DIGITAL HERO #8
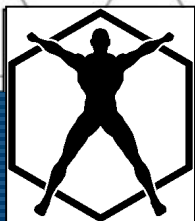
MAR 2003

©MMIII

In this issue:
- Atoms
- Agents
- Aliens
- Anime
- Atlanteans
- Time
- Space
- History
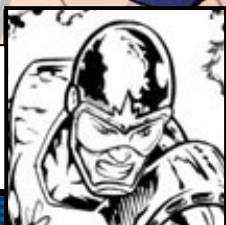
the secret special page

Table of Contents

When We Last Left Our Heroes…

by Steven S. Long

Normally I'd fill this column with some discussion about our next book – *Millennium City,* to be precise. However, this month I have something even more interesting to discuss: the Hero Games production schedule for 2004!

By the beginning of 2004, we expect to have another person in the Creative Dept. here at Hero, allowing us to expand our production a bit. Instead of the 12 books we're producing in 2003 (one per month), right now we're planning *eighteen* books (three every two months, approximately) for 2004. We have to scale up because we'll have more product lines by that point, and we want to make sure they all receive sufficient support.

Our current lineup includes six Champions products, three Dark Champions products, three Fantasy Hero products, three Star Hero products, and three rules/system-oriented books. Here they are, listed in alphabetical order. To get an idea of tentative page counts, prices, and publication dates, check out the "2004 Schedule" page in the "Our Products" part of the Hero website:

Champions: DEMON; Gadgets And Gear; Galactic Champions; The Mystic World; Vibora Bay; Villainy Amok
Dark Champions: Dark Champions; Hudson City: The Urban Abyss; Predators
Fantasy Hero: Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds; The Turakian Age; The Valdorian Age
Star Hero: Galactic Federation; Scourges Of The Galaxy; Worlds Of Empire
System Books: The HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook; The Ultimate Brick; The Ultimate Mystic

The Champions line for 2004 has a definite "mystic" theme, though it's not entirely oriented that way – *Gadgets And Gear, Galactic Champions,* and *Villainy Amok* aren't about supermages and their brethren. But that still means half the books are devoted to matters magical, and when you combine them with *The Ultimate Mystic,* you have a year that's full of wizardly coolness.

The centerpiece of the 2004 releases is the re-launch of the Dark Champions line, which focuses on modern-day action-adventure in all its aspects: vigilante crimefighting, cop dramas, technothrillers and special ops missions, military gaming, espionage, and more. The genre book, *Dark Champions,* will debut at GenCon 2004. A setting book (*Hudson City: The Urban Abyss*) and an enemies book (*Predators*) will follow shortly thereafter. And believe me, I have lots of plans for Dark Champions books beyond that. ;)

Fantasy Hero will be in its second year of release in 2004, and since we'll already have books of monsters and spells available, we're mostly focusing on some pre-built settings for you to use. The first, *The Turakian Age,* is a high fantasy setting with powerful magic, fearsome monsters and foes, fabulous treasures, epic quests, adventure, excitement, and romance. It's got a world-threatening Dark Lord, dozens of kingdoms ranging from petty to mighty, a completely detailed pantheon of gods, and a magic system that's both easy to learn and easy to use. The second, *The Valdorian Age,* is a swords-and-sorcery setting with a different feel. Magic isn't nearly as common, nor as easy to use, but it can be just as effective in the right hands. Every warrior and rogue, no matter how sneaky or strong, has the good sense to fear spellcasters, not to mention the priests who serve the strange Valdorian gods. To go along with both these settings, *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds* provides not only several interlinked scenarios, but lots of maps you can use in any campaign.

Star Hero has two books tied to our Terran Empire setting – *Scourges Of The Galaxy,* an enemies book; and *Worlds Of Empire,* a planets book – plus an additional setting in our future history. *Galactic Federation* details the period 2700 to 3000 AD, between the ending of the Terran Empire and the beginning of the Galactic Champions period (during which the Federation continues to exist). It's a time when Humanity unites with numerous other species throughout the Galaxy to create an enlightened government devoted to security, exploration, and the advancement of knowledge. But never fear – there are plenty of opportunities for adventure stopping Ackálian and Thorgon aggression, dealing with the threat of Varanyi spies, and perhaps even preparing for enemies far stranger, and far deadlier.

In addition to *The Ultimate Mystic,* the rules-oriented part of the year's schedule contains another Ultimate book, *The Ultimate Brick,* as well as a resource book suitable for just about any campaign, *The HERO System Vehicle Sourcebook.* The latter builds on the 50 sample vehicles in *The Ultimate Vehicle* to assemble a collection of Things That Move ranging from horse-drawn carriages, to cars and tanks, to planes, to the most advanced starships. While TUV stuck to relatively common vehicles, the HSVS has the room to go further afield and look at wierder, more unusual, and/or more experimental vehicles – pulp-era coupes, volantors, enchanted flying ships, and lots more.

So, get your checklists ready and start saving up your ducats, Hero fans! The *HERO System* is going places in 2004, and we want you to come along for the ride. ;)

– Steven S. Long
HERO System Line Developer

HEROglyphs by Steven S. Long

Stop! In the Name of Time

BUILDING A "TIME STOP" POWER

A few months ago, someone on the Hero message boards posted a question asking me how to create the ability to stop time throughout the Universe "accurately and elegantly." Unable to get the idea out of my head, I sat down and spent a couple hours writing up a power that fit the questioner's carefully-defined parameters. I posted the original version to the message boards, but since then I've refined things a bit. Here's my take on the subject. I hope you have lots of Character Points to spend….

Assumptions

To keep this exercise as simple as possible, I'm going to specify the following assumptions and preconditions:

1. The exact size of the Universe, *a.k.a.* "Reality," is unknown, and possibly unknowable. However, a MegaArea effect at the +10 Advantage level is big enough to encompass the entire Universe, regardless of where the character happens to be situated within the Universe.

The Time Stop power, as designed, assumes there's just one dimension. If there are multiple dimensions and a character wants to affect all of them with this power, he should apply Transdimensional to all parts of it.

(Hereafter, I refer to the various parts of the Time Stop power as "sub-powers.")

2. Characters can use multiple-Power attacks in the game. A character has to activate the different time-stopping effects at once – but he doesn't always need every effect. Thus, he must be able to pick and choose the subparts he wants to use, yet use all the sub-powers he selects simultaneously. Using a multiple-Power attack is much easier than figuring out which sub-powers should Link to which other sub-powers, and possibly creating an arrangement that won't fit what some characters want to do.

3. The levels of power chosen for the various sub-powers are, by GM's fiat, sufficient to affect any being and thing in the Universe, from the lowliest microbe to the most powerful super-being or god. I've built with enough points that I suspect well over 90% of the beings and things in the Universe would be affected anyway, but for the sake of game play and having fun just assume this monstrosity of a power can affect Tyrannon or Zeus.

4. Two hundred doublings of mass (a +50 Advantage) suffices to affect the mass of any single object in the Universe with a Usable As Attack power.

5. The sub-powers are constructed using multiple Areas Of Effect so that it's easy for a character to hit everyone in the Universe. While technically 1 in 216 people should be "missed" (since a roll of 18 always misses), the GM should just ignore such statistical nonsense in favor of good old-fashioned common sense and dramatic sense, and assume everyone gets zapped.

6. Rules clarifications: Be sure to consult the Rules FAQ if a power construct doesn't make sense to you. Creating the Time Stop power led to the addition of several questions-and-answers to the FAQ.

Time Stop

Time to get chronal.

SUB-POWER 1: STOP WHERE YOU ARE!

The first aspect of Time Stop to account for is the fact that everyone and everything stops moving. This requires a two-part sub-power. The first part uses Entangle:

Stop Where You Are!: Entangle 1d6, 1 DEF, NND (defense is time manipulation powers; +1), Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½), Area Of Effect (1" Radius; +1), Selective (+¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaArea (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Personal Immunity (+¼) (150 Active Points); No Range (-½). Total cost: 100 points.

This power is, of course, a blatant violation of the rule against applying NND to Entangle. However, as noted in Captain Chronos's description on page 137 of *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks,* it's all in the sake of fun. This is, after all, an intellectual experiment. So, assume for the sake of argument that the GM grants permission.

TIME STOP AS EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

For true "elegance" (meaning, in this context, a simple but satisfying power construction), the best method for creating Time Stop is Extra-Dimensional Movement. That power allows a character to simulate "other states of being," and stopping time certainly qualifies. The parameters and conditions discussed in this article set forth the natural scientific laws applying to the new "dimension." Of course, this method involves a lot of "handwaving" by the GM, and is, in the hands of all but the most mature and responsible players, grossly unbalancing in game terms. Those of you who want strict mathematical accuracy can stick with the method outlined in this article, or create more limited powers with the special effect of "stopping time" (see Captain Chronos in *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks* for plenty of examples of the latter).

The second part of this sub-power is that people and objects frozen in time don't fall if they're in the air — gravity is time-stopped, too. To take this into account, we apply some Flight to everyone and everything in the Universe. For the sake of this power, assume 100" Flight suffices to withstand any pull of gravity. (See *Star Hero* for more information on gravity and its effects.)

Stop Where You Are!: Flight 100", Area Of Effect (20" Radius; +1), Selective (+¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaArea (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Usable As Attack (x200 doublings of mass; +51), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Personal Immunity (+¼) (12,900 Active Points); No Range (-½). Total cost: 8,600 points.

So, due to this sub-power, when the character stops time, no one can move. Flying creatures and vehicles stay exactly where they are, and falling objects are suddenly suspended in mid-air. However, thanks to the Personal Immunity, the character can move around freely, and since the Entangle has the *Takes No Damage From Attacks* Advantage, he can hurt or otherwise affect the time-stopped people if he chooses. He can take against them any action he could normally take, and he pays END for those actions at the usual rate. (Even though the character is "outside time," the GM should track "phantom Phases" for purposes of END expenditure and such.)

Technically speaking, there's one thing the character can't do: move the victims around. They are, after all, Entangled in an Area Of Effect – that means moving them would involve "tearing" through part of the Entangle to reach them, and then "tearing" them out of it. Given the special effects involved, the GM could easily rule that the character can move people and objects around without paying for any additional powers. But for GMs uncomfortable with that solution, here's the ability for a character to move time-stopped people and objects from place to place:

Cost	Power
83	*Let's Rearrange Things:* Multipower, 125-point reserve, all Extra Time (-¼), Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-¼)
7u	1) *Let's Rearrange Things (Small Rearrangement):* Teleportation 1", Usable As Attack (x200 doublings of mass; +51), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (105 Active Points); Extra Time (however long it takes for the character to carry/drag the object to the desired location; -¼), Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-¼) (total cost: 70 points) 0
8u	2) *Let's Rearrange Things (Large Rearrangement):* Teleportation 1", MegaScale (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Usable As Attack (x200 doublings of mass; +51), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (125 Active Points); Extra Time (however long it takes for the character to carry/drag the object to the desired location; -¼), Must Pass Through Intervening Space (-¼) (total cost: 83 points) 0

Total cost: 98 points.

SUB-POWER 2: HEY, WHAT HAPPENED?

The next aspect of Time Stop to account for is that living beings aren't aware of the fact someone's stopped time. As long as time remains stopped, they remain oblivious; when the character turns time back on, they don't even realize the merest picosecond has passed.

There are several ways to handle this particular effect. The most thorough and accurate would be Transform, but ensuring that any living being regardless of BODY or Power Defense could be completely and instantly Transformed would cost in the hundreds of thousands of Character Points. So instead, let's try something a bit simpler: Change Environment. For purposes of this power, "ability to sense the passage of time" is defined as a single Sense Group. Because the character is immune to the effect, he senses the passage of time normally.

Hey, What Happened?: Change Environment 1" radius, -40 to Time Group PER Rolls, NND (defense is time manipulation powers; +1), Selective (+½), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaArea (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Personal Immunity (+¼) (1,677 Active Points); No Range (-½). Total cost: 1,118 points.

GMs unwilling to accept "Time Sense Group" as valid can simply buy this same power multiple times, defining the Change Environment as affecting a different Sense Group each time. (The GM may, in his discretion, simply allow the character building the power to buy multiple combat effects for a single Change Environment power, as discussed in the Rules FAQ.)

Of course, 1 in 216 people will still make their PER Rolls to realize what's happening, since a roll of 3 always succeeds. As with the Attack Rolls discussed above, the GM should apply common sense and dramatic sense and just assume none of the affected persons ever succeeds with a PER Roll.

SUB-POWER 3: SNUFFING OUT THE STARS

The third aspect of Time Stop that this power construct must account for relates to sub-power 1(b). Gravity isn't the only form of energy the power has to stop; as long as time remains stopped, stars don't burn, water doesn't boil, and other similar potentially damaging effects simply lose their ability to harm the character. He could walk on the surface of Rigel if he wanted and not feel a thing.

Star Hero opines that the damage caused by the core of Earth's Sun would inflict 975d6 Killing Damage, Continuous, Armor Piercing (x8), Penetrating (x16), per Segment. For purposes of this power, I'll assume all stars are G2V ones like Sol. That's 204,750 Active Points' worth of power to negate (or 210 points per d6!). That requires a lot of dice of Drain using the Standard Effect Rule:

> *Snuffing Out The Stars:* Drain Energy 68,250d6 (standard effect: 204,750 points), all Energy powers simultaneously (+2), Area Of Effect (1" Radius; +1), Selective (+¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaArea (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Personal Immunity (+¼) (11,261,250 Active Points); All Drained Points Immediately Return When Character Deactivates Power (-½). Total cost: 7,507,500 points.

The Drain is bought as Continuous so that it maintains its effect as long as the character wants – neither the Sun nor any other energy phenomena can recover the lost points quickly enough to negate the ongoing effect. Defining "Energy" as a special effect is somewhat questionable, but forgiveable due to the scale of the power; GMs concerned about this can buy the power multiple times until the cover all the energy-based special effects they can think of.

SUB-POWER 4: I FEEL SO YOUNG

The last aspect of time-stopping to account for is that affected beings and objects don't age, become hungry, catch diseases, or the like. That, of course, requires Life Support.

> *I Feel So Young:* Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality), Area Of Effect (1" Radius; +1), Selective (+¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaArea (1" = the entire Universe; +10), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (662 Active Points); Does Not Affect Character (-½). Total cost: 441 points.

Since the Life Support has a Limitation that it doesn't affect the character, he ages normally, has to eat and sleep, and so on. The GM has to keep track of the passage of "phantom time" while the time stop effect exists.

Total Cost

So, what does this wonderful and amazing power cost a character?

Power	Cost
Sub-Power 1(a)	100
Sub-Power 1(b)	8,600
Sub-Power 2	1,118
Sub-Power 3	7,507,500
Sub-Power 4	441
Total	7,517,759
Options	**Cost**
Moving things around	98

So, there you have it! For a bit over 7.5 million Character Points, you, too, can stop time.

In next month's *HEROglyphs,* we'll go one step forward... or backward... as I discuss how to create a time *manipulation* power.

Ⓧ

GOOD GUYS, BAD GUYS

"There is a heroism in crime as well as in virtue. Vice and infamy have their altars and their religion."
— William Hazlitt

"I don't care who does the electing just so long as I do the nominating."
— William Marcy Tweed

WOW! EVEN DICKENS THOUGHT IT WAS BAD!

"This is the place: these narrow ways diverging to the right and left, and reeking every where with dirt and filth. Such lives as are led here, bear the same fruit here as elsewhere. The coarse and bloated faces at the doors have counterparts at home and all the wide world over. Debauchery has made the very houses prematurely old. See how the rotten beams are tumbling down, and how the patched and broken windows seem to scowl dimly, like eyes that have been hurt in drunken frays. Many of these pigs live here. Do they ever wonder why their masters walk upright in lieu of going on all-fours? and why they talk instead of grunting?"

— Charles Dickens, during a visit to Five Points in 1842

6

You Gotta Have Character by Jason Walters

"Life is lived forwards, but understood backwards." — Kierkegaard

GANGSTA TALK FROM 1852

Bill the Butcher pads the hoof near Paradise Square, searching furiously for Jake, one of the Dead Rabbits' sluggers. After far too much heel to toe he spies Jake coming out of some hackum diving bell on Canal Street. Bill quickly ducks into a nearby alley so as to catch Jake unaware as he saunters down the way. As he passes by the alley Bill lunges out, grabs Jake by the shoulders, and draws his lancet across Jake's gutter lane. Bill brings his mouth within a mouse whisker of Jake's ear.

"I heard you was mowing my jomer." He whispers sensually into the side of the addle-cove's idea pot, "She said you buzzed that gold fawney I gave her and fenced it!"

Bill pierces Jake's skin slightly with his shiv to punctuate the end of his sentence. Drops of blood ooze down the front of Jake's chest, staining his already discolored vest with the colors of his own gizzard. Unfortunately for Bill, at this very point Morrissey, a slugger for Tammany Hall's Boss Tweed, happens upon the scene. Morrissey pounces on Bill, fibbing his pate unmercifully and causing Bill to drop his Arkansas toothpick.

Slightly injured in body but much in soul, Jake screams at Bill "Your jomer works in a goosing slum and picks up blokes from a flash panny!"

Now completely enraged, Bill kicks Morrissey away before drawing his barking irons from his talma. He aims each of his roscoes at a different hard case. "Have you both been swilling nokum stiff? I'm gonna send you straight to your ground sweat!"

All of the commotion on Canal Street has attracted a crowd of disreputable looking people of uncertain professions – the kinds who make up much of the population of the Five Points District. Just as things are beginning to look top rail, a crusher walks up and orders the three sluggers to break it up or he'll send them all to city college.

"I know your hamlet!" Bill snarls at the crusher as Morrissey and Jake (who is beginning to feel played out) begin to backpedal into the crowd. "Let's grab a root." One says to the other. But Bill moves in to settle their accounts – until a faker from a nearby shop warns Bill that the crusher wears a Joseph's coat. Bill quickly backs off, stashes his barking irons back inside of his talma, and vacates the scene with much promises of revenge most bloody upon all assembled. Disappointed but toeing the crusher's mark, the crowd fades quickly into the damp New York night, heading out onto her grimy cobblestone streets in search of more lively entertainment…

The Gangs of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld was penned by controversial writer, newspaperman, and war hero Herbert Asbury back in the 1930s. A lurid tour through a now unrecognizable New York of abysmal poverty, habitual violence, and seething corruption it is cobbled together from urban legend, fading memories, police records, the self-aggrandizements of aging crooks, yellow journalism, and the odd bit solid historical research. Although it is generally regarded as both sensationalist and unreliable, *Gangs of New York* makes for entertaining reading and was used as the basis for a recently released popular Martin Scorsese movie of the same name.

One of the central characters in Martin Scorsese's recently released film *Gangs of New York* is a frightening mobster and murder known as Bill "The Butcher" Cutting. While it is certainly difficult to imagine anyone as dreadful as renowned method actor Daniel Day-Lewis' character existing in real life, an actual Bill the Butcher (born William Poole) did indeed live, fight, and eventually die near the infamous Five Points neighborhood of New York in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the American Civil War. A study in opposites, Poole was known both for his open generosity and vicious racism, for his good nature and black temper, and for womanizing while he openly espoused family values. A compulsive gambler, mercenary fireman, loving father, violent racketeer, political enforcer, and actual family butcher, Poole joins the great American rouge's gallery as one of New York's best contributions to our proud nation's history of villainy!

William "Bill the Butcher" Poole

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
17	BODY	14	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	6		
40	END	0		
42	STUN	7		

Total Characteristics Cost: 128

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
Swimming: 5"/10"

Cost	Powers

Martial Art: Five Points Fisticuffs

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Backhand	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA ½d6
5	Roundhouse	-2	+1	7d6 Strike

Martial Art: The Butcher's Art

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Rng	Notes
4	Basic Throw	+0	+0	+2	+2 DC
4	Deadly Throw	-1	-1	+0	+4 DC
3	Def. Throw	-1	+2	+0	Strike
4	Quick Throw	+1	+0	+0	+2 DC
1	Weapon Element: Blades				

Perks

15 True Blue Americans 8- (extremely useful Skills or resources, Contact has significant Contacts, Organization)

Skills

9 +3 with The Butcher's Art
6 +2 with Five Points Fisticuffs
2 +1 with Barking Irons

5 AK: New York City 14-
3 Breakfall 13-
3 Bribery 13-
5 Conversation 14-
5 Defense Maneuver II
7 Fast Draw 15-
8 Gambling (Craps, Faro, Cock Fighting, Dog Fighting) 13-
5 KS: Gangs of New York 14-
5 Oratory 14-
3 Persuasion 13-
3 Streetwise 13-
3 Seduction 13-
2 WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 122

Total Character Cost: 250

125+ Disadvantages

15 DNPC: Charles Poole 8- (Incompetent)
15 Enraged: When Insulted (Uncommon, Go 14-, Rec 14-)
25 Hunted: Dead Rabbits 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, PC is very easy to find)
20 Psychological Limitation: Gangster's Code of Honor (Common, Total)
15 Psychological Limitation: Racist (Common, Strong)
10 Reputation: Violent Racist 11- (Extreme)
15 Reputation: Violent Gangster 11- (Extreme)
10 Rivalry: John Morrissey (Professional, As Powerful, Seek to Harm or Kill, Rival Aware of Rivalry)

Total Disadvantage Points: 125

"BOSS TWEED" AND THE TAMMANY HALL MACHINE

For a time in the middle of the 19th Century, it seemed as though nothing happened in New York City unless "The Boss" (no, not Bruce Springsteen) wanted it to. William M. "Boss" Tweed squeezed the Big Apple so shamelessly in the years right after the Civil War that his name has become synonymous with corruption, fraud, and graft. Chairman of the New York county Democratic Party and the Grand Sachem of the Tammany Club (better known as Tammany Hall), Boss Tweed swindled an estimated 75 to 200 million dollars from ol' Gotham between 1865 and 1871. During his reign he used illegal means to force election of his choice for New York governor, New York City mayor, and speaker of the state assembly. In the end he was brought down by political cartoonist Thomas Nast, whose untiring efforts eventually brought Tweed's shameless thievery into the public spotlight. Arrested, convicted, and sentenced he escaped from prison and fled to Spain, where he was ironically identified from one of Nast's political cartoons.

THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

For almost two hundred years anybody who was anybody in nineteenth century New York wanted to be buried in Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery. As *The New York Times* succinctly put it in 1866, "It is the ambition of the New Yorker to live upon Fifth Avenue, to take his airings in the [Central] Park, and to sleep with his fathers in Green-Wood." They came first by the thousands and then by the hundreds of thousands, first as tourists eating picnic lunches on her well-groomed laws in the shade of her trees and stony mausoleums, then as permanent residents deep in the comforting soil: Civil War generals, murder victims, gangsters, inventors, artists, the famous, and the infamous. Bill the Butcher is laid to rest there, as is Indian Princess Do-Hum-Me, Sara W. Kaims (who lived to 117 years of age), Confederate general Robert Selden Garnett, famous newspaperman Horace Greeley, the infamous William Marcy "Boss" Tweed, and even President Theodore Roosevelt. To this day it remains one of the finest places in American to be caught dead in.

8

Background/History: William Poole was born in 1821 to respectable New Jersey parents of English descent. Seeking greater opportunity, the Poole family moved to New York City in1832 where William's father, a butcher by trade, opened a shop in Washington Market. The family soon became established in their community and was well thought of by all of their neighbors. William followed in his father's footsteps, served an apprenticeship, and ultimately opened a butcher shop in the same market. Bill took pride in his skills as a butcher, enjoying a loyal following amongst both his rich and poor clientele. He married well, purchased a pleasant brick home on Christopher Street, and was gifted with a much-loved son named Charles.

Yet simple work and simple virtue were never enough for William "Bill the Butcher" Poole. A man of singular ambition and innately criminal instincts, he became a member of the Red Rover "Volunteer" Fire Engine Company No. 34, at Hudson and Christopher Streets. Before too long he was its chief. A far cry from the valiant NYFD of today, the New York fire departments of the time were private, mercenary "companies," often demanding cash up front from a burning building's owners in order to save it from the flames. Thus, the Red Rovers was little more than a gang with a fancy label, frequently engaging in skirmishes with the North River Engine Company No. 27 over territory (and often at the scene of fires). This ongoing quarrel began in earnest when the Red Rovers, attending to a fire, pumped so much water into a competing North River fire engine that the expensive machine was badly damaged. "Washing" another fire company's engine was considered the ultimate insult that a fireman could inflict, so these contests quickly turned from pumped water to knives, bats, and revolvers. Often the two groups would simply ignore the fire they had arrived to put out so that they could engage in running street battles with one another.

Inexplicably, Bill the Butcher thrived in this sort of profitable criminal environment despite his respectable middle class upbringing. It was probably only a mater of time before he became active in one or the other of the prominent New York gangs. Although there were several different criminal neighborhoods in Manhattan at the time, including The Bowery and The Waterfront, the most infamous was The Five Points. One of the worst slums in American history, The Five Points was an unspeakably rough, largely immigrant neighborhood formed by the intersection of Cross (now Park), Anthony (now Worth), and Orange (now Baxter) streets. The families who lived there were lucky to have one room to themselves and buildings such as the Old Brewery, Jacob's

Ladder, Gates of Hell, and Cow Bay were visions of the most abject filth, vice, and misery which human beings are capable of. Crime and harlotry were frequently the only way in which the inhabitants of Five Points could survive. The gangs there "earned" their money through many of the same activities that modern criminals do today: gambling, prostitution, political fixing, extortion, and robbery to name but a few. The city's major political power, the mighty and long-lived Democratic Party stronghold of Tammany Hall, employed the Five Points gangs at election time, bailing out their leaders whenever they were arrested. The various Five Point gangs, with a collective membership of around fifteen hundred men, controlled the area between Broadway and the Bowery, and Fourteenth street and City Hall Park.

