

ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

OFFICIAL GAME ADVENTURE

THE AOTEAROA GAMBIT

By Dale Elvy, with Morgan Davie & Cam Banks



A BENEFIT FOR



ST. JOHN NEW ZEALAND

THE AOTEAROA GAMBIT

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INTRODUCTION



Written as a fundraising initiative for the Christchurch earthquake of February 2011.

The Aotearoa Gambit is a short, fast-paced adventure for ICONS superheroes. It is intended to be run in a single session and might also work well within a Roleplaying Convention round. The action takes place in New Zealand (Aotearoa) and after some initial scene setting, presents the players with 3 possible encounters, which they can choose to resolve in any order. Each encounter is structured to have possible alternate solutions, other than brute force, and also to increase in difficulty if not resolved immediately, making some tough choices for the heroes. These encounters should ultimately lead to a final scene which features a showdown with the main villain - an encounter which will determine the fate of an entire nation.

BACKGROUND

Wilfred Stapleton III was born into a life of privilege. His great grandfather had made his fortune inventing and patenting a ubiquitous but popular item of office stationary, affording his descendents unparalleled wealth. Wilfred travelled the world, spending his formative years in private schools and colleges in the United States, Switzerland, and Monte Carlo. It was on a trip to India, however, that Wilfrid had a life-changing experience with a wise man in the Punjab, who told him it was his destiny to save the world. Transformed by the experience, Wilfred replaced his own name with the Hindi word for renewal: Naya-Karna.

Naya-Karna soon realised that the greatest threat to the planet was man made pollution and turned his wealth and energy to combating this problem. Frustrated by the slow pace of progress, he became ever more radical. Eventually he turned his anger into eco-activism and formed a number of radical environmental groups, including the French activist organization Les Dégonflés. But even these efforts failed to cause the kind of change that Naya-Karna believed necessary.

Several years ago Naya-Karna hatched a new plan: if he could not convince the world to change, he would simply find a new world where he could begin afresh. To this end he seized upon the idea of a new “ark,” one large enough to take an entire nation into space, complete with people, plants, and animals. After careful consideration he selected the islands of New Zealand as the basis of his vessel. With its relatively unspoiled environment, low population, and geographic distance from the nations of the Northern Hemisphere, it was an ideal candidate. Naya-Karna created an alpine base high in the mountains of Mount Cook, New Zealand’s tallest peak, and began his work.

Naya-Karna had the resources, but he needed a genius to make his plan succeed. The infamous teenage hacker and inventor Havoc made an excellent choice. Although less passionate about the environment than Naya-Karna, the notion of ruling the land where his favourite books were made into films greatly appealed to Havoc. He quickly set about designing the necessary equipment to shear New Zealand from the earth’s crust and send it into space inside of its own self-contained environment.

Naya-Karna also recruited former cellmates, activists, and other like-minded individuals, bringing them into the country under assumed identities to avoid suspicion. One of these new arrivals is the Green Man, a passionate super-powered environmentalist. The Green Man remains unaware of the full scope of Naya-Karna’s plans.

Now all the pieces of the plan are in place. Final adjustments are being made to the Eco-Sphere generator at Naya-Karna’s base high on Aoraki—Mount Cook—while his minions prepare a series of distractions to prevent any last minute interference with the final phase of operations...

NEW ZEALAND SUPERHEROES

If your world uses established superheroes here are some suggestions for local crimefighters who the heroes might be coming to visit, or who might provide some aid. Stats for these heroes can be found at the end of the adventure.

- Taniwha – A Māori Superhero and crime-fighter residing in Auckland.
- The Wizard of New Zealand – A sage with magical powers living in Christchurch.
- Captain Hawk – A retired superhero living in a managed care facility in Wellington.
- The Weta – A mysterious insect-powered superhero who roams New Zealand and fights crime.

WELCOME TO NEW ZEALAND!

Billed as “the youngest country on Earth,” New Zealand’s spectacularly beautiful landscape includes vast mountain chains, steaming volcanoes, sweeping coastlines, primal fiords, and lush rainforests. It is a land mass comparable in size to Great Britain, Colorado, or Japan with a population of just 4 million, which makes it one of the world’s least crowded countries. It is a popular destination for those seeking peace, rejuvenation, and relaxation, as well as a playground for thrillseekers and adventurers.

There are any number of reasons why your heroes may travel to New Zealand. First among these is the need for some rest and relaxation. New Zealand has a wide range of luxury resorts and health spas set in beautiful natural surroundings, and any one of them might prove an idyllic place to recover from the rigours of battling supervillains. Similarly, New Zealand has a tradition of adventure tourism that might appeal to other heroes. Daring heroes shun the spa to brave the fast-moving whitewater rivers in guided speedboats, bungee jump from high bridges into rocky canyons, and either skydive or handglide over rugged forests and plains.

