, was relocated to the interment camp at Manzanar, California, built in the Mojave Desert.

Chisa grew up in the communal poverty of Manzanar, where her family worked hard for little pay and less freedom. She was a tomboy, playing and fighting in the desert, or waiting out dust storms in the barracks. By the time the order was rescinded in 1945, her parents had lost everything they previously owned, and received paltry compensation from the government.

As Chisa got older, her disgust of America grew, as did her intolerance of her people. Too many continued to praise the government loudly, even though it treated them shamefully. Finally, her anger at America, and at those who accepted abuse, drove her to leave home. Chisa dropped out of school at 16, and hitchhiked down the coast, learning to survive on the streets of L.A., San Diego, and Tijuana.

Chisa found no faith in America, and travelled to Europe. She was in Spain during the start of the Basque movement, even joining them for a short time. Chisa moved across Europe, into Asia, and spent time with several revolutionary groups in Indonesia, India, and the Philippines.

In Indonesia, Chisa met the technosmith, Artificer. In a pact of mutual co-operation, Artificer agreed to genetically enhance her with alien technologies, if she agreed to serve as his bodyguard. The surgery was excruciatingly painful, but Chisa never cried. Artificer augmented Chisa's skeletal and musculature structure with a weave of biosteel, making her stronger, faster, and harder to kill. His pièce de résistance was replacing her eyes with synthetic lenses, wired to her neural pathways and central nervous system. Chisa would temporarily learn any physical action she witnessed, transforming observation into reflexive instinct. Chisa became White Banner, a flag representing no nation or ideology.

White Banner and Artificer attempted to steal a prototype supercar, the Spirit of America, but were stopped by Lady Starbright and Slipstream. Since then, White Banner has often helped Artificer, although she no longer works for him exclusively. In the 1970s she was seen in various conflicts in Vietnam, Ethiopia, and the Sahara. Through the '80s, White Banner travelled between Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey, and then to Peru, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. White Banner has worked for numerous mercenary units, including Executive Outcomes and Sandline International, but most often returns to a company she helped found, called Egide Ubiquiste.

Body	14	Attack Combat Value	11
Mind	8	Defense Combat Value	9
Soul	8	Health Points	130

LVL	PTS	Characteristic Attributes
1	3	Attack Combat Mastery
10	10	Combat Technique (Accuracy, Blind Fighting, Block Ranged Attacks, Concealment, Judge Opponent, Lightning Reflexes, Steady Hand, Portable Armoury, One Shot Left, Weapons Encyclopaedia)
1	2	Defense Combat Mastery
2	16	Extra Attacks
2	6	Extra Defenses
6	12	Gadgets (Weapons of all types)
1	1	Heightened Awareness
6	6	Highly Skilled
2	4	Massive Damage (Strikes)
1	2	Tough
2	6	Wealth

LVL	PTS	Power Attributes
1	3	Armour
3	3	Special Movement (Balance, Cat-Like, Wall-Bouncing)
5	24	Unique Power: Mirror Physical Ability (Duration 7; Range 2)
	-2	* Restriction (Mirror Physical Ability; Must see target use Skill)

LVL	PTS	Skills
2	6	Burglary (Breaking-and-Entering)
1	1	Controlled Breathing (Holding Breath)
1	5	Demolitions (Artificial Structures)
1	3	Disguise (Costume)
4	8	Foreign Culture (Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Spanish)
2	2	Gaming (Military Simulations)
2	8	Interrogation (Physical)
3	3	Languages (English, French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish)
3	12	Mechanics (Aeronautical)
4	16	Military Sciences (Hardware Recognition)
2	2	Navigation (Air)
3	6	Piloting (Helicopter)
3	9	Urban Tracking (Underworld)
3	3	Wilderness Survival (Desert)
3	6	Wilderness Tracking (Desert)

PTS	Defects
-1	Famous (White Banner)
-1	Marked (Scars from surgery, missing part of ear)
-2	Recurring Nightmares (Internment camp)
-2	Wanted (Suspected of crimes in numerous countries)

Unique Attribute: Mirror Physical Ability

Cost: 3 Points/Level
Type: Power
Relevant Stat: Body
PMVs: Duration, Range
Progression: Linear, starting at one Level 1 Skill (Level 1) increasing to ten Level 5 Skills (Level 10)
Reduction: Only one Skill at a time
Restrictions: Specific targets; must see target use Skill; limitation on Skills that can be mirrored.

Upon a successful Stat check, the character can temporarily learn any physical Skill of any single target character within the Range PMV distance. The Attribute Level determines the maximum Skill Level that can be mirrored. A physical Skill is either a combat skill, or one for which the Relevant Stat is Body.

The Level of the Attribute also determines how many Skills in total can be mirrored at any given time. Although only one target may be mirrored in a round, multiple targets can be mirrored over subsequent rounds.

Artificer

Blake White, a former major with the US Airforce, was stationed at Cape Canaveral when an alien ship crashed to Earth in the '50s. Although much of the ship was destroyed, White's team salvaged what they could. White was fascinated by their recovery, and studied it secretly while waiting for orders from his superiors. White accidentally discovered a metallic sphere that activated upon human touch. It was a mnemoic thought archive, holding information on a plethora of wonders.

White knew with his background and rank, he would likely never see this material again. He made a decision, stole the sphere, and vanished. White went into hiding and studied the device. Although there was little information on who or what had designed it, much of the information was easy to comprehend. He began building samples of the technology, and selling them off at exorbitant prices to finance greater operations. Soon, White had set himself up as a one-stop shop for black market technology.

White named himself Artificer, and never confirmed where his secrets came from. He built himself a suit of power armour, and would even sell his services as a mercenary. Over the years, he has provided equipment or resources to many criminal organizations and supervillains, and even been directly responsible for the creation of individuals like White Banner. Artificer, however, does not discriminate in his customers. He is willing to sell anything to anyone for the right price, although few heroes can stomach supporting him.

Green Ronin

Rachel Wilde was a long time student of archaeology and the occult, based at Oxford. She spent many years researching mystic artifacts, from the Holy Grail, to the Philosopher's Stone, to a mythical nameless weapon passed through generations of warrior women. Wilde believed Dover Angel was the last woman to bear it, and narrowed in on its location. While investigating, Wilde noticed a peculiar young girl touring the region. Wilde kept an eye on young, frail Sarah Gebhart, and followed her late one night to the lost grave of Dover Angel.

Wilde rushed to beat Gebhart to the find, and both grabbed a bayonet buried inside Iron Duke simultaneously. The women battled over the weapon, causing it to split. Wilde bonded with the emerald armour, and became Green Ronin. Over the years she has schemed to separate the rest of the artifact from Gebhart, now Red Phoenix, and the awakened Iron Duke; she simultaneously defends her own fragment fiercely.

Green Ronin still investigates lost wonders, and has become even more of a relic thief. The armour is seemingly indestructible, helping her avoid death on many occasions. It is magically light and flexible, and while Red Phoenix holds the sword, Green Ronin's armour is far stronger. It additionally protects her in hostile environments, allowing her to search regions too dangerous for most investigators. She compliments the armour with high tech gadgets, and with mystical weapons she's managed to recover.

Red Minstrel

Jean-Fortunée Hamelin, an orphan on the streets of Paris, became an excellent thief at a young age. Hamelin always loved folk tales and music, and was delighted by buskers and storytellers. When the Gallery of Paris proclaimed it had the Pied Piper's flute on display, Hamelin believed its magic would make him rich, powerful, and famous. He only became famous: for being the youngest thief to break into the Gallery; for trying to stop the Sûreté de France with only a gold-plated flute; and for hopelessly romantic dreams. He was sentenced to five years at age 14.

In jail, Hamelin heard of a man who could make dreams real. Upon his release, he sought out the Artificer and asked for a magic flute — like the Pied Piper, he would punish the world for what it had done to him. The Artificer crafted a sonic weapon that could stun, hypnotize, or shatter with a note, and Hamelin, now the Red Minstrel, worked hard to pay the Artificer back. He ended up in jail regularly, defeated by costumed glory hounds.

In 1992, Hamelin learned of a mystic cult called the Temple of Mars, from a talkative cellmate. They had stolen a magical, alien jewel, called the Olympus Diamond, from a secret US space program. A thoroughly incredulous and convenient story, it appealed tremendously to Hamelin's fancy. He escaped, and used his information to steal the stone.

Although the stone's origins were never fully known, the cultists knew enough not to touch it. When Hamelin opened the protective case, it unleashed something terrible, a force of chaos and insanity that completely overwhelmed Hamelin. Something dark and awful possessed him, and now uses Red Minstrel as its avatar to sow the seeds of Pandemonium.

Seawolf

Charles D. Dagon is the son of Hank Dagon, a Master Chief in the US Navy during WWII. Hank volunteered for Project Speargun, a mostly failed experiment to develop aquatic assault troops. Charles, however, was born a bit strange. Not only was he a tremendously strong child, but he frightened his parents badly on several occasions when he appeared to drown in a bathtub or pool; their nervousness only worsened when they realized he could breathe water.

Navy scientists tried their best to help, but caused more harm in their anxiousness and excitement. Charles grew up as a test subject, although he learned to master his abilities with the Navy's help. Superstrong and extremely tough, he was resistant to hot and cold extremes, navigated instinctively underwater, and could live beneath the surface indefinitely.

Charles officially enlisted when he turned 18, but in truth he had known little beyond the naval base. Five years later, his parents passed away, and Charles decided he had had enough. He was sick of being a lab rat, and sick of humanity's hubris; he, and other metahumans, were symbols of something greater. He believed he was at the top of the food chain, and that it was time humanity remembered there were greater forces of nature out in the world.

A small group flocked to him, drawn by his strength, and sycophantically agreed with his ideology. He became Seawolf, and attempted to steal a prototype submarine to lead his people into the waves, but the American Sentinel and Caliburn stopped him.

Seawolf escaped, and vanished for a time, learning how to be a more effective leader. More people have joined his crusade over the years, and Seawolf has used their contributions to create a hidden, underwater lair, a data-haven buried on the floor of the Atlantic. He physically plagues the oceans and coastlines, and philosophically attacks society. Seawolf appeals to an anarchistic crowd, and any who catch his eye are invited to his home.

Torque

Torque is a metahuman enforcer who most often works for the Mafia, under Michelangelo Saracino. Torque has developed a fearsome reputation as a Mafia hitman, known for his destructive telekinetic powers. His favourite tactic is to grab someone telekinetically, and then twist them in opposing directions. He also manifests powerful force fields, making him difficult to hurt.

Torque grew up as Carl Yates, the biggest and meanest kid on the streets of Hell's Kitchen. He made it as far as Vietnam, where he enlisted for two terms, becoming an even nastier thug. When he returned home he could not adjust to civilian life, and drifted almost naturally to the gangs.