Poole's family were members of the conservative Whig political faction which was experiencing a sharp decline in America by the late 1940s. The crumbling of this major party left a vacuum which was quickly filled by a growing anti-immigrant movement known as the Know-Nothing party or the Native Americans (also known as the American party). The Know-Nothings became popular in New York amongst the native-born populace due to the huge number of immigrants flooding through a city that had become, in effect, America's front door. Bill switched his membership to the Native Americans by around 1851. Soon his Washington Street gang had been renamed the True Blue Americans, serving as "shoulder-hitters" for the Native American party. A shoulder-hitter enforced the will of a political boss (in this case Poole) by using threats or violence to "persuade" voters to choose their candidate at the polls… often more than once! It was this rough-and-tumble political process which led Poole into a series of conflicts with John Morrissey, an Irishman working as a "slugger" for Tammany Hall, which was to ultimately lead to his death in 1855.

Bill humiliated Morrissey, a noted prizefighter, by beating him in a fight in July of 1854. Both men agreed to the terms of the fight and met at Amos Dock in the Waterfront District. According to newspaper reports, Morrissey struck the first blow, but the far more agile Poole ducked, managed to grab Morrissey, and threw him to the ground. Poole leapt on top, mercilessly beating Morrissey for about five minutes until he pleaded for grace. After the fight, Morrissey and his friends set out to murder Bill and, on the foggy evening of February 25, 1855, they accomplished their goal. Bill was shot through the heart by Louis Baker, one of Morrissey's friends, while he was drinking, gambling, and womanizing at the True Blue American's hangout at Stanwix Hall. True to form, Bill the Butcher lived for fourteen painful days after the shooting. With his last

breath Bill gasped, "Good-bye, boys – I die a true American!"

The Native American political party gave a huge, magnificent funeral for William Poole. Five thousand men rode in carriages or walked behind the hearse while thousands of spectators filled the streets. His funeral was attended by many of the city's noteworthy conservative political leaders as well as hundreds of the city's native-born poor, for whom he had become something of a martyr. His remains were laid to rest in Brooklyn's infamous Green-Wood Cemetery.

Personality/Motivation: William Poole was a man of unchanging, sometimes violent conviction in a rapidly changing world. Both fiercely patriotic and fervently small minded, he perceived the waves of immigration that rocked New York in the wake of the Irish Potato Famine of the 1930s as a direct threat to the American way of life. His unique world view, when combined with his own loose character as well as the volatile, opportunistic disposition of the time in which he lived, served to transform him from an ambitious middle-class businessman into a violent gang leader with political aspirations. He quickly developed a reputation as a rough and tumble fighter who often inflicted horrendous wounds upon his adversaries (although there are no newspaper or crime reports that indicate he ever murdered anyone.)

When Bill was not engaged at his butcher shop, he was generally involved in his Washington Street gang activities, hanging out at the Red Rover volunteer fire department, or working for the Native American political party. Generally Poole's turf was in Christopher St. District, over by the West Village piers, a very long way from the Five Points – but he was known to go over to the predominantly Irish neighborhood for "political" reasons. These included gambling on "bull-baiting" (a sport in which specially trained dogs battled a wounded bull in a pit), "turning-out" young Irish women (converting them into prostitutes), and beating the daylights out of rival gang members (like John Morrissey). Thus it can be fairly stated that Bill the Butcher was not the best loved visitor to the Five Points, though he may have been one of the most feared.

Although he was a great proponent of the family life, Bill generally kept one or two girlfriends on the side. He was an extremely jealous man, prone to incredible fits of rage when her felt that his "territory" was being trespassed upon. Yet he also had a reputation for polite, even honorable behavior when it suited him, giving out choice cuts of meat to neighborhood widows and donating upon occasion to charity.

According to New York urban legend, Bill the Butcher's favorite drink was a perfectly horrible concoction known as a Blue Blazer. This Victorian liver-killer was created when one wineglass of Scotch whiskey was combined with one wineglass of boiling water before being poured into a pewter mug. The bartender then ignited the mixture, blending it by tossing the ingredients back and forth from one mug to another in a series of dramatic passes. After about five tosses, he poured the concoction into a silver tumbler, sweetened it with one teaspoonful of sugar, added a sliver of lemon peel, and served it still burning to the customer. Little wonder the average life expectancy of a man at the time was about forty-five!

Quote: "A damned Irishman will do work for a nickel that a colored man will do for a dime – or a native white man for a quarter!"

Powers/Tactics: Bill's ability to throw knives was the stuff of legend. He was said to be deadly accurate to distances of twenty feet even when throwing something as unwieldy as a butcher's knife (treat as a full 1d6 RKA for game purposes). This art of throwing unbalanced, non-aerodynamic cutlery can be considered specialized enough to constitute a private martial arts form, unique only the Bill the Butcher, known simply as *The Butcher's Art.* Given his druthers, Poole would use knives over any other sort of weapon in a violent confrontation, typically hurling two *quick throws* in rapid succession followed by a *deadly throw* for good measure.

A capable hand-to-hand combatant, Poole employed a ruthless urban fighting style known as *Five Points Fisticuffs* which combined vicious kidney blows and eye gouges with powerful roundhouse blows. The point of this crude street fighting method was to disable, then publically humiliate, opponents during bar fights for the entertainment of one's friends. Bill was a well known practitioner of this style, using it to great (although ultimately tragic) effects against larger, stronger opponents like John Morrissey. He was also known to carry a couple of Paterson Revolver "barking irons" under his vest as back up weapons (RKA 1d6, 6 Shots).

Campaign Use: Bill "The Butcher" Poole was very much a creature of his time, easily dropped into any Victorian or Western Hero adventure which takes place in or around New York City. As crooked, violent, and world-weary as the place that spawned him, Poole was an archetypical but non two-dimensional villain who can be depicted as both despicable *and* honorable (in an odd sort of way) at the same time. In the frenzied, morally ambagious world in which he lived Bill the Butcher might not

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York* (1928)

Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets* (1974)

George Matsell, *The Secret Language of Crime: The Rogue's Lexicon* (1859)

Luc Sante, *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (1992)

CIVIL WAR DRAFT RIOTS

Although they occurred well after Bill the Butcher's death in 1855, the Draft Riots are an important historical event, which has forever tainted both the place and period in which he lived… with blood. It remains the largest civil disturbance in American history. Extending over four ghastly days in 1863, the disorder went through daily changes in focus as the riot progressed. Parts of the riots were pure criminality: looting, robbing, rape, and arson were all common. Some rioters tried to keep the uprising's focus on the blatant unfairness of Lincoln's draft law, which allowed rich men to get out of the service by paying a $300 fee (interestingly, Boss Tweed was one of the few wealthy New Yorkers who tried to

raise money for poor citizens to buy their way out as well). Other rioters saw a Republican plot to wreck the growing trade union movement. For yet others, hatred of the Irish and African American minorities was the primary focus.

President Lincoln ordered the army into New York City in an attempt to stop the bloodshed. In the end, 105 rioters, policemen, and soldiers lay dead in the city's cobblestone streets. Some 128 more lay injured, while 18 African Americans had been sexually mutilated before being hung or beaten to death. In the two weeks after the riots, the bodies of ten men, one woman, and three children were washed up on the shores of Manhattan and Brooklyn. With the recovery of the final body from the Atlantic, one of the most deplorable incidents of urban violence in American history came to a merciful close.

even be considered a total villain. He would very likely help heroic player characters who were combating a menace which truly threatened his beloved city.

In many ways William Poole is typical of the sorts of rascals one might find inhabiting America's greatest city during the early Victorian Era. In the early 19th century criminal gangs began to form in Manhattan as a result of growing population, a bad economy, and an increase in job competition. These gangs quickly started to specialize in specific criminal activities, splitting up the seedier parts of the city into numerous territories. Records show that Irish immigrants formed the first known modern American criminal gangs in an area of New York City known as The Five Points. They were known to dress in a specific way, spoke in a specialized slang, and used monikers or nicknames to identify themselves. Irishman Edward Coleman became the first recognized American gang leader in 1826 when he formed a crew called the Forty Thieves. In the Bowery there was another group of native-born gangsters known as the Bowery Boys. These two sets battled so regularly and intensely that at one point the army had to be called in to stop them.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, New York City's government had become so corrupt that there was little distinction between political bosses, businessmen, and gang leaders. In this environment the gangs plundered stores, businesses, and private homes without fear of the police, who were often on their payroll or even members of their organizations. With no one to protect them, the citizens of the city constantly fell victim to the schemes of professional criminal warlords, who ran its various neighborhoods like private fiefdoms. An enterprising mobster/ politician could expect a cut of every hooker's earnings, every pickpocket's loot, and every footpad's take within his territory.

Early Victorian New York could be an absolutely wonderful setting for a group of very powerful (250 point) Heroic level masked vigilantes. The common people of New York lived their daily lives almost completely at the mercy of corrupt police, murderous gangs, battling political factions, and unchecked vicious criminals - they *genuinely* could have used the protection of a masked avenger or two. To this nasty stew of crime add Confederate spies, scheming foreign diplomats (English, French, Russian, etc.), mad Victorian scientists, evil cultists, plus any other sort of steampunk madness which a game master can contrive from his darkest musings to create a completely unique setting for heroic tales of daring do. All it takes is a little imagination combined with a dollop of audacity, liberally mixed with the sort

of poor, confused understanding of history you commonly find in this column.

Appearance: Bill was described by his peers as tall, handsome, and dark haired with an extraordinarily large mustache. Broad shouldered with a muscular physique, he towered over his fellow New Yorkers at (for the time) an astounding six foot five inches. To accentuate his height he wore tall black "top-hat," shoes with pronounced heels, and "high pocket" trousers, which ended halfway up the torso. Bill generally wore a specially designed coat which contained hidden pockets for roughly a half dozen knives and a gentlemen's vest, or talma, which he used to conceal a couple of revolvers.

Leftover Hero: Terran Empire by Steven S. Long

Chapter One

Here are the full descriptions of the Osathri (page 23), the Shiseki (page 26), the Jaruma (page 34), and the Az'arc'a (page 43), all of which I had to trim down considerably, as well as more information about the Varanyi.

OSATHRI

A strange fish-like species, the Osathri do not mingle much with Humans or other aliens. Uncomfortable out of water, they prefer the company of their own kind, or at best that of other aquatic species.

Osathri Biology

The Osathri (singular Osath) are an ocean-dwelling species resembling catfish, with specialized fins for manipulating objects. They have six eyes – two on the sides of the head, two on top forward, and two downward-looking just in front of the mouth. Osathri have two genders and lay eggs; well-fed females have daughters, but hungry or stressed mothers have sons. At present, males make up only 10 percent of the Osathri population and live solitary wandering lives in the oceans of the homeworld with almost no technology; the interact with other Osathri primarily to breed.

Soolasha, The Osathri Homeworld

The homeworld of the Osathri is a large planet, some 15,000 kilometers in diameter with a gravity of 1.2 standard gees. An ocean averaging 10 kilometers deep covers the surface; only one small group of islands breaks the surface. The Osathri barely use the land, which they cannot ambulate on without advanced technology. Many islands house Imperial facilities, vacation resorts for tourists who come for the diving and other water sports, and the like.

Osathri Society And Culture

The ancestral Osathri lived in shallow water, feeding on creatures resembling shellfish, and evolved the ability to use tools to break into their food's shells. Civilization developed on reefs and in shallow lagoons, where the Osathri began farming shellfish and herding fish. Osathri have an extremely old civilization, as living in the ocean slowed their technological and scientific development.

Contact with Terrans and annexation by the Empire has caused a great schism in Osathri society. For some, access to air-breather science and the chance to leave their ocean homes to visit other worlds was worth becoming subject to the Empire. For others, the disruption of traditional society was intolerable. Over time, several million Osathri have moved to other worlds in the Empire, especially water planets; they are typically Imperial loyalists and often join the Imperial Army's Sea Forces. The Osathri homeworld remains a hotbed of rebellion and discontent, requiring four full divisions of soldiers (which do not include any Osathri troops) to keep things quiet.

The total population of Osathri is hard to determine. Off-world Osathri number about 125 million; the population of the homeworld is thought to be approximately 1 billion, but it is notoriously difficult to keep track and many census-takers suffer fatal accidents. Rumors of secret deep-ocean communities persist – several million Osathri could be living in hiding, preparing for an uprising against the Empire. An Imperial governor has authority over the islands and a few Army bases; otherwise Soolasha is controlled by small local communities, usually democracies.

Pre-Imperial Osathri technology was barely ATRI 2. Osathri on colony worlds typically maintain a technology rated at ATRI 8. On the homeworld, a few enclaves around the Imperial capital are ATRI 10, but the rest of the world is ATRI 5 or below. Because they can only live in water and have no legs, Osathri require watersuits and hover platforms when they visit air-dwellers. On colony worlds with significant Human settlements such things are as common as automobiles; Osathri on the homeworld in possession of such devices are shunned and hated as "walker lovers."
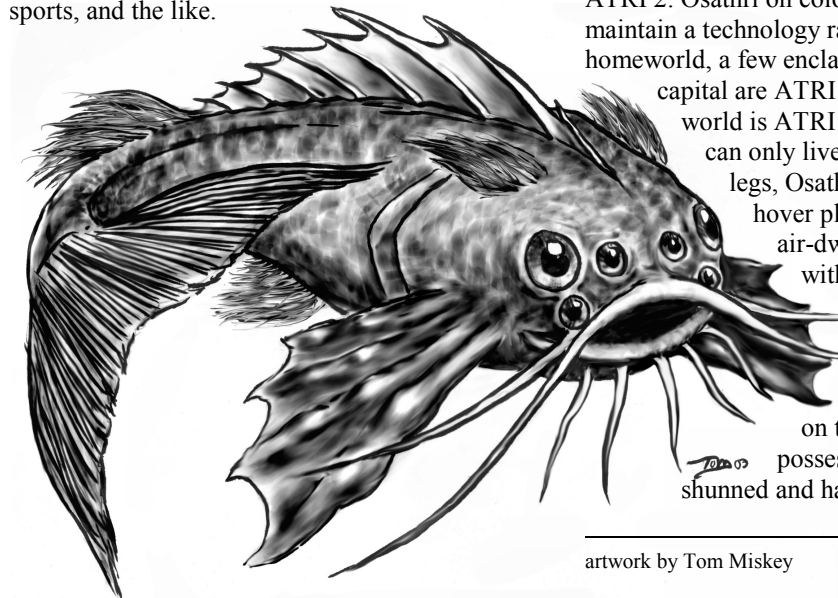
artwork by Tom Miskey

SHISEKI

An unusual crab-like species conquered by the Ackálians in the twenty-sixth century, the Shiseki have proven invaluable to their masters as traders and even soldiers.

Shiseki Biology

Individual Shisheki look, to Humans, something like giant spiders or crabs, with long spindly legs supporting a compact body. Specific "castes" are biologically specialized for different tasks – warriors have large fighting pincers, breeders have immense bodies, and workers have manipulator hands.

The Shiseki are a hive species. They communicate among via what might be considered a natural form of radio (they use translator devices to talk to other species). Over time, the network of individual minds gradually evolved into sentient "meta-minds," each "mind" defining a single hive. The hives, in turn, "link" together to form one overall Shiseki group mind.

A Shisheki hive is a sentient being, but the members of the hive are barely smarter than cats. The more Shisheki are linked together, the smarter they get – a group of 100 has INT 3, 200 have INT 4, and so on up to INT 12 when a thousand are connected. In hives larger than 1,000 individuals, the whole community does not link together at once, except on special occasions.

Sekra, The Shiseki Homeworld

Located in the rimward region of Ackálian space, Sekra is an Earthlike planet of stark beauty – towering mountains, wide tundras, deep forests – and a biosphere carefully controlled and farmed by the Shiseki. It has nine small continents, three of which have isthmuses linking them together. Commerce between the various continents and islands has made the Shiseki skilled mariners.

Sekra is the economic and industrial heart of the Ackálian Empire. Ten billion Shisheki work tirelessly in the planet's factories and farms, serving the Ackálians. Careful management has prevented any severe environmental damage, but with the Ackálians constantly pushing for more production and bigger projects, the Shiseki may soon have to start "cutting corners."

Shiseki Society And Culture

The Shisheki are the economic mainstay of the Ackálian Empire for two reasons. First, their hive mind makes it easy for them to establish smoothly-functioning planetary trade networks and bureaucracies. The Ackálians have transported groups of Shiseki to many of the planets in their Empire to improve the efficiency of the government and the economy. Second, they're hard workers who don't seem to object to being pushed around by their Ackálian masters – to a hive being, "freedom" is a difficult concept to understand – so they end up performing a lot of jobs the Ackálians don't want to do themselves.

Shisheki hives are potentially immortal, even though the lifespan of individuals is less than 30 years. Some of the bigger hives, already hundreds or thousands of years old, make plans for very long terms – centuries or millennia. A hive's actions sometimes seem strange, or even counter-productive, but what other species can't see is the long-range goal the hive is working toward.

Thanks to their hive minds, the Shiseki have a much higher degree of societal unity than most species. They "talk" out and resolve serious differences as soon as possible, to keep from disrupting the orderly conduct of society. There's a lot of pressure to conform to "group opinion," which sometimes squelches originality, free thinking, and innovation. As a result, despite the age of their society, by themselves they only achieved an ATRI 8 level of technology. (Since their conquest they have improved to ATRI 10.)

At present, the Shiseki seem content to serve as labor for the Ackálians; in exchange the Ackálians have planted Shisheki colonies on several worlds in their empire. If the hives ever decide the Ackálians are no longer useful to the Shisheki, the consequences could be astounding.
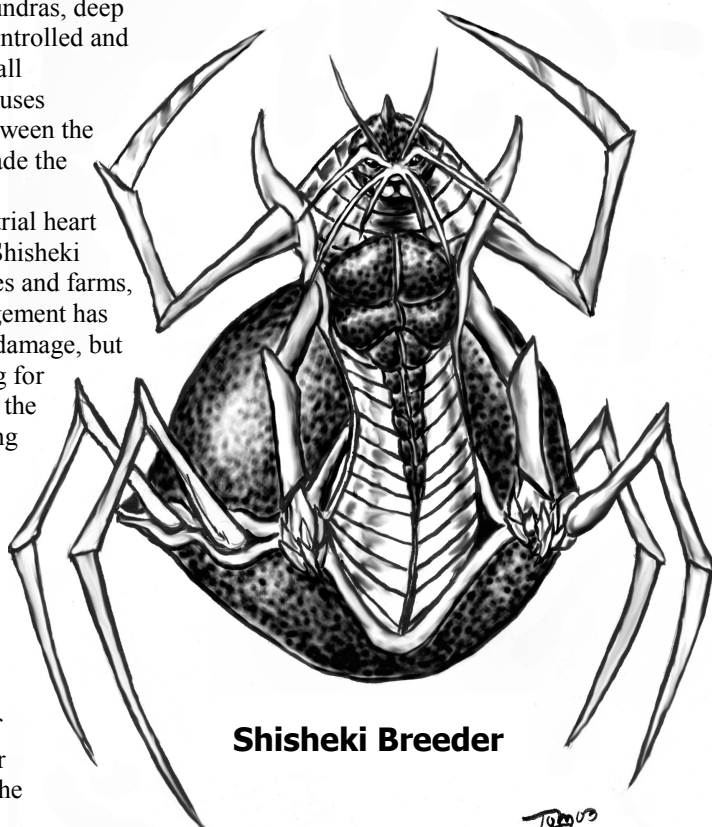
Shisheki Breeder

Shisheki Worker

Shisheki Warrior

SHISEKI PACKAGE DEAL

Ability	Cost
Shiseki Body Structure: Extra Limbs (4 – total of four arms, four legs), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	5
Shiseki Skin: Armor (1 PD/1 ED)	3
Shiseki Communication: Mind Link, any willing group of up to 1,000 individuals; Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1), Affected As Radio Group, Not Mental Group (-¼)	29
Shiseki Communication: +10 INT; Dependent On Mind Link (see text; -½)	7
Wakefulness: Life Support (Diminished Sleep: only needs to sleep 8 hours per week)	1

Disadvantages	Value
-8 INT	-8
-4 EGO	-8
-2 PRE	-2
-2 DEX	-6
Psychological Limitation: Loyalty To The Hive (Very Common, Strong)	-20

Total Cost Of Package: 1

CASTE ADDITIONS

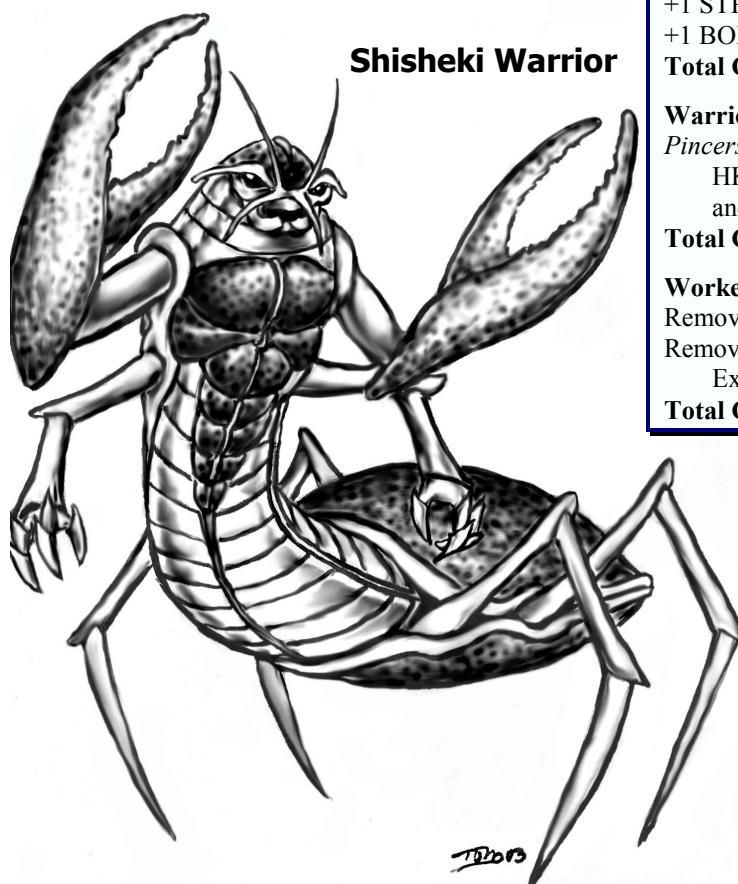| Breeder Caste	Value
+1 STR	1
+1 BODY	2

Total Cost Of Package: 4

Warrior Caste	Value
Pincers: Multipower with two slots, HKA 1d6 (up to 2d6 with STR) and +15 STR, Only To Grab (-1)	17

Total Cost Of Package: 18

Worker Caste	Value
Remove penalty to DEX	6
Remove *Limited Manipulation* on Extra Limbs	1

Total Cost Of Package: 8

JARUMA

One of the most unusual-looking known species, the Jaruma have belonged to the Conjoined Civilizations since first contact with the Se'ecra.

Jaruma Biology

Powerfully-built creatures, the Jaruma (the name is both singular and plural) have an unusual body chemistry involving fluorosilicone compounds. They come from a high-temperature Venusian world and breathe a mix of carbon dioxide and fluorine which is deadly to most other species (and which requires them to use special breathing gear when they need to interact with other species). They stand more than two meters tall on three stumpy legs. They have three arms, each of which ends in a mouth/hand surrounded by three eyes.

Umara, The Jaruma Homeworld

Umara is a Type 8 world (on the Terran scale) with a high atmospheric density and high temperatures. Few species can survive there without protective gear. One of the reasons for the Jaruma's importance in the Conjoined Civilizations is that they've been able to spread out and colonize many similar planets that other species have little or no use for. They prefer to establish colonies in star systems with other inhabited planets so they can develop a robust intra-system economy quickly.

Jaruma Society And Culture

The Jaruma evolved on a world where life is often harsh, and creatures that survive must be tough and clever. Lacking natural weaponry, they used their intelligence to create weapons and band together in *ku'la* ("tribes") to hunt and defend themselves. After they advanced to a stage of development where predators were no longer a significant threat, they spread out and established kingdoms and city-states based on tribal alliances and rivalries. These gave way to true nations in time, though not without numerous wars, rebellions, and other conflicts (much as on Earth). The Jaruma united in the twenty-second century under an immensely charismatic political leader named Damgu Wa'neet, and have remained that way ever since, though periodically some sentiment arises for a return to balkanization.

Family and clan influence remains strong in Jaruma society. Most Jaruma give their loyalty to their large extended families first, their clans second, their careers (usually in clan-owned businesses) third, and to Jaruma society as a whole fourth. The Jaruma educational and apprenticeship system, used to train the young, is widely admired for its high degree of success and efficiency.

The Jaruma had developed a fairly advanced technology on their own (ATRI 7), but never had any interest in space exploration or interstellar travel until they were contacted by the Se'ecra – in fact, thanks to the nigh-perpetual cloud cover over all of Umara, they had almost no astronomical knowledge at all. On the other hand, their geological, biological, and mathematical sciences were well-developed; they're well-known even today for their skills in the fields of prospecting, mining, and genetic engineering.

JARUMA PACKAGE DEAL	
Ability	**Cost**
+3 STR	3
+3 CON	6
Jaruma Toughness: Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)	1
Jaruma Toughness: Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Heat)	3
Jaruma Body Structure: Extra Limbs (2 – one extra arm and leg), Inherent (+¼)	6
Three Sets Of Eyes: Increased Arc Of Perception (360°) for Sight Group)	10
Disadvantages	**Value**
None	
Total Cost Of Package: 29	

AZ'ARC'A

The Az'arc'a (the apostrophes represent ultrasonic vowels Humans cannot perceive or pronounce) are a species of energy beings, composed of ions bound by electric fields. They are native to the radiation belt surrounding a gas giant world in the Galactic core, but have spread to similar environments all through the central parts of the Galaxy.