New Zealand is also en route to other adventure sites. Flights to Antarctica regularly depart from New Zealand, and its location in the Pacific Ocean makes it an ideal base to investigate sunken Atlantis or investigate the mysteries of the South Seas. New Zealand has a thriving film industry popularized by an award-winning fantasy film trilogy; many other production studios make use of its landscapes and cheaper costs. Perhaps your heroes are flying to meet with a famous director who prefers to work from Wellington rather than Hollywood in order to negotiate a grandiose biopic of their origins?

Travel time to New Zealand on a domestic airliner is around 12 hours from the West Coast of the United States, 19 hours from the East Coast, or around 25 hours from Europe. Of course your heroes may have more rapid means of travel that cut such travel times down considerably!

Finally, perhaps your heroes are local. New Zealand affords a high standard of living, but is hardly crime free, giving would-be superheroes plenty of work. The reported crime rate runs to around 105 crimes per 1,000 people which puts it among the highest levels of crime in the world, but these statistics are somewhat deceptive. It is fair to say that New Zealand suffers from comparable levels of crime as any other western nation, particularly in the Auckland metropolitan area, which is home to over a quarter of the nation’s population.

THE AUTHORITIES

The New Zealand authorities are not intended to play much of a role in this scenario. They have their hands full trying to restore public order and dealing with Nara-Kanya’s minions. That said, here are a few brief details for flavour:

New Zealand is a Westminster-style parliamentary democracy led by a Prime Minister who is in turn supported by a Cabinet of Ministers, all of whom are Members of Parliament. If the superheroes are famous, perhaps the New Zealand Prime Minister has personally asked for their aid? If not, he may soon realise their unique skills as they deal with Naya-Karna’s distractions and contact them.

Most New Zealand police do not carry firearms, using tasers and pepper spray to subdue unruly offenders. The New Zealand police maintains a number of well armed tactical teams (Armed Offenders Squads) who can be rapidly deployed to combat armed threats. If your world has established supervillains it should be assumed that these teams are armed with weaponry equivalent to their US and UK counterparts.

In cases of extreme emergency, New Zealand can deploy several thousand well trained soldiers, supported by Light Armoured Vehicles (NZLAV) and helicopters.

For the purposes of this scenario it is assumed that these forces are kept busy maintaining public order.

SCENE 1: QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown is a small resort town with just under 30,000 residents, located in the south-west of New Zealand's South Island. It is built around a picturesque inlet named Queenstown Bay near Lake Wakatipu, a long thin Z-shaped lake formed by glacial processes.

Queenstown is a popular tourist destination and boasts spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. Luxury chalets and hotels ring the lake, built into the cliffs and offering breathtaking views. The small township offers every amenity a traveller might wish for. The nearest international airport is located around ten minutes drive from the town.

After their long flight to New Zealand the heroes must first clear customs, a fairly simple process. However, they are much more rigorously screened by biosecurity officers. These officers don't seem to care about the hero's celebrity, reading out the standard list of questions: Have they brought any food items into the country? Have they been on any farms overseas? Are their shoes clean? This rigorous protocol is all in the name of preserving New Zealand's biodiversity, and bemused heroes may find themselves scrubbing the soles of their shoes in clean rooms or having their luggage carefully screened and examined by unsympathetic officials. This should be the first hint that New Zealand's clean, green identity is unique, and will be a significant element of this adventure.

In the event that the heroes somehow skip customs, perhaps a small number of uniformed biosecurity officers show up at their hotel room, politely but firmly insisting they be allowed to inspect the contents of bags. As well as emphasising the importance of the environment to New Zealanders, this might also be a good social challenge for the heroes. The biosecurity officers are unarmed and only have the power to issue small fines, but they are dedicated and convinced of the importance of protecting New Zealand's ecology.

Finally, the heroes are whisked to their accommodation, negotiating a narrow winding road built into a steep gorge over a churning river, until they finally round a bend and see the magnificent sight of Queenstown laid out before them. The sun is setting and an orange glow plays over the snow-capped mountains around the lake, bathing the town in a warm, welcoming light.

The Legend of Lake Wakatipu

Māori are the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand. According to some Māori legends, a giant named Matau was burnt to death in his sleep after he abducted a chief's daughter. His fiery end burned a massive hole into the ground and melted the ice and snow of the surrounding mountains, forming a lake. The lake is a large "S" shape, like a giant, curled up and sleeping on its side.

Lake Wakatipu rises and falls about 12cm (5") every five minutes. According to legend this is the still beating heart of Matau...

It is suggested that the heroes obtain a local guide. The perfect man for the job is Temu Curtis, who is usually found with his trusty four-wheel-drive van wearing a sleeveless shirt, wrap-around sunglasses, and a cheerful smile. Temu has made a career out of being an extra in movies both locally and overseas. In recent years his dark good-looks, muscular frame and friendly demeanour have given him work as a stormtrooper, terrorist, and Persian warrior. Temu is currently working in Queenstown waiting for his shooting days on the next blockbuster Hollywood production filming nearby. Temu happily ferries the heroes around, shows them the sights, fills them in on the Māori legend of the lake (see the sidebar) and points out the houses of celebrity residents like Sheryl Crow and Sam Neill. Temu may also tell the heroes of another celebrity, one with more money than sense, who has built a lodge high on the summit of Aoraki Mount Cook, much to the bemusement of the locals—although the GM should take pains to make this part of Temu's banter and not draw undue attention to it.