A friend found him an easy job managing a warehouse, which stored chemicals for Matthews GenTech. As long as he kept an eye on the barrels of who-knew-what, he could use the building to run rackets. His lucrative business ended with a police raid. While the officers arrested his men, Yates laid low in a prepared cubby hole, hidden behind some barrels. Unfortunately, in the chaos, a barrel's seal was broken, and Yates breathed fumes for several hours. Eventually the coast cleared, and Yates stumbled home with a terrible migraine.

The fumes changed Yates somehow, granting him the ability to generate powerful kinetic energies. He revelled in his newfound abilities, and soon came to the attention of Mickey "the Saint," who helped Torque develop his new identity.

Day on the Job

Part III

3:42 PM

Thunderclap's manoeuvre leaves me deaf and a little stunned, along with Red Phoenix and Slipstream. Sentinel and Caliburn seem unaffected, as do our villains. The fight continues with little sign of slowing, but everything happens in mute. The only thing I hear is the fading echo of a thunderclap and the rising roar of blood rushing through my ears like a runaway ocean.

Slipstream, momentarily dazed, wobbles in place at jerky high speed. Iron Bow nocks another arrow, this time drawing a bead on the jade speedster. Caliburn covers him, however, throwing a pair of billiard-sized balls at Iron Bow. They hit, exploding in a wet epoxy mess that instantly solidifies and coats Iron Bow's force field in an opaque resin. He's blind ... for now.

Sentinel slams into Thunderclap with both fists extended, sending the villain flying and sparking silently through the air. Sentinel hovers there a moment, energy particles orbiting his hands while he prepares an atomic blast. For a moment, I hear the television Sentinel from *The Sentinel Atomic Action Hour* cry, "By Einstein's Ghost, prepare to face my twin atomic furies!"

I blame it on the combat stress.

Red Phoenix, also affected by Thunderclap's attack, hesitates unsteadily. Rapier ... waits for her to recover. This show of chivalry surprises me. Red Phoenix returns his smile and straightens up ... they have an unspoken understanding. Rapier's here only to test his skills against hers, nothing more. They stare at each other a second and exchange the barest of nods. Suddenly, they're both dancing in a dazzling display of swordplay.

***

11:14 AM; 4 Hours, 28 Minutes earlier.

It took less than a minute to reach the bank robbery out on Wall St., and I probably slowed Sentinel down. We arrive minutes before the first patrol car even gets here. Sentinel sets me down on a second story terrace facing the bank, leaving me among a stunned crowd of smokers in suits. I'm still wearing my hardened padding; Sentinel insisted I keep them on.

Sentinel flies toward the bank and the smokers scramble for ringside seats at the terrace's railing. I'm watching too. I can see the getaway car, a blue and banged up Chevy, idling in front of the bank. The driver is unconscious and the four wheels deflated. Slipstream was here 45 seconds ago. I fumble for the ear-mike Sentinel gave me, eavesdropping on their conversation.

Sentinel: "...tion report?"

Slipstream: "For.rmed.spects.forcng.managr.to.opn.vult."

I spoke with Slipstream earlier today and discovered he trained the Guard to hear him at higher speeds ... like learning a new language.

Sentinel: "Weapons?"

Slipstream: "Shtgns.n.MP5s."

Sentinel: "Hostages?"

Slipstream: "Twntytwo."

Sentinel nods: "Disarm the robbers deepest in the bank, priority on the fully automatic weapons. I'll disarm the ones in the lobby ... Go!"

Slipstream gives a thumb's up and vanishes in a green streak. Sentinel is through the door before it even opens fully.

I hear a rush of noise in my ear.

"Excuse me," a middle-age businesswoman says to me. "Wha ... what's happening in there?"

I suddenly realize the smokers are looking at me. They're staring in awe like ... I'm a hero. My sparring armor is sleek with just enough dings to look authentic, and I'm well-built, carrying off that heroic physique easily.

I have to admit, it brings a moment of exhilaration and panic. There's an admiration in their eyes that I've never experienced, but I'm also afraid that I've somehow lied; that they'll uncover me as a fraud.

Still, I look at their faces and realize for this moment, I have their fullest attention and highest esteem.

Sentinel: "Clear."

Slipstream: "Clr."

"They've disarmed the bank robbers," I say in my most authoritative voice.

The crowd cheers and one person shakes my hand. A few more pat me on the back.

I'm stunned, even humbled by their reactions.

There's an odd elation in their adoration, until you realize it's greater than you or your belief in yourself. Suddenly, I'm a kid again, riding my first two-wheeler while my dad shouts, "You can do it...." I wonder what I did to deserve this unfailing faith. Why are they trusting me with their happiness?

Why do I deserve this?

***

2:33 PM; 2 Hours, 9 Minutes earlier

Red Phoenix and Caliburn return from a sortie, a raid against a blackmarket arsenal bunker that supplied today's bank robbers with grade-B military hardware. They also have information on a supervillain team in contact with the gunrunners.

I attend the meeting in the Situation Room. We're sitting at the Guard's Round Table (the round table was Caliburn's suggestion, I believe), going over files on these supervillains.

"The group calls itself the Legionaries," Red Phoenix says with a German lilt. "They are mercenaries who work primarily for Banana Republic dictators, and they've fought the Untouchables. We believe this is their first time in Empire City."

The monitors reveal action shots on four individuals, captured by reporters and security cameras.

"What are they doing here?" Sentinel asks.

"We don't know," Red Phoenix says, "but they wanted high-grade explosives."

"We do know they share the same technological hardware," Caliburn announces.

"Artificer technology?" Slipstream asks; he's back at "normal" speed.

"Surprisingly, no," Caliburn says, "and it's not alien either. Maybe a new supplier."

"We've heard reports of new technology appearing in Tokyo," Sentinel says. "Maybe we should contact Tokkotai."

"Good idea," Slipstream says. "I've been meaning to introduce myself."

Caliburn nods in agreement. "Unfortunately, that'll have to wait. Our four villains are due back at the weapon's depot this afternoon to pick up the explosives."

"We'll be waiting," Sentinel says. "Who is the opposition?"

"Well," Caliburn says, "we have Thunderclap, who we think might be the team leader. Bionic implants and a powered exoskeleton make him very strong and tough. He leaps instead of flies. His gauntlets also generate a concussion pulse on impact capable of warping steel girders ... if their strike in Dresden was any indication."

"I'll handle him," Sentinel says.

"Good," Caliburn says, "but your secondary focus should be this woman — Cloud Racer." A picture of a statuesque Asian woman in a sleek jet-pack suit replaces Thunderclap's ugly mug. "She is the team's only aerialist, with subsonic flight, swift reactions, and a powered gauntlet to knock opponents silly. She fights close-up, so I'll bait her to me."

"How are you taking her down?" Red Phoenix asks.

"Caustic smoke bombs and sticky grenades. If I can't gummy up her armour, I'll herd her towards Sentinel."

"Next," Red Phoenix continues, "is Rapier, a swordsman."

The next picture shows a thin, wiry, Latino. In almost every picture, he has Errol Flynn's swashbuckling grin.

"He uses a micron-filament blade that can slice through most solid objects," Red Phoenix says. "His implants are the lightest, possibly to help him maintain his speed and flexibility as the team's fighter."

"I'll handle him," Slipstream says.

"Actually," Red Phoenix says, "he'll probably come after me."

"Why?" Sentinel asks.

"The gunrunners we arrested say he's been asking questions about me. Many questions."

"He wants a challenge?" Slipstream asks.

"It seems. He can be your secondary opponent if I need to go after Thunderclap. Besides Slipstream, we need you against this last man — Iron Bow." Rapier's picture vanishes, revealing a stout jawed Grizzly Adams carrying a bow with heavy hydraulics and pistons. That can't be good.

"He uses a mechanical bow and cybernetics, providing his arrows with several hundred pounds of additional thrust."

Slipstream whistles softly.

"His arrows are either blunted lead for kinetic impact or filled with a depleted uranium core to punch through vehicles and vaults. We believe his shots also break the sound barrier." Red Phoenix stops, allowing that to sink in. "Slipstream, you must knock those arrows from flight, or prevent him from firing."

Slipstream nods, his mood considerably more serious.

"You have twenty minutes to study the tapes," Caliburn adds. "We're leaving in thirty. The Marvels Tactical Unit has already been informed, and will stay out of the area until we've captured the team."

"What about me?" I ask.

Sentinel and Red Phoenix exchange looks.

"We would prefer you remain here," Red Phoenix says.

"Look," I say, "I can appreciate the concern for my safety, but if I'm going to be in the MTU, I have to see how you guys operate."

"Officer Pallin," Caliburn says, "there's no way we can tackle these Legionaries and protect you at the same time."

"I'm not asking to be in the thick of the fight," I say. "I'll be in an adjoining building, or two buildings down."

Nobody says anything.

"At least let me be nearby so I can see how you deal with the aftermath."

Quiet still.