Az'arc'a Biology

To a solid being, an Az'arc'a appears as a spherical or circular mass of pulsing rings and/or loops of plasma occupying a volume about 10 meters across. Some have a symmetrical appearance; some are asymmetrical collections of energy pulses, some seem to change appearance at will. They communciate by radio, light pulses, or inducing vibrations in metal structures to create sound.

Reproduction among Az'arc'a is asexual; individuals rich in energy divide into two offpsring, each with the parent's memories. Over time the older memories fade, but most Az'arc'a can recall things that happened millennia ago. Individuals who spend long periods traveling at lightspeed may have even older memories.

Az'arc'a Society And Culture

Az'arc'a cannot live on planets, but can interact with material beings in spaceships or stations. They can move through normal space at velocities up to the speed of light. Since they have limited ability to manipulate physical objects, they have no technology to speak of, but their knowledge of mathematics, physics, astrophysics, and cosmology is profound.

Material beings dealing with Az'arc'a can only trade in energy and information. The things Az'arc'a find interesting are mysterious – some of them love to hear music (via radio), others collect mathematical theorems, codes, detective stories, or new prime numbers. In exchange they give out knowledge of their own, typically physics data, astrogational information, or Galactic history.

AZ'ARC'A PACKAGE DEAL	
Ability	**Cost**
Default environment is zero gravity	0
+5 INT	5
+8 REC	16
Az'arc'a Absorption: Absorption 6d6 (energy, to END)	30
Az'arc'a Form: Desolidification (affected by energy attacks), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½), Inherent (+¼); Always On (-½), Cannot Pass Through Metals (-½)	45
Az'arc'a Senses: HRRP (Radio Group)	12
Az'arc'a Senses: Radar (Radio Group), Increased Arc Of Perception (360°), Discriminatory,	25
Az'arc'a Movement (Space): FTL Travel (1 LY/year)	10
Az'arc'a Movement (Normal): Flight 10"	20
Az'arc'a Energy Projection: Multipower, 60-point reserve	60
1) Energy Blast 4d6, Affects Physical World (+2)	6
2) Sight Group Flash 4d6, Affects Physical World (+2)	6
3) Radio Group Flash 4d6, Affects Physical World (+2)	6
4) Telekinesis (10 STR), Affects Physical World (+2)	4
Az'arc'a Form: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Longevity: Immortality; Safe Environments: High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/ Vacuum; Diminished Eating: no nead to eat)	26
Disadvantages	**Value**
-10 STR	-10
Physical Limitation: no Hearing Group or Touch Group Senses (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)	-15
Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Electrical Attacks (Common)	-20
Total Cost Of Package: 226	

15

THE VARANYI

Here is more information about the Varanyi, which I had to cut for space reasons.

Varanyi Architecture

Similarly, the prevalence of telekinetic powers among crested Varanyi has affected their society. Humans, who must pick up things with their hands, have to store objects relatively close to the ground. The Varanyi, however, can erect shelves dozens of feet tall and experience no difficulty reaching the stored items. They favor enormously tall buildings, since they use telekinetically activated "elevators" to reach the higher floors.

T'illk

Two important divisions exist within Varanyi society. The first is "caste," or division based on crests. The more crests a Varanyi has, the higher his *t'illk*. *T'illk* combines some of the meaning of the human terms "mental serenity," "class," "status," and "face." Due to their mental powers, the Varanyi are easily able to judge another Varanyi's state of mind, psychological "balance," mental acuity, and mental power, and all of these factors, as well as the more concrete ones such as "status," are implicit in the term.

T'illk marks a clear division between social strata, but a Varanyi can "lose" it if he does something particularly embarrassing or detrimental to society. Still, it is very, very rare for a Varanyi to lose so much *t'illk* that he falls to a social level below the one dictated by his caste. The *Ks'lch*, who have no crests and hence no *t'illk* whatsoever, may act as they please without suffering further social opprobrium, which offers them a measure of social freedom crested Varanyi sometimes envy.

A Varanyi's position in society, job, and opportunity for significant achievement generally depend on his crests and *t'illk* (a Fringe Benefit reflects this; Varanyi whose accomplishments have earned them unusually hi *t'illk* can represent this by paying more points for the Fringe Benefit, or buying a *Reputation* Perk). The lowest, dirtiest, most menial and dangerous tasks are reserved for the *Ks'lch*. Varanyi of one or two crests occupy mid-level positions. Varanyi of three or more crests hold the highest positions in society, though it is possible for a lesser crested Varanyi to earn sufficient *t'illk* (through valor in warfare, notable scientific discoveries, and similar accomplishments) to obtain a position normally reserved for Varanyi of more crests. The *Ks'lch* have no such opportunities for advancement; they are forever trapped in their caste.

Non-Varanyi subjects of the Empire have no *t'illk* whatsoever; they're even lower on the social ladder than *Ks'lch*. The Varanyi rarely allow them to travel within the Empire, and never outside it; the best they can hope for is a mercifully short life of backbreaking slave labor. Many species are simply exterminated because the Varanyi find it more trouble to guard them than to eradicate them.

Ey'vidra

The second important division in Varanyi society is the *ey'vidra*, or "clan." Family ties are very important to the Varanyi, and the clans form one of the backbones of Varanyi society; a Varanyi's clan name is written first, before his given name. As a result, nepotism runs rampant, and large clans or alliances of clans wield significant social and political power. The Varanyi have a total of 357 Varanyi clans – one for the entirety of the *Ks'lch*, and 356 for the crested Varanyi. It is generally accepted that male Varanyi may marry females who are beneath them in number of crests, but females only marry males who have as many or more crests as they do (in any event, no crested Varanyi would *ever* marry a *Ks'lch*.)

Each crested Varanyi clan has its own unique "coat of arms" (*nuva'lish*); most are centuries old. By tradition a coat of arms is divided into from one to five "fields," depending upon the number of crests possessed by clan members (thus, only the Al'gari have a five-field coat of arms). The fields may be horizontal or vertical; the basic shape of the heraldic device is rectangular.

Chapter Five

Here are two Imperial Package Deals I had to cut to save space:

IMPERIAL PSIONICS FOUNDATION SEEKER

Employees of the Imperial Psionics Foundation who specialize in locating young psionics and bringing them to the IPF for training are known as "seekers." Equipped with psionic powers, abilities and special sensors to help them locate and evaluate people with psi potential, and broad police powers relating to this one subject, they ensure that people blessed with the gift of psionics use that gift for the betterment of Imperial society.

IPF SEEKER PACKAGE DEAL	
Ability	**Cost**
Analyze Psi Powers	3
KS: The Psionic World 11-	2
Power: Psionics	3
PS: Psionics Instructor 11-	2
SS: Psionics 11-	2
WF: one type of energy weapon (player's choice)	1
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bribery, Bugging, Computer Programming, Persuasion, Seduction, Shadowing, Streetwise, any Background Skill	6
Fringe Benefit: Psionics License	1
Fringe Benefit: Psionic Police Powers	3
20 points' worth of psionic powers	20
Disadvantages	**Value**
Hunted: Mind Police 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)	-15
Social Limitation: Minority (Very Frequently, Minor)	-15
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20
Total Cost Of Package: -13	

TERRAN INTELLIGENCE COMMAND (ANALYST)

TIC analysts study information brought back from the field by other agents. They rarely go on missions themselves, but on those rare occasions the operation has a vital importance for the Empire.

Other civilizations have analysts of their own, as do services like the TSS, military intelligence, and the Mind Police. You can easily use this same Package Deal for them with few or no adjustments.

TIC ANALYST PACKAGE DEAL	
Ability	**Cost**
Computer Programming	3
Deduction	3
KS: Alien Civilization (player's choice) 11-	2
KS: The Espionage World 11-	2
Language (one alien language, fluent conversation)	3
6 points' worth of Skills from the following list: Bugging, Conversation, Cryptography, Interrogation, Persuasion, Shadowing, Streetwise, any Background Skill	6
Computer Link: TIC Database	9
Fringe Benefit: Security Clearance	3
Disadvantages	**Value**
Hunted: TSS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)	-10
Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)	-20
Total Cost Of Package: 1	

PAGE 129 – PSIONICS

I had to cut the entire section of sample psionic powers. Here they are:

ESP POWERS

Extra-Sensory Perception includes all the various forms of Clairsentience and Detect. Gamemasters may wish to include the Talents *Absolute Range Sense, Combat Sense,* and *Danger Sense* as ESP abilities. A character could define Luck as a form of unconscious precognition that lets him avoid bad things.

Dowsing

One of the oldest and most common psi abilities, dowsing allows a character to sense water (and sometimes other substances) deep underground. The IPF suspects the existence of a great many unconscious dowsers in the Empire who don't know they have this power... and who might have the potential for other psi abilities.

Beta I: Detect Underground Water (INT Roll) (Mental Sense Group) (3 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½). Total cost: 2 points.

Beta II: Detect Underground Liquids (INT Roll) (Mental Sense Group), Discriminatory (10 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½). Total cost: 7 points.

Gamma: Detect Underground Substances (INT Roll) (Mental Sense Group), Discriminatory (15 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½). Total cost: 10 points.

Finding

Finders can locate objects with a connection to a certain individual. They must "attune" themselves to the person, and then can locate missing or stolen items which still carry that person's "psychic signature." They often work in law enforcement or investigation.

Beta I: Detect Stolen Items (INT Roll) (Mental Sense Group) (5 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½), Can Only Detect A Single, Attuned, Person's Items At A Time (-½). Total cost: 2 points.

Beta II: Detect Stolen Items (INT Roll) (Mental Sense Group), Discriminatory (10 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½), Can Only Detect A Single, Attuned, Person's Items At A Time (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

Foresight

The IPF has only scientifically verified the existence of Foresight, a disturbing and unreliable power that provides glimpses of future events, among Humans in the past few decades. Highly sought after by the military, law enforcement, rescue services, and businesses, Foreseers cannot prevent future events (at least, none has so far), though they can alert the authorities in time to mitigate the effects of disasters or harmful conduct.

Epsilon: Precognitive Clairsentience (Sight Group) (40 Active Points); No Conscious Control (-2), Precognition Only (-1), Vague And Unclear (-½). Total cost: 9 points.

Zeta: Precognitive Clairsentience (Sight Group), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (60 Active Points); No Conscious Control (-2), Precognition Only (-1), Vague And Unclear (-½). Total cost: 13 points.

Psychic Diagnosis

Another "folk power" proved real in the modern age, Psychic Diagnosis allows a psi to determine what illness(es) a person has. Of course, unless the psi has some medical training, he may not have the ability to express what he detects in terms a doctor would find useful. For this reason, the IPF tries to steer psis with this ability into the medical professions.

Despite numerous reports of psis with the ability to heal diseases or injuries, neither the IFP nor any other agency or organization known to it has ever verified the existence of such a psi power.

Gamma: Detect Disease (INT Roll) (Mental Group), Discriminatory, Sense (17 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Requires An SS: Medicine Roll (-¼). Total cost: 5 points.

Delta I: Detect Disease (INT Roll) (Mental Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Sense (22 Active Points); Activation Roll 14- (-½), Costs Endurance (-½), Requires An SS: Medicine Roll (-¼). Total cost: 10 points.

Delta II: Detect Disease (INT Roll +2) (Mental Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Sense (24 Active Points); Requires An SS: Medicine Roll (-¼). Total cost: 19 points.

Remote Viewing

The most basic ESP power, Remote Viewing allows a psi to see events happening elsewhere. It usually requires quiet and intense concentration. Terran sensor technology reduces the need for this ability, but Viewers still find themselves in demand in some quarters (including in elite military forces who want an "edge" sensor tech cannot provide). The Imperial Navy uses Theta-class Viewers (those with "cosmic visualization," in military parlance) to spy on enemy fleet movements.

Gamma: Clairsentience (Sight Group) (20 Active Points); Attack Roll Required (-¼), Blackout (-½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute to activate; -3/4). Total cost: 6 points.

Epsilon: Clairsentience (Sight Group), Megascale (1" = 100 km; +3/4), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (40 Active Points); Attack Roll Required (-¼), Blackout (-½), Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Extra Time (1 Minute to activate; -3/4). Total cost: 13 points.

Zeta: Clairsentience (Sight Group), Megascale (1" = 100 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (50 Active Points); Attack Roll Required (-¼), Blackout (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute to activate; -3/4). Total cost: 20 points.

Theta ("Cosmic Visualization"): Clairsentience (Sight Group), Megascale (1" = 10 light-years, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +4) (80 Active Points); Attack Roll Required (-¼), Blackout (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute to activate; -3/4). Total cost: 32 points.

TELEPATHY POWERS

Telepathic abilities involve most forms of Mind Scan, Mind Link, Telepathy, and Mental Transform. Psionic forms of Universal Translator qualify as a Telepathic power, and some forms of Danger Sense could have telepathic roots (the character unconsciously picks up hostile intentions).

Empathy

This basic telepathic power allows a psi to communicate with others empathically, both reading their emotions and projecting his own emotions into their minds. The IPF suspects the existence of many unidentified Beta-grade empaths in the Human population.

Beta: Telepathy 2d6 (10 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Empathy (-½), Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Reduced By Range (-¼). Total cost: 4 points.

Gamma: Telepathy 4d6 (20 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Empathy (-½), Reduced By Range (-¼). Total cost: 10 points.

Delta: Telepathy 6d6 (30 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Empathy (-½), Reduced By Range (-¼). Total cost: 15 points.

Mindseeking

A talent especially valued by the ISP and the Mind Police, Mindseeking allows a telepath to "scan" a defined area for a specific mind. The smaller the area, and the more the psi knows about the victim, the greater his chances of success. Psis also find it easier to search for other psionic minds (+1 to the ECV Attack Roll).

In the Terran Empire setting, this power works throughout a single star system. Telepaths who want to Mindseek in systems other than the one they currently occupy should apply the *MegaScale* Advantage.

Epsilon: Mind Scan 8d6 (40 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½). Total cost: 20 points.

Zeta: Mind Scan 12d6 (60 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½). Total cost: 30 points.

Theta: Mind Scan 16d6 (80 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½). Total cost: 40 points.

Mind Shield

A psi with this common ability can resist psychic assaults and mental intruders. Some telepaths can even use "psionic jamming," the ability to protect others against similar attacks (in game terms, they apply the *Usable By Others* Advantage).

Beta I: Mental Defense (10 points + base points from EGO) (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Beta II: Mental Defense (10 points + base points from EGO). Total cost: 10 points.

Gamma: Mental Defense (20 points + base points from EGO). Total cost: 20 points.

Thought Speech

This low-powered form of telepathy provides a convenient means of communication. The Imperial Army sometimes recruits Thoughtspeakers (especially those with Mindseeking) to provide hard-to-intercept communication channels.

Gamma: Telepathy 4d6 (20 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½). Total cost: 10 points.

Delta I: Telepathy 4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (25 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Concentration (½ DCV; -¼). Total cost: 17 points.

Delta II: Telepathy 4d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (30 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼). Total cost: 24 points.

Telepathy

The standard form of telepathic psionics, telepathy provides a psi with the ability to read another person's thoughts (even against his will) or project his thoughts into another mind. Characters with this power often learn other applications like Deep Probe or Puppeteering.

Many psis have telepathy that doesn't always work properly. You can simulate this by applying the *Activation Roll* Limitation.

Delta: Telepathy 6d6 (30 Active Points); *Concentration* (½ DCV; -¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½). Total cost: 17 points.

Epsilon: Telepathy 8d6 (40 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼). Total cost: 32 points.

Strong: Telepathy 10d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (62 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼). Total cost: 50 points.

Telepathic Deep Probe

Psis who have telepathy can sometimes take extra time and effort to reach even more deeply into someone's mind to root out hidden memories or subconscious desires. Deep Probe ("DP") specialists generally work for intelligence or law-enforcement agencies.

Zeta: Telepathy 10d6 (50 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

Eta I: Telepathy 10d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (62 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (Active Point penalty -1 per 20 points; -¼). Total cost: 15 points.

Eta II: Telepathy 10d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (75 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (Active Point penalty -1 per 20 points; -¼). Total cost: 19 points.

Telepathic Link

Another common telepathic power, "TL" (as psis usually refer to it) allows one person to easily maintain telepathic contact with one or more people (even over interstellar distances). In the headquarters of the Mind Police much of the conversation takes place over telepathic links to foil surveillance by other security agencies.

Some psis can only establish and maintain a Mind Link with other psis who have this power; they apply the *Only With Others Who Have Mind Link* Limitation. Some require LOS to establish a Link; they remove the *No LOS Needed* Adder.

Gamma: Mind Link, one specific mind, No LOS Needed (works over interstellar distances, to a maximum range of about 5,000 light-years) (15 Active Points); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -¼), Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Delta: Mind Link, with up to any 8 individuals, No LOS Needed (works over interstellar distances, to a maximum range of about 5,000 light-years) (30 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 20 points.

Epsilon: Mind Link, with up to any 32 individuals, No LOS Needed (works over interstellar distances, to a maximum range of about 5,000 light-years) (40 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½). Total cost: 27 points.

Telepathic Assault

Also known as a "Telepathic Shriek," this ability simply allows a telepath to assault another mind with a burst of psionic energy. Psis usually discover they have this power by accident during a crisis situation.

Some psis can Shriek so powerfully they affect all the minds around them. You can buy this by applying the Advantages *Explosion* and *Personal Immunity* and the Limitation *No Range*.

Delta: Ego Attack 3d6 (30 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Range (10"; -¼). Total cost: 20 points.

Epsilon: Ego Attack 4d6 (40 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Range (15"; -¼). Total cost: 27 points.

Zeta I: Ego Attack 6d6 (60 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Range (20"; -¼). Total cost: 40 points.

Zeta II: Ego Attack 5d6 (50 Active Points); Limited Range (20"; -¼). Total cost: 40 points.

Puppeteering

The IPF refers to telepaths who can actually control a subject's mind as "puppeteers." Just about everyone, even most Mind Police officers, thinks they're scary. The Mind Police and Psionics Foundation do their best to identify all puppeteers and keep them in structured settings where officials can monitor them and ensure they only use their powers for the greater good of the Empire.

Zeta: Mind Control 8d6, Telepathic (+¼) (50 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (-½). Total cost: 15 points.

Eta: Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (75 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Reduced By Range (-¼), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (Active Point penalty -1 per 20 points; -¼). Total cost: 30 points.

Theta: Mind Control 12d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (90 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Requires A Power: Psionics Roll (Active Point penalty -1 per 20 points; -¼). Total cost: 51 points.

TELEKINESIS POWERS

Telekinetic powers occur less frequently in Humans than ESP or Telepathy, and usually at lower levels of power as well. Most telekinetics tend to have only telekinetic abilities; psis who have both telekinetic and ESP or Telepathy powers are rare... and valuable to many organizations.

Standard Telekinesis

Most telekinetic psis in the Terran Empire have this ability, and other half of them have it as their only telekinetic ability. Telekinetics with highly-developed "TK" powers often buy Powers as "tricks" reflecting their skill at psychokinetic manipulation, such as RKA (strangulation, squeezing someone's heart) or Sight Group Flash (holding eyelids shut).

Beta: Telekinesis (4 STR), Invisible To Sight Group (+½) (9 Active Points); Limited Range (12"; -¼). Total cost: 7 points.

Delta: Telekinesis (6 STR), Fine Manipulation, Invisible To Sight Group (+½) (28 Active Points); Limited Range (18"; -¼). Total cost: 22 points.

Zeta: Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation, Invisible To Sight Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) (44 Active Points); Limited Range (30"; -¼). Total cost: 35 points.

Eta: Telekinesis (18 STR), Fine Manipulation, Invisible To Sight Group (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼) (65 Active Points); Limited Range (54"; -¼). Total cost: 52 points.

Telekinetic Deflection

A common application of basic telekinesis, this power allows the telekinetic to protect himself or others against missiles he can see, but not bullets or energy beams.

Gamma II: Missile Deflection (non-gunpowder projectiles), Ranged (adjacent hexes, +½) (15 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Will Not Work Against Heavy Missiles (-¼). Total cost: 9 points.

Gamma II: Missile Deflection (non-gunpowder projectiles), Ranged (+1) (20 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Will Not Work Against Heavy Missiles (-¼). Total cost: 11 points.

Your Horoscope For: Aries by Allen Thomas

[Aries] is the first sign of the Zodiac situated in the thirty degrees immediately following the vernal equinox. Nature wakes from the torpor of Winter and this sign symbolizes first and foremost the thrust of Spring and hence impetus, virility (it is the chief sign of Mars), energy, independence and courage.

— *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (Tr. John Buchanan-Brown)

This installment of *Your Horoscope For:* details an orbital habitat: a near-future space station orbiting 500 kilometers above the surface of the planet, Mars.

At some point in the not-too-distant future, mankind will begin to explore – to witness firsthand, and not through intermediaries such as unmanned probes – the other planets of our solar system, and Mars is a likely starting point. Whatever the details of such an endeavor, it will involve bold and ambitious plans, which, to be successful, will require the participation of courageous men and women. Or, in the symbolic terms of the zodiac, plans outlined by Arians and carried out by Arians!

SPACE STATION ARIES

Circa 2100 AD, mankind makes an important step in exploring the solar system, and places a space station in Mars' orbit. The space station is intended to be a permanent habitat with a maximum occupancy of forty people – although, initially, its crew numbers only eleven.

The construction of Aries was the work of nearly a decade. A fleet of ten space shuttles cycled between Earth and Mars to transport materials. Thirty personnel resided in stations similar to the 20th Century's MIR station. Upon completion of Aries, the smaller stations were sent crashing to Mars's surface to prevent potential "mid-space" collisions with Aries.

The primary mission of Aries is simply to prove it possible for humans to reside far from their terrestrial home, in an environment hostile to life. While the technology of the time does not allow the station to be entirely self-sufficient – water and manufactured parts, at the very least, must be supplied from terrestrial sources – Aries personnel can survive, barring catastrophic events, upwards of four years without terrestrial contact.

Once the primary mission is proven successful, the Aries station will then serve as a launching point for both the colonization of Mars' surface and the exploration of the outer planets.

artwork by Brad Parnell
cartography by Lisa Hartjes
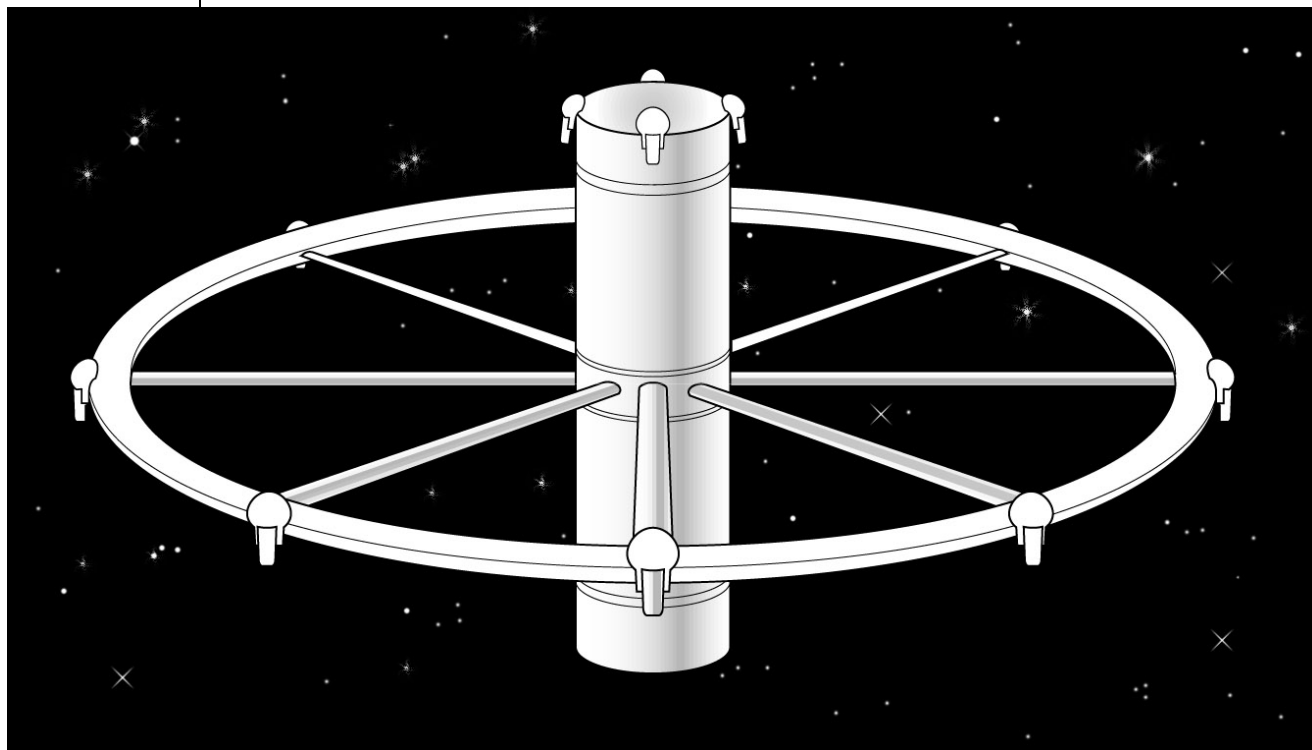
Aries

Description: Aries is basically comprised of two distinct parts: a torus, which contains living quarters and workspace for the crew, and a cylinder, called the axis. Eight "spokes" link the torus to the axis. To create gravity, the torus rotates about the axis; the axis itself is stationary.

Design Notes: To calculate the Size Characteristic, the volume of the axis and the surface area of the torus cross-section along its center were used. The volume of the axis is approximately 7854 cubic hexes. As per the rules on page 209 of *Star Hero,* this is equivalent to a Base with an area of 7854 hexes. The area of the torus cross-section is approximately 1571 hexes. (The surface created by the cross-section is essentially a two-dimensional ring with a constant width of 5".) The sum of the two is 9425 hexes, yielding, a Size Characteristic costing 32 points.

Aries has a total of four Solar Panels. Two Solar Panels provide adequate power to maintain normal conditions and operations aboard the station. With only one Solar Panel, vital systems can continue to operate, but no more than that.