Scenario Summary

1. Scene 1: Queenstown
 - a. A close encounter with Biosecurity officers
 - b. A Local Perspective
 - c. Triple Crisis (encounters occur simultaneously)
 - i. Encounter: The Bungee Ultimatum
 - ii. Encounter: Mayhem on the Set
 - iii. Encounter: Smash and Grab
 - d. Other Strangeness and Avalanche occur during the Triple Crisis
2. Scene 2: Showdown!
 - a. Piloting New Zealand

TRIPLE CRISIS

The heroes have barely had time to settle in when trouble breaks out. Three events occur simultaneously, orchestrated by Naya-Karna to thoroughly distract any attempts to stop the final phase of his plan. Depending on their level of fame, the heroes may find out about these in a number of ways:

1. A helicopter shatters the tranquillity of their spa or golf course and disgorges an out-of-breath army colonel who immediately briefs them on all three incidents.
2. A nearby television shows a triple split screen with a banner that reads “Breaking News: Chaos in Queenstown.” One shot shows a bridge over a picturesque valley, a group of hostages in the middle of the bridge threatened by rifle-wielding thugs. Another shows people fleeing from a film set (a collection of trailers, trucks, lights etc). The third shows dust clouds and damage in Queenstown town centre as something big lurches past the camera.
3. A breaking news story may be broadcast over Temu’s car radio providing sketchy details as above.
4. A telephone call from Police Commissioner Davis requesting their aid, and outlining events.
5. They may actually encounter one of these events.

Each of these events is intended to tie up the superheroes' time and resources, and prevent them from uncovering what's really going on. The heroes can choose to tackle these encounters one at a time, but there is a consequence to this choice. Each event gets progressively worse and harder to resolve if not tackled immediately. Another option is that the group splits up and tackles all the events simultaneously. This is harder work for the GM, so it is suggested that each encounter is run in a short segment, then you switch to the next, then repeat the process so that the players are all resolving their actions almost simultaneously.

EVENT 1: THE BUNGEE ULTIMATUM

Location: The Kawarau Bridge, 20 minutes drive from Queenstown.

The Kawarau Bridge is a long steel arch bridge built in 1963, spanning the Kawarau river at a height of 43 meters. On either side of the bridge are sheer cliffs punctuated by the occasional bush or tussock. When the heroes arrive there are police cars at either end of the bridge, blocking the road. Huddled together on a simple wooden platform in the middle of the bridge are three terrified tourists.

You should use the hero's back-stories to create sympathetic hostages; if one has a daughter, then one of the hostages is a young girl of about the same age. The hostages should be tragic figures whose plight spurs action and prompts heroics. By default they are: a young girl around twelve years of age (Sarah), her mother (Lorraine) and an older man with a heart condition (James). Each has a bungee cord wrapped around his or her legs. Four people wearing green T-shirts and ski masks menace the police from the platform with what look like rifles but which are actually tranquilizer guns. Self-importantly walking up and down the bridge, shouting into a bullhorn, is the Green Man.

If the heroes choose to do this encounter immediately, the police are led by Constable Graves, who is relieved to get superhero aid. He tells the heroes that an Armed Offenders Squad unit is on the way, but they will be some time, and that he and his men are willing to help the heroes in any way they can. To make matters worse a news helicopter is hovering above, with cameras pointed at the hostages and the strutting Green Man.

The Green Man is demanding immediate action on climate change. He threatens to push the hostages off the bridge and cut through their bungee cords unless the world leaders immediately meet and sign a binding resolution to put a price on carbon. The Green Man's real objective is to capture media attention and distract both the heroes and the authorities.

Negotiating with the Green Man reveals that while he is passionate about climate change and the demands he has made, his resolve to harm others is not as firm as he makes out. If his motives are questioned he stubbornly repeats lines from the environmental film "An Uncomfortable Truth" about the urgency of addressing environmental issues.

His henchpeople are also rapidly losing their confidence and bicker with one another nervously as the police numbers grow. Nevertheless, if provoked or taunted, the Green Man pushes one



of his hostages off the platform, then begins to saw through their cords as they bounce high above the river.

If the heroes choose to deal with this encounter after the others, things get worse. A police tactical response team arrives and prepares to assault the bridge. This agitates The Green Man and makes him much more distrustful and unwilling to resolve the situation peacefully. The heroes must balance the Green Man's increasing paranoia with the increasing determination of Sergeant Richardson to assault the bridge. Fast thinking and careful negotiation or decisive action is required to avert bloodshed.