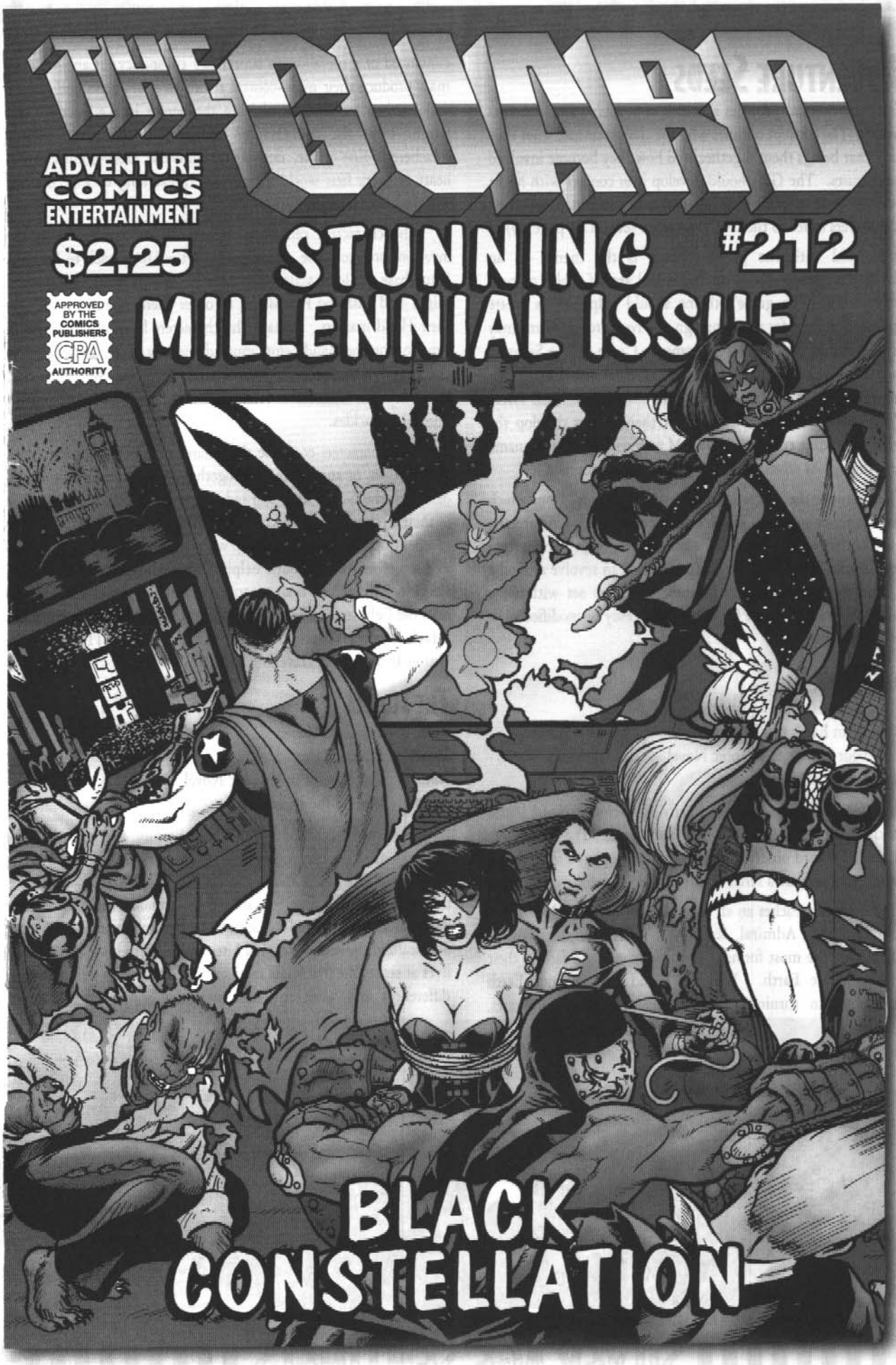
"Then this entire day of showing me how your team operates ... was it for nothing?"

Sentinel sighs.

"All right, son ... you can be in the area," he says, "but, as soon as anything goes wrong, you get out of there...."

I'm about to agree, when Sentinel adds, "And, you don the suit. Agreed?"

I nod, suddenly relieved at the thought of wearing the padding again.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

Adventure Seeds

Silver Age Sentinels provides a wealth of possible game concepts and themes. The concept outlines who the characters are, what they are doing that brings them together, and how they become involved with adventures. The GM should develop it in concert with his or her ideas on scale, period, location, and tone, and in conjunction with the players (refer to the GM Discussion section on page 20).

Associated with the game concept is the theme — an underlying idea that pervades the individual arcs of a plot or even the entire story. The game's theme should help players create appropriate characters for the campaign or adventure. A theme may be as straightforward as a quest for someone ("who are the Seven?") or something ("locate the nine planetary soul-diamonds"), as specific as "are metahumans still human?" or as abstract as "dark forces rising" or "hope will always prevail." A theme helps develop the campaign's narrative cohesion. The GM may wish to devise a name for the campaign or adventure that conveys an appropriate feel.

GMs can use the following ideas as "game seeds" from which an adventure can unfold. These examples serve to illustrate the flexibility of *Silver Age Sentinels* as a multi-genre superhero system and demonstrate how an entire game scenario can revolve around a single, underlying theme. All of these seeds are set within the campaign universe of Empire City, but could easily be modified to fit into another world.

Attack Force Io

Scale: Major Heroes
Locale: From Earth to the stars
Tone: Four Colour to Graphic Novel
Theme: Defenders of humanity

Jade Naga, Haud Lord, has finally contacted a Haud battle fleet, and summoned them to Earth's solar system. The Haud have established a forward observation point on Io, Jupiter's fifth moon, from which they initiate a series of intelligence gathering operations.

Haud activity reaches an all time high on Earth, as Jade Naga co-ordinates with Admiral Kapp'Ara. Clearly, the world's superheroes are the most formidable barrier the Haud face in their goal to subjugate Earth. Will the Haud trick various Earth governments into turning against their metahuman saviours, convinced of a metahuman supremacy conspiracy? Can the Haud mass produce their mind-control toxins to overwhelm and enslave major urban populations, driving the heroes into a guerrilla war fought from the countryside? Or would the Haud plan a treacherous first strike, detonating nullverse atom-bombs in the heart of every first world metropolis, threatening to wipe out the world's greatest defenders?

The characters can piece together clues foreshadowing the invasion force to come, and even trace the Haud back to Io. The Haud base would be staffed by numerous vassals, and the characters might find enslaved Parousians, or other alien creatures toiling for their Haud masters. Perhaps the characters learn of the threat in time to stop the Haud before much damage is done ... or maybe the characters cannot stop the events from occurring, but must help humanity rise from defeat, and throw off their overlord's mind-numbing shackles.

The characters could be the Guard, members of an expanded Guard team, or another force altogether (after all, the Haud would deal with the Guard first, and Jade Naga undoubtedly knows some of their strengths and weaknesses). A large-scale threat provides an excellent opportunity to team up with solo defenders of a city (such as Prometheus or Caliburn helping with a Haud nest in Central Park), or to combine teams into a metahuman army, which would take the fight into space (the characters could co-ordinate a massive attack force, consisting of the Guard, Aegis JTF, and the Untouchables — all travelling to Io!).

The Jungle

Scale: Standard Heroes
Locale: Empire City
Tone: Four Colour to Graphic Novel
Theme: War on the streets

Gang war has erupted throughout Empire, and it is up to the heroes to quell the murderous rage. With La Cosa Nostra seemingly locked in a downward spiral, the Chinese Triads have decided it is time to establish an iron grip on the city's underworld. A series of daring raids perpetuated by demon-faced metahumans have further demoralized the crime bosses of Little Italy. With both fortunes and lives at stake, the five Mafia families must attempt to put aside their differences and work to push back the border of Chinatown.



Slipstream quickly incapacitates some of Jade Naga's Haud soldiers

Although Murder Incorporated does its best, the Mafia leaders realize outside help is needed, and bring in Alice, Queen of Hearts, to exterminate the Triad leaders. Meanwhile, rumours abound that a Hong Kong *Dai Lo* is arriving to become the new kingpin of Empire.

As the rest of the city feels the tremors in the Lower East Side, violence erupts in the Bowery and Hell's Kitchen, when local toughs try to carve a bigger piece of the pie. While some sell their services to the highest bidder, others, like the Dead Rabbits, make grandiose grabs for power. The chaos provides an excellent smokescreen for collecting on old debts and settling scores ... and is also the perfect opportunity for someone like Rain Killer to create even more strife for the characters.

In the end, the EPD are overwhelmed simply trying to manage damage control; it is up to the characters to help go after the gangs, and to protect the innocents always caught in the crossfire. As the war escalates, the characters may have to question the old adages: is it better to choose the lesser evil? Is the enemy of an enemy your friend? How can the conflict resolve without putting a new enemy in power?

Merry-go-round

Scale: Standard Heroes
Locale: Rock Springs, Wyoming ("the Carousel")
Tone: Graphic Novel to Mature
Theme: The Individual against the State

The characters are called in when a jailbreak releases a metahuman mob in the Carousel, allowing the supervillains to run rampant. The prisoners have escaped their specialized restraints and taken over the penitentiary. They have been confined to the building by a police cordon, but no one believes it will last for long. The rogues gallery holding court could consist of any or all of the villains presented in this book, in addition to any new criminals the characters have put away. A particularly smart or powerful villain is in charge, negotiating the lives of the hostages for high stakes demands. The characters know that these villainous personality types will not work together for long, but this simply adds to the time pressure; if they don't act quickly, the hostages will die.

The characters can storm the Carousel, with police back up, or they can try to negotiate with the leaders. Likewise, they can infiltrate the prison, in an attempt to quietly subdue the opposition; if they are not careful, however, they may find themselves locked up in the same cells that once contained the villains!

At some point in this chaos, the characters should learn that one key villain, perhaps the most nefarious of the bunch, is missing. He or she was the impetus for the jailbreak — orchestrated by the Order! Did they act on orders, and have sanction for breaking into a federal penitentiary and illegally extracting a prisoner? Is the government cutting a back-room deal with one of the most dangerous beings on the planet? How high in the chain-of-command does the conspiracy reach?

Summer Snows

Scale: Major Heroes
Locale: Empire City
Tone: Four Colour
Theme: Power of nature

Winter, namely General Winter, paralyzes Empire City beneath July snowstorms. The citizens of Empire are forced to deal with waist-high snowdrifts, roads slick with treacherous black ice, white-out conditions, and a razor-sharp north wind. Emergency services are unprepared and ill-equipped for the freak blizzard, and the weather is no kinder to them. Power and phones lines come down, and pipes threaten to freeze, cutting off water to homes.

While the characters perform emergency rescue operations, General Winter's minions scour the streets, searching for ... something. Does Winter desire to extend his storm across the entire globe? Is there a way for him to block out the sun's warmth? Is he righting a wrong done to one of his people? He could even be searching for a lost love to warm his icy heart! The characters need to discover what Winter is searching for, and why he is looking for it, before determining their best course of action.

Magic Streets

Scale: Minor to Standard Heroes
Locale: Back alleys, side streets, and forgotten places
Tone: Graphic Novel to Mature
Theme: Childhood's end

A major city, be it Empire City or Los Angeles or New Orleans, has abandoned and forgotten places — forgotten by the middle and upper crusts, at least. But people still live there and must survive the day-to-day grind. These lost souls are often easy pickings for amoral villains. Doc Cimitière prays on new immigrants, Bloody Mary hunts runaway children, and Jade Naga and Mister Matthews may each kidnap the homeless for experimentation. Most superheroes and law enforcement agents are overworked or uninformed (or in some cases even disinterested) in helping the hopeless.

But there are saviours and fables, even for the downtrodden. Pan & Belle are two of the most active adventurers. The girls may call on the characters for help facing Cimitière's *zombi* legions, or tell the characters how to find Bloody Mary when she strikes too close to their homes. Of course, sometimes Pan & Belle may even clash with the characters, such as when the duo help ravers escape from a police bust, or break a child prodigy out of an exploitive government institution.

The characters may never before have noticed what happens in the poor districts of town, or they could be living there themselves, driving to the fringes of society when their powers manifested. Such characters have few resources available in normal society, but can find friends and allies in the Untouchables, or dark vigilante figures like Caliburn and the Baron, who understand that the world is made of greys.

Last, Best Hope

Scale: Minor to Obscure Heroes
Locale: Empire City and the world
Tone: Four Colour to Graphic Novel
Theme: Call to duty

The White Rooks are triumphant. They have managed to imprison, or even destroy, the Guard and the United Nations' Aegis JTF. Perhaps they've created an alternate reality where those heroes never existed, or maybe they trapped them in an alien crystal-matrix. The White Rooks are triumphant, and the world must bow to them!