Eight thrusters are located equidistant around the outside edge of the torus, and function primarily to maintain spin velocity. Four equidistant thrusters are located around the top of the axis, and function primarily to eliminate any "wobble" caused by the rotation of the torus, or movement of the station. The thrusters can also serve to move the space station to a different orbit. While Aries can descend into Mars' atmosphere, the thrusters cannot hold the station aloft once it enters a macrogravity environment. The Thrusters can rotate to change the direction of thrust. Spinning would only be stopped in a dire emergency, and damage inside the torus is likely to be extensive.

The outside hull of the space station is studded with multiple camera units, which together comprise the External Camera System. Despite the rotation of the torus, the cameras can fix on a single point, and relay the image to an internal monitor without a break in continuity. Basically, the cameras are automated, so that one camera shifts to the next as the torus rotates, keeping the desired image in view.

The END cost of the Greenhouses is based on the need for lighting to enable photosynthesis, as well as the cycling system which provides atmosphere for the entire torus.

Climate Control, Greenhouses, and Artificial Gravity do not extend to the axis of the space station; the axis is zero gravity and lacks an atmosphere.

SPINNING AND ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY

Studies have shown that some sort of artificial gravity is necessary for healthy, long-term life in a microgravity environment. Detrimental effects of life without gravity include (but aren't limited to): cardiovascular changes, muscle atrophy, bone damage, and changes in posture and stature. Additionally, any sort of physical activity is more easily accomplished in an Earth-normal environment. For these reasons, the simulation of gravity was considered all-important to the success of Aries' primary mission.

To simulate gravity, the torus of Aries rotates clockwise about the axis at the rate of one revolution per minute (for illustration, this is the same direction and speed as the seconds hand of a clock or wristwatch). While the gravity inside the torus approximates 1 G, the rotation produces additional effects.

Rotation of the torus creates two vectors of force. One vector moves directly away from the center; this vector simulates gravity. The second vector, tangent to the rotation, moves in the direction of the rotation (prograde), and results in phenomena not experienced in Earth's gravity. For instance, a rubber ball dropped on Earth bounces straight up. The same ball dropped on Aries bounces in an arc, moving opposite the rotation of the station (retrograde).

Described in more geometric terms… Any individual's position can be described with three axes: a vertical axis which represents up-down, and two horizontal axes which represent left-right and front-back. On Earth, the vertical axis is fixed – up-down is always the same, regardless of a change in position; and the horizontal axes are not fixed – left-right and front-back can be changed simply by turning around. In zero gravity, none of the axes are fixed – each is dependent on the individual's position. On Aries, two of the three axes are fixed – the vertical axis for up-down, and the horizontal axis which represents prograde-retrograde.

Optional Rules: The artificial gravity on Aries requires time to grow accustomed to. The effects are not detrimental to health, but do interfere with coordination. Effects include: lurching when one stands up, the effort required to move retrograde is greater than that to move prograde, and motion sickness.

At the GM's option, a -2 penalty can be applied to CV and Dexterity-based Skill Rolls, until the PCs acclimate to Aries. Space station personnel have the Talent, *Environmental Movement: Artificial Gravity* (3 Character Points), to reflect their long-term habitation of Aries, and suffer no penalty.

DISTANCE FROM MARS TO EARTH

The distance between the two planets is ½ AU (Astronomical Unit), or 75 million km, and the equivalent of 32½ billion hexes. With a *Megascale (+2)* Advantage, that is equal to 7½ inches of movement.

PLOT SEEDS

♈ Space station Aries has begun to explore the possibilities of colonizing Mars. To gather data, unmanned probes have traveled to and from the surface. The scientist's last report indicated an astonishing find, with more details to come… but the details never came. What happened aboard Aries? What did they find? Was it a plague that has turned the crew into "space zombies?" Or, more realistically, bacteria that, once introduced into a habitable environment, activated and killed the plants in the station's greenhouses? Whatever the case, the PCs must journey to the station and discover what was found on the surface of the red planet.

ϒ Aries mission control reports that the space station has entered the planet's atmosphere, and crashed on the surface. How and why did this happen? Has any of the crew survived? Those are mysteries the PCs will have to solve, when mankind's first mission to Mars's surface becomes a rescue mission.

ϒ An astounding – and disturbing – event has occurred: the crew of Aries has made first contact with extraterrestrials. They have promised free-access to advanced technology, and changes that will make the Earth a paradise – and the crew is convinced – but The Powers That Be know that nothing is free. A special mission group (the PCs) is assembled and ordered to journey to the station. They are to assess the threat-level posed to Earth's status quo by the extraterrestrials, and, if possible, neutralize that threat. Will they be swayed by the promises of the extraterrestrials, or will they uncover a darker plot?

Aries

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
20	BODY	18	
160"x80"	Size	32	-14 DCV
10	DEF	21	

Movement: Flight: 3"/24"

Cost	Abilities & Equipment	END
25	*Space Station:* Location: In Space	0

Power Systems

6	*Solar Panel:* Endurance Reserve (23 END/23 REC); OAF (Immobile Breakable; -2¼), Only Powers Electrical Devices (-¼), Requires Solar Proximity (-½)	0
10	*Solar Panel:* 3 more Solar Panels (total of 4)	0

Propulsion System

28	*Thrusters:* Multipower, 42-point reserve; Only Works in Space (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (difficult to replace from sources outside the ship, 4 Years; -0)	
2m	*Repositioning Thrusters:* Flight 10", 8x Noncombat; Only Works in Space (-½), Limited Maneuverability (-¼), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (-0)	[1cc]
2m	*Artificial Gravity:* Flight 3", 8x Noncombat, Rapid Noncombat Movement (+¼); Only To Spin Torus Around Axis (-2), Only Works in Space (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (-0) **plus** Telekinesis (5 STR); Only to Pull Objects Straight Down to "Floor" (-1), Only Works in Space (-½), Linked (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (-0)	[1cc]

Operations Systems

34	*Sensor And Communication Systems:* Variable Power Pool, 30 base + 15 control cost; OIF (Bulky; -1), Only For Senses And Communications (-1), Costs Endurance (-½)	var
24	*Long-Range Sensors:* Megascale (10 million km per Active Point, can scale down to 1 km per Active Point; +2) for any Sensor Pool Sense; OIF (Bulky; -1), Lightspeed Delay (-½)	var
5	*Radio Communications System:* HRRP (Radio Group); OIF (Bulky; -1), Costs Endurance (-½)	1
7	*Long-Range Sensors:* +10 versus Range for Radio Group; OAF (high-gain antenna; -1)	0
16	*External Camera System:* Clairsentience (Sight Group); Limited Range (Perception point can be placed no further than outer edge of space station; -¼)	2

Personnel Systems

4	*Shielding:* Life Support (Safe Environments: High Radiation, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0
3	*Climate Control:* Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Cold, Intense Heat); Costs Endurance (-½)	1
7	*Greenhouses:* Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing); Costs Endurance (-½)	1
3	*Food Supplies:* Life Support (Diminished Eating: no need to eat); 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (difficult to replace from sources outside the ship; 4 Years [*i.e.,* 160 man-years]; -0)	[1cc]

Skills/Laboratories

5,5	SS: Astronomy 11-, SS: Chemistry 11-
5,5	SS: Medicine 11-, Physics 11-

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 196

Total Base Cost: 267

0+ Disadvantages

10	Physical Limitation: Cannot Enter Atmosphere (Infrequently, Greatly)

Total Disadvantage Points: 10

Total Cost: 257/5 = 51

EXAMPLE SENSOR AND COMMUNICATION CONFIGURATIONS

Magnetometer: Use of this sense can generate of topographical map of Mars' magnetic field. The PER roll is based on the operator's Systems Operation (*Star Hero,* page 201).
Detect Magnetic Fields (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Increased Arc of Perception (360 degrees), Ranged (25 Active Points). Total Cost: 25 points.

Spectroscope: This configuration is used to analyze light from celestial bodies. The PER roll is based on the operator's Systems Operation. It does not have the *Ranged* Adder, since light must travel to the Spectroscope, and if the light is somehow blocked, it cannot be detected.
Detect Light (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze (20 Active Points). Total Cost: 20 points.

High-Gain Antenna: This is used to communicate with Earth or incoming shuttles outside the range of the Radio Communications System. (Remember: The Long-Range Sensors are *Megascaled*.) There is approximately a four-minute lag when communicating with Earth.
HRRP (Radio Group) (12 Active Points) plus +10 versus Range for Radio Group (15 Active Points). Total Cost: 27 points.

Location Descriptions

The vast majority of space in Aries is dedicated to storage: food, water, rocket fuel for the thrusters, spare parts, and so on. The station has enough supplies for the crew to survive four years without terrestrial contact, although, for safety's sake, a shuttle from Earth arrives once yearly.

AXIS STATIONARY

SPIN
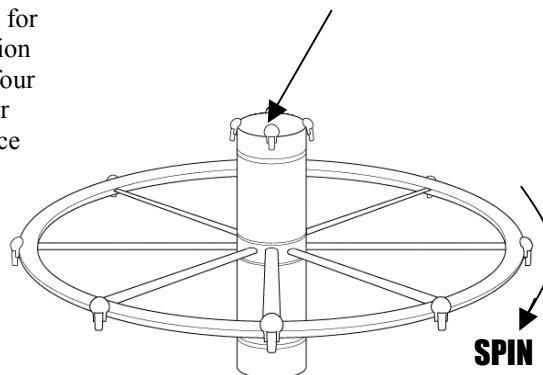
AL AIRLOCK
LQ LIVING QUARTERS
GH GREENHOUSE
SL SCIENCE LAB
BR BRIDGE
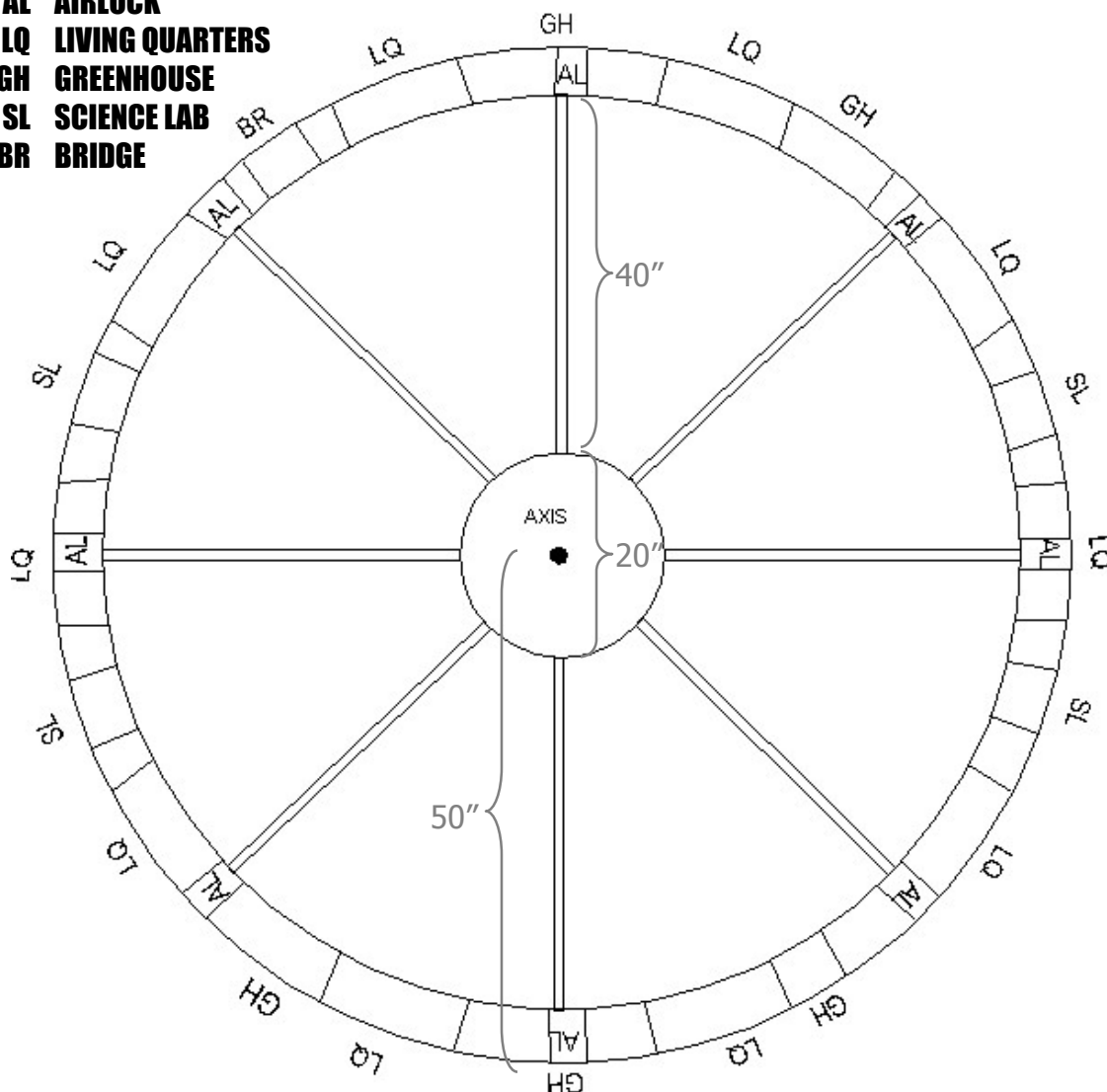
THRUSTERS

The Thrusters can rotate to change the direction of thrust. When Artificial Gravity is in effect, 14 Active Points remain the Multipower's reserve for the Repositioning Thrusters, so Aries can move 2" with a Noncombat Movement Modifier of x8 (a maximum of 48" a Turn). If the spinning is stopped for any reason, it requires 1 Turn to achieve full effect thanks to the *Rapid Noncombat Movement* Advantage. Spinning would only be stopped in a dire emergency, and damage inside the torus is likely to be extensive.

CREW OF ARIES

As stated elsewhere, eleven personnel reside on Aries. Crewmembers were chosen not just for their skills, but also their ability to get along with others. In the enclosed environment of Aries, interpersonal skills were deemed of the utmost importance. Five of these are as follows:

Colonel Jonathan Kilpatrick: Kilpatrick has been involved with the project since its inception. He had to lobby hard to gain the position of commanding officer aboard Aries, due to

his age (he is in his mid-sixties). He has been informed off-the-record once the initial phase of the Aries station is completed, he will be retired. Ever pragmatic, Kilpatrick will deal with it when it happens, and is confident he will remain in command of the station.

Lieutenant Colonel Mary Doroschuk: Doroschuk is second in command aboard Aries. She is the perfect second, but would make a poor captain. While she is excellent at interpreting and enforcing her superiors' orders, she has difficulty enforcing her own orders and tends to give subordinates too much slack.

Lieutenant Colonel Edward Brown: Chief of engineering aboard Aries, he is familiar with all operations aboard the station and can substitute as a pilot in a pinch. His main fault is that he often fails to explain a problem in detail, instead answering "I'll fix it." Even if pressed for details, he tends to answer, "Too long to explain. Quicker if I just fix it." Though he has always "fixed it" in the past, it could become an issue in an unusual or extraordinary crisis.

TORUS

While in the torus of the station, down is directly way from the center – in other words, when standing upright, one's head points toward the axis.

The single, most unusual feature of the design of the torus is the hallway. A single hallway inside the torus connects all the rooms. The curvature of the hallway, as it curves around the torus, is noticeable, and while traveling the hallway, one seems to walk up a gradual slope. However, all of the rooms have level floors, to more closely replicate a normal Earth environment.

Because of the curvature, visibility is reduced. Assuming a character is 6-foot tall, he can see 18" until the ceiling cuts off his view. If prone, he can see 24".

LIVING QUARTERS
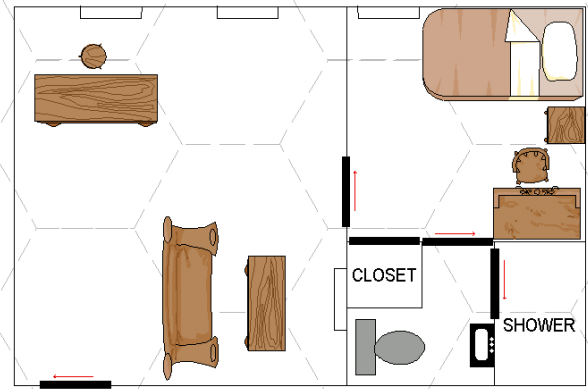
DOOR (ARROW IS DIRECTION DOOR SLIDES OPEN)

Living Quarters: Privacy was deemed essential to the psychological well-being of station personnel, and each person on Aries has his own living quarters, for a total of forty. Living quarters are divided in ten blocks of four, and spaced evenly around the inside of the torus. The quarters are divided into two rooms: living room/office and bedroom. Flat-screen monitors are hung on the far wall of the room, and are designed to resemble windows. A selection of landscapes and scenes are available for display on these monitors.

(Prograde)

Spin

(Retrograde)

Up (Toward Axis)

| Room | Door | Hallway |

Down (Away from Axis)
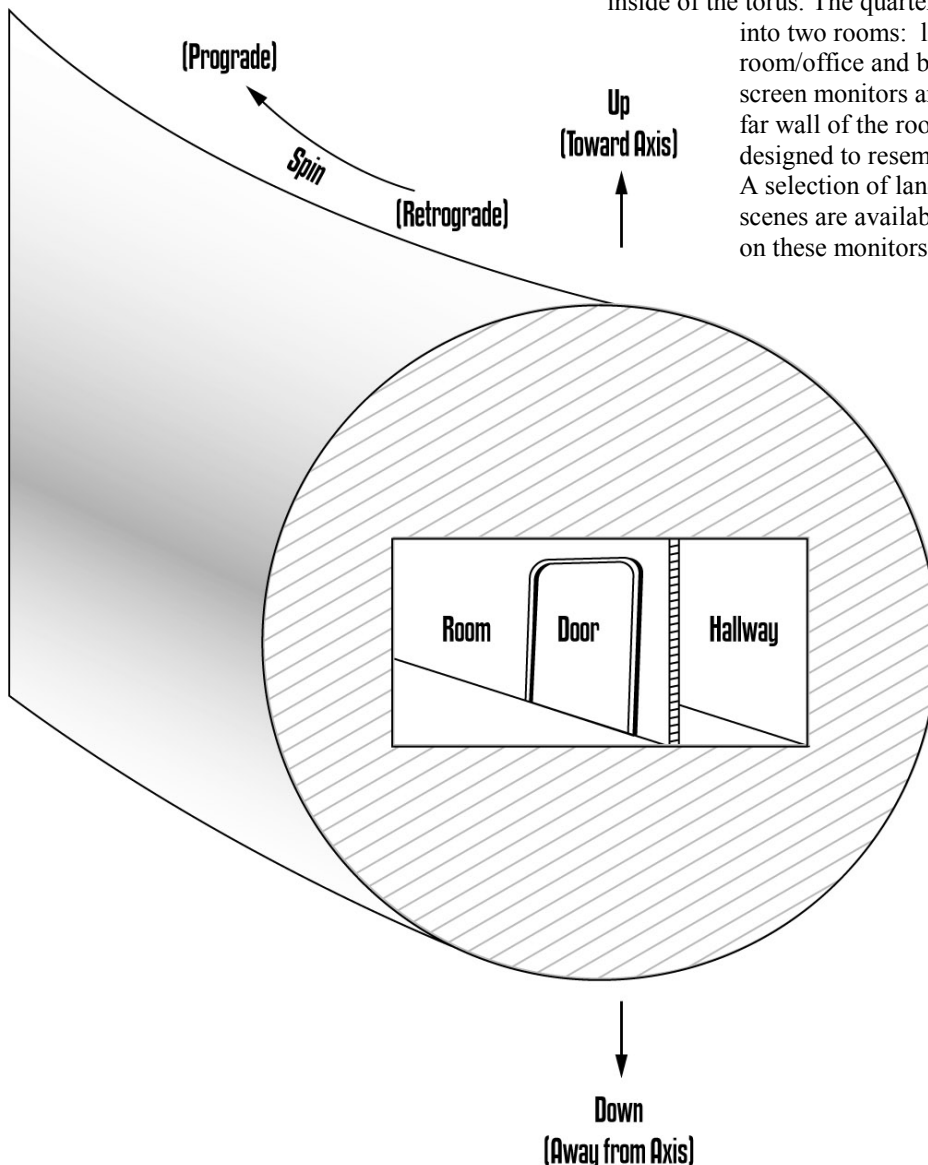
The Bridge: The bridge has seats for five crew members. The three seats and control panels against the wall opposite the door are for the pilot, commander, and co-pilot. From here, Aries is maneuvered for docking with shuttles and position/orbit changes are performed. The seat to the left of the door is the docking station. Here, communications with the shuttles are carried on, the docking port deployed, and the axis monitored. The two seats to the right of the door are for mission specialists, and the control panels can be re-configured to best suit the particular mission. The central display monitors are keyed into the External Camera System.

BRIDGE MAP

AXIS

The axis does not rotate and has no gravity. This serves a dual purpose. First, rotation would reduce the efficiency of the solar panels. Since the axis is stationary, the panels are able to adjust and take maximum advantage of solar exposure. Second, ships can dock with the station. If the entire station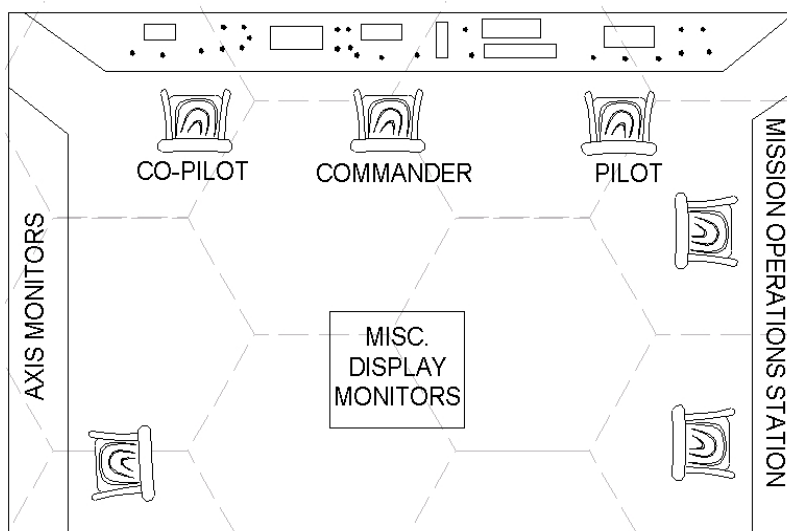 rotated, the difficulty of docking, as well as the risk incurred by both ship and station, would be prohibitively high.

Hatches, placed above and below where the spokes join with the axis, provide access, and there are sixteen in all. Hatches are DEF 8, BODY 7.

The lower portion of the axis is dedicated to batteries and generators, and produces power which is distributed throughout the entire station. The upper portion is dedicated to storage and the docking bay.

Materials for immediate off-loading, such as waste materials, and surplus supplies are kept in the axis storage areas. The materials are lashed down to prevent them from shifting.

The ceiling of the docking bay opens, to allow the docking port to extend outwards to meet with an arriving shuttle. A camera and light, and rendezvous and arrival antenna, aid operations on both the space station and the shuttle. If either the camera or antenna is damaged, docking operations are performed at a -5 penalty. Those boarding or disembarking the shuttle pass through the docking port (essentially a thick tube), before passing through an air lock.

AXIS DOCKING RING
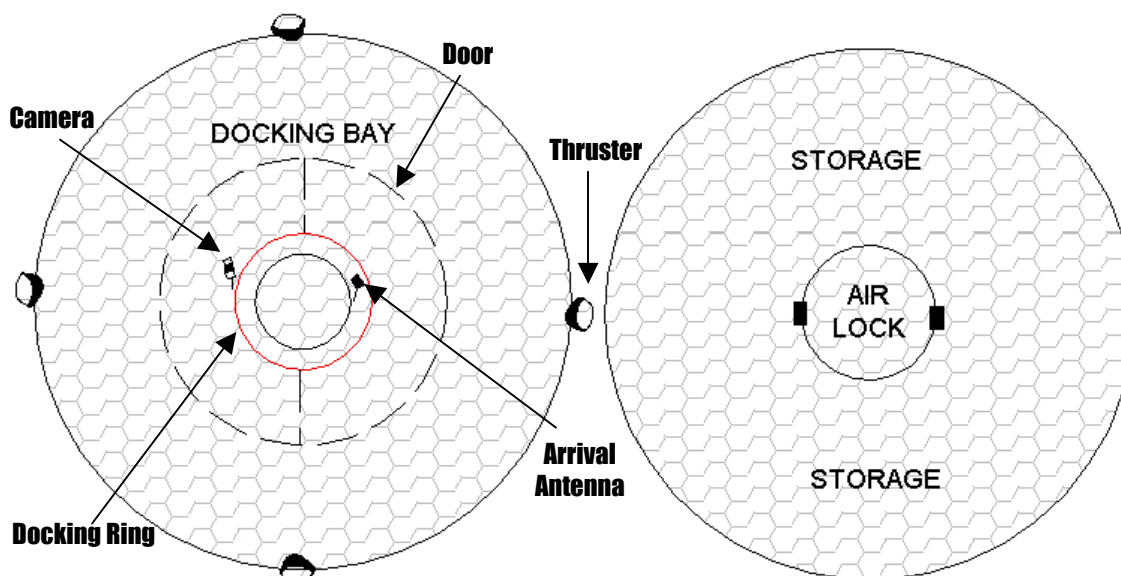
Doctor Igor Kandinsky: While far from the most gifted scientist in any one field, Kandinsky is likely the most gifted scientist in the most fields. He was included among personnel in the hope that his broad skill set would help in unexplored areas of science (in game terms, SS: Xenobiology and the like). Any truly alien incident is likely to fall into his lap.