Once the Green Man has surrendered or been defeated he talks. He says that an old former cellmate and passionate activist, Naya-Karna, asked him to create a diversion to cover the real work of the day. The Green Man doesn't know what the master plan involves but he has been told that Naya-Karna will soon save the world from the pollution and corruption of modern society.

CONCLUDING THE BUNGEE ULTIMATUM

There are a number of ways this encounter can be resolved:

1. **Frontal assault.** The most direct approach is simply to attack the Green Man and his henchpeople. This initiates a combat, and the Green Man immediately shoves the hostages from the platform. If he's not stopped before he can subsequently saw through the bungee cord, a river rescue will need to be attempted or the hostages will drown. His henchpeople will fire their tranquiliser rifles at anyone who attacks them.
2. **Negotiation.** The Green Man can be convinced to release the hostages and surrender, but he will play for time, and make sure to milk the situation for everything its worth before surrendering. If the heroes were to personally pledge (on camera) to undertake action to combat climate change he may well be convinced to conclude things sooner.
3. **Stealth attack.** The Green Man is not a tactical genius and can easily be outflanked. An obvious tactic is to use the underside of the bridge to sneak up and surprise him. This works so long as the heroes don't give away their position. An aerial attack is similarly effective.
4. **Subterfuge.** Another obvious scheme is to pose as a camera crew and reporter to close on the Green Man and attack him by surprise. Again, the Green Man is easily duped. So excited is he by the prospect of reaching a wider audience that he won't be too suspicious if the heroes look the part.

EVENT 2: MAYHEM ON THE SET

Location: Mount Aspiring National Park, 90 minutes drive from Queenstown

The Mount Aspiring National Park is a breathtaking mix of remote wilderness, high mountains and beautiful river valleys. It is a hiker's paradise and a must for mountaineers. The views are endless and unforgettable. The location of the trouble, however, is all too evident; a stream of cars is fleeing from a small wooded area just inside the entrance to the park.

As the heroes arrive, several large security guards flee past them, running hard, their eyes wide with terror. If stopped all they can do is whimper about "those terrible wraiths with their glowing eyes." The film set is crammed with dozens of trailers, RV generators, lights and cables—all in stark contrast to the natural beauty of the forest that surrounds them.

As the heroes pick their way through a warren of trailers and tents, they pass half-eaten meals, cooling cups of coffee, and personal items all abandoned in people's haste to escape. If they investigate further they might find some of the crew cowering behind furniture, too scared to flee. If they pay particular attention to the set, they might also note an RV with a large satellite dish mounted on the roof, festooned with a thick tangle of power cables leading to a generator.

Crying and wailing can be heard from up ahead, and the heroes are soon confronted with a strange sight. A group of actors dressed as halflings huddle in the middle of a clearing; in full costume right down to their hairy prosthetic feet. Surrounding them, perfectly motionless, are four wraiths: six foot tall and swathed in hooded black robes. They hold razor sharp swords high over their heads, ready to sweep down upon their captives. Meanwhile two more wraiths are carefully carving the letters "Havoc wuz here" into the trunk of an enormous tree with their swords.



As the heroes arrive all the of wraiths look up at once, as though they were expecting them. In fact, they were, as Havoc has been watching the heroes approach on a network of small cameras around the set. The heroes find themselves staring into the burning red eyes of 6 wraiths. A moment later, all the wraiths raise their swords simultaneously and fly forward to attack.

As combat is joined it becomes apparent that the wraiths are neither living creatures nor undead abominations. They're robots!

If Havoc is captured, he refuses to tal, but as a genius teenager he is rather too full of himself not to drop some large hints while gloating. He reveals that he had been promised his own domain in the "new world" by Naya-Karna. He also boasts that the technology that he has created is "beyond the understanding of meatheads like you."

If the heroes choose to deal with this encounter after the others, things get worse. A police tactical response team arrives and enters the set, only to be attacked and overwhelmed by the wraiths. The heroes encounter blood trails and injured police begging them for help. A small number of police have holed up in a trailer near the set, firing out indiscriminately at anything that moves. The heroes must brave this gauntlet as they fight the wraiths.

A RAPID CONCLUSION

It is possible to effect a rapid ending to this encounter by severing the wraith's signal from their controller, who currently lurks in the large RV with the dish on top.

Havoc is dressed in a cream-colored motion capture bodysuit covered in ping-pong-ball sized lumps which only accentuates his lanky body. He is controlling the wraiths personally by acting out each sword-swing and cleave. A clue to this might be the odd synchronicity of the wraiths movements, which extends to scratching themselves in unison between attacks.

It is possible to jam his signal, or simply cut it off at the source by either cutting power to the RV, or by unplugging Havoc's suit. Difficulties for technical solutions are set at Havoc's Intelligence. Simple physical solutions are easier, but earn the hero a sharp shock (4 damage) from a booby-trap.

If it looks like he's going to be captured Havoc flees, by inexpertly trying to drive the RV away, trailing arcing power cables. Apprehending him will not be hard, although his driving is bad enough to make the RV a definite danger to anyone nearby.