But of course there are still metahumans and adventurers on the planet; the question is, are any of them heroes? The characters are all minor roles, sidekicks, novices, or fledgling heroes, or maybe they are obscure back-benchers or second stringers. They may have never faced anyone stronger than the local tough-guy, but now they must pull together to defeat Kreuzritter, Iron Duke, Janus, Mister Matthews, and Alice, Queen of Hearts.

It will be difficult to say the least, and their challenges will be manifold. They may find a number of allies in unexpected places, however, for the White Rooks will have made enemies in governments, private individuals, corporations, and even amongst other supervillains who will not kowtow to them.

The White Rooks, confidant in their superiority, will not expect a bunch of misfits and has-beens to be any threat. The characters might simply have to discover how to find and free the prisoners. A more satisfying victory, though, would come from outwitting their opponents, turning them against each other, or isolating them and using team-work to defeat them. The characters must be extremely careful and cautious in their actions, for one mistake can spell doom at the hands of the world's greatest villains!

Red Rain

Scale: Standard Heroes
Locale: Empire City
Tone: Graphic Novel to Dark and Gritty
Theme: Who done it?

Attempted murder has been committed, but the pieces don't add up. Red Minstrel and Green Ronin have both been savagely assaulted, and lie in critical condition. Rain Killer has been caught and charged with the attacks, but swears she isn't responsible. While she has had blood on her hands in the past, she's always been truthful about her involvement. Yet Rain Killer's defense becomes even more suspect when she fingers Red Phoenix as the assailant.

On the other hand, Red Phoenix has vanished, and has part of Green Ronin's armour. Is Rain Killer possibly telling the truth? Can the characters track down Red Phoenix, or should they protect the hospitalized victims? And is Rain Killer now at risk, or just looking for a way to break out and finish the job herself?

Will the Temple of Mars arrive to punish Red Minstrel for his theft? Do the Guard know of Red Phoenix's strange behaviour? Finally, in any conflict between Red Phoenix and Green Ronin, can the Iron Duke be far off?

Stardust to Guide Us

Scale: Major Heroes
Locale: Space
Tone: Four Colour to Mature
Theme: Protectors of reality

The Nimbus are an ancient and enigmatic alien race, but they have proved to be benevolent and caring, as far as humanity is concerned. Although both heroes that the Nimbus have chosen have died in the line of duty, the Nimbus believes humanity must have a place in the galactic arena. They have chosen not a single protector this time, but a group of strong-willed and good-hearted individuals: the characters.

Those chosen by the Nimbus could come from any walk of life. What matters is the Nimbus believes they have the potential to be amongst humanity's greatest defenders. They are gifted with the power of starlight and space travel, and are driven to do good deeds throughout the universe.

The universe is full of threats, from local (and global) supervillains, to the star-spanning Haud Empire, to the mystic forces buried deep beneath the Martian sands. Often, such heroes command tremendous power, but face even more overwhelming forces — embodiments of primal ideas, the dying of stars, or tears in reality. Solutions are rarely achieved by application of raw power, and must be found by ingenuity, rhetoric, and strategy. On the other hand, they are given "big sticks" for a reason.

Legitimate Villainy

Scale: Major to Standard Heroes
Locale: Empire City
Tone: Four Colour to Graphic Novel
Theme: Realpolitik

The White Rooks have decided they've played the "bad guys" long enough, and it is time to change their spots. Offers were made in the highest levels of power, and top government officials recognize the potential value of a partnership with such individuals. In exchange for sealing all past criminal histories, permanently suspending any current cases, and an offer of considerable compensation and privileges, the White Rooks have agreed to sign on with the new administration.

Kreuzritter happily executes an exclusive trade deal with the US, in exchange for becoming the lead partner in new technological, chemical, and defense programs. The only way for the US to properly integrate Thule's scientific advances is to have a Thulian design team in place. Kreuzritter himself earns a new cabinet position, Secretary of Global Development.

Meanwhile, Mister Matthews is finally recognized as one of the leading scientific minds of this generation. He is made a member and co-chair of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. Matthews GenTech now helps set the US standards on biomedical and genetics research.

Iron Duke likewise is accepted in a scientific capacity, once again under the purview of the military. He has agreed to let them study him in exchange for their aid in helping him restore his lost intellect.

For Alice, Queen of Hearts, opportunities abound. Technically, she is employed as a strategic advisor to the Order, but in reality she looks to become the US government's top-ranked black ops agent.

Janus, meanwhile, was "give up" to the US authorities, for he was too much of a loose canon to ever properly reform. There is a wild rumour, however, which suggests that while technically incarcerated, he enjoys more luxuries than any Mafia don, and helps the government by turning his wily intellect against supervillains.

Can any of this be true? Have these villains really changed? Or is this some sinister plot to take over the world from the inside? The characters must decide whether to swallow their pride, or choose to investigate this mystery. The characters will inevitably look suspicious in the process, and old friends who truly believe the villains have reformed may turn against the characters. In the end, if something terrible is occurring, their diligence will pay off!

From the GenTech Files

Scale: Standard to Major Heroes
Locale: Empire City
Tone: Four Colour to Graphic Novel
Theme: Dark forces rising

In the years since the Guard (or any other significant group of player characters) have taken residence in Empire City, Mister Matthews has grown to hate and loathe their meddling. He has decided it is time to get rid of them, once and for all. The research and development laboratories of Matthews GenTech have devoted all of their resources to studying these "heroes," and gathering comprehensive data on each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

With a strong database now compiled, Matthews goes to work creating his most fiendish monstrosities, creatures designed with one explicit function: to hunt and kill one particular hero. Matthews tailors every breed to their natural prey, such as godbeasts for Sentinel, link-men for Mother Raven, or lupus bellator for Slipstream.

Matthews then waits for the ideal time to strike. He is a patient, calculating man, and will hold his forces until the moment comes. On a night when the heroes are scattered over town, Matthews will unleash a first wave of chaos, a horde of mutated vermin throughout the city. Crises will occur in lower Manhattan, Central Park, the Upper East Side, Queens, and Coney Island. Special units will track each hero as they help Empire's citizens confront the mutant rat packs, carrying the hunter-killer beasts to be released at Matthews's command.

Such a dedicated effort will certainly place the characters in danger. They may be surprised and unnerved to see how much Matthews has learned, and how easily they risk defeat. The characters will have to use teamwork and strategy to overcome the odds, and turn the tables on Matthews.



Mother Raven battles some of Mister Matthews's mutant apes

Day on the Job

Part IV

3:32 PM; 10 minutes earlier

It was a trap.

The Legionaries were contracted to eliminate the Guard.

Seems the Legionaries had financed the bank robbery, then tipped the Guard's emergency hotline themselves, knowing the trail would lead the heroes back to the weapons' bunker eventually. By telling the gunrunners when they planned to return for the explosives, they had a fair idea when to ambush the Guard. Maybe overly complicated, but I hear most villains like their mousetraps that way.

The force fields were also a new twist. The Guard didn't expect that, but they weren't fools either. The Legionaries tried detonating the bunker, but Slipstream spotted the concealed explosives and brought Caliburn and Red Phoenix outside before the bombs went off. I could barely understand the jade speedster at the time because he was speaking so fast ... all I heard was a string of consonants in between bursts of intense static. Sentinel caught most of it however, and filled in the blanks. He flew out of the rubble after the bunker had exploded and collapsed atop him.

As the Guard emerged from the bunker, the Legionaries rushed their attack. Cloud Racer buzzed overhead, distracting Slipstream and Red Phoenix from Thunderclap and Iron Bow. Luckily, Caliburn spotted them, and forced his partners out of the way. Iron Bow's arrow, now off target, shrieked overhead, but Thunderclap's quake threw the group apart.

Cloud Racer dive-bombed Slipstream. The speedster glanced up in plenty of time, and suddenly vanished in a green blur, racing to intercept an arrow. Cloud Racer adjusted her descent towards Caliburn, but suddenly veered aside sharply, narrowly dodging Sentinel's atomic blast.

Before Red Phoenix could rejoin the group, Rapier leapt off a nearby rooftop, gracefully tumbled through the air, and landed in front of her. Red Phoenix took a defensive step back, but Rapier simply smiled and saluted with his blade.

Sentinel took off after Cloud Racer, chasing her twelve stories up. Caliburn manoeuvred to Thunderclap's flank, and proceeded to draw his attention with several flash bangs. Thunderclap's helmet appeared to protect his eyes and ears, however. Slipstream zoomed at Iron Bow, while Rapier and Red Phoenix exchanged lightning quick thrusts and parries.

The fight was now in earnest, with me in the one place I wasn't supposed to be — in the middle. Once the fight had spilled onto the streets, I started evacuating the nearby buildings, telling people to leave through the rear exits, away from the skirmish decimating their block. I also noticed Sentinel and Caliburn drawing the fight away from my position, but eventually, the combatants were all around me.

***

3:43 PM; Present time

Sentinel unleashes a sunset-coloured stream of atomic energy that slaps Thunderclap high into the sky; then Sentinel flies after him. My hearing is returning and I can see Cloud Racer trying to extricate herself from the wrecked car, using her engines for thrust. She melts the car with her rocket blast, and I wonder why she isn't burning herself.

With Iron Bow temporarily out of commission, Caliburn lobs two grenades at Cloud Racer. She vanishes in a fog of white smoke, coughing ... her field is porous enough to allow air and particulate matter through. Meanwhile, Red Phoenix and Rapier dance and fight, testing their respective skills against a worthy opponent. Nobody interferes with them.

Caliburn motions to me, then gives me the "get out of here," thumb jerk. Slipstream, back to his senses, grabs me and moves. My world explodes into a three-dimensional smear. In a second, I find myself at the MTU squad truck outside the combat zone. My head spins painfully from the visual distortion of moving that quickly. Thankfully, Slipstream is gone by the time I double over and puke.

"You okay, officer?"

I look up and barely see Prometheus through the throbbing headache and blurred vision.

I nod.

"I'm going in," Prometheus says to the heavily armed and protected MTU officers gathered around the truck. Prometheus has even strapped on a heavy flak vest over his costume, but it looks almost pitiful compared to the full riot gear everyone else is wearing. "The ERV will follow to evacuate any wounded." Emphasizing his point, the police blue M75 tracked armored personnel carrier lumbers out from behind the truck.

"I want two bunker men in the ERV. Go! Go!" a MTU lieutenant yells, directing her men into action. Prometheus is about to race into the combat zone when I wave him back. I'm still nauseous.

"Sergeant," I say, "the perps have force fields ... strong ones ... but they're tied into a central power source."

"Where?" Prometheus asks.

"Don't ... don't know, but it's interfering with radio transmissions."