Doctor Lisa Schmidt: Schmidt is *not* the world's foremost expert on astrophysics and astronomical phenomena -- she was chosen over the other candidates for her likeable personality and easy-going disposition -- and it is a noticeable chip on her shoulder. Despite not being the best, and regardless of her personal opinion, she is very talented.

The remainder of the personnel is left for the GM to flesh out. Names and positions are: Captain James Thornton (second pilot under Doroschuk), Captain Alvin Washington and Captain Susan Witt (two engineers under Brown), Dr. Sheila O'Donnell (geology/environmental science), and Dr. Victor Fortune (mathematics).

RULES FOR MOVING TO AXIS

As described, climbing along a spoke to the axis is not easily accomplished. While careful tethering has prevented serious incidents, during a crisis situation (like those that occur during a game session!) such care might not be possible. Suggested rules are as follows:

- If the climber doesn't have Environmental Movement: Artificial Gravity, he must make a Climbing Skill Roll. (If he has the Talent, he does not need to make the Skill Roll since there are ample handholds.)
- The climber must make a STR Roll every 10" after the first 10" of movement. (A total of three rolls to make it to the axis.)
- Since centripetal force is inversely proportional to the radius, the force acting on the climber increases as he moves toward the axis. The GM should apply a -1 penalty to his STR Roll for every 10" traveled after the first 10", for a total of -3 during the last 7.5" of the climb.
- A failed STR Roll means the climber is flung free of the spoke. He falls

MOVING FROM TORUS TO AXIS

One of the more dangerous routine duties for Aries personnel is moving from the torus to the axis. To do so requires leaving the relative safety of the torus, and entering outer space, after passing through an airlock.

There are a total of eight airlocks on the torus. A trapdoor in the ceiling of the hallway allows entry. The first room is a changing room, where space suits are kept. Next to the changing room is the airlock proper. Handholds and footholds dot the walls and floor of the air lock. The hatch to outside is in the ceiling, and opens just above one of the spokes. Once outside, a person must climb along the spoke toward the axis. The effort required is the equivalent of climbing a ladder on earth, with gravity lowering on the climb "up."

The dangerous part is moving from the spoke to the axis, since the spoke rotates and the axis is stationary. The person tethers himself to the spoke, leaving himself plenty of slack. Once he is securely tethered, he grabs hold of a rung bolted to the axis. When he has a grip, he quickly releases the tether before he is pulled from the axis.

Moving supplies from axis to torus is done in a similar manner and is more difficult; on occasion, supplies have been lost when they slipped and floated away from the space station.
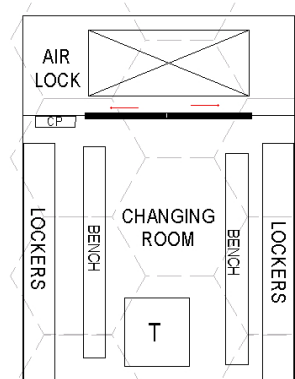
CREW LINGO

Doing a lap: To walk the entire length of the hallway, a distance of approximately 320 meters.

Down-down: Down while inside the torus is the direction away from the axis. Down-down refers to down, where the axis is the vertical. For example: "The solar panels are down-down from the spoke." Up-up has a similar, but opposite meaning – "The docking port is up-up from the spoke."

Hamster Wheel: A nickname for the hallway.

Inward: Inward refers to the direction towards the axis. So while standing in a room in the torus, one's head points inward.

Outward: Outward refers to the direction away from the axis.

Space Ghost: As the station rotates, the spokes flex and creak. The creaking is audible in sections of the hallway nearest the spokes, and the crew have taken to referring to the noise as the space ghost.

Walking downhill: Walking prograde in the torus, because doing so requires less effort.

Walking uphill: Walking retrograde in the torus, because doing so requires more effort.

AIRLOCK TOP VIEW

AIR LOCK (TOP DOWN VIEW)

DOOR TO OUTSIDE (IN CEILING)

DOOR TO HALLWAY (IN FLOOR)

CONTROL PANEL

AIRLOCK SIDE VIEW

AIR LOCK (SIDE VIEW)

HANDHOLD

DOOR (ARROW IS DIRECTION DOOR SLIDES OPEN)

AXIS CROSS-SECTION

Top

Doors

Camera & Light

Rendevous & Arrival Antenna

Thruster

Docking Bay

Docking Port

Storage

Airlock

Storage

Spoke

Rotor

Spoke

To Torus

To Torus

Batteries/Generators/Etc.

Solar Panel

Based on Voyager Spacecraft

Plasma Wave Antenna

Magnetometer

Scanners/Spectroscope

High-Gain Antenna (not to scale)

Planetary Radio Astronomy

Key

: Hatch

toward the torus and, for the sake of simplicity, his velocity is 5" per Segment. He does not accelerate as he travels.

- For purposes of grabbing hold of the axis, it has a DCV of 5.
- Once grabbed, the climber must make a successful STR Roll or lose his grip.

Atlantean Water Arts by W. Ross Watson

Atlantean Water Arts

Possibly having the same roots as Pankration, the Atlantean Water Arts were developed for use in a fluid underwater environment. The maneuvers are graceful, almost dancelike, and were patterned after the movements and abilities of undersea life. The military forces of Atlantis practice this form heavily, but many denizens of the deep have begun learning and adapting this style for themselves.

ATLANTEAN WATER ARTS NOTES

Optional Rules

All maneuvers except the Nautilus Block and Eel's Dance take a 3d6 Location roll.

Special Abilities

Swirling Maelstrom: True masters of the Atlantean Water Arts are rumored to have the ability to stir up the surrounding water so much that bubbling wake conceals them from view. You can simulate this by purchasing one hex radius of Darkness versus the Sight Sense Group and Sonar (because of the swirling bubbly noise), with the *No Range* (-½) Limitation and the *Personal Immunity* (+¼) Advantage.

Atlantean Water Arts Maneuvers

Shark's Nudge: This maneuver is designed to be used with Swimming. Running, Swinging, and Tunneling are too awkward, but Flight can be used to get the extra momentum for this attack.

Atlantean Water Arts

Maneuver	Phs	Pts	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
Shark's Nudge	½	5	+1	+0	STR +v/5; FMove
Dolphin Strike Punch	½	4	+2	+0	STR +2d6 Strike
Mako Tail Strike	½	5	-2	+1	STR +4d6 Strike
Nautilus Block	½	4	+2	+2	Block, Abort
Octopus Escape	½	4	+0	+0	+15 STR vs. Grabs
Eel's Dance	½	5	—	+4	Dodge All Attacks, Abort: FMove
Embrace of the Squid	½	4	+0	+0	STR +4d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab

Skills
Acrobatics
Contortionist
KS: Atlantean Water Arts
PS: Dancer
WF: Staff
WF: Swords

Talents
Environmental Movement (no penalties underwater)

Elements
Weapons	+1 Use Art With Swords
	+1 Use Art With Staff

Atlantean Water Arts originally created by Patrick E. Bradley.

artwork by Derrick Thomas

Professor Piscean

Background/History: P'scann was once a fairly ordinary citizen of a most extraordinary nation: Atlantis. Born an orphan, P'scann was a ward of the state who grew up friendless and alone. He made up for his lack of social graces by excelling in his studies, and by the time he had grown to adolescence, his interests turned to athletics.

With a passion and fervor rarely seen among youngsters his age, P'scann pushed himself to become one of the best that Atlantis had to offer. He drove himself to swim further and faster than the rest. He strove to be the fastest, strongest, and toughest Atlantean within the sunken realm. Eventually this quest led him to learn from the masters of the Water Arts, and for many years he trained under their tutelage to learn the intricacies of the underwater fighting style.

However, achieving acknowledgement for his mastery of the Water Arts was not enough for P'scann. His mind hungered for more, and his ego demanded that he find another venue in which to prove himself. It was then that P'scann encountered his first failure… he found that he had absolutely no talent for magic, and the spells that most Atlanteans could utilize with ease slipped through his fingers.

Atlantis' Queen had some contact with the surface world, and rumors of the "science" they practiced there instead of magic intrigued P'scann. He begged the Queen for a boon to travel to the surface world and bring back some of this "scientific knowledge"… for the betterment of Atlantis, of course. The Queen agreed, not without reservations, and P'scann began a new course of study amongst the air-breathing cultures of the surface world.

P'scann's impression of life above the waves was not good. The surface worlders appeared weak and foolish to him, and the smug superiority that he affected among Atlanteans only won him scorn when he was with the surface-dwelling teachers P'scann went to for scientific instruction.

Eventually, P'scann had enough. Bearing with him an extensive library of scientific knowledge, the arrogant Atlantean returned home. He presented to the Queen some of his achievements, and boasted of the research that he would then engage in, expecting fame and celebration at his return.

Such was not to be, for the Queen's misgivings were proven correct. P'scann intended to use his knowledge to construct terrible weapons of war, and he advocated conquest of the "weaklings" on the surface world. The Queen's dismissal of P'scann's plans angered and frustrated the young Atlantean, and his pride prodded him into unwise actions.

Proclaiming the Queen unfit to rule Atlantis, P'scann insulted the royal family, and hinted that someone else should sit upon the throne.

P'scann's enraged taunts were more than the Queen could take. She ordered P'scann exiled, banished permanently from Atlantis. As the Queen's soldiers took him away, P'scann vowed revenge.

Some years passed before P'scann re-appeared, but hideously changed. Now calling himself Professor Piscean, the former Atlantean scientist is bent on the destruction of Atlantis, and placing everything under the sea into his authority. He established a foreboding base of operations known as the Coral Citadel several miles from Atlantis, surrounding it with a menagerie of genetically-tailored monsters based on myth and legend. Sea serpents, giant lobsters, and even stranger beasts prowl near his lair, discouraging attack.

Some believe that P'scann encountered one of the surface world "supervillains," receiving training and funding from a genius even more deranged than his own. Whether this is true or not, Professor Piscean remains a threat to the security of Atlantis and all who venture beneath the waves.

Personality/Motivation: Professor Piscean is motivated by hate and shame, twin scourges that drive him on to subjugate everything he considers worthwhile… which includes the undersea world, but has little to do with normal civilizations above the ocean.

His hate is reserved for Atlantis, the culture that cast him out and has resisted his attempts to conquer it over and over again. The shame he feels stems from his lack of magical aptitude, the only area of Atlantean culture he could not find a way to excel in.

Professor Piscean believes the surface world is composed of weak, incompetent fools who do not deserve the wealth and resources they enjoy. Although he rarely concerns himself with thoughts of what lies above sea level, Professor Piscean plans to crush the surface world under his heel… eventually. Only after Atlantis and the other undersea nations bow to him as their king would he consider dealing with places like America or Europe.

The Professor is very egotistical, a condition which makes working with other underwater villains difficult. As long as it is understood that Professor Piscean is the smartest, strongest, and overall "best" of the group, he could end up leading a coalition of supervillains against Atlantis. Fortunately for the Atlanteans, such circumstances have not yet arisen.

Heroes who investigate will discover that the creatures are the creations of Professor Piscean, who is attempting to train his newest beasts to obey his commands in preparation for an assault on Atlantis. If the heroes interfere, they will soon find out that the most powerful of the sea monsters has gone bezerk, refusing to obey even its creator in an rage of destruction. Will the heroes work together with Professor Piscean to end the monster's rampage? Or will they find some other solution to the crisis?

Quote: "You fools! All that exists below the waves will soon belong to me!"

"You've breathed your last, surface-dweller. I shall see to it personally!"

"Meddle in the affairs of the sea, and you will find the ocean just as unforgiving as I am."

Powers/Tactics: Like all Atlanteans, Professor Piscean is completely at home beneath the waves. He moves and breathes through the water with ease. He can swim at great speeds, see in near-complete darkness, and tolerate the cold temperatures of the deep.

Professor Piscean has blended the genetic structure of many undersea-dwelling creatures into his own, granting him some of their abilities. His body is unnaturally tough and strong, easily able to withstand the crushing pressure of the depths. Like a shark, he can sense motion around him and follow the scent of blood for miles if need be. Also like a shark, his skin has multiple layers of sharp scales that grip and cut at anything it touches.

His skin has received another enhancement; similar to some bottom-feeding fish, his flesh can assume the colors of its surroundings. This works best while the Professor remains still, as movement can quickly spoil the illusion. Additionally, the feared neurotoxic filaments of the Portuguese man-of-war jellyfish can be extruded from his face. These filaments "sting" by injecting virulent poisons into his opponents, rendering them helpless with the intense agony such toxins cause. The filaments easily find ways through most conventional armor. Force Fields (or complete immunity to poisons) render this attack harmless, however.

The evil professor has also added a massive claw formed of hardened exo-skeletal cartilage, similar to a lobster's claw. The power of the professor's modified muscles allows his claw to crush even hardened steel or rip open a submarine's hull with ease. He has also grafted on a group of four powerful octopus tentacles that obey his every command, and often swirl around him ominously, even while he is otherwise calm.

The Professor's experiments upon himself have also exacerbated his Atlantean physiology's weaknesses. In particular, he feels great pain if he does not soak in water every so often, and attacks based on heat can quickly dry out his fish-like skin.

Professor Piscean is also a master of the underwater fighting style known as the Atlantean Water Arts. He seems to prefer hand-to-hand combat, and will often close in with a grab, intending to use the Embrace of the Squid (enhanced by the properties of his sharklike skin) to crush an enemy into paste.

Finally, Professor Piscean's base at the Coral Citadel gives him an extensive laboratory to construct and test various strange and dangerous devices. He will often bring several of these clever inventions with him to assist his efforts to rule the oceans.

Campaign Use: Professor Piscean makes a good low-level "master villain" for coastal or underwater campaigns. Scenarios that focus on or involve Atlantis could also prove a good place for Professor Piscean to wreak some havoc. The Professor rarely concerns himself with the surface world, although there may be some overlap with one of his plans for undersea domination.

To scale down Professor Piscean, reduce his Man-Of-War attack down to 2d6, lower his strength to 30, and remove his Combat Skill Levels. To raise his power level, increase his Man-Of-War attack to 5d6, add other creature powers, and increase the size of his VPP.

The Professor would only Hunt someone if they were tied into Atlantean culture or were otherwise linked to underwater nations. As a Hunter, Professor Piscean prefers to test out his inventions upon those who have earned his wrath. Characters who are Hunted by Professor Piscean should expect to encounter a wide variety of freakish sea monsters and wickedly deadly gadgets.

Appearance: Professor Piscean stands an impressive seven feet tall, and his build is what can be charitably described as incredibly muscular. Through his experiments he has become a bizarre combination of creatures after he introduced DNA from many of the undersea-dwelling animals into his own biological system. As a result, he has scaly blue-green skin, and his face is a hideous mess of human and animal features. His hands and feet have grown out of proportion to his body. He bears only three fingers on either hand and his feet are little more than webbed flippers. A sharkfin grows from his back, octopus tentacles from his shoulders and waist, and his left arm ends in a massive lobsterlike claw. He commonly wears only a pair of black shorts, choosing to flaunt the questionable advantages of his bioengineering expertise.

Professor Piscean

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	30	17-	6½ tons; 8d6 HTH [4]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
26	CON	32	14-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll: 14-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
0	COM	-5	9-	
15	PD	7		Total: 25 PD (10rPD)
15	ED	10		Total: 25 ED (10rED)
5	SPD	14		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
12	REC	2		
60	END	4		
60	STUN	7		

Total Characteristics Cost: 215

Movement:
Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 8"/16"
Swimming: 20"/40"

Cost	Powers	END
64	*Fiendishly Clever Devices:* Variable Power Pool, 50 points; Can Only Be Changed in a Laboratory (-½), Slightly Limited Class of Powers (technology, -¼)	var
60	*Man-Of-War Neural Sting:* EB 3d6, NND (versus PD Force Field or hardened rPD, +1), Does BODY (+1); No Range (-½) **plus** Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attack (+½); No Range (-½), Works Against CON, Not STR (-0), Only Works If Target Takes BODY from NND Attack (-0)	9
54	*Lobster Claw:* HKA 2d6 (4d6 with STR), Continuous (+1), +1 STUN Multiplier (+¼); Limited Power (No Knockback, -¼)	7
20	*Swirling Maelstrom:* Darkness to Sight Group 1" radius, Personal Immunity (+½); No Range (-½)	2
32	*Sharkskin:* HKA 1d6-1 (1½d6 with STR), Damage Shield (Can be used with HTH attacks, +¾), Continuous (+1), Reduced END (0 END, +½)	0
30	*Tough Hide:* Armor (10 PD/10 ED)	0
20	*Protective Coloration:* Invisibility to Sight group, Reduced END (0 END, +½); Chameleon (-½)	0
10	*Nictating Membrane:* Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
8	*Atlantean Body:* Life Support (Breathe Underwater; Safe Environments: Intense Cold, High Pressure)	0
5	*Gene-tailored Physiology:* Life Support (Immunities: Neurotoxins and Zootoxins)	0
18	*Atlantean Travel:* Swimming +18" (20" total)	4
5	*Atlantean Eyes:* Nightvision	0
15	*Atlantean Senses:* Active Sonar (Hearing Group)	0
8	*Shark Senses:* Discriminatory Tracking Perception (Smell/Taste group); Only In Water (-1½)	0
15	*Passive Sonar:* Spatial Awareness, Only In Water (-1½)	0
5	*Octopus Tentacles:* Extra Limbs	0

Martial Arts: Atlantean Water Arts

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	Shark's Nudge	+1	+0	STR +v/5; FMove
4	Dolphin Strike Punch	+2	+0	10d6 Strike
5	Mako Tail Strike	-2	+1	12d6 Strike
4	Nautilus Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Octopus Escape	+0	+0	55 STR vs. Grabs
5	Eel's Dance	—	+4	Dodge All, Abort, FMove
4	Embrace of the Squid	+0	+0	12d6 Crush, Must Follow Grab

Perks

20	*Coral Citadel:* Base, 100 points plus Disadvantages	
20	*Sea Monsters:* 4 Followers, 50 points plus Disadvantages	

Talents

5	Eidetic Memory	
3	*Aquatic Movement:* Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)	

Skills

24	+3 with All Combat
3	Acrobatics 14-
2	Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals) 14-
3	AK: Atlantis 14-
3	AK: Oceans of the World 14-
3	Contortionist 14-
3	Inventor 14-
3	KS: Atlantean Culture 14-
3	KS: Atlantean Water Arts 14-
2	Language: English (fluent conversation, Atlantean is native)
2	Navigation (Marine) 14-
3	Scientist
2	1) SS: Cloning 14-
3	2) SS: Genetics 15-
2	3) SS: Marine Biology 14-
2	4) SS: Organic Chemistry 14-
2	5) SS: Physics 14-
3	6) SS: Prosthetics 15-
2	7) SS: Theoretical Physics 14-

2   8) SS: Zoology 14-
3   Stealth 14-
3   Shadowing 14-
2   Survival (Undersea) 14-
3   Tactics 14-

Total Powers & Skills cost: 535

Total Cost: 750

150+ Disadvantages
10   Dependence: Must be immersed in water at least once per hour or suffer 2d6 damage (Very Common)
20   Distinctive Features: Freakish Combination of Man and Beast (Not Concealable; Major Reaction)
10   Distinctive Features: Atlantean Water Arts Style (Not Concealable; Detectable By Large Group)
20   Hunted: Atlantis 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15   Psychological Limitation: Disdains the Surface World (Common, Strong)
15   Psychological Limitation: Driven to Rule the Seas (Common, Strong)
15   Psychological Limitation: Hates Atlantis (Common, Strong)
 5   Reputation: would-be undersea conqueror, 8- (Extreme, Limited Group)
10   Rivalry: Other Underwater Villains (Professional, For Prestige)
30   Vulnerability: 2x STUN from Heat Attacks (Very Common)
450   Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 750

SAMPLE FIENDISH DEVICES

Phase Inversion Belt: Professor Piscean uses this creative invention to bypass Atlantis' defenses, allowing him to spy upon the residents of the sunken city.
Desolidification (affected by Force Fields) (40 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total Cost: 20 points.

Sonic Cannon: A common weapon used by Professor Piscean to target enemies at range, the fearsome Sonic Cannon has an infamous reputation amongst the forces of Atlantis.
Energy Blast 10d6 (50 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total Cost: 25 points.

Thermal Vent Drilling Mechanism: Professor Piscean plans to sneak his most deadly creation into the heart of Atlantis and activate it. The machine works by drilling a hole deep into the earth's crust and coaxing the white-hot lava underneath into boiling up nearby. The process takes some time, but the machine can become very difficult to stop once begun.
Major Transform 1d6 (Ocean Floor into Magma, heals back normally), Area Effect (One Hex, +½), Continuos (+1), Uncontrolled (+½) (50 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), 1 Continuing Charge which never recovers lasting 1 Year (-3). Total Cost: 14 points.
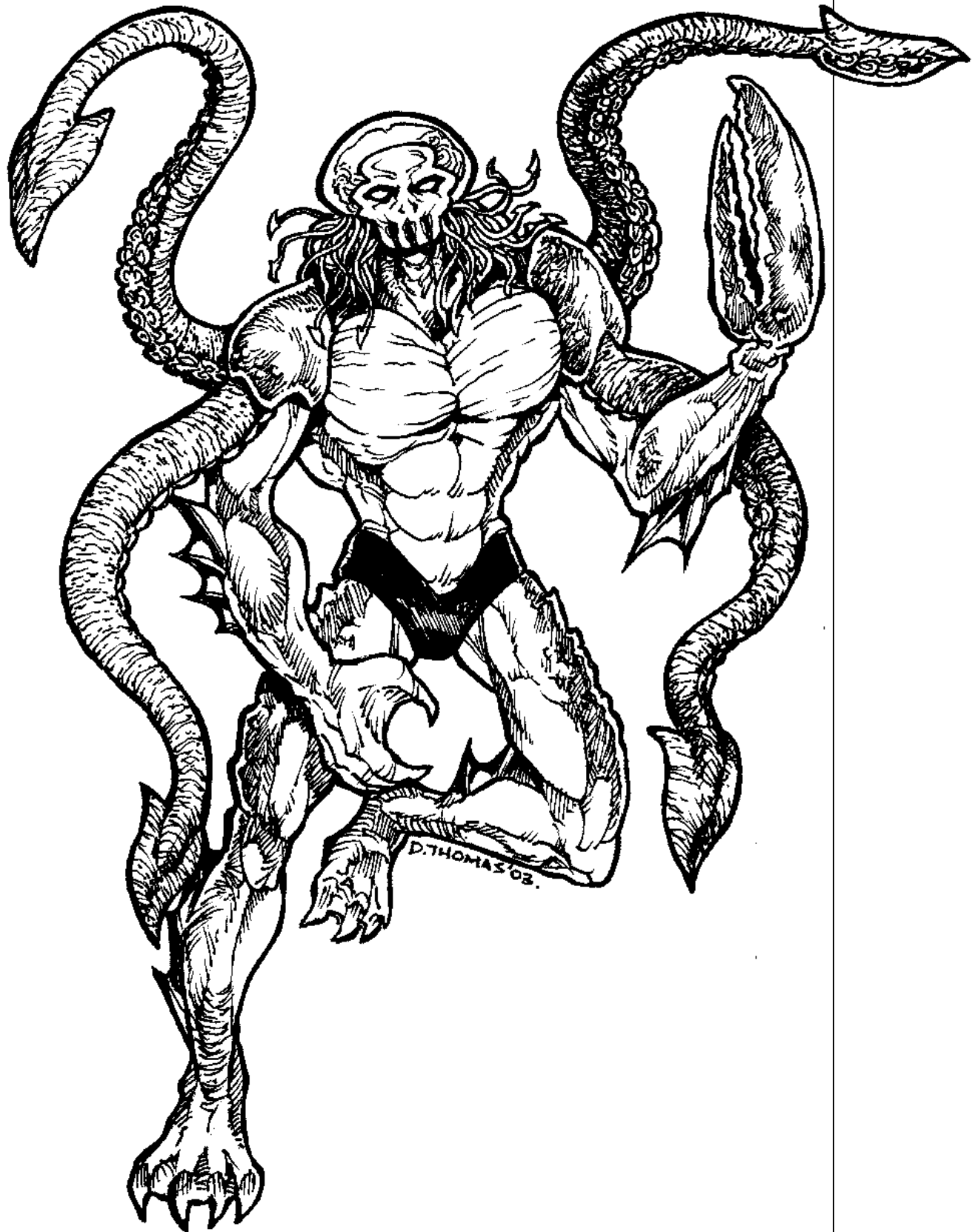
Professor Piscean

Anime and the HERO System by Michael Surbrook

I Have Big Eyes, Long Legs, and Speed Lines. Now What?

> Gotta get in tune with Sailor Moon
> Cause that cartoon has got the boom anime babes
> That make me think the wrong thing
> — Barenaked Ladies, *One Week*

Like it or not, Japanese animation is here to stay. Ever since entering into mainstream American culture in the early 1990s, Japanese animation (better known as "anime") and manga (Japanese comic books, literally "involuntary pictures") has spread rapidly, gaining popularity and acceptance among a wide variety of people, both young and old. Anime has also had a strong impact on many forms of American entertainment, most specifically within the comic book and roleplaying game industries. Comic books and roleplaying games have both tried to adopt the look and feel of many popular forms of anime, in an attempt to either simulate or cash in on (or both) a sizable and diverse market.

The widespread popularity of anime, with its exciting visuals and highly varied subject matter has resulted in many roleplaying gamers expressing a desire to *play* in an anime setting. For *HERO System* fans, this has led to calls for an *Anime Hero* sourcebook, detailing how to game in an anime environment. However, this request has one small problem...

Which anime?

You see, anime by definition isn't a genre, but a medium. You can't have an "anime roleplaying game" any more than you can have a "television roleplaying game." Much like television, the movies, and books (or comics books for that matter), anime encompasses a variety of genres, including: fantasy, giant robots, horror, martial arts, romance, science fiction, and space opera.

So, this leads us to the next question, "What is anime, anyway?"