EVENT 3: SMASH AND GRAB

Location: Queenstown Town Centre

Queenstown's town centre is packed with elegant stone-carved storefronts of all kinds, well maintained streets and alleys, and ornamental rock gardens referencing the town's rugged alpine surrounds. The traffic in Queenstown is gridlocked as people try to flee, and many people have abandoned their cars to flee on foot. A tremendous crash and the sound of breaking glass leads the heroes on into the heart of the shopping district where they encounter a strange sight.

A man-shaped pile of rocks is pounding a coffee cart into the pavement. This is Boulder, an inhabitant of Lake Wakatipu formed from the strangely round Moeraki boulder. Boulder has been rudely awakened from his two-hundred year hibernation and is both confused and in pain. Naya-Karna's minions unloaded him earlier today, placing a small device on the huge rock serving as his head. This transmits signals causing the creature to lash out in pain.

Boulder is ancient and nearly indestructible. Nearly twelve feet tall, he can pulverise concrete with a single blow from his rocky hands. Getting close to him, let alone spotting and removing the device, proves challenging. Meanwhile, Boulder continues to rampage, smashing through a souvenir shop, an ice-cream parlour, movie theatre, and new car lot, tossing the vehicles around like toys and causing significant damage. He lashes out at anyone who gets close, and lumbers after anyone who attacks him from range, hurling anything which comes to hand (traffic lights, mailboxes, or even people).

Again, it is possible to prematurely end this encounter by blocking the signal from the device on his head with some quick thinking. With a hurriedly constructed gadget of some sort, this might be a successful option. Once the device is gone, Boulder lumbers off into Lake Wakatipu to resume his slumber. Communicating with Boulder might cause him to pause long enough to target the device. Human speech is not something Boulder recognizes. However, the deep tenor of a stereo bass would sound enough like the speech of his people to halt him. Electronics stores and souped-up cars are easily found in Queenstown and quick-thinking heroes might think to 'borrow' the necessary equipment. Perhaps Boulder smashes into a music shop, rips the speakers from the walls, and throws them away in disgust, giving the heroes a clue.

If the heroes choose to deal with this encounter after the others, things get worse. They follow a trail of destruction—fires burning out of control, burst water mains turning the streets into streams and choking dust everywhere making visibility difficult. Boulder rapidly approaches a natural gas plant; should he reach it, a giant fireball will engulf part of the town. The heroes must prevent him from getting there by any means necessary.



An Avalanche

After the second event has been resolved, there is a distant crash that rumbles around the hills. In the distance the heroes can make out a cloud of white rising from the peaks of the Southern Alps. A massive avalanche has been caused as Naya-Karna fires up the powerful Eco-Sphere generators. Ultimately they may have more than enough on their plates to worry about this distant event, but it is important to mark Naya-Karna's progress. Perhaps the heroes remember Temu's story about the wealthy celebrity who built a lodge near the summit of Aoraki Mount Cook?

OTHER STRANGENESS

In addition to the other hero-distracting events of the day, Naya-Karna's minions are busy preparing for their new lives. Trucks crammed with exotic animals clog the streets. A hero opens the curtains of his or her second floor hotel room in the morning and comes face to face with a giraffe, perhaps. The distant roar of lions and bellows of wilderbeests add to the bizarre cacophony. Naya-Karna's Ark will have at least two of every animal on the earth.

Street signs are being removed in Queenstown, causing confusion. Stanley Street becomes Wildflower Street, Frankton Road becomes Sustainable Avenue, and Camp Street becomes Organic Way. The signs are changed by smiling people wearing green T-shirts who are certain their new lives are soon to begin. They are happy to talk and babble excitedly about the wonderful new world that Naya-Karna will soon create.

More teams of these volunteers are at work tearing up "unnecessary roads" and replacing the asphalt with new seedlings. This causes much confusion and consternation among the residents of Queenstown who suddenly find entire streets replaced with fresh topsoil. The heroes might overhear loud arguments or even have to break up fights as Naya-Karna's renewal takes hold.

SCENE 1: SHOWDOWN!

Once they've dealt with the distractions, a very strange thing happens. Naya-Karna's Eco-Sphere Generators power up and there is a tremendous whine, followed by a deafening thunderclap. Then the sky turns a strange orange colour. The islands of New Zealand have been encased in the Eco-Sphere, a bubble of force nearly a mile thick and two and a half miles high. All communication with the outside world (including satellites and compasses) is severed.

It is likely the heroes won't immediately know what has occurred, but they should have enough information to suspect that Naya-Karna is behind what's happening. If they haven't already deduced his location, a little sleuthing is in order. All of Naya-Karna's minions carry radios whose signal can be triangulated to his mountain base. If suitably threatened, or tempted, Havoc reluctantly reveals the location of the base, while the generators that power the sphere are emitting so much energy almost any kind of receptor (radio, television etc) will pick up the signal. If the heroes are really stumped, perhaps Naya-Karna chooses this moment to address the people of his new Ark. His elaborate communications array, broadcasting on every channel and frequency, tells them of the exciting adventure ahead of them. The outlines of the Alps are clearly visible in the background.