"We wondered where all that static was coming from."

"Grab a radar detector ... and radar gun from one of the squad cars ... we can use those to pinpoint...."

"The radar detector's got a narrow bandwidth," Prometheus says. "It won't do much."

"I'll get Slipstream here ... he's smart enough and fast enough to jury rig it on the fly. He'll increase its bandwidth."

Prometheus nods. "I get you, and he field patches it into the radar gun to act as a locator ... good thinking."

"Thanks ... does the Tactical truck carry the ESU standards?"

"That and more."

"Good," I say, knowing Slipstream will need some tools and electronic parts to strip. "Get the truck chauffeur to pull out the tool box, cutting torches ... uhm, oh yeah ... the Geiger counters and dosimeters."

I still have the Guard's ear and throat mike, so I call for Slipstream over the bursts of static, repeating his name until he shows up two seconds later. When I tell him the plan, he gives me a quick thumb's up and a grin before racing off. He steals the equipment out of Prometheus's and the chauffeur's hands, and works at breakneck speed using a cruiser's trunk as his table. Within a minute, he field strips the equipment and uses the Geiger counter to boost the radar detector's bandwidth and act as an electronic "sniffer." He races off again, leaving the MTU and Prometheus to follow.

An EMS para-medic brings me a mini-tank of oxygen and helps me to an ambulance. I'm exhausted.

***

The Next Day

The Guard and Prometheus managed to keep the Legionaries occupied long enough to finally locate their power source. It was a high altitude drone using something called a "tesseract power coupling nexus" to feed energy directly to the force fields. I admit I don't understand this extra-dimensional jargon, but I'm happy nobody was badly hurt. Sentinel incapacitated the satellite, leaving Red Phoenix to take out battered Thunderclap after she had defeated Rapier. Caliburn gummed up Iron Bow's cybernetics with more sticky bombs, and eventually wrestled the hydraulic bow away from him. The MTU has it securely impounded. Slipstream had to chase Cloud Racer down after she briefly escaped, but he caught up to her in no time. The Weekly Watcher even snapped a front-page picture of Slipstream tackling her out of the air.

I spent the day at home resting, watching the news and reading the paper. The Guard were currently in the Philippines, helping with relief and rescue efforts after a massive mud slide killed hundreds last night.

I also received a brief visit from Prometheus in plain clothes. He told me I had an extended weekend, but on Monday, I was to report to the Marvels Tactical Unit for duty.

"Y'know," Prometheus says, "they're talking about giving you an Honorable Mention award, maybe even the Medal of Valor. Privately, of course. We don't want to jeopardize your identity."

I smile, but it feels weak.

"You saved a lot of people by evacuating those buildings."

"I'm sorry," I say, "I don't mean to seem ungrateful."

Prometheus quietly stares at me. He's letting me get this off my chest.

"It's just ... the Guard, and all these other heroes, do this day in and day out. It's their job. God knows why, but it is. I don't feel right accepting hurrahs for something that should be my job. My duty."

Prometheus smiles. "The medals aren't for you."

"Yeah, I know, I heard the speech. My medals are to inspire my fellow officers. But what I did, seems trivial ... at least compared to what the Guard does daily."

"It seems that way, but I'll tell you something. I have far more respect for the men and women who go out there and put their lives on the line with nothing but their badges to protect them. Many heroes feel the same way."

"But when folks thought I was a hero, they looked at me differently. They never treated me that way when I was a cop. Don't get me wrong, I don't want that adulation. It scares me. But...."

"I know, but I'll tell you something," Prometheus says, then pauses in mid-thought.

"What?"

Finally he says: "It comes down to the people we help and save. They may not think of us all the time. They may even have Red Phoenix's or Britannia's poster on the walls. After all, heroes are the people you look up to, and aspire to. But when everyday people need help, we're the first people they call. That's good enough recognition for me."

I nod, feeling more confident about my place in things. I need to know one last thing, though.

"How do you handle it?" I ask.

Prometheus looks at me.

"You've told me how you feel as a cop, but as a mask ... how do you handle their faith in you?" I ask.

Prometheus smiles, and I notice he relaxes a little. It's an honest moment and it probably helps that this is the first time I'm treating him like an average Joe.

He shrugs....

I've never seen any superhero shrug to a question before. It's the most natural thing I've ever seen him do.

"It's like Sentinel once told me," Prometheus says, "Who am I to fail that trust?"

It's as simple as that.

As a cop, it's something we both understand. We take responsibility to safeguard people and their rights. When it comes down to it, they believe in us enough to know we're here to protect and serve.

Who am I to betray that trust?

Prometheus nods and smiles. "Well goodnight, Officer Pallin. Will we see you Monday ... or tomorrow?"

I smile back and shake his hand, "Tomorrow, I think. Yeah ... tomorrow sounds better."

Random Character Creation

Game Masters wishing to create a villain *du jour* for a game session or players who are new to the *Silver Age Sentinels* Role-Playing Game may wish to use the following rules to create a character quickly. Once new players become familiar and comfortable with the game, they can create their own, custom-made characters using the full Character Creation rules presented on pages 20 through 102. While the options presented herein will create fully functional characters, they will lack the depth and dimension that players can instill in their own designs.

Step 1: Determine the Character's Origin

Roll one 10-sided die and consult Table A-1: Character Origin to determine what the character did before (and perhaps, while) he or she became a superhero or villain. GMs should be aware that the following origins do not represent the average person in society, who would normally have lower Stats and Skills. For example, the Teacher Origin does not represent the average teacher at the local university — it represents an exceptional person fate has touched and turned into a superpowered character.

Table A-1: Character Origin

Die Roll	Origin
1	Alien. The character is from an alien culture, either another planet or a fantastic realm on Earth, such as Atlantis. The character has Stat values of 10, 6, and 4 that the player may assign to Body, Mind, and Soul as desired.
2	Athlete. The character was a professional athlete. He or she has a Body of 8, Mind of 4, and Soul of 6, as well as Tough Level 2 and Wealth Level 1. The character also has the Famous (3 BP) Defect.
3	Kid. In his or her normal identity, the character is just a kid. The character has a Body of 4, Mind of 4, and Soul of 6. The character also has Alternate Form (Full Powered Hero) and Ism (Treated like a kid; 2 BP) Defects. While the character is transformed into his or her adult superpowered identity, the character gains the Enhanced Stat Attribute (the player may chose which Stat) Level 9 and is no longer affected by the Ism Defect.
4	Lawyer. The character devoted his or her time to defending or prosecuting criminals in court. The character has a Body of 4, Mind of 8, and Soul of 6, as well as Organizational Ties (Law Firm) Level 2. The character also has the following Skills: Etiquette Level 2, Interrogation Level 1, Law Level 2, Social Sciences Level 1, Street Sense Level 1.
5	Occultist. The character explored the mystical side of existence. The character has a Body of 4, Mind of 6, and a Soul of 8, as well as Heightened Awareness Level 1 and Wealth Level 1. The character also possesses the following Skills: Cultural Arts Level 4, Foreign Culture Level 3, Languages Level 2, and Social Sciences Level 2. The character's exploration of the mystical arts has left deep psychological scars; the character suffers from the Recurring Nightmares (2 BP) Defect.
6	Philanthropist. The character was someone with a great deal of wealth who spent it on a variety of unusual causes that caught his or her fancy. The character has a Body of 5, Mind of 5, and Soul of 5, as well as the Wealth Attribute Level 3.
7	Police Officer. The character was a member of law enforcement. He or she has a Body of 6, Mind of 6, and Soul of 6. The character also possesses Organizational Ties (Police) Level 2 and Tough Level 1, as well as the following Skills: City Knowledge Level 1, Interrogation Level 1, Law Level 2, Gun Combat Level 1. Additionally, the character has the Red Tape (2 BP) Defect.
8	Scientist. The character devoted his or her time to scientific studies. The character has a Body of 4, Mind of 8, and Soul of 6, as well as Organizational Ties (one specific scientific organization) Level 2. The character also has one of the following two Skill packages: Package 1 (Biological Sciences Level 2, Medical Level 2, Physical Sciences Level 1) or Package 2 (Computers Level 2, Electronics Level 2, Mechanics Level 1).
9	Soldier. The character was a member of the armed forces. He or she has a Body of 8, Mind of 6, and Soul of 4. The character also has Attack Combat Mastery Level 1 and Tough Level 1.
10	Teacher. The character focused his or her efforts on academic pursuits before becoming a costumed hero. He or she has a Body of 4, Mind of 8, and Soul of 6. The character also possesses the Organizational Ties (the school at which he or she teaches) Attribute Level 2 and the following Skills: Cultural Arts Level 3, Foreign Culture Level 2, Languages Level 2, Social Sciences Level 3, Writing Level 2.

Step 2: Determine Powers

After determining the character's Origin, roll on Table A-2: Character Powers to discover what superhuman abilities the character possesses. The Power packages listed below do not come close to the full range of character types possible in a superhero game, only representing the primary archetypes found in comics. The complete character creation rules are required to fully explore the boundaries that are possible in a *Silver Age Sentinels* game. If a Power requires PMVs (as explained on page 25), their Ranks are equal to the Attribute's Level.

Table A-2: Character Powers

Die Roll	Powers
1-2	Energy Projector
3-4	Flyer
5-6	Mentalist
7-8	Powerhouse
9-10	Speedster

Energy Projector

The character has gained the ability to project powerful bolts of energy. Roll another die to determine which of the following Energy Projector packages the character gains.

Table A-3: Energy Projector

Die Roll	Powers Gained
1-3	Armour (Optimized vs fire) Level 3, Attack Combat Mastery Level 3, Defense Combat Mastery Level 2, Extra Attacks Level 1, Force Field Level 4 (Stops 60, Offensive), Special Attack Level 6 (Flame Blast: 40 Damage, Accurate, Burning, Contagious, Flare, Penetrating: Force Field, Short Range), Special Attack Level 3 (Fire Bolt: 60 Damage), Telekinesis (Fire) Level 4, Tough Level 1
4-6	Armour Level 2, Attack Combat Mastery Level 3, Environmental Influence (Cold) Level 1, Extra Attacks Level 1, Extra Defenses Level 1, Force Field Level 4 (Stops 80), Heightened Awareness Level 2, Special Attack Level 6 (Ice Blast: 80 Damage, Accurate, Long Range), Special Attack Level 6 (Ice Trap: 120 Damage, Tangle, No Damage), Tough Level 2
7-9	Attack Combat Mastery Level 4, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes x2) Level 2, Defense Combat Mastery Level 2, Enhanced Body Level 2, Enhanced Soul Level 4, Extra Attacks Level 1, Flight (Can Hover) Level 3, Heightened Awareness Level 4, Special Attack Level 6 (Laser Vision: 60 Damage, Accurate, Long Range, Penetrating: Armour), Special Attack Level 4 (Atomic Vision Blast: 60 Damage, Area Effect), Tough Level 3
10	Super-Energy Projector: roll again (ignore further rolls of 10) and add 1 additional Level to the character's Special Attack Attribute (add 20 points of damage to the attack)

Flyer

The character is capable of flight and feats of agility. Roll another die to determine which of the following Flyer packages the character gains.