MICKEY MOUSE IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN: THE ORIGINS OF ANIME

The origins of the Japanese animation industry can be traced to two men – Osamu Tezuka and Walt Disney. Osamu Tezuka is considered by many to be the father of Japanese animation, as well as the person responsible for the stylistic look of both the anime and manga medium. He in turn was influenced by the films of Walt Disney, which Tezuka was first exposed to during the American occupation of postwar Japan. The creator of such well known series as *Tetsuwan Atom* (a.k.a. *Astro Boy*) and *Jungle Emperor Leo* (a.k.a. *Kimba the White Lion*), Tezuka himself influenced an entire generation of up-and-coming artists, and basically defined the look of the medium for several decades.

Following Tezuka came a virtual horde of animators and artists, all of whom slowly built on Tezuka's initial ideas, but it wasn't until the late 1960s that anime started to come into its own. First came Tatsunoko Studios, who introduced the idea of the superhero team with anime such as *Science Ninja Team Gatchaman* (known in America as *Battle of the Planets*). Then came Go Nagai, who introduced the concept of the pilotable giant robot with such shows as *Grandizer* and *Great Mazinger.* He also brought a new level of sex (via nudity) and violence to anime with his shows *Cutey Honey* and *Devilman.* Finally, there was Leiji Matsumoto, who defined the anime space opera genre with shows like *Galaxy Express 999, Space Pirate Captain Harlock,* and *Uchuu Senkan Yamato* (a.k.a. *Starblazers*).

The 1980s saw introduction of *Mobile Suit Gundam,* the first show to present a giant robot as a mere machine and not some sort of all-powerful defender of justice. The 1980s also saw the introduction of some of the biggest anime TV shows ever, such as *City Hunter, Dragonball* and *Dragonball Z, Fist of the North Star, Lupin III, Ranma ½, Urusei Yatsura,* and *St. Seiya.* The 1980s also saw another new innovation in anime: Original Video Animation (a.k.a. OVA or OAV). OVAs allowed studios to make animated films of higher than normal quality aimed at smaller "niche" markets. In America, some of these OVAs would end up with virtually fanatical followings, with the series *Bubblegum Crisis* a prime example.

The 1990s saw a drop in the amount of anime made, at least when compared to the 1980s, but overall the quality of animation (especially with the use of computer graphics) went up. The 1990s also saw such release of landmark shows like *Cowboy Bebop,* which lived up to its own tagline by creating a new genre of anime.

Currently, one of the biggest names in modern anime is Hayao Miyazaki. Known for such classic films as *The Castle of Cagliostro, Kiki's Delivery Service, Laputa: Castle in the Sky, My Neighbor Totoro,* and *Nausicaä,* Miyazaki's 1997 film *Princess Mononoke* became the highest grossing film of all time in Japan (only to be eclipsed by the film *Titanic*).

artwork by Erica Girotto

Undaunted, he then released *Spirited Away* in 2001, and promptly outdid *Titanic* to regain the top spot in overall sales.

With regards to America, anime started to make inroads into American culture in the 1960s, when such shows as *Astro Boy, Gigantor, Marine Boy,* and *Speed Racer* (known as *Mach Go Go Go* in Japan) first appeared on American television. However, anime's big American break didn't come until early 1985, when an American company combined three completely unrelated series (*Genesis Climber Mospeada, Super Dimensional Cavalry Southern Cross,* and *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross*) into one single, long-running show called *Robotech*. Although a smash hit itself, *Robotech* found serious competition in the form of *Starblazers,* which was *extremely* popular at the time, almost leading to a *Star Trek* versus *Star Wars* division among the fan base. Regardless, both shows sparked a slowly growing interest in Japanese anime and manga, which eventually resulted in a number of comic and video companies gaining the rights to import, translate, and distribute Japanese anime and manga in the United States.

The 1990s saw anime develop into a massively popular art form, and now anime videos, which were once only to be found in mail-order catalogs and specialty comic shops, can be found in any major video store. In addition, anime has once again returned to American television, with dubbed (and edited) versions of such shows as *Sailor Moon* and *Dragonball Z* (among others) becoming quite popular. The Cartoon Network even went so far as to specifically target one anime, *Cowboy Bebop,* at adult viewers, making it part of its Adult Swim segment.

BIG EYES AND SMALL MOUTHS: COMMON ANIME CONVENTIONS

Although anime is a medium, and not a genre, it does have a number of "genre" conventions that tend to appear in a wide variety of anime shows, regardless of content. Although these conventions are not required to play an anime-inspired game, they can help achieve the proper "look-and-feel."

The Anime Hero

Possibly the biggest difference between anime and Western storytelling (specifically Hollywood) is how anime handles its heroes. The average anime hero isn't strong, handsome, self-assured, and so on, because to the Japanese mind, how hard is it to be a hero if you already have all these advantages? Instead, many heroes start out a bit weak, uncertain about their skills, or have terrible tempers and/or suffer from hubris (*i.e.* a tendency to run off at the mouth). It is by overcoming these faults they show their true, heroic nature.

This evolution from unconfident novice to skilled veteran is often central to the plot of many anime stories. Through rigorous training, self-sacrifice, and/or a simple refusal to give up, the hero improves his skills and becomes more capable. And this capability can be at anything: piloting a mecha, playing sports, learning to cook, casting spells, or the martial arts. Very few characters in anime are innately super powerful, and even those characters who command a great deal of power (Son Goku from *Dragonball* or Ifurita from *El Hazard* for example) often have gained that power through constant training and self-improvement (or didn't ask for the power in the first place).

There are various ways to work this effect into the *HERO System*. For starters, the GM could have his players start with characters built at power levels *below* what the campaign might actually call for (For example, starting with 250 to 300-point characters in a 350-point superhero setting), and building the PCs up with small allotments of experience points. Another way is to determine what the player would like his PC to do and make sure the PC receives specific skills and powers as experience. For example, a player in a fantasy setting wants his young farmboy to grow into an experienced knight. During play the GM makes sure the farmboy PC encounters people who can teach him how to fight, how to ride, and similar skills. When the time comes for experience points to be handed out, instead of giving the farmboy's player a lump of points to do with as he pleases, the GM gives the PC some Combat Skill Levels, Martial Arts maneuvers, Riding, and Weapon Familiarities.

When dealing with PCs built on higher power levels (for example, characters in the typical anime martial arts setting), where they are already competent heroes, then the GM needs to make sure the PC have valid and character-defining Disadvantages. Appropriate character Disadvantages include: Enraged, Hunted, Psychological Limitation, Rivalry, and Social Limitation. As the saying goes, "With great power comes great responsibility," and anime heroes, due to their often larger-than-life nature, have more than most people.

Big Eyes and Small Mouths

The generic anime character (especially a female one) has a heart-shaped face, small mouth, small upturned nose, and exceedingly large eyes. This art style is so prevalent and well recognized there is even a roleplaying game named after it (Guardians Of Order's *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*). The large eyes look is often given as a reason why people don't like anime, as it is a visual turn off. Interestingly enough, many Disney characters have the same look, although

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE…

An important fact to keep in mind when reading anime is one of audience (and/or author) identification. The creator or an anime or manga usually wants to present characters the reader can identify with, and then, in the course of the story, put the character through the Japanese equivalent of adolescent male power fantasy (of course, girls get their own version of a "power fantasy" in manga targeted at female readers). This set up is no different than many American superhero comic books, and the parallels between an anime series where a geeky high school student ends up the pilot of an impressive combat mecha, and the Marvel Comics series *Spider-Man* (where the nerdy high school student ends up with impressive superpowers) should be obvious. Simply put, a great deal of anime and manga is a case of creator (and reader) "wish-fulfillment."

it is not quite so exaggerated. So, why are the characters drawn that way?

The answer can be found in the origins of anime and Osamu Tezuka. As stated before, Tezuka was heavily influenced by the early films of Walt Disney shown in post-World War II Japan and drew his own animated characters with the same style of large, expressive (and round) eyes. His style of art pretty much set the standard for others to follow, and even now, nearly 40 years later, many artists draw their characters in the same exaggerated style. However, this style isn't as widespread as it once was, and there are artists and animators who draw their characters far more realistically (for example, Hiroaki Samura's *Blade of the Immortal,* Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira,* and Mamoru Oshii's *Jin-Roh*).

Eyes are also a way of expressing age, innocence, personality, sexuality, and even nationality. Youthful characters (especially girls) will have large eyes, in order to make them look younger and more vulnerable. Older characters, villains, and Westerners (Americans especially) will have narrow, "realistic" eyes, since narrow eyes are less expressive and make the character look less friendly (narrow eyes also indicate a loss of humanity among villains and the like). Females, even female villains, will usually have larger eyes than males, the better to show emotion. The rules tend to hold true for most anime (even Disney animated films), although there are a few exceptions, of course (such as Yakumo, the hero of the anime/manga *3x3 Eyes,* whose eyes are rarely seen as more than mere slits).

Unfortunately, such a convention is nearly impossible to adopt for a face-to-face RPG session, as RPGs tend to be verbal, while anime and manga are visual. However, considering the wealth of visual material available on the World Wide Web, it's probably not that hard for the average GM to find pictures of anime characters that match his desired needs, large and/or small eyes and all.

Strange Hair Colors

Hair – everyone has it, although some have more (or less) than others. However, no one quite has hair like an anime character. Think about it; blue, green, pink, purple... anime characters often have hair colors that aren't found anywhere in nature, much less among the population of Japan!

The rationale behind such odd hair colors is simple once you think about it. In Japan, all manga is printed in black and white, so artists have three choices for hair color: black, zip-a-tone, or white (*i.e.* "blond"). This often leads to a large number of characters all with the same hair color (the manga *Ranma ½* is a perfect example of this). However, from time to time, characters

who are normally printed in simple black and white get to show up in color (Usually as a color lead in to the rest of the comic pages in weekly or monthly manga magazine.). At this point someone (the artist or a third party colorist) will then come in and assign hair colors to the characters (if someone hasn't done so already). Thus, the different colors of hair make each character stand out. This also helps explain some of the wild anime hair styles one sees. An unusual or dramatic hairstyle makes a character distinctive and easier to pick out in a crowd.

Now, the important question becomes one of, "Is the character's hair really that color?" It's hard to say. In many cases, it's understood the character doesn't really have pink, or blue, or green, or whatever hair color they've been given – but this only holds true for "normal" human characters. Aliens, androids, elves, and other "non-human" types often have the exact hair colors they are drawn (or painted) with.

In a game situation, hair color can be used in different ways. In a true anime game, no one should get a Distinctive Features for having an unusual hair color, no matter how strange it might be (although fluorescent might count). The same goes for length, as many characters (mostly females) have hair to their waist (or longer). That said, one can use hair color in a game as an indicator of personality. In anime shows with multiple characters in the main cast, the following breakdown will be seen: the hero of the show will have dark hair (black, blue, or green is common); the hot-tempered fighter is red-haired (and has dark or tanned skin); the mystic/intellectual has purple/lavender hair (and often wears glasses); and the mechanic/sleuth has brown or blond(e) hair. In cases like this, hair color doesn't always determine nationality, although a lot of Americans are blond-haired and Japanese characters tend to be black or brown-haired (the anime *Silent Möbius* is a perfect example of this breakdown).

Super-Deformed Characters

Many anime characters are often drawn with large heads and exceedingly tiny bodies. This style of drawing is known as "SD," meaning "super-deformed" (or "chibi," meaning "little"), and is usually used for advertisements, side illustrations, or parodies. In most cases the artwork is done for its humor value, or, if in the middle of an anime and/or manga story, to emphasis some sort of humorous incident (an anime version of mugging for the camera, so to speak). In some cases an entire sequence will be drawn in this styles, although that is almost always reserved for parodies of the series the characters belong to. Usually, however, a character will go "super-deformed" only when the mood and/or scene calls for it, although some characters seem to do this at will.

As with many of the more visual aspects of anime, implementing the concept of super-deformed characters can be difficult in a roleplaying situation. Since it is normally used for comic effect, players (and the GM) may to verbally describe their character going "SD" for a few moments in response to some sequence of events. Of course, everyone should remember that the SD effect should only be used in comedic campaigns to being with, as a more serious anime show normally won't use such an exaggerated visual image.

Weird Names

Belldandy, Bolt Crank, Chocolate Misu, Cloud Strife, Compiler, Cranberry Jam, Dark Schneider, Demon King Piccolo, Integral, Lebia Maverlick, Nu Suoad Graphite, Sephiroth, South Burning…. The list of names (and yes, these are real character names in anime!) goes on and on. Some make sense (sort of), while others sound like totally random collections of syllables.

What's up with that?

The reason is a simple one; for the most part anime and manga names are picked based on how they sound, not what they mean. To the Japanese ear, "Lebia Maverlick" simply sounds cool (Kia Asamiya has stated he named Lebia after the Maverick air-to-air missile, since he liked the sound of the name), never mind that it isn't a real name that anyone in the Western world would ever have. Other names are picked based on themes. For example, the manga *Dragonball* featured many characters with theme names. One set of villains were all named after musical instruments (Cymbal, Drum, Piccolo), another set were temperature related (Cooler, Freezer, King Cold), and another set of characters were all food related (Bardock [burdock], Brolly [broccoli] Kakarott [carrot], Nappa [a type of cabbage], Parsus [parsley], Raditz [radish], and Vegita [vegetable]).

A similar idea is to use "real" names but assign them differently. The anime *Trigun* deals with the adventures of an infamous gunfighter, so gun-related names abound. Two major characters work for the "Bernadelli Insurance Society," and these characters are named Meryl Strife and Milly Thompson. Of these names, Bernadelli is maker of shotguns, while Thompson made the famous Thompson submachine gun. In addition, there is another layer of reference. "Meryl Strife" is an obvious play on "Meryl Streep" and the idea of "strife" or "conflict," while "Milly Thompson" seems to be a play on Lilly Tomlin (and it so happens both Milly and Lilly are very tall women to boot).

Of course, English speakers (and gamers) can do the same sort of thing when naming their Japanese characters. Imagine a team of five characters named Anago, Ebi, Kappa, Maguro, and Saba. Sound pretty normal, right? Maybe not, since you've just named your team of characters after different types of Japanese *sushi!* (*Anago* = eel, *ebi* = sweet shrimp, *kappa* = cucumber, *maguro* = tuna, *saba* = mackerel.) Creative GMs can also use such naming conventions with more "normal" English names, picking some common theme and developing names from that. Suggestions include cities (Brooklyn, Dallas, Francisco, Louis, and Washington), firearms (Berreta, Colt, Ruger, Smith, and Wesson), or even planes (Draken, Falcon, Mirage, Phantom, and Spitfire – This group makes for a good set of superhero names.).

Naturally, not all names in anime are so unusual. There are plenty of more "normal" sounding names as well. Those writers and artists who have a reasonable command of English (or other languages) will usually create names that sound perfectly normal to foreign readers. On the other hand, it is certain that non-Japanese speakers create names that sound just as odd and incorrect to a native Japanese speaker. As a case in point, the novel *Shogun* contains a character named "Yabu Kasigi." Not only is Kasigi not a proper Japanese surname (or a name, period), but Yabu is a surname as well, which means the character is named (to Japanese ears) Smith Johnson.

IT'S BETTER TO LOOK GOOD THAN TO FEEL GOOD: ANIME AND STYLE

If there is one driving force behind anime, it is a certain sense of style. It is a sense of form over function. Reality is there only to provide the most basic of groundwork for the setting. The most important question in an anime show usually isn't, "Would this work?" but, "Does this look cool?"

Consider mecha for instance. They are a prime example of the anime rule of style above realism. In reality, a giant humanoid-shaped mecha would be clumsy, unbalanced (humans walk by basically falling forward and then catching themselves), inefficient, and slow. They would be totally outclassed by your average armored vehicle, and would be the prime prey of jet fighter-bombers and tank-killer helicopters. But an anime mecha is none of this. They are fast, nimble, and powerful war machines that can easily destroy anything but another mecha (as long as the enemy mecha is piloted by a major character, that is). Anime mecha can be any size – from a realistic 7'-8' in height to immense constructs that can slice planets in two with their energy swords. In anime, mecha look *cool,* and that is all the reason needed to turn then from clunky, lumbering hunks of metal to sleek and efficient fighting machines.

FUN WITH NAMES

The author's favorite example of a character name which is also a play on someone else's name was a trio of pirates in the anime *Cowboy Bebop* named "George," "Herman," and "Ruth." "George Herman Ruth" is the real name of famous baseball great "Babe" Ruth.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Although GMs should allow characters pull cinematic stunts in an anime game (like running along the top of a chain-link fence or leaping twenty feet straight up from a standing start), they shouldn't allow characters to do obviously impossible things. For example, if the game is set in the present day, and the characters are all bounty hunters, the characters shouldn't be able to punch through car doors or fire heavy machine guns with one hand (unless the GM decides that the special ability of one of the PCs is to be *really* strong). And if the game is set in the near future, and the characters are all crew on a spaceship, no one should be able to breathe the vacuum of space (surviving it for short periods is one thing, *breathing* it is another).

To sum up, an anime game, no matter the genre, system, or the setting, should define the term "Cinematic Roleplaying." Realism and logic shouldn't play much of a part when deciding what a character (or mecha) can and cannot do. Instead, such decisions should be resolved by deciding what looks "cooler" or makes for a more interesting story. As the saying goes, don't let the facts get in the way of a good story.

Now, this does not mean a GM wishing to run an anime game should disregard substance. Although many anime and manga are sold on the visual appeal of their art, it is the story that usually wins over the most fans, and a good story can make or break an anime, regardless of the visual content. For example, the anime *Spriggan* was touted as having state-of-the art animation sequences, but its lackluster story meant it fell flat with regards to reviewers. Much the same thing happened with the anime *Ghost in the Shell.* While it was (and is) beautiful to look at, the story lacked the "meat" of the original manga and it wasn't the huge hit it could have been. On the other hand, Gainax's initial success with *Neon Genesis Evangelion* meant that when a lack of budget reduced scenes late in the series to little more than talking silhouettes and the like, it didn't hurt the show's following one bit. The intriguing story and the audience's identification with key characters had already hooked the viewers.

Another way in which the anime sense of style makes itself known is the manner in which many anime films handle characters, specifically main characters. The main hero of an anime isn't just some guy off the street; he's someone special. It may be a factor of his birth (he's the only son of a famous scientist [or other notable]; he's secretly a member of royalty; he's the heir to a great power), or training (he's a top fighter pilot; he's one of, if not *the*, best martial artists around; he's managed to master complex magics at a very young age), or simply circumstance (the character has a singular ability no one else has; the character is the only one capable of piloting the plot-important mecha; the character happens to end up in the middle of a situation which will decide the fate of the world). Even if the character starts out as a total nobody, he will quickly be caught up in events that will turn him into someone important, whether he wants it or not.

So... what does this all mean with regards to a game, then?

For starters, the GM should encourage the purchase of "cinematic" Skills, Talents, and Powers, and give the players the chance to use them in the course of the game.

Cinematic Skills would include: all Autofire Skills, Defense Maneuver, Rapid Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, and the Power Skill. Characters with these skills should also invest in either Combat Skill Levels or Penalty Skill Levels to counteract the negative penalties from either stacking these skills or attempting dramatic actions with them.

Cinematic Talents would include: Ambidexterity, Combat Luck, Danger Sense, Environmental Movement, and Lighting Reflexes. Of these, Combat Luck is probably the most important, as it is virtually designed with many anime characters in mind. Characters who otherwise wear practically no armor should be allowed to buy one or more levels of Combat Luck with the special effect that attacks at the character *just* miss. Bullets graze the cheek, scalp, or arm (resulting in a dramatic flow of blood) but don't actually impact. Edged weapons and claws tear clothing, cut off locks of hair, or leave long thin cuts on the skin (which give off a trickle of blood), but don't hit the character solidly.

The primary Cinematic Power, at least with regards to anime, is Leaping. In many anime, and specifically martial arts anime, characters are capable of impressive leaps. GMs should make all leaps in an anime game "Accurate" and may want to let characters leap vertically as far as they can horizontally. GMs should also consider letting anime characters leap their full distance without having to make a running start.

A secondary Cinematic Power would be to allow characters in an anime game to buy additional movement with the Limitation of *Only To Make A Half Move* (-1). Basically, what this means is that a character with a base 6" of Running could buy another 6" for 6 points, giving him 12" of Running, but only for the purposes of making a 6" Half Move. This suits the highly mobile style of most anime combats, in which characters move quickly about the landscape while fighting.

Finally, GMs and players shouldn't overlook Damage Reduction, specifically *STUN Only* Damage Reduction. Many anime characters seem capable of withstanding large amounts of abuse and remain standing, and Damage Reduction is the perfect power with which to simulate this effect.

With regards to Power Limitations, there are a few the GM should consider *not* using when running the average anime game. These Limitations are: *Mass, Real Armor, Real Weapon, Required Hands,* and *STR Minimum* – basically, all the Limitations that define weapons and armor in real world terms. In most cases, these Limitations are too restricting for the highly cinematic nature of anime gaming.

MAGICAL GIRLS AND MECHA PILOTS: COMMON ANIME ARCHETYPES

Considering the vast amount of anime available, it is only natural that various characters will appear over and over. The anime industry isn't above copying last year's success story, or trying yet another new spin on a tried-and-true theme. This has lead to a number of common anime character types, both archetypes and stereotypes. When designing an anime campaign, or even if looking for anime elements to add to a game, one should look first at this list of anime character types, and decide what will (or will not) fit in the desired setting.

Alien

Alien characters, naturally enough, hail from outer space. Almost always human-looking (apart from unusual and exotic secondary characteristics like horns, catlike ears, or a tail), alien characters can either be male or female, and if the latter, are usually incredibly beautiful (and a princess of some powerful interstellar empire to boot!). In either case, the character's alien heritage is often the rationale for all sorts of amazing powers and abilities (such as Lum's ability to fly and throw lightning), as well as highly advanced technology (such as Washu's entire lab).

Examples: Aisha Clan Clan (*Outlaw Star*), Ayeka, Sasami, and Tenchi Masaki (*Tenchi Muyo!*), Iczer-1 and Iczer-2 (*Iczer-1*), Kahm (*Outlanders*), Lum (*Urusei Yatsura*), Son Goku (*Dragonball*), Washu Hakubi (*Tenchi Muyo!*).

Android/Cyborg/Robot

This is a broad category, covering not only cybernetically augmented humans, but also humanoid machines and self-aware robots. It is a common character type, and one of the first anime characters was, in fact, a humanoid robot (Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy*). Such characters are the "bricks" of anime, and are often capable of both absorbing and dishing out a great deal of punishment. All this power comes at a price, however, and a common theme when dealing with cyborg and robotic characters is one of humanity. If the character is simply a brain in a robotic frame, are they still human? Can an artificial construct be human? And what is meant by humanity? All of these questions (and more) have been examined in different anime series, with one of the more in-depth treatments found in Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* manga.

Examples: Alita/Gally (*Battle Angel*), Armitage (*Armitage III*), Artificial Humans 16-20 (*Dragonball*), Atsuko "Nuku Nuku" Natsume (*All-Purpose Cultural Catgirl Nuku Nuku*), Briareos Hecatonchires (*Appleseed*), Jet Black (*Cowboy Bebop*), Kiddy Phenil (*Silent Möbius*), Major Motoko Kusanagi (*Ghost in the Shell*), Ross Sylibus (*Armitage III*), Sonnet Barjie (*Blue Sonnet*).

Artificial Life Form

Similar to the android and robot character, the artificial life form is just as often organic in nature as it is robotic. Such characters are often created as servants, guardians, or war machines, and are expected to obey without question. The problem comes when they exhibit a personality or act against their creator's wishes. As with cyborgs, the question of humanity, as well as whether an artificial being can have a soul, is a common one.

Examples: Anna and Uni Puma (*Dominion*), Cyberdroids and Sexroids (*Bubblegum Crisis*), Greenpeace Crolis (*Dominion*), Ifurita (*El-Hazard*), M-66 (*Black Magic: M-66*), Melfina (*Outlaw Star*), Ryoko (*Tenchi Muyo!*).

Bishonen

The world *bishonen* translates as "beautiful boy" (bi = "beautiful" and shonen = "boy"). At one point, the word referred to androgynous young boys and men notable for their effeminate qualities. They worked as servants (and lovers) for samurai, temple abbots, and other powerful men in Japanese society. Anime *bishonen* are a little different. They retain the androgynous look, but are quite often powerful warriors and magicians. The stereotypical anime *bishonen* is tall and very slender, with features more beautiful than handsome, long hair, and a soft voice. In many ways, they are the female wish-fulfillment answer to the busty and scantily clad anime catgirl (see next entry).

Examples: Allen (*Vision of Escaflowne*), Ashram (*Record of Lodoss War*), Harry MacDougall (*Outlaw Star*), Heero Yuo, Duo Maxwell, and Zechs Marquis (*Gundam Wing*), Sephiroth (*Final Fantasy 7*), Vicious (*Cowboy Bebop*).

Catgirls

Although anime doesn't have the same sort of anthropomorphic characters as Western animation and comics (there are very few talking mice, dogs, and ducks, for example), it does have what are commonly called "catgirls." These characters usually look like human females (and yes, they are almost always female), with secondary feline characteristics such as cat's ears and tails. The typical catgirl is young, highly attractive, and scantily clad, usually serving as the hero's sidekick. Their powers (if any) vary, ranging from virtually none to such traits as super-strength and superior fighting ability.

Examples: Aisha Clan Clan (*Outlaw Star*), Anna and Uni Puma (*Dominion*), Atsuko "Nuku Nuku" Natsume (*All-Purpose Cultural Catgirl Nuku Nuku*), Cheshire (*Miyuki-chan in Wonderland*), Eriya and Naria (*Vision of Escaflowne*), Felicia (*Darkstalkers*), Pink (*Dragon Pink*).