Aoraki Mount Cook is 163 miles distant from Queenstown. In all likelihood it will take the heroes several hours to travel there, barring teleportation or supersonic flight. Given the gravity of the situation, the military are happy to provide a helicopter for the trip, an offer matched by local news networks who sense their greatest story of all time is at hand. As neither compass nor GPS is working, flight is by visual flight recognition only.

At 3754 metres, Aoraki Mount Cook is New Zealand's highest mountain, surrounded by 27 other mountains in an alpine backbone which peak at over 3050 metres, and hundreds of others not far short of that – all making up the famous Southern Alps. The flight is breathtaking. Looking out of the helicopter small clusters of forest, orderly green fields, and a sparkling serpentine twist of rivers can be picked out. Then the Alps; snowy mountains towering into the sky, all bathed in the strange orange glow from above.

The heroes' target soon becomes obvious: A ring of massive generators. These huge metal coils gleam and wink high on the mountain summit a short distance above the sleek glass and timber form of a massive mountain chalet.

If the heroes maintain their course, Naya-Karna fires a series of surface-to-air missiles at them. Each round the helicopter is airborne, it is targeted by an explosive blast attack, Coordination 4, damage 8. The helicopter needs to turn back or make a forced landing in the snow. The heroes are on their own from here.

APPROACHING NAYA-KARNA'S LAIR

As the heroes pick themselves up the scope of Naya-Karna's scheme become clear. The sun begins to move, just a little at first, and then faster as it climbs across the sky. Shadows lengthen and shrink in the space of a few minutes. At the same time, stars suddenly become visible against the orange sky, and they too begin to move; Naya-Karna's Eco-Sphere has lifted off and the whole of New Zealand is slowly climbing into the sky!

Now that the heroes have made it this far and his plan has been brought to fruition, Naya-Karna patiently waits for them to traipse up to his chalet. He sees them as the last of the old order, the outdated champions of a corrupt society who must either kneel before his great accomplishment or die. He permits no interference with the generators, and should the heroes try and attack them directly, he brings the fight to them.

Otherwise, the heroes pick their way up to a gigantic building nestled into the side of the mountain amid the snow and ice. Sleek and glass, it is covered in solar panels, and affords magnificent views of the surrounding mountain ranges.

Inside is the height of modern minimalist chic. Sleek black sofas are the only concession to comfort, while the floor to ceiling glass windows fill the stark interior with amber light. A low



glass table has been laid out with brandy and tumblers, while haunting classical music pipes from concealed speakers. On a large white wall, a light projector beams a continuous series of images from Naya-Karna's cameras. One shows the Eco-Sphere gradually climbing above the Earth, leaving a gigantic chasm in its wake that is filling rapidly by the ocean. Another shows massive solar sails gradually being extended from different parts of the sphere. Yet others show New Zealand's major metro areas: Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin. People stand in the streets staring at the sky with a mix of wonder and fear.

Once the heroes have had a chance to explore a little, and grasp the magnitude of their situation, Naya-Karna makes his entrance. He is clad in a shimmering suit made of ultra-panels—Havoc's new and improved solar panel. Larger versions form the primary energy collection source for the Eco-Sphere's generators. The suit grants Naya-Karna a range of energy powers that make him a formidable opponent. The suit also has one fatal flaw; if deprived of solar energy it rapidly loses power, becoming little more than a suit of clinking mirrors.

Naya-Karna begins cordially, asking the investigators to drink to the great quest they've begun today. He expects to be treated like a deity, an arrogance heightened by the fact that while wearing the suit he glows brightly enough that people must squint to look at him. His demeanour rapidly cools if the heroes fail to show him the respect he feels he deserves. Naya-Karna patiently explains

his plan, as though speaking to children, then offers the heroes a choice. Either they join his new order and explore new worlds, or they die. Unless the heroes are exceptionally patient it's likely that violence erupts rapidly and the final fight commences immediately after.

In battle, Naya-Karna uses his energy powers and ability to blind heroes. Up to eight henchmen like those who helped the Green Man earlier might aid him, but he prefers to deal with the heroes alone. He is particularly sensitive to the complications of the heroes, and brings up challenging images on the big screens to goad heroes into making mistakes.

Once Naya-Karna is defeated, the heroes face a final challenge. Naya-Karna controls the entire sphere from a small control device in his pocket, which looks like nothing more than a television remote. The heroes must pilot the Eco-Sphere back to its original place before deactivating the generators. Doing otherwise sends New Zealand plummeting down to the planet below with potentially catastrophic consequences. Piloting New Zealand perfectly is a difficulty 9 Coordination challenge. This is a perfect time for the heroes to burn any Determination they have left to bring the country safely back to rest.