Table A-4: Flyer

Die Roll	Powers Gained
1-3	Attack Combat Mastery Level 6, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes) Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 5, Enhanced Body Level 6, Less Capable (Strength; 2 BP), Enhanced Soul Level 2, Extra Attacks Level 2, Extra Defenses Level 2, Flight (Can Hover) Level 5, Heightened Awareness Level 3, Heightened Senses (Sight) Level 1, Natural Weapons (Claws) Level 1, Superstrength Level 1, Tough Level 3
4-6	Attack Combat Mastery Level 3, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes) Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 4, Enhanced Body Level 2, Less Capable (Strength; 1 BP), Extra Attacks Level 1, Extra Defenses Level 4, Flight (Can Hover) Level 7, Heightened Awareness Level 7, Heightened Senses (Sight x2) Level 2, Special Attack Level 5 (Atomic Blast: 60 Damage, Accurate, Penetrating: Force Field), Tough Level 1
7-9	Animal Summoning/Control (Birds) Level 4, Attack Combat Mastery Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 6, Enhanced Body Level 2, Less Capable (Strength; 1 BP), Enhanced Soul Level 4, Extra Attacks Level 1, Extra Defenses Level 2, Flight (Can Hover) Level 5, Heightened Awareness Level 4, Heightened Senses (Sight x2) Level 2, Telepathy (Birds only) Level 4, Tough Level 3
10	Super-Flyer: roll again (ignore further rolls of 10) and add 1 additional Level to the character's Flight Attribute

Mentalist

The character gained powers of the mind. Roll another die to determine which of the Mentalist packages the character gains.

Table A-5: Mentalist

Die Roll	Powers Gained
1-3	Combat Technique (Judge Opponent) Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 3, Enhanced Mind Level 6, Extra Defenses Level 3, Heightened Awareness Level 5, Mind Shield Level 3, Special Movement (Dimension Hop: Astral) Level 1, Telekinesis Level 2, Telepathy Level 6
4-6	Defense Combat Mastery Level 1, Enhanced Mind Level 2, Extra Defenses Level 1, Heightened Awareness Level 5, Mind Control (Humans) Level 2, Mind Shield Level 5, Special Attack Level 6 (Mind Blast: 40 Damage, Mind Attack, Short Range), Telepathy Level 4
7-9	Defense Combat Mastery Level 3, Enhanced Mind Level 3, Extra Defenses Level 2, Heightened Awareness Level 5, Illusion (All Senses) Level 4, Mind Shield Level 4, Telepathy Level 6
10	Super-Mentalist: roll again (ignore further rolls of 10) and add 1 additional Level to the character's Telepathy Attribute

Powerhouse

The character has gained superhuman strength and resilience. Roll another die to determine which of the following Powerhouse packages the character gains.

Table A-6: Powerhouse

Die Roll	Powers Gained
1-3	Armour Level 5, Attack Combat Mastery Level 5, Enhanced Body Level 4, Less Capable (Agility; 1 BP), Extra Attacks Level 1, Immovable Level 3, Jumping Level 2, Special Attack Level 4 (Ground Quake Attack: 40 Damage, Area Effect, Muscle Powered, Quake, Stun, Melee), Superstrength Level 6, Tough Level 5
4-6	Armour Level 7, Attack Combat Mastery Level 5, Enhanced Body Level 4, Extra Attacks Level 1, Immovable Level 5, Superstrength Level 8, Tough Level 5
7-9	Armour Level 5, Attack Combat Mastery Level 3, Enhanced Body Level 6, Less Capable (Agility; 2 BP), Extra Attacks Level 1, Immovable Level 4, Jumping Level 8, Superstrength Level 9, Tough Level 5
10	Super-Powerhouse: roll again (ignore further rolls of 10) and add 1 additional Level to the character's Superstrength Attribute

Speedster

The character has gained the ability to run a superhuman speeds. Roll another die to determine which of the following Speedster packages the character gains.

Table A-7: Speedster

Die Roll	Powers Gained
1-3	Attack Combat Mastery Level 2, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes) Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 6, Enhanced Body Level 6, Less Capable (Strength; 2 BP), Extra Attacks Level 2, Extra Defenses Level 4, Mass Decrease (Insubstantial) Level 6, Special Movement (Light-Footed, Wall-Crawling) Level 2, Speed Level 5
4-6	Attack Combat Mastery Level 2, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes) Level 1, Defense Combat Mastery Level 4, Enhanced Body Level 4, Less Capable (Strength; 1 BP), Extra Attacks Level 2, Extra Defenses Level 4, Special Attack Level 6 (Rapid Punch: 60 Damage, Auto-Fire, Knockback, Stun, Melee), Speed Level 4, Tough Level 1
7-9	Attack Combat Mastery Level 3, Combat Technique (Lightning Reflexes x3) Level 3, Defense Combat Mastery Level 8, Enhanced Body Level 6, Less Capable (Strength; 2 BP), Extra Attacks Level 2, Extra Defenses Level 5, Speed Level 7, Tough Level 2
10	Super-Speedster: roll again (ignore further rolls of 10) and add 1 additional Level to the character's Speed Attribute

Step 3: Defects

All superpowered characters should have a Defect of some sort, a weakness that they must overcome in daily life. Roll one die and consult Table A-8: Character Defect to determine the character's main Defect. All Defects operate at the 3 BP Level.

Step 4: Derived Values

Calculate the character's Derived Values. See page 102.

Step 5: The Final Details

The character is now complete except for the character's background story and motivation. The degree to which the player or GM wishes to develop the character depends on its intended use. A one-shot NPC villain requires far less development than a player's character intended for campaign play. See Character Outline on page 21 for the details that should be fleshed out for the character's background.

Table A-8: Defects

Die Roll	Defects Gained
1	Achilles Heel: The character has a weakness to a common substance and loses twice as many Health Points when attacked with that material. Roll on Table A-9: Defect Specifics to determine what the character is susceptible to (or simply choose the substance).
2	Backlash: If the character ever fails a check, when using one of his or her Powers (the Power with the second highest Attribute Level), the character suffers a backlash. The character suffers 20 points of damage (or some other, similar sort of backlash) due to the failed use of the character's Power.
3	Bane: The character takes damage from simple contact with a common substance, suffering 60 points of damage each round of exposure. Roll on Table A-9: Defect Specifics to determine what the character is susceptible to (or simply choose the substance).
4	Marked: When the character gained his or her superpowers, the character also gained some obvious, identifying mark. Roll on Table x-x: Defect Specifics to determine the character's identifying mark (or simply choose from the list).
5	Nemesis: The character has a Nemesis who constantly hinders the character's efforts. Generate a new character to serve as the character's Nemesis. This Defect is only suitable for player characters. If this is rolled while creating an NPC villain, ignore it — the villain is fortunate and does not have a Defect.
6	Phobia: The character is terribly afraid of something common such as heights, spiders, crowds, etc. He or she has a tremendous difficulty functioning when subjected to the fear. Roll on Table A-9: Defect Specifics to determine the subject of the character's fear (or simply choose).
7	Special Requirement: The character must perform some task on a regular basis (at least once a day) in order to maintain his or her Powers. If the character does not perform this task, he or she loses access to all powers until the task is accomplished once again. Roll on Table A-9: Defect Specifics to determine the character's task (or simply choose).
8	Unreliable Power: One of the character's Powers (the Power with the second highest Attribute Level) does not always function when the character wants it to. The character must make a successful Stat check using the relevant Stat for the Power (or Soul if none is listed) with a -6 Check Value penalty in order to activate the Power. If the check fails, the Power does not activate and the character loses the action in the failed attempt. The character may attempt to use the Power again next round (in combat) or in an hour (out of combat).
9	Vulnerability: The character loses all Powers when he or she is around a specific substance. This substance can be rare, but must not be unique or impossible to encounter in the game environment. The character will regain access to his or her powers when the substance is removed from the area (roughly 50 metres from the character). Roll on Table A-9: Defect Specifics to determine the character's vulnerability (or simply choose).
10	Roll two more times (re-rolling further rolls of 10) and assign both Defects rolled.

Table A-9: Defects Specifics

Dice Roll	Achilles Heel/Bane	Marked	Phobia	Special Requirement	Vulnerability
1-2	Fire	Antennae	Crowds	Drink a Potion	Gamma Radiation
3-4	Silver	Burning Hair	Darkness	Eat Garlic	Hydrogen Gas
5-6	Steel	Prominent Tattoos	Heights	Pray	Magic
7-8	Water	Odd Skin Colour	Loud Noises	Sleep Outside	Mercury
9-10	Wood	Stone Skin	Spiders	Watch the Sun Rise	Uranium

Glossary

10-sider A die with 10 faces (instead of the regular 6), representing the numbers from 1 to 10. This is the default die used to play *Silver Age Sentinels*.

Area PMV A value that modifies the radius of influence of a Power.

Attack Combat Value A calculated number (Derived Value) that represents a character's defensive aptitude in physical conflict. See also: Attack Combat Value. Values typically range from 1-20.

Attribute Assignments that represent a character's acquired or innate talents and abilities, such as Flight, Speed, and Superstrength. Levels typically range from 1-10.

Attribute Progression The benefit provided by an Attribute as a character's Level increases.

Average The mean average, obtained by adding all the values together and dividing the total by the number of values in the sample.

Average Human Adult A phrase intended to indicate the current capabilities of a normal, unremarkable, human adult.

B Billion, or 1,000,000,000. Equal to a thousand million.

Background Points The bonus Character Points that a Game Master rewards a player for providing the game with an extra benefit, such as a character sketch or background story.

Body Stat The Stat that measures the physical aspects of a character.

Bonus Points The Character Points that are returned to the character when he or she is assigned Defects.

C Degree Celsius

Character A fictional identity who is one of the main protagonists of the role-playing adventures. Each player controls one character. See Player.

Character Points The number of game Points a Game Master assigns to a player. The player uses the Character Points to acquire Stats, Attributes and Skills for his or her character.

Characteristic Attribute An Attribute that best reflects a Character talent, descriptive element, or resource.

cm Centimetre

Combat Value A calculated number (Derived Value) that represents a character's aptitude in physical conflict. It is subdivided into Attack Combat Value and Defense Combat Value.

Cost The number of Character or Skill Points, as appropriate, required to acquire an Attribute or Skill.

Defects Assignments that represent disadvantages though which your character must suffer in order to overcome the hardships of day-to-day life, such as Bane, Famous, and Red Tape. Defects typically return 1-3 Bonus Points to the character.