FIVE-*PERSON* TEAMS

Although the "rules" for a five-man team hold true for the most part, the 1980s and 1990s saw some *sentai* shows with two female members. In these cases, the female members of the team would often wear blue, white, or yellow instead of – or in addition to – pink. Further more, if a five-man team ever gains a sixth member, that member will wear white (if the team has a full set of colored heroes) or wear the color the female (*i.e.* pink) team member replaced.

Esper

Espers are people with psychic powers, and in some anime, these psychic powers are frightening to behold! An esper character is usually capable of a wide range of telekinetic effects, ranging from simple telekinesis to telekinetic fields and walls, flight, teleportation, and even telepathy and mind control. Probably the most famous esper is Tetsuo Shima, from the anime/manga *Akira*. He also represents esper powers at their most extreme, since he was capable of teleporting from the Earth to the Moon and could withstand direct hits from an orbital laser weapon.

Examples: Colonel MacDougal (*Spriggan*), Koichi Moroha (*Striker*), Kyosuke Kasuga (*Kimagure Orange Road*), Mai (*Mai the Psychic Girl*), "Old Man" Cho (*Domu*), Sonnet Barjie (*Blue Sonnet*), Sunao Oumi (*Seraphic Feather*), Tetsuo Shima (*Akira*), Yuki Saiko (*Silent Möbius*).

Five-Man Teams

The five-man team is just that – a team of five men (or four men and one woman), who have banded together to fight crime, evil, giant monsters, or what have you. Five-man teams have their origins in various elements of Japanese culture, specifically the five Confucian virtues of benevolence (*jin*), justice (*gi*), courtesy (*rei*), wisdom (*chi*), and sincerity (*shin*). These virtues have associated colors (red, yellow, green, blue, and black, respectively), which will be used to make each team member's uniform. Interestingly, women have no place on a five-*man* team, and if a woman is one of the five characters she will wear pink and replace either courtesy or sincerity.

The most basic form of the five-man team will see little in the way of super powers, and the characters will tend to get by with their skill in the martial arts and various technological gadgets of one sort of another. However, since anime has an unlimited special effects budget, it's a common stunt to give the five-man team highly advanced mecha and the like to pilot (as well as giant monsters and such to fight). A subset of the mecha five-man team is the mystic mecha or mystic armor five-man team, in which the characters can summon suits of armor and/or giant robots from apparently nowhere, and fight using that.

Most five-man teams are seen in live-action *sentai* shows, although there are some anime examples. As an interesting side note, the cultural significance of the number five often leads to other shows having five major characters. *Sailor Moon* is a prime example, with the primary characters being Sailors Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Moon, and Venus. This trend is so pronounced that even otherwise nontraditional shows will follow this pattern, with both *Cowboy Bebop* and *Outlaw Star* having a five character central cast (for *Cowboy Bebop* it was Ein, Faye Valentine, Jet Black, Radical Edward, and Spike Spiegel, while *Outlaw Star had* Aisha Clan Clan, Gene Starwind, Jim Hawking, Melfina, and Twilight Suzuka). GMs who wish to run an anime campaign may want to limit the number of players to five, to capture this effect.

Examples: *Golion/Voltron, Magic User's Club, Sailor Moon, Science Ninja Team Gatchaman, Shinesman.*

Idol Singer

Idol singers are Japanese pop music stars who are virtually worshiped by their fans. They can be either male or female, although most anime idol singers are young women. The primary requirements for being an idol singer is the ability to look cute and sing well – nothing else really matters. The company who owns the idol singer will market them aggressively, getting their thousands (or even millions) of fans to buy all sorts of products related to the idol singer (as well as packing the singer's shows). Idol singers were primarily a phenomena of 1980s Japan, and many anime from that time period feature such characters. The protoypical idol singer is Lin Minmei, from the show *Macross.*

Examples: Eve Tokimatsuri (*Megazone 23*), Key (*Key the Metal Idol*), Lin Minmei (*Macross*), Madoka Ayukawa (*Kimagure Orange Road*), Sharon Apple (*Macross Plus*).

Magical Girls

The concept of the "magical girl" is probably the one anime element most familiar to the average reader. Simply put, a magical girl is a teenaged girl who can undergo a magical transformation from her "normal" self to a version (usually more "adult" in size and development) with super powers (usually of a "magical" nature). For whatever reason, the transformation often requires a lengthy warm-up speech and the character's clothing to vanish momentarily in mid-transformation. Although they sound a bit silly, magical girls are really no different from many Western comic characters with *Only In Hero ID,* such as DC Comics' Captain Marvel, or Marvel Comics' Thor.

As a side note, magical girls are strictly a female phenomena, limited to *shojo* (girl's) anime and manga. There are few males who can undergo this form of transformation, and most of the ones that do turn into *girls* when they transform!

Examples: Cutey Honey (*Cutey Honey*), Hououji Fuu, Hikaru Shidou, and Ryuuzaki Umi (*Magical Knight Rayearth*), Jiyu Nanohana (*Jubei-chan The Ninja Girl*), Sailors Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Moon, and Venus *et al* (*Sailor Moon*), Sasami (*Pretty Girl Sammy*), Yohko Mano (*Devil Hunter Yohko*).

Martial Artist

When one considers Japan's martial arts heritage and history, it is no surprise that anime is rampant with martial artist characters. They range from the fairly mundane to super-powered warriors capable of devastating entire planets. For the most part, martial artists are anime's answer to the Western superhero, with many of them having distinctive costumes, fighting styles, and weapons. In general, the average anime martial artist is incredibly strong, can leap vast distances, and can hurl blasts of *chi* energy.

The anime martial artist is probably the easiest character to develop and write up. GMs could even run an entire campaign involving nothing but martial artist characters. Such campaigns often work best if they follow the video game convention of having some sort of periodic worldwide tournament as an excuse to bring large numbers of characters in contact with each other at one time. When not at the tournament, characters can train by traveling the world, meeting other fighters, and participating in lesser tournaments. Naturally, they will also have various adventures and other encounters along the way.

Examples: Baiken, Jam Kuradoberi, and Sol Badguy *et al* (*Guilty Gear X*), Chun Li Xiang, Ken Masters, and Ryu *et al* (*Street Fighter II*), Ken (*Fist of the North Star*), Kibagami Jubei (*Ninja Scroll*), Manji (*Blade of the Immortal*), Ranma Saotomi, Ryoga Hibiki *et al* (*Ranma ½*), Ryoko Mitsurugi and Shizuma Kusanagi (*Real Bout High School*), Son Goku, Trunks, and Vegita *et al* (*Dragonball*), Spike Spiegel (*Cowboy Bebop*), Twilight Suzuka (*Outlaw Star*).

Mecha Pilots

In Japan, "mecha" is used to describe virtually anything mechanical, and refers to cars, planes, spaceships, *and* giant robots. Naturally, all these vehicles require someone to drive and/or pilot them, and this is where the mecha pilot comes in. The archetypical mecha pilot is extremely skilled at handling his vehicle, and is often a touch reckless as a result. Being the best (or close to it), he gets handed all the really difficult jobs, and it's only due to his skill with his vehicle (and often, the special enhancements built into the same vehicle), that he can survive the mission in one piece.

Mecha shows are often combined with the idea of a five-man team to create shows where the five main characters all pilot small single-man vehicles that can then combine into one much larger vehicle. Other versions of the same basic format have the five main characters all part of an elite mecha combat unit (or a similar group), each with their own individualized machine. Normally, this latter concept treats both the mecha and the combat situations in a more serious and realistic manner.

The various subsets of the mecha pilot archetype include: characters who wear formfitting suits of powered armor, fighter pilots, race car drivers, submarine drivers, and just about anyone else who specializes in flying, driving, piloting, or otherwise operating mobile machinery.

Examples: Amuro Rei and Char Aznable (*Gundam*), Bean Bandit (*Gunsmith Cats/Riding Bean*), Isamu Dyson and Roy Fokker (*Macross*), Gai Daigoji (*Martian Successor Nadescio*), Go Mifune/Speed Racer (*Mach Go Go Go/Speed Racer*), Linna Yamazaki, Nene Romanova, Priss Asagiri, and Sylia Stingray (The Knightsabers, *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Bubblegum Crisis 2040*), Mayumi Kino and Tetsu Hayami (*Blue Submarine No. 6*), Noa Izumi (*Patlabor*), Shin Kazama (*Area 88*), Shinji Ikari (*Neon Genesis Evangelion*).

Police Officer

Police officers are common characters in anime for the one simple reason: Cop shows are exciting, regardless of the culture. Of course, just like in America and American television, the typical anime police action show has little to do with how the police in Japan really work. The typical anime police officer is honest, hard working, and upholds the law. However, these same individuals are often a bit of a maverick when compared to their fellow officers and will "go it alone" if needed (much like their American counterparts). Of course, this being anime, they can get away with such stunts as well.

Examples: Angel and Raiden (*Angel Cop*), Deunan Knute (*Appleseed*), Jeena Malso (*AD Police*), Jet Black (*Cowboy Bebop*), Leon McNichol (*Bubblegum Crisis*), Leona Osaki (*Dominion*), Major Motoko Kusanagi (*Ghost in the Shell*), Mihoshi Kuramitsu (*Tenchi Muyo!*), Noa Izumi (*Patlabor*), Ross Sylibus (*Armitage III*), Roy DeVice (*Silent Möbius*).

Royalty

To be of royal blood in anime often means the character in question will have special powers and/or access to special equipment (such as spaceships and combat mecha). Such characters will also have some degree of status, although for an anime princess, this often translates to being the target of one kidnapping scheme after another. Interestingly enough, a large number of anime royalty are aliens, and of those, most are beautiful females.

Examples: Ashitaka (*Princess Mononoke*), Ayeka, Sasami, and Tenchi Masaki (*Tenchi Muyo!*), Kahm (*Outlanders*), Lum (*Urusei Yatsura*), Rune Venus (*El-Hazard*), Shiko (C-ko) Kotobuki (*Project: A-ko*), Vegita (*Dragonball*).

43

Sorceress/Sorcerer

Pound for pound, magicians and their ilk have to be some of the showiest people in anime. They are one of the "big guns" of the anime world, and rank up with espers for their ability to wreak havoc on the landscape. Due to the visual nature of anime, anime magic and magicians rarely work in subtle ways, and cast spells using loud verbal incantations, expressive gestures, and impressive visual side effects. The spells themselves are often quite destructive, capable of destroying buildings and even entire cities when they impact.

For the most part, anime magicians seem to follow the traditions of Western European "hermetic" magic, calling upon angels and elemental spirits to power their magic. However, there are also Buddhist Bukkyo, Shinto priests and priestesses, and other types of magicians to be found in anime.

GMs who wish to feature anime-styled magicians in their games should consider the following conventions:

1) Most anime magicians have specific names for their spells and usually announce them out loud when casting said spells (usually as part of the incantations).

2) Many anime magicians are specialists, and concentrate on specific areas of expertise. GMs should consider having magicians who only cast specific elemental spells (such as cold or fire), or who only know a select set of spells. Few anime characters have the sort of potpourri spell selections often seen in many fantasy roleplaying games.

3) Both GMs and players should consider how spells look when cast. For example, characters might cast blasts of water that look like dragons or whales, create barriers by producing an ever-expanding sheet of paper, or summon flying birds and animals that detonate on impact with a target (and so on). Although this will probably have little effect on game play, it certainly will help establish the idea this is an anime magician and/or game.

4) Recommended Limitations for anime magicians include: *Concentrate, Extra Time, Incantations, Increased Endurance, Gestures, Requires A Skill Roll,* and *Side Effects.*

Examples: Dark Schneider (*Bastard!!*), Kahm (*Outlanders*), Katsumi Liqueur, Mana Isozaki, and Nami Yamigumo (*Silent Möbius*), Kiki (*Kiki's Delivery Service*), Lina Inverse (*Slayers*), Urd (*Oh My Goddess!*).

Special Agent

The term "special agent" is a misnomer, and a better one might be "special operative" or even simply "specialist." In any event, this is a sort of catchall category for all those bounty hunters, contract killers, ninja, private investigators, and spies who inhabit anime. Almost always found in modern or future settings, these characters are usually as good with firearms as the anime martial artist is with his fists.

In general, these characters are solo operatives, although they might have a sidekick or some friendly contacts to use as a source of information and equipment. Naturally, their skills and their profession get them into all sorts of trouble, at which point they must use these same skills to get them out safely.

Examples: Goku (*Midnight Eye Goku*), Golgo 13 (*The Professional*), Kei and Yuri (*The Dirty Pair*), Lupin the 3rd and Daisuke Jigen (*Lupin III*), Rally Vincent (*Gunsmith Cats*), Ryu Saeba (*City Hunter*), Vash the Stampede (*Trigun*).

Supernatural Monster

Japan's religious beliefs are such that ghosts and other spirits are readily accepted as a fact of life. Naturally, this means that such elements are common to anime as well. Although, in anime, supernatural creatures are just as likely to be heroic characters as monstrous villains. Vampires seem to be the most popular character type, followed quickly by ghosts. Regardless of origin, all such characters have impressive powers, such as enhanced strength, flight, immunity to certain weapons (or damage in general), and magic spells.

GMs who wish to let such characters into a campaign have a lot of leeway as to what the character can do, and shouldn't feel constrained by traditional sources and abilities – this is anime after all, where one vampire lives off of vegetable juice while another carries twin automatic pistols and flies by turning into a cloud of bats (not to mention the ghost who hurls around bolts of fire!).

Examples: Alucard and Seras Victoria (*Hellsing*), D (*Vampire Hunter D*), Hsien-ko (*Darkstalkers*), Jean Jaquemonde (*Striker*), Miyu (*Vampire Princess Miyu*), Okinu (*Ghost Sweeper Mikami*), Rally Cheyenne (*Silent Möbius*), Yakumo Fuji (*3x3 Eyes*), Zenki (*Zenki*).

Supernatural Monster Hunter

Wherever there are supernatural monsters, there are monster hunters. For some reason, the average anime monster hunter is a young attractive woman in a tight and/or skimpy outfit, usually armed with a great big sword (or other edged weapon). They are often trained in the martial arts, and back up this skill with various magical powers useful for slaying ghosts, demons, and other monsters. Interestingly, in some cases, the supernatural monster hunter is a supernatural monster herself.

GMs wishing to run an anime-inspired campaign might want to consider the "monster hunter" framework. It often allows for a broad

mix of anime elements, from five-man teams to magicians, and usually contains more than enough action, adventure, and character development to keep everyone interested. Such games can be run in a lighthearted vein, or be deadly serious (or anywhere in between).

Examples: Alucard and Seras Victoria (*Hellsing*), Ayaka Kisaragi (*Phantom Quest Corp*), D (*Vampire Hunter D*), Eiko Rando, Maki Umezaki, Takami Sakuragi, Yoichi Taba, Yu Himehagi, and Yuka Kikushima (*Geobreeders*), Katsumi Liqueur, Kiddy Phenil, Lebia Mavelick, Lum Cheng, Mana Isozaki, Nami Yamigumo, Rally Cheyenne, and Yuki Saiko (*Silent Möbius*), Ling Ling Li (*3x3 Eyes*), Mikami (*Ghost Sweeper Mikami*), Miyu (*Vampire Princess Miyu*), Yohko Manno (*Devil Hunter Yohko*).

ELVES, ESPERS, AND NINJA: ANIME AND YOUR FAVORITE GENRE

There is an anime for every possible genre from sports to cyberpunk, from modern-day conspiracy to near-future post-holocaust. The following list really only glosses over some of the main "metagenres" of anime, talking a look at common elements and characteristics.

One thing to remember when viewing any anime is that the story is not written with Western viewers in mind. Many elements will seem strange or unusual, due to a difference in culture. However, for the most part, the stories carry over quite well, and are enjoyable regardless of national origin.

COMEDY

All-Purpose Cultural Catgirl Nuku Nuku, Devil Hunter Yohko, Dominion, Excel Saga, FLCL, Geobreeders, Jubei-chan The Ninja Girl, Project: A-ko, Ranma ½, Slayers, Urusei Yatsura.

Characteristics

Anime comedy is rarely of the American "sit-com" type, tending more towards "theater of the absurd" in which anything worth doing is worth overdoing. The humor is often of a visual nature, with sight gags, pratfalls, goofy magical rituals, and wacky combat techniques. At times, the stakes might be serious (rescuing a kidnapped maiden, defeating an evil monster), but the journey itself might be filled with silly situations and bizarre characters.

Typical Conventions

Anything Worth Doing Is Worth Overdoing: This can also be termed "exaggeration humor." Basically, it means taking a simple character element and magnifying to an absurd degree. Manga writer and artist Rumiko Takahashi is a master of this effect, as evidenced by Ataru Moroboshi, who isn't just girl-crazy, but *the most* lecherous individual in the universe,

or Ryouga Hibiki, whose sense of direction is so bad he can get lost *inside* a house. Other examples are female characters so unable to cook they can literally burn water.

Parody Can Be Fun: Basically, this means poking fun at anything and everything. Once again, Rumiko Takahashi virtually elevated this to an art form with her series *Ranma ½*, which parodied the entire martial arts genre with such things as martial arts figure skating, tea ceremony, and cooking. *Excel Saga* does much the same, with each episode poking fun at a popular form of anime and/or genre (examples include action movies, love stories, and sports anime).

People Are Indestructible: At times characters in anime comedies reach an almost Warner Brothers level of invulnerability, withstanding all sorts of abuse only to come back a few frames later in perfect health and condition (although they may have been a blackened and smoking silhouette a little while ago). This is shown to great effect in *Slayers,* where spells capable of flattening entire cities only singe most characters. *Excel Saga* takes this effect one step further, killing off the main character (Excel) several times in the first episode alone, only to have her brought back by the "Great Will of the Universe."

School Is Stranger Than You Can Imagine: If you're a student at a Japanese school in an anime comedy, you can guarantee your fellow students (and teachers) are probably certifiably insane. Odds are there are ghosts in the backrooms, the Science Club is blowing stuff up, and the beautiful exchange student is secretly from another planet... and that's just for starters. However, if you survive, you'll have the time of your life.

The Universe

The world is usually tilted in favor of the heroes, if only because Evil isn't funny. Alternately, Evil is portrayed as humorous through basic stupidity, ineptitude, and simple inability to spot the obvious.

CYBERPUNK

AD Police Files, A.D. Police, Akira, Angel Cop, Appleseed, Armitage III, Battle Angel, Black Magic M-66, Blue Sonnet, Bubblegum Crisis, Bubblegum Crisis 2040, Crusher Police Dominion, Dominion, GenoCyber, Ghost In The Shell, Silent Möbius, Spriggan

Characteristics

The future is here and it is dark. There maybe be advanced medical techniques, powerful computers, three-dimensional televisions, and fully interactive video games, but there is also pollution, overcrowding, urban violence, and monolithic corporations to worry about.

Typical Conventions

I Only Do Eyes: "Future Shock" is a common theme of cyberpunk, both American and Japanese. It is defined as virtually unrestricted technological development, which results in people unable to keep up with, much less fully comprehend, the world around them. In anime cyberpunk, this theme is also represented by scientists who create, build, and unleash new technologies without any thought as to the long-term impact their creations will have on society.

Machines Are People Too: If you build an intelligent robot, eventually that robot will want to be free. Several anime series (such as *Armitage III* and *Ghost In The Shell*) have looked at this sort of situation, in which humans and their artificially created lifeforms struggle over such ideas as freedom and equal rights under the law.

The Matrix Has You: Entering cyberspace in anime usually means entering into a totally different "dimension." Characters do so by donning feedback suits or by sitting in special sensory stimulation tanks, both of which are connected to the virtual world of cyberspace. Although the character has access to almost unlimited amounts of information and data, combat encounters in this other world can be quite dangerous – to both the character and his equipment.

Will The Real Human Please Stand Up?: Many anime cyberpunk series have a notable preponderance of androids, cyborgs, robots, and synthetic humans. This often becomes a major theme of the series, in which the question of who is a human and what it means to be human is examined. A similar theme is one of identity and sense of self. If you've replaced 90% of your body with artificial parts, are you still "you?"

The Universe

Neutral. The world sometimes tilts a little in the favor of the villains, usually because the villains are part of the monolithic corporations and have access to vast resources.

DRAMA

Grave of the Fireflies, Jin-Roh, Noir, Perfect Blue, Wings of Honneamise.

Characteristics

This form of anime wants to tell a story pure and simple. In most cases the story is one with minimal visual effects, or with ones no different than seen in your typical live-action film. These anime also tend towards a "realistic" look, in which many of the normal anime conventions (large eyes, small mouths, strange hair colors) are virtually nonexistent.

Typical Conventions

Life Is Pain: This isn't a Disney picture. There is no guarantee the hero, heroine, or the cute sidekick (if there is one) will make it through the film just because the standard movie conventions say so. Characters in dramatic anime have tough choices to make and these choices can – and will – have consequences.

Welcome To The Real World: A dramatic anime wants to be just that, dramatic. So, the anime sense of style takes a backseat to real world action. Vehicles look and act like real vehicles, bullets hurt people, and people who are hurt can and will die.

The Universe

Neutral. The world is tilted neither in favor of the hero, or the villain. If someone wants something done, they need to do it themselves, and they better prepare properly, or else they will probably fail.

FANTASY

Bastard!!, El-Hazard, Fushigi Yugi, Heroic Record of Arslan, Magical Knight Rayearth, Ninja Scroll, Princess Mononoke, Record of Lodoss War, RG Veda, Slayers, Vision of Escaflowne.

Characteristics

For the most part anime fantasy adventures and fantasy worlds are epic in scale. The threat the heroes must oppose is a great evil, and failure will usually bring the destruction and/or enslavement of the world. Depending on the specific anime, some of the obstacles the heroes encounter and over come may be familiar to the Western viewer (such as dragons, goblins, and trolls), while others will be rooted in various Asian cultures and mythologies.

Typical Conventions

Don't Meddle In The Affairs Of Dragons: Anime dragons are huge. Really huge. As in "What happened to the sun?" huge. They are also really old, really powerful, intelligent, and capable of wiping out entire armies. However, they can be either good or bad in disposition, and thus not necessarily an enemy.

Dungeons And Dragons: The Anime?: One of the first big anime fantasy series was *Record of Lodoss War,* which was based off of a series of novels, which were in turn based off of a *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign run by a Japanese college student. *Record* itself has many recognizable elements of *D&D,* such as character classes (fighters, thieves, magicians, and clerics), races (elves and dwarves), and monsters (dragons and goblins). A very popular anime, it went a long way in influencing the look and feel of other "Western-styled" fantasy series to follow.

Elves: Anime elves have a unique look all their own. They come in two basic types, "light" and "dark." Light elves are fair skinned, with fair hair, and usually live in trees and the like.

"Dark" elves have deeply tanned or light brown skin, light or dark hair, and tend to avoid the daytime. In either case, they are usually a bit shorter than humans, with slender builds, and very (Very!) long thin pointed ears. However, elves only appear in anime with a "Western" fantasy feel to them.

Magic Is Number One: If the contest is between a single swordsman and a lone magician, the magician wins. If the contest is between an army and a lone magician, I'd bet on the magician if I were you. Anime magicians tend to have a lot of power to throw around, and in some anime (such as *Bastard!!* and *Slayers*) a single magician is capable of casting spells capable of destroying entire cities! On the other hand, the lone swordsman probably has a number of special fighting techniques of his own, some of which may seem almost magical in nature, so it all balances out (not to mention, many anime heroes know both swordplay *and* sorcery).

Weird Armor: A lot of characters in anime wear vaguely European suits of armor. This armor is a suit of plate and has such features as large (and I do mean *large*) *pauldrons* (shoulder armor), a breastplate, forearm armor, *tassets* (hanging plates that protect the waist, groin, and thighs), and thigh armor. Quite often, there is no helmet, no bicep armor, and minimal thigh armor. Characters also tend to wear this armor over bare skin, or simple clothing, not the thick padded coats used in reality. When women wear such armor, it can have such features as high heels, a lack of thigh protection (to show off their legs), and exposed cleavage.

You're Not In Kansas Anymore: A popular form of anime fantasy involves dragging a character (or characters) from Earth to another world. Naturally, the characters find themselves central to some prophecy, or possessing magical powers, and are expected to save the kingdom from the threat of evil.

The Universe

The world tends to be tilted in the favor of the heroes, if only because the prophecies and legends say evil will be defeated (provided the heroes perform certain actions). That said, there is no guarantee the heroes will all live through the adventure, and odds are, one or two will die before victory is assured.

HORROR/SUPERNATURAL

3x3 Eyes, Blue Seed, Demon City Shinjuku, Ghost Sweeper Mikami, Hellsing, Legend of the Overfiend, Phantom Quest Corp, Silent Möbius, Spirited Away, Vampire Hunter D, Vampire Princess Miyu, Wicked City.

Characteristics

The typical anime horror setting runs like this: In the shadows there live Things Man Was Not Meant To See. They are the demons, ghosts, goblins, vampires, and other fierce monsters of the Underworld, who will quickly kill (or worse yet, *not* kill) anyone they encounter. Standing against this threat is a small number of magicians, priestesses, and demon hunters who have made it their job to defend humanity. It is a dirty and dangerous job, but, as the saying goes, someone has to do it.

Typical Conventions

Anyone Can Die At Anytime: There is nothing more expendable than the background population of a horror anime. Although the heroes will tend to survive the attacks of the monsters, everyone else is fair game. While most of the violence tends to be off-screen, or generalized in nature (*i.e.* we see a building full of people collapse without seeing the individual suffering that goes with it), the body counts of such anime can be staggering.

Land Of 1000 Ghosts: As a rule, Japan has always had a strong belief in ghosts and the like. A lot of this is tied into both the Buddhist and Shinto religions, which state that spirits stay around after death before moving on to the land of the dead, and that spirits can eventually be reincarnated and returned to earth to try their luck again. Naturally, anime capitalizes on this, and anyone looking to run a horror type game should read up on Japanese ghosts and spirits for some ideas on their nature. This also means that Japan is virtually crawling with ghosts, as seen in *Ghost Sweeper Mikami*.