Obviously, the heroes may elect a different approach entirely and place New Zealand back on a different part of the planet entirely or perhaps even venture off to explore other worlds. The choice is theirs.

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

It is possible that the heroes will work out what's going on before they have completed all of the encounters from Scene 1 and simply determine to confront Naya-Karna immediately. Such initiative should be rewarded. If the heroes make a direct line for the mountain chalet, Naya-Karna hastily arranges for one of his diversions to be directed into their path; his activists might herd Boulder into their way by increasing the signal to the device attached to his head, arrange for the Green Man to be picked up by helicopter and flown to intercept them, or have Havoc redeploy his wraiths from his RV. Use whichever encounter the heroes haven't yet faced.

Ultimately the haste behind such a move reveals his desperation, and it's entirely possible that Naya-Karna minions fail to obstruct the heroes, particularly if the heroes persist in pressing on to Naya-Karna's lair. A fair reward for such persistence and deduction is that Naya-Karna has not yet activated the Eco-Sphere when the heroes arrive and is frantically fiddling with the control as they arrive. He will try and play for time, but ultimately may fail to achieve the activation of the Eco-Sphere, leaving New Zealand secure in its current geography.

If the heroes try to confront Naya-Karna before the distractions have begun, they find the mountain chalet empty. Naya Karna is busy arranging the encounters and the generators are concealed by thick layers of snow which are subsequently dislodged in the avalanche following their activation. The only clue about events to come is a giant crate that contains the slumbering Boulder. He is currently inert, a single giant rock, and cannot be awakened.

Boulder



ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 12'

WEIGHT: 2 TONS

FIRST APPEARANCE: SOUTHERN CROSS #4

POWERS

Invulnerability

Strike

Super-Speed

Blast

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

STAMINA

14

QUALITIES

CATCHPHRASE: (A DEEP RUMBLING SOUND)

PART OF THE EARTH

SMASH HIS WAY TO PEACE AND QUIET

CHALLENGES

STRIKE AND SUPER-SPEED ONLY USABLE WHEN HE

TUCKS HIS LIMBS AND ROLLS LIKE A BOULDER

BLAST ONLY WHEN THERE IS DEBRIS TO HURL

DAZED AND CONFUSED

THE GREEN MAN



ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'10" WEIGHT: 190

FIRST APPEARANCE: ROBO-ZARD #2

POWERS

Affliction

Animal Control

Plant Control

Plant Growth

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Biology

Investigation

Stealth

Law

STAMINA

11

QUALITIES

SAVE THE EARTH, NO MATTER THE COST

DEDICATED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

CATCHPHRASE: HUG IT OUT!

CHALLENGES

ENEMIES: THE FORCES OF CAPITALISM, MAN!

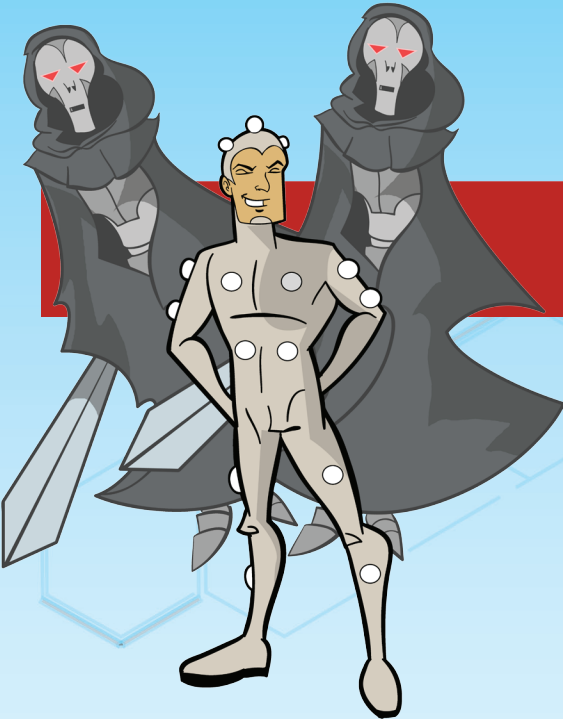
RECOILS FROM ANYTHING PLASTIC

DOESN'T REALLY WANT TO HURT ANYONE

HENCHMEN

- Use the statistics from ICONS rulebook p116. They are armed with Tranquilizer Guns that function as Affliction 4 (when Stamina reduces to 0 the victim falls asleep; all Stamina loss is recovered at the end of the scene).