Defense Combat Value A calculated number (Derived Value) that represents a character's offensive aptitude in physical conflict. See also: Defense Combat Value. Values typically range from 1-20.

Derived Values Numerical assignments that reflect a character's combat prowess (Combat Value) and resistance to damage and trauma (Health Points). A optional Derived Value, Energy Points, reflects a character's pool of mystical energy reserves.

Descriptive Progression An Attribute progression that does not follow the Progression Chart, but instead requires the player to read the Attribute's description for further details.

Duration PMV A value that determines the maximum period of time that the Power's effect with influence the target.

Energy Attack Any attack that does not have a physical form, such as Special Attacks that use lightning strikes, energy blasts, laser beams, sonic waves, heat rays, etc.

g Gram

Game Master (GM) The person who runs the game by creating adventures for the other players. He or she is like the director/producer of a movie.

GM See Game Master.

In Character The time during a game in which the player is acting the part of his or her character, such as speaking in character. See also: Out of Character.

Initiative One specific moment in time, used to determine order of character action in combat.

k Kilo, or 1,000.

kg Kilogram

km Kilometre

Knockback The distance a character is knocked back, measured in metres, from an impact, such as a forcefull blow landed in combat.

kph Kilometres per hour

Less Capable A Defect that indicates decreased competency in one aspect of a Stat.

Linear Progression An Attribute progression that does not follow the Progression Chart, but instead increases in identical increments between Attribute Levels.

m Metre

M Million, or 1,000,000.

Mass A property of matter, relative to size and density, measured in kilograms or tonnes. The mass of an object is not dependent on gravity. It is therefore different from, but proportional to, weight (measured in pounds).

Maximum Human Potential The greatest achievement possible using currently living humans.

Melee An attack against an adjacent opponent, made unarmed or with a non-projectile weapon.

Metagaming Examining the plot and actions of a game from the players' point of view, rather than the characters'. Metagaming refers to the bigger picture, in which choices made by the players and GM benefit the campaign and roles of the characters.

Mind Stat The Stat that measures the mental aspects of a character.

Non-Player Character (NPC) Background characters in an adventure that are role-played by the Game Master.

NPC See Non-Player Character.

Out of Character The time during a game in which the player is not acting the part of his or her character, but rather as him or herself. This often occurs when the player asks the Game Master questions about the adventure. See In Character.

Physical Attack Any attack that has a physical, non-energy, form. This includes normal and Special Attacks that use solid objects, liquid blasts, and gaseous clouds to damage the target.

Player A person who plays in the adventures created by the Game Master. Each player assumes the role of one character. See Character.

PMV See Power Modifier Value.

Power Attribute An Attribute that best reflects a supernatural ability that extends beyond the limits of human potential.

Power Modifier Value (PMV) A factor that modifies a Power Attribute, which allows players to customize an Attribute even further. The four PMVs are Area, Duration, Range, and Targets.

Progression Chart A tabular summary of the benefits, measured in Ranks, provided by an Attribute as a character's Level increases. The chart contains entries for fast progression, medium progression, and slow progression.

Q Quadrillion, or 1,000,000,000,000,000. Equal to a million billion.

Quint Quintillion, or 1,000,000,000,000,000,000. Equal to a billion billion.

Range PMV A value that determines the distance at which the Power may be used.

Reduction A Defect that greatly restricts the benefits offered by a particular Attribute in exchange for a reduction in the Attribute's Character Point cost.

Relevant Stat The Stat most relevant to an Attribute's or Skill's use should a Stat or Skill check dice roll be needed.

Restriction A Defect that slightly restricts the benefits offered by a particular Attribute in exchange for Bonus Points.

Reversed Progression An Attribute progression that follows a reverse Progression Chart. That is, as the Attribute Level increases by 1 Level, the associated Progression Chart Rank decreases by 1.

Role-Playing The act of assuming the personality of a character in a fictional, interactive story. Similar to improvisational acting in theatre.

Round A measure of game time approximately 1-10 seconds in length (usually averaged to 5 seconds).

Scene A game situation where the events remain linked by location and/or theme.

Silver Age A comic book publishing period, running approximately from the 1950s to the 1970s (though the exact time period is hotly debated), that featured stories with heroic themes — teamwork, good vs. evil, power comes with responsibility, etc.

Skill Points The Points a player uses to assign Skills to his or her character. Through the Highly Skilled Attribute, one Character Point can be converted to 10 Skill Points.

Skills Assignments that represent a character's extensive training and experience within a field, such as Computers, Physical Sciences, and Seduction. Levels typically range from 1-5.

Soul Stat The Stat that measures the spiritual aspects of a character.

Special Effect The description of a Power that differentiates it from other similar Powers. For example, a Level 2 Special Attack could be derived from many special effects: flame attack, rocket burst, energy ray, carnivorous feeding frenzy, etc.

Specialization An area of heightened training or experience within a broader Skill, such as the Chemistry Specialization of the Physical Science Skill. When a character acquires a Skill, he or she also gains one appropriate Specialization automatically.

Specific Attack Ability One single Special Attack Ability, such as Burning, Irritant, or Tangle.

Specific Power Attribute One single Power Attribute, such as Mind Control, Telekinesis, or Telepathy.

Specific Special Attack One character's single Attack, represented by his or her Special Attack Attribute. Another character's Special Attack that has identical Level, Damage, Abilities, and Disabilities is not considered to be the same Specific Special Attack. For example, Sentinel's Atomic Thunder or Mother Raven's Sun's Kiss.

Sphere of Control The area and objects surrounding a character that are dramatically important to a scene. If an opponent uses a power to target an object or area in a character's sphere of control, the character resists the affects of this power as though he or she were the target.

Stats Numerical assignments that reflect a character's base capabilities. The three Stats are Body, Mind, and Soul. Values typically range from 1-20.

Superhuman Stats Stat Levels above 12.

Supernatural That which is not normal to an average human. Frequently refers to mystical or magical properties.

T Trillion, or 1,000,000,000,000. Equal to a million million.

Targets PMV A value that indicates the maximum mass of objects and/or number of people, as appropriate, that an Attribute can affect.

Velocity A vector quantity whose magnitude is a body's speed and whose direction is the body's direction of motion.

Zappers The common name for devices that suppress superhuman powers. These Items of Power possess the Nullify Attribute, usually with the Drain ability. Elite law enforcement and superhero teams use Zappers to render villains less dangerous.

Table A-10: Animal Stats

Animal	Size	Body	Mind	Soul	ACV	HP	Armour	Damage	Attributes/Defects
Ant	Tiny	6	0	0	2	10	0*	1	Superstrength 2
Ape, Chimpanzee	Human	12	3	3	8	40	0	10	Extra Arms 2
Ape, Gorilla	Large	14	3	3	10	80	2	15	Extra Arms 2, Superstrength 1, Less Capable (Agility) 1 BP
Bat	Small	6	1	1	2	10	0	1	Heightened Senses (Radar) 1, Flight 2
Bear, Black	Human	12	2	2	8	60	2	15	Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Bear, Grizzly	Large	12	2	2	12	80	5	20	Superstrength 1, Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Beetle	Tiny	6	0	0	2	10	0*	1	Superstrength 6
Bird, Duck	Medium	4	1	1	2	20	0	5	Flight 3, Water Speed 2
Bird, Eagle	Medium	4	1	1	10	30	0	10	Flight 4
Bird, Song	Small	4	1	1	2	10	0	1	Flight 2
Boar	Human	8	2	2	10	40	2	10	Less Capable (Agility) 1BP
Bull	Large	4	2	2	4	60	2	15	Superstrength 1
Cat, Cheetah	Human	12	3	3	10	40	0	10	Speed 1
Cat, Domestic	Medium	10	3	5	8	20	0	5	Heightened Senses (Hearing), Less Capable (Strength) 2BP
Cat, Tiger	Large	14	3	3	12	60	2	15	Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Crocodile	Large	12	2	2	12	80	10	20	Superstrength 1, Water Speed 2, Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Dog	Medium	8	3	5	8	40	0	5	Heightened Senses (Smell)
Dolphin	Human	12	4	6	8	40	2	10	Heightened Senses (Sonar), Water Speed 3
Elephant	Giant	6	3	3	4	100	10	30	Superstrength 3
Elk	Large	12	2	2	4	60	2	15	
Fly	Tiny	6	0	0	1	10	0	1	Flight 1
Frog	Small	10	1	1	12	10	0	1	Jumping 2, Less Capable (Strength) 2BP
Horse	Large	8	2	2	2	60	2	15	Superstrength 1
Iguana	Small	4	1	1	4	10	5	1	
Kangaroo	Human	8	2	2	2	40	0	5	Jumping 1
Rabbit	Medium	10	1	1	2	20	0	5	Less Capable (Strength) 2BP
Rat	Small	12	3	3	2	10	0	5	Less Capable (Strength) 2BP
Scorpion	Small	8	0	0	8	10	0*	40	Special Attack 3 (40 Damage; Burning: Hourly)
Shark, Great White	Giant	8	2	2	12	100	10	40	Heightened Senses (Electric Fields), Superstrength 3, Water Speed 3
Shark, Mako	Large	10	2	2	12	80	5	20	Heightened Senses (Electric Fields), Water Speed 4
Snake, Constrictor	Human	10	1	1	4	40	5	10	Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Snake, Poisonous	Medium	8	1	1	10	20	2	80	Special Attack 5 (80 Damage; Burning: Hourly)
Spider, Poisonous	Tiny	6	0	0	4	10	0	40	Special Attack 3 (40 Damage; Burning: Hourly), Superstrength 1
Squid, Giant	Giant	10	1	1	6	80	10	20	Extra Arms 8, Superstrength 2, Water Speed 3
Turtle	Medium	8	1	1	2	20	10	5	Armour (Partial; Unarmoured), Less Capable (Agility) 2BP
Wasp	Tiny	6	0	0	4	10	0	5	Flight 1
Whale, Blue	Giant	4	2	2	4	160	20	20	Heightened Senses (Sonar), Superstrength 8, Water Speed 3
Whale, Killer	Giant	10	3	3	8	120	15	40	Heightened Senses (Sonar), Superstrength 3, Water Speed 3
Wolf	Medium	8	3	3	10	40	0	10	
Wolverine	Medium	10	3	3	12	40	0	10	Superstrength 1

Tiny = 0.1-10 cm Small = 11-20 cm Medium = 21-100 cm Human = 1-2 m Large = 2-5 m Giant = above 5 m

Notes

1. The Attributes/Defects column does not list obvious animal abilities, such as those represented by the Features (page 44) and Natural Weapons (page 57) Attributes.

2. Medium, Small, and Tiny animals also possess the Diminutive Defect (page 94) at 2 BP, 4 BP, or 6 BP, respectively. The values given in the table are the base numbers, which then must be reduced according to their Diminutive BP. Large and Giant animals possess the Awkward Size Defect (page 92).

3. Tiny or Small animals with a 0* rating possess natural Armour that protects them against other animals their size, but is insufficient to stop any damage from larger opponents (such as humans).

4. Insects that rely mainly on instinct have a Mind and Soul of 0. Animals not traditionally viewed as intelligent have a Mind and Soul of 1. Obviously, it is impossible to gauge the true Stat Values of animals, and thus the entries only reflect estimations.

Metric Conversions

The International System of Units (SI) is a modern version of the metric system established by international agreement. The metric system was developed during the French Revolution (1789-1793) and was first promoted in the US by Thomas Jefferson. Its use was legalized in the US in 1866. In 1902, proposed congressional legislation requiring the US Government to use the metric system exclusively was defeated by a single vote.

In the Empire City world setting, the vote passed.

Table A-15: Metric Prefixes and Symbols

Multiplication Factor	Prefix	Symbol
$1,000,000,000 = 10^9$	giga	G
$1,000,000 = 10^6$	mega	M
$1,000 = 10^3$	kilo	k
$100 = 10^2$	hecto	h
$1 = 1$		
$0.1 = 10^{-1}$	deci	d
$0.01 = 10^{-2}$	centi	c
$0.001 = 10^{-3}$	milli	m
$0.000001 = 10^{-6}$	micro	μ
$0.000000001 = 10^{-9}$	nano	n
$0.000000000001 = 10^{-12}$	pico	p

Table A-14: Metric to Imperial Conversion

Metric Units	Imperial Units	Metric to Imperial		Imperial to Metric	
		Multiply by	Or simply	Multiply by	Or simply
kilometre (km)	mile	0.62137	0.6	1.609347	1.6
centimetre (cm)	inch (in)	0.3937007	0.4	2.54	2.5
metre (m)	foot (ft)	3.2808398	3.0	0.3048	0.3
metre (m)	yard (yd)	1.0936132	1.0	0.9144	1.0
metres per second (m/s)	miles per hour (mph)	2.2369362	2.2	0.44704	0.5
square metre (sq. m)	square foot (sq. ft)	10.763915	10.0	0.09290304	0.1
square metre (sq. m)	square yard (sq. yd)	1.1959901	1.0	0.83612736	1.0
square kilometre (sq. km)	square mile (sq. mile)	0.3861	0.4	2.590	2.5
hectare (ha)	acre (ac)	2.4710	2.5	0.4047	0.4
litre (l)	Canadian gallon (gal)	0.2199736	0.2	4.546	4.5
litre (l)	US gallon (gal)	0.264172	0.3	3.7854118	3.8
millilitres (ml)	fluid ounce (fl oz)	0.033814	0.04	29.57353	30
kilogram (kg)	pound (lb.)	2.2046224	2.2	0.4535924	0.5
tonne (1,000 kg)	ton (2,000 lb.)	1.1023112	1.0	0.9071848	1.0
degree Fahrenheit (F)	degree Celsius (C)	$tC = (tF - 32) \div 1.8$			
degree Celsius (C)	degree Fahrenheit (F)	$tF = 1.8tC + 32$			
Kelvin (K)	degree Celsius (C)	$tC = tK - 273.15$			

Silver Age Sentinels on the Internet

Many internet resources are available for *Silver Age Sentinels* that are either sponsored by Guardians Of Order, or independently maintained by fans.

Company Website

Visit the official Guardians Of Order website at http://www.guardiansorder.com for the latest company news and updates.

Official Email List

To subscribe to the official *Silver Age Sentinels* email list, send an email to silverage-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. For more information, visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/silverage. A general Tri-Stat System list is also available, though discussion usually focuses on *BESM*. To subscribe, send an email to tristat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Official Message Boards

Guardians Of Order hosts a message board. This site also hosts the Empire City shared world board, where players and GMs can co-operatively build upon *Silver Age Sentinel's* official setting. Visit http://pub59.ezboard.com/bguardiansoforder44269 to become a member.

Converting Big Eyes, Small Mouth to Silver Age Sentinels

Converting characters from our anime RPG, *Big Eyes, Small Mouth (BESM)*, to *Silver Age Sentinels* is a simple process. Since both games use the Tri-Stat System (D6 for *BESM*, D10 for *Silver Age Sentinels*), players familiar with one game will quickly understand the other.

The following conversion notes outline the major differences between the two games and gives suggestions on switching *BESM* characters to *Silver Age Sentinels*.

Character Points

Superheroes frequently exhibit more abilities, talents, and powers than standard anime characters. Consequently, the terms "average powered" and "high powered" will have different meanings in the two games. The table below lists the *BESM* Character Point power levels, and gives approximately equivalent values for *Silver Age Sentinels*.

Table A-11: Character Point Equivalents

Power Level	BESM Character Points	Equivalent to....
Low Powered	15, 20, or 25	50
Average Powered	30 or 35	75
High Powered	40 or 45	100
Very High Powered	50 or 55	125
Extremely High Powered	60 or more	150 or more

Stats

While *BESM* Stats extend from 1-12, *Silver Age Sentinels* expands the range from 1-20. Values 1-8 are the same for both games, but *BESM* Stats 9-12 correspond to Stats 9-20.

Table A-12: Stat Conversion

BESM Stat	Equivalent to....
1 through 8	1 through 8
9	9 or 10
10	11
11	12 through 18
12	19 or 20

Attributes

Most Attributes from *BESM* are presented in this book in some format (see Table A-13, for examples of some equivalent Attribute names), though some less appropriate ones have been removed.

The 6 Attribute Levels in *BESM* are most often expanded to 10 Levels in *Silver Age Sentinels* in one of three ways: 4 new Levels have been added on top of the 6 (such as with Telekinesis); the 6 Levels have been stretched to 10 Levels (such as with Organizational Ties); or the progression has been reworked completely (such as with Superstrength). When converting a character from *BESM* to *Silver Age Sentinels*, select the Attribute Level that fits the existing character the best.

Power Modifier Values

BESM does not use PMVs. You should assign them as required during the conversion, to ensure the character retains the same abilities. For example, the *BESM* Force Field Attribute (3 Points/Level) is equivalent to the one in *Silver Age Sentinels* with 2 Ranks of the Area PMV added. Do not assign PMVs to Attributes that your *BESM* character could only use on him or herself (such as Invisibility).

Defects

Like Attributes, Defects have been expanded from 2 BP Levels to 3 (or in a few cases, to 10 BP Levels). See the guidelines for Attributes when converting.

Other Differences

Some other rules function differently in *Silver Age Sentinels* than they do in *BESM*, including:

- Skills range from 1-5 now, instead of 1-6
- Positive modifiers are now added to the Check Value, rather than subtracted from the dice roll
- Negative modifiers are now subtracted from the Check Value, rather than added to the dice roll
- Knockback has been added as an optional rule
- Most Check Value modifiers (such as those for combat situations) in *Silver Age Sentinels* are double the value listed in *BESM*
- *Silver Age Sentinels* features four different critical hit charts, rather than the single one in *BESM*
- Attacks now inflict variable damage (25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%), rather than always delivering full damage as in *BESM*

Table A-13: Attribute/Defect Equivalents

BESM Attribute	Equivalent to....
Appearance	Features (Appearance)
Art of Distraction	—
Astral Projection	Special Movement
Aura of Command	—
Combat Mastery	Attack Combat Mastery Defense Combat Mastery
Damn Healthy!	Tough
Dimensional Portal	Pocket Dimension
Dynamic Sorcery	Dynamic Powers
ECM	Sensory Block
Environmental Control	Environmental Influence
Exorcism	—
Extra Attacks	Extra Attacks; Extra Defense
Flunkies	Henchmen
Focused Damage	Massive Damage
Ground Speed	—
Gun Bunny	Combat Technique
Heavy Armour	Armour
Insubstantial	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)
Kensei	Combat Technique
Life Support	Special Defense
Light Armour	Armour
Magic	Power Flux
Mechanical Genius	Gadgeteer
Meld	Mass Decrease (Insubstantial)
Own a Big Mecha	Item of Power
Personal Gear	Gadgets
Place of Power	—
Precognition	Sixth Sense
Sensors	Heightened Senses
Servant	Sidekick
Shape Change	Alternate Form
Size Change	Grow; Shrink
Space Flight	Hyperflight
Weapon Attack	Special Attack

BESM Defect	Equivalent to....
Ageism	Ism
Attack Restriction	—
Awkward	—
Cannot Talk	Physical Impairment
Easily Distracted	—
Girl/Guy Magnet	—
Hangar Queen	—
Inept Combat	Inept Attack; Inept Defense
Involuntary Physical Change	Involuntary Change
Magical Restrictions	Restriction
Not So Fast	Less Capable
Not So Tough	Less Capable
One Arm/No Arms	Physical Impairment
Owned by a Megacorps	Owned
Physically Unappealing	Unappealing
Restricted Ground Movement	—
Restricted Path	—
Volatile	—
Vulnerability	Achilles Heel

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Flash Comics #1 (DC Comics, 1940, Art: Shelly Moldoff)
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Giant Sized X-men #1 (Marvel Comics, 1975, Art: Dave Cockrum)
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Batman: The Dark Knight Returns #1 (DC Comics, 1986, Art: Frank Miller)
Watchmen #1 (DC Comics/Titan, 1987, Art Dave Gibbons)
Spawn #1 (Image, 1992, Art: Todd McFarlane, Ken Steacy)
Wild C.A.T.S. (Image, 1993, Art: Jim Lee, Scott Williams)
Sandman #1 (DC Comics, 1989, Art: Dave McKean)
Ultimate Spider-Man #1 (Marvel Comics, 2000, Art: Mark Bagley)

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Character Information

Player's Name: _____ GM's Name: _____

Superhero Identity: _____ Former Aliases: _____

Character Name: _____

First Comic Appearance: _____

Group Affiliations: _____

Occupation: _____ Territory: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Physical Description: _____

SILVER AGE SENTINELS

THE SUPERHERO ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Damage Percentage Table

Dice Roll	Result
2-5	Maximum Damage
6-10	75% of Maximum Damage
11-16	50% of Maximum Damage
17-20	25% of Maximum Damage

Statistical Information

Character Points: _____ Skill Points: _____

Advancement Points Earned: _____ Unused Advancement Points: _____

Body Stat	Mind Stat	Soul Stat	Health Points	ACV	DCV

Critical Hits Table

Dice Roll	Damage Percentage
2-5	
6-11	
12-20	

Attributes

Attribute	Type	Level	Cost/Level	PMVs	Total Cost	Notes

Skills

Skill	Level	Cost/Level	Total Cost	Skill	Level	Cost/Level	Total Cost

Defects

Defect	BP	Notes

Gadgets/Items of Power/Notes

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SILVER AGE SENTINELS