HAVOC



ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'1" WEIGHT: 140

FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #17

POWERS

Gadget Wizardry

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Computers

Electronics

Mechanics

STAMINA

5

QUALITIES

Way, Way Smarter Than You

Elite Techie Hacker with No Moral Code

CHALLENGES

Overconfident

Loves to Gloat

Perfers Technology to People

ROBO-WRAITH MINIONS

Prow 4, Coord 3, Str 6, Int 1, Awa 2, Will 2, Stam 8, Strike 5;

Challenges: Remote-directed robots

Naya-Karna



QUALITIES

"Only My Plans Can Save The World."
 The Perfect Man At The Perfect Time
 Wealthy Dilettante Turned Maniacal Saviour

ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'3" WEIGHT: 180
 FIRST APPEARANCE: SALAMANDRESS #1

POWERS

Blast

Blinding

Fast Attack

Reflection

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Athletics

Leadership

Mental Resistance

Occult

STAMINA

6

CHALLENGES

REFLECTION POWER: ENERGY ATTACKS ONLY
 BLAST HAS LIMITED POWER SUPPLY: SOLAR
 EXPECTS TO BE WORSHIPPED
 SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

NEW ZEALAND HEROES

TANIWHA



DETERMINATION

5

QUALITIES

"I'M MEAN AS"

CONNECTIONS: NORTHLAND MAORI

GUARDIAN OF THE SECRET OF FIRE

ABILITIES

PROWESS	6										
COORDINATION	5										
STRENGTH	5										
INTELLECT	4										
AWARENESS	4										
WILLPOWER	6										

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 145

FIRST APPEARANCE: SOUTHERN CROSS #6

POWERS

Fire Control - Attack, Create

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Art

Criminology

Medicine

STAMINA

11

CHALLENGES

ENEMY: WHEKE, INC.

CONTROVERSIAL REPUTATION

ACTS BEFORE THINKING

THE WIZARD



DETERMINATION

1

QUALITIES

*CONNECTIONS: THE PEOPLE OF CHRISTCHURCH
THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL WIZARD
KEEP EVERYONE ON THEIR TOES*

ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'8" WEIGHT: 145

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE WHISPER #32

POWERS

Immortality

Invisibility

Weather Control -

Defending, Shaping

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Art

Occult

Oratory

Sociology

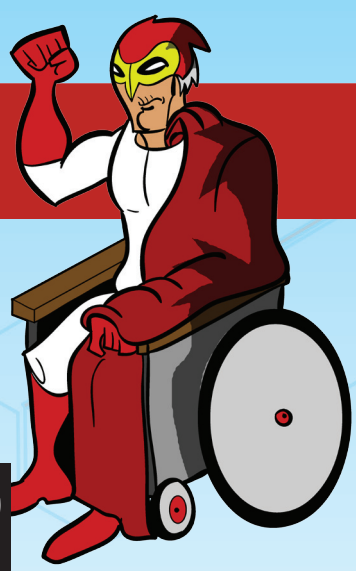
STAMINA

9

CHALLENGES

*ENEMY: CENSOR CENSUS, THE LIVING BUREAUCRACY
UNCONVENTIONAL LIFESTYLE
EASILY DRAWN INTO ARGUMENTS*

CAPTAIN HAWK



DETERMINATION

1

QUALITIES

CONNECTIONS: OLD FOLKS EVERYWHERE
NEW ZEALAND'S MOSTLY-FORGOTTEN HERO
"I'VE STILL GOT IT!"

ABILITIES

PROWESS	5										
COORDINATION	4										
STRENGTH	3										
INTELLECT	2										
AWARENESS	3										
WILLPOWER	6										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 120
FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS LEGENDS #7

POWERS

Binding	5										
Flight	3										
Telekenisis	2										
Attack & Defense	4										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES

Law

STAMINA

7

CHALLENGES

RETIRED AND OLD-FASHIONED
INFIRM, IN A WHEELCHAIR

The Weta



DETERMINATION

2

QUALITIES

THE CREEPER IN DARKNESS
COULD BE ANYONE
MOTIVATION: PUNISH THE GUILTY

ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'9" WEIGHT: 160
 FIRST APPEARANCE: SOUTHERN CROSS #1

POWERS



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics
Athletics
Investigation
Martial Arts

STAMINA

12

CHALLENGES

EMOTIONS HIDDEN BEHIND A MASK
DRIVEN VIGILANTE
WEAKNESS: BRIGHT DAYLIGHT

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Real New Zealand Heroes:

St John New Zealand:

<http://www.stjohn.org.nz/>

The Christchurch Earthquake International Appeal:

<http://www.christchurchearthquakeappeal.govt.nz/>

More information for visitors to New Zealand:

<http://www.newzealand.com/travel/International>

New Zealand's Defence Capabilities:

<http://www.defence.govt.nz/reports-publications/defence-white-paper-2010/contents.html>

New Zealand Biosecurity

<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/biosec/sys>

Queenstown Information:

<http://www.queenstown-nz.co.nz/>

Mount Aspiring National Park website:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/national-parks/mount-aspiring/>

Aoraki Mount Cook website:

<http://www.mtcooknz.com/>

Moeraki Boulders:

<http://www.moerakiboulders.com/moeraki-boulders-facts.php>

ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

NEXT ISSUE.....



DANGER IN DUNSMOUTH

by Jason L. Blair

COMING IN MARCH FROM