Magic Is Real: Magic exists in virtually all horror anime, although the ability for the heroes to exploit this fact varies greatly. In many cases, only the supernatural (*i.e.* ghosts and vampires) have magical and/or supernatural powers, so normal humans have to get by with their wits and modern technology.

Naughty Tentacles: A staple of *hentai* ("adult") anime, things with tentacles lurk everywhere, just waiting for some poor unfortunate (and beautiful) female to wander by. Once they have a woman in their clutches, they... well... I'll let you use your imagination for the rest.

The Universe

Neutral at best, weighted towards the powers of darkness at worst. Even if the heroes win their battles, they will usually take severe wounds, and lose members.

ROMANCE

El-Hazard, Kimagure Orange Road, Maison Ikkoku, Oh, My Goddess!, Please Save My Earth, Ranma ½, Tenchi Muyo!, Windaria.

Characteristics

For the most part, romantic elements are built into and around other forms of anime. Few

anime seem to be love stories for the story's sake; usually the romantic angle is worked in among other plot threads.

Typical Conventions

Frustration Is Funny: Pining after the incredibly beautiful girl is one thing. Getting to do anything other than kiss her is another. The prime reason for this is simple: the author is telling a story, not an X-rated *hentai* series. It also depends on the target market – romantic stories aimed at younger readers will concentrate more on the attempts of the main character to actually win his (or her) love, not what comes after (since usually a kiss is enough to seal the relationship). Of course, in stories aimed at more adult and mature audiences, the content will follow suit.

One Guy, One Million Girlfriends: This is what you get when you combine comedy and romance. In a more serious setting, love-triangles are common anime elements, as it provides a nice bit of conflict to motivate characters and add tension to inter-character relationships. In a comedy, however, a love-triangle can quickly get out of control, and a single main character (almost always male) will find himself with upwards of a dozen (or more) would-be girlfriends (or worse: *fiancés!*). Naturally, our hero is unable to pick between them all, or if he has picked, no one (including his would-be beloved) believes him. The Rumiko Takahashi series' *Ranma ½* and *Urusei Yatsura* pretty much defined this concept, although *Tenchi Muyo!* doesn't do a bad job either.

The Universe

For the most part the world is neutral, although one can argue it is tilted in favor of chaos, if only because the hero never seems to get an even break. On the other hand, in most romantic settings, everything does work out okay in the end.

SPACE OPERA

Armored Trooper VOTOMS, Cowboy Bebop, Five Star Stories, Outlaw Star, Legend of the Galactic Heroes, Macross, Mobile Suit Gundam, Space Battleship Yamato/Starblazers, and anything else done by Leiji Matsumoto.

Characteristics

This genre is actually two settings in one. The main setting is true Space Opera on the scale of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek,* while the secondary setting is far more restrained in sense of scale and attention to realism. In Space Opera, the setting is galactic in scale, with epic adventures between huge fleets of space-faring empires. In the more realistic Science Fiction settings, the scale is restricted to a single system or even a single planet. Science Fiction settings also have a greater attention to realism and actual physics,

while Space Opera is more willing to ignore such things in favor or impressive visual effects and stunts. The best modern comparison between the two styles would be to compare the plot elements and adventures of the characters in *Outlaw Star* to those in *Cowboy Bebop.*

Typical Conventions

Bigger Than Big Spaceships: Ships in Space Opera are big. Really big. They also have an amazing tendency to look like water-based battleships and destroyers, complete with upper gun decks bristling with triple turrets and the like. Others are modeled after sailing ships, with masts, solar sails, and rows of guns along the sides. Few ships in this genre have the blocky, unaerodynamic look one expects "real" spaceships to actually have.

Laser Swords: Ever since *Star Wars*, it has apparently been a requirement for characters to haul around weapons with energy blades. Swords, axes, spears, and so on – if it has an edge, odds are you'll find a laser version of it somewhere. And like the lightsabers in *Star Wars,* such weapons can, and will, cut through most anything.

Massed Missiles: Apparently one reason spaceships are so big is so they can carry limitless supplies of missiles. For the most part, anime missiles are visually spectacular and incredibly inaccurate. The start of any anime ship-to-ship battle (especially if it's hordes of smaller fighters) is usually marked by clouds of missiles being fired off en masse to make pretty smoke trails and a few explosions, followed by an intense World War II-styled dogfight. Of course, missiles fired by the hero tend to ignore these rules and can hit anything.

Wave Motion Guns: Initially seen in *Space Battleship Yamato,* the Wave Motion Gun (a.k.a. the Wave Bye-Bye Gun) is really just a general term for any number of anime superweapons that can wipe out even the toughest targets in a single shot. Usually the entire ship is built **around** this weapon, or it makes up the spine of the ship. Of course, such a powerful weapon does have certain drawbacks, and these weapons normally need some time to warm up before they can be used (which is why they are never used at the beginning of the battle). Such weapons also tend to use all of a ship's available energy, making the ship using them extremely vulnerable immediately after firing. Other classic examples of the Wave Motion Gun include the *Macross* main gun and the Emaan Demolition Cannon from the series *Orguss.*

The Universe

Mostly weighted in favor of the heroes. However, war is hell, and many Space Opera anime drive this home with scenes of death and destruction, both among the enemy and the heroes.

PLEASE WELCOME: MR. AND MRS. GENERIC ANIME!

That's right, it's Ken and Sakura! These two combine a multitude of anime stereotypes and clichés into their respective character sheets. Although valid characters, one shouldn't take them all that seriously – they are deliberately designed to be an exaggeration of an anime mecha pilot and an anime magical girl after all.

Ken Tanaka

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
19/25	DEX	27	13-	OCV: 6(8)/DCV: 6(8)
16	CON	12	12-	
12	BODY	4	12-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll: 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4	13-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3/5	SPD	1		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		(3, 5, 8, 10, 12)
32	END	0		
40	STUN	12		

Total Characteristics Cost: 98

Movement: Running: 7"/14"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
9	*At Home In His Mecha:* DEX +6; No Figured Characteristics (-½), Only In Mecha (-½)	0
13	*At Home In His Mecha:* SPD +2; Only In Mecha (-½)	0
2	*Swift Runner:* Running +1" (7" total)	1

Martial Arts: Earth Defense Force Hand-to-Hand Training

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	25 STR Disarm
4	Escape	+0	+0	30 STR Versus Grabs
4	Strike	+0	+2	5d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	3d6 +v/5; Target Falls

Perks
3   Membership: Earth Defense Force Officer
4   Reputation: Ace Pilot 11- (+2/+2d6)

Skills
15   +3 with Vehicle Weapons
3   +1 with Earth Defense Force Hand-to-Hand Training

3   Breakfall 13-
5   Combat Driving 14-
9   Combat Pilot 16- (17-)
3   Electronics 13-
2   Gambling (Card Games) 13-
4   KS: Aircraft And Aircraft Identification 14-
1   KS: EDF Ceremonies And Drill 8-
2   KS: EDF History And Customs 11-
3   KS: Military World 13-
3   Mechanics 13-
3   Navigation 13-
1   Paramedics 8-
2   PS: Pilot/Soldier 11-
3   Streetwise 13-
2   Survival (Temperate/Subtropical) 13-
3   Systems Operation 13-
5   Tactics 14-
11   TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Mecha, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Combat Aircraft, Large Planes, Parachuting (Advanced and Basic), Small Planes
5   WF: Small Arms, Grenade Launcher, Knife, Vehicle Weapons

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 138

Total Character Cost: 236

125+ Disadvantages
20   Hunted: Agents Of The Denzari 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
15   Hunted: The Earth Defense Force 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Ken is easy for the EDF to find, Watching)
15   Psychological Limitation: Attracted To/Obsessed With Melita (Common, Strong)
15   Psychological Limitation: Emotionally Distant (afraid to form permanent deep relationships) (Common, Strong)
10   Psychological Limitation: Tired Of The Killing (Common, Moderate)
10   Reputation: Ace pilot of the EDF, 14- (Limited Group)
20   Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major [character suffers punishment for disobedience])
6   Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 236

SAY… WHAT IS KEN'S MECHA ANYWAY?

There is no description for Ken's mecha in order to make it easier to drop Ken into any setting the GM desires. The basic description would be for something resembling an F-15 Eagle with the ability to transform into a two-legged walking machine. Known as a Hussar, the mecha has twin rotary cannons in the wings, missiles on racks under the wings, and might even carry a large and heavy laser rifle ("gunpod") for use in walker mode.

WHY KEN AND SAKURA?

The names for the two sample characters were chosen with some care. For starters, their surnames are "Tanaka." Tanaka is a real Japanese surname, and is roughly the equivalent of the American "Smith," a nod to the characters' generic origins. As for their personal names, "Ken" was chosen as it seems to be the prototypical Japanese name, easy for Westerners to pronounce, and the root of many more complex Japanese names (such as Kenjii, Kenjiro, Kennosuke, and so on). It also doesn't hurt that the character for "ken" can be written to mean "sword," "fist," or "technique."

Sakura's name was selected because, to be honest, you can't swing a dead cat in anime without hitting a character named Sakura. A short list of anime with a Sakura character include: *Cardcaptor Sakura, Hyper Police, Key the Metal Idol, Sakura Taisen, Street Fighter Alpha,* and *Urusei Yatsura.*

Ken Tanaka

江理香

Background/History: For as long as he can recall, Ken Tanaka wanted fly. When he was little, he'd lay in the grass, watching the planes and shuttles fly overhead. As he grew older, he built a whole fleet of model planes, with aerospace fighters as his favorite. After leaving high school, he promptly joined the Earth Defense Force, applying as a pilot in the hopes they would teach him to fly. Fortunately for him, he passed his exams with flying colors, and not only was made a pilot, but was enlisted into the combat arm of the EDF, and given the chance to get behind the controls of the very same aerospace fighters he'd built so many models of when he was younger.

But Ken's happiness was not to last. The same day that his girlfriend Yuka tied his white pilot's scarf around his neck and accepted his proposal for marriage, the alien Denzari dropped asteroid chunks on several major Earth cities. Millions were killed – among them Ken's parents and the love of his life, Yuka.

Now, with nothing much to live for, Ken has found solace in the EDF, fighting to both protect the Earth and to enact his vengeance on the enemy who took everything dear from him. His dedication has made him one of, if not *the*, top pilots in the EDF, with an impressive number of kills to his credit. But his experiences are beginning to take their toll on Ken, and some of his squadmates fear that it is only a matter of time before he self-destructs.

Personality/Motivation: For the most part, Ken is a quiet loner who does his job simply and efficiently. Although he occasionally joins his fellow pilots in the mess for dinner and card games, he isn't much for frivolity, and most pilots give him a wide berth. Newer pilots tend to think his attitude is due to being arrogant and stuck up over his kill record, while older pilots know better and respect his privacy. As for Ken, he's found befriending his fellow pilots and getting to know them better only seems to result in heartache when they are inevitably killed in action.

Recently, however, Ken has become almost obsessed with a Denzari fighter pilot by the name of Melita. She is an ace herself, and the two have met several times in battle, each doing their best to shoot the other down, but failing due to their virtually equal skill as pilots. It doesn't help that Melita is very beautiful, and that Ken's obsession may be slowly turning into infatuation.

Quote: "*We go up, we fight, some die, we come back. Tomorrow we do it again. What sort of life is this?*"

Powers/Tactics: Simply put, Ken is one of the best there is. He hand-eye coordination is already better than most, but once in the cockpit he almost becomes "one" with his machine, and can push any vehicle to its limits. In combat, he seeks quick, clean kills, and will try and down his opponent as soon as possible, leaving grandstanding and bold stunts for the foolish and inexperienced (and the soon to be dead). He favors cannons over missiles (he finds them more precise), and prefers speed above all, and will leave his mecha in flight mode for as long as he can get away with it, only switching to walker mode if he has no other options left.

Campaign Use: Ken Tanaka combines numerous common elements of the Mecha Pilot Hero archetype, including: a dead fiancé (or girlfriend, or parents), being an ace pilot, falling in love with a female enemy pilot, and being weary of war and tired of killing. As a further cliché, he should be very young, somewhere between the ages of 16 and 19. This version is nominally 21, so that he'd have been around 19 when Yuka was killed. Many mecha pilots are very young, especially in shows targeted for young teens, and one of the most famous mecha pilots of them all, Shinji Ikari from the show *Neon Genesis Evangelion,* is only 14 years old.

Ken can be used in a wide variety of campaigns, and with a little work would be at home in such diverse settings as the Second World War or far-future Space Opera. Regardless of the setting, however, Ken should be *the* best pilot there is, or at least one of the best. If the best, he shouldn't be a regular part of the campaign, but someone the PCs only occasionally meet and interact with, so as not to overshadow the PCs' exploits. If the GM wants to bring Ken into an adventure, he could do so by having the PCs act as his wingmen for a mission, or have the PCs mount a rescue mission to retrieve Ken from enemy hands (even the best pilots get shot down sometimes). To really test the PCs' loyalty and up the melodramatic angst factor common to many mecha anime, they could be called on to capture Melita, not knowing of her relationship with Ken!

Appearance: Ken stands just under six feet in height, with a lean, muscular build. His dark blue hair is cut short on the sides and back, but tends to hang long in the front, falling across his brow and into his eyes. When on duty, he will wear the regulation uniform, which for him consists of a one-piece flight suit, boots, gloves, and helmet. Around his neck, Ken knots a long white scarf, a non-regulation affectation that he refuses to remove. Off-duty Ken dresses in the inexpensive casual fashions of the day.

WHO ARE THE DENZARI?

The alien invaders can be anyone the GM wants them to be, but in true anime fashion, they should be virtually identical to humans with only some slight physical differences (like blue or green skin, or minor differences in facial features). For purposes of this write-up, the Denzari are virtually identical for humans so that Ken can fall in love with one of them.

MELITA

A pilot for the Denzari invasion force, Melita should have skills equal to Ken's and a COM of 18 or 20. For her part, she should fall in love with Ken as well, possibly going so far as to defect to the EDF and end up fighting against her own people. Naturally, this being anime, it is Melita's defection and relationship with Ken that provides the catalyst to end the war.

Sakura-Hime Sakura
(Cherry Princess Sakura)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10+15	STR	12*	11-(14-)	Lift 100(800 kg); 2d6(5d6) [1(2)]
16+10	DEX	18+24*	12-(14-)	OCV: 5 (9)/
12+11	CON	4+18*	11-(14-)	DCV: 5 (9)
9	BODY	-2	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll: 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
12+8	PRE	2+6*	11-(13-)	PRE Attack: 2d6 (4d6)
16	COM	3	12-	
4+6	PD	2+2*		Total: 16 PD (6r)
2+8	ED	4*		Total: 16 ED (6r)
3+2	SPD	4+8*		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4+6	REC	0		(3, 5, 8, 10, 12)
24+22	END	0		
20+15	STUN	1*		* OIHID (-¼)

Total Characteristics Cost: 110

Movement: Running: 8"/16"
Leaping: 30"/60"
Swimming: 3"/6"

Cost	Powers	END
48	*Cherry Princess Powers:* Multipower, 60-point reserve; OIHID (-¼)	
3u	1) *Shining Sakura Strike:* EB 12d6; Gestures (point at target with the Cherry Blossom Scepter; -¼), Incantations (-¼), OIHID (-¼)	6
3u	2) *Sparkling Cherry Bomb:* EB 8d6, Explosion (+½); Gestures ("throw" the attack with the Cherry Blossom Scepter; -¼), Incantations (-¼), OIHID (-¼)	6
2u	3) *Radiant Petal Flurry:* Change Environment 16" radius, -4 to Sight Group PER Rolls; Extra Time (Full Phase; -¼), Gestures (swing the Cherry Blossom Scepter around the head; -¼), Incantations (-¼), No Range (-½), OIHID (-¼)	4
1	4) *Cherry Gentle Kiss:* Simplified Healing 6d6; Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (Sakura must touch the target with the Cherry Blossom Scepter; -¼), Increased Endurance (x2 END; -½), Others Only (-½), OIHID (-¼)	12
8	*Cherry Blossom Scepter:* HA +2d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Hand-to-Hand Attack (-½), OIHID (-¼)	0
24	*Can Leap To The Horizon:* Leaping +25" (30" forward, 15" upward), Accurate; OIHID (-¼)	2
4	Running +2" (8" Total)	2
1	Swimming +1" (3" Total)	1
3	*Transformation Sequence:* Cosmetic Transform 2d6 (clothing into Cherry Princess Sakura *fuku* and back); OAF (Cherry Blossom Scepter; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Limited Target (clothes; -½)	1

Martial Arts: Judo

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	Block	+1	+3	Block, Abort
4	Escape	+0	+0	25 (40) STR vs. Grabs
3	Joint Lock	+0	-1	Grab One Limb, 20 (35) STR To Hold On
4	Joint Lock/ Throw	+1	+0	Grab One Limb; 1d6 NND (7); Target Falls
3	Slam	+0	+1	2d6 (5d6) +v/5; Target Falls

Perks
15 Follower: Monster, a white ferret

Talents
10 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED); OIHID (-¼)
3 *Supreme Balance:* Environmental Movement: no penalties on narrow surfaces

Skills
4 +2 OCV with Yumi
6 +2 with Judo
4 +1 with Hand-to-Hand Combat; OIHID (-¼)
4 +1 with DCV; OIHID (-¼)

5 Acrobatics 13- (15-)
3 Breakfall 12- (14-)
3 Climbing 12- (14-)
1 KS: Judo 8-
1 KS: Myconids 8-
1 KS: Shinto Ritual 8-
1 Mechanics 8-
3 PS: Softball 12- (14-)
0 PS: Student 8-
3 PS: Volleyball 12- (14-)
1 TF: Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Muscle-Powered Ground Vehicles
1 WF: Yumi (Bow)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 184

Total Cost: 294

150+ Disadvantages
10 Distinctive Features: Absurd-Looking Fuku (Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable)
10 Distinctive Features: Judo Style (Not Concealable, Detectable By Large Group)
20 DNPC: Hitomi Ishida (best friend and monster bait) 14- (Normal)
15 DNPC: Grandfather 8- (Normal, Unaware of character's Secret Identity)
20 Hunted: Myconids 14- (As Pow, Kill)
10 Psychological Limitation: A Touch Scatterbrained (Common, Moderate)

15 Psychological Limitation: Impulsive And Headstrong (Common, Strong)
15 Psychological Limitation: Protective Of Her Friends (Common, Strong)
10 Reputation: tomboy 14- (Limited Group)
15 Social Limitation: Secret ID (Frequently, Major) (Sakura Tanaka)
5 Unluck: 1d6

Total Disadvantage Points: 295

Background/History: When she was very young, Sakura Tanaka's parents were killed in a car accident, leaving her in the care of her grandfather. Although he raised her the best he could, the ways of young girls were somewhat beyond him, and Sakura grew up a touch "wild," with a tomboyish nature and love for many things "non-feminine," such as sports, the martial arts, and anything to do with the outdoors.

One day, while looking through some of her parents' belongings, Sakura found an interesting object tucked away in her mother's storage chest. It was a long stick, or wand, shaped to look like the branch of a cherry tree in full bloom. Curious, Sakura tapped the wand against the chest in an effort to knock the dust off.

Once she recovered from the shock of being lifted in the air while her clothes were torn from her body, Sakura discovered she had become someone else, someone far different, someone with magical powers and abilities far beyond those of normal school girls. She was, according to Monster, her pet ferret, who now seemed to be able to talk, Sakura-hime Sakura, the Cherry Princess, and it was her mission to stand and oppose the Myconids, those foul and loathsome creatures of the dark. As for Sakura, she did what any normal girl would do in a situation like this: she fainted.

From such inauspicious beginnings, Sakura has since gone on to take up the scepter of the Cherry Princess, fighting evil in all its forms. Her constant foes are the Myconids, ugly and horrible fungus-like creatures who lurk in the dark places of Tokyo, preying on the weak and helpless. But, armed with her Cherry Blossom Scepter, her Cherry Princess powers, the advice of Monster the ferret, and her own courage, she will see justice done!

Personality/Motivation: Brought up by her grandfather since she was very young, Sakura is not what one normally expects from a Japanese female high school student. Quite a bit of her grandfather's nature has rubbed off on her, and Sakura is well known for being stubborn and prone to act on impulse, as opposed to any sort of careful planning. Unfortunately, this also means she's a problematic student and has trouble concentrating on any one thing for long, resulting in her having a reputation among her teachers as being flighty and unable to apply herself. To compound her problems, her love of sports and archery, coupled with her total inability to cook, has made her a bit of an outcast, much to the dismay of her best friend Hitomi, who constantly tries to set up Sakura on dates, only to watch most of them fail miserably.

For her own part, Sakura is tries to rise above it all. She knows she's not the best student, that she often oversleeps, that she has trouble concentrating on any one thing for any length of time, and that she can't boil water to save her life, but she also knows she has a higher purpose in life, and as long as she holds to her mission, all will work out all right in the end.

Quotes: *In the name of Peace, Love, and Justice, Sakura-Hime Sakura has arrived! Myconids beware!"*

"Oh, teacakes!" (her answer to swearing)
"Shut up, Monster!"

Powers/Tactics: By tapping her Cherry Blossom Scepter against any handy surface, Sakura can activate her Cherry Princess powers, transforming from Sakura Tanaka, simple schoolgirl, into Sakura-hime Sakura, warrior for love and justice. The transformation lifts her off the ground a few feet, shreds her clothing (much to Sakura's dismay), and then reforms the fragments into her Sakura-hime Sakura uniform. Aside from a change in clothing, she gains an increase in physical strength, reflexes, and durability, becoming faster, stronger, and tougher. The Cherry Blossom Scepter transforms as well, becoming a sturdier version of itself, and is usable as both a hand-to-hand weapon and as a focus for Sakura's magic powers.

Sakura's Cherry Princess Powers allow her to hurl blasts of brilliant pink energy or to throw explosive bombs. She can also summon a storm of cherry blossom petals to hide her from her enemies, heal the injured with a touch of her scepter, leap great distances, and she shows a marked resistance to injury (although her uniform is never so lucky).

Campaign Use: Sakura Tanaka is so ridden with Magical Girl clichés it's almost painful. For starters, she's a bit of a social misfit, being an athletic tomboy as well as a problem student, and she lives in a Shinto shrine to boot. In addition, she has to deal with all the "rules" many Magical Girls operate by: she must transform into an ornate or impractical-looking costume, her weapon is an apparently useless wand, all her powers require wordy attack names to use, she has a cute animal sidekick, and she fights for (or with) the power of "love." At 17, she's actually a little old for the role, as many Magical Girls are in their early teens (and some are even preteens).

MONSTER THE FERRET?

It is a virtual requirement for any magical girl to have a cute animal sidekick. In Sakura's case it is her pet ferret Monster (Sakura doesn't know much English you see...). Monster should use the Domestic Cat write-up on page 143 of the *Hero Bestiary* and have the Smart template added from page 27. Monster should also have a 10 EGO (or more) and be perfectly fluent in Japanese. The personality is up to the GM, and it is perfectly in genre for Sakura and Monster to argue constantly. It is also perfectly in genre for Monster to inform Sakura of new powers she never knew she had – usually right after she *really* could have used them.

MYCONIDS

Most magical girls seem to have a "theme" enemy they are always fighting. For Sakura it's the Myconids. They come in many shapes and sizes, and their ranks include fungus goblins, mushroom ogres, and slime-mold snakes. In general, a Myconid isn't very smart, fairly immune to physical attacks, and very unpleasant to deal with.

WHAT IS A FUKU?

A *fuku* is a Japanese girl's school uniform, also known as a *se-ra-fuku* (Literally: sailor clothes, *fuku* itself just means "clothes"). The original *fuku* was modeled after uniforms of sailors in the English Royal Navy, and was a popular form of children's clothing in Victorian England. The clothing style was adopted in Japan at the end of the 19ᵗʰ Century, and soon became the standard uniform of schoolgirls. Probably the most famous *fuku* in anime are the ones worn by the cast of *Sailor Moon.*

Boys have their own school uniforms as well. Based on German school uniforms from the same era as the original sailor suits, a boy's school *fuku* consists of a high-collared jacket (usually blue or black in color), and matching trousers.

Sakura-Hime Sakura

As a Magical Girl archetype, Sakura is best used in such settings as modern day fantasy (which most magical girl shows are) or superhero games. In Sakura's case, she is a bit of a comedic character and would work well in campaigns with a less-than-serious tone. In fact, she's a natural for the "superhero high school" subgenre, and works well as either an NPC or as a model for a possible Player Character. At 295 points she's pretty much average for most Magical Girls, although some certainly are far more powerful.

Appearance: Sakura Tanaka is 17 years old, and finishing up her stay in high school. She is tall for a girl, standing nearly 5'9" in height, with a long-legged, athletic build. Sakura has long pink hair (usually tied up in a ponytail), brown eyes, and lightly tanned skin from spending a lot of time outside. While at school, she wears the regulation uniform, or *fuku*; while at home, she dresses in casual western fashions (unless her Grandfather forces her to wear a *kimono*). Her Sakura-Hime costume looks vaguely like her school uniform, in that both consist of a short-sleeved blouse and a skirt, but there, the resemblance ends. The pleated skirt is a bright cherry-red (and in Sakura's opinion far too short), while the blouse is white with cherry-red trim, and leaves a disconcerting amount of her midriff bare. Under the collar of her blouse is a pink scarf, while around her waist (and forming a belt, of sorts, for the skirt) is a long length of pink cloth tied into a huge and impractical bow behind her back. White gloves and short white boots complete the outfit. Naturally, Sakura finds the costume embarrassing to be seen in, especially given the undue attention she receives from boys while wearing it.

IN CLOSING

Anime Hero is something is something I've wanted to write for a long time, and has been though several previous incarnations as the scope and intent of what I wanted to write changed. Obviously, it is not possible to cover all of anime in a single 17,000-word article. Although as complete as I could make it, *Anime Hero* is lacking in some areas. For example, I don't go into any detail on sports anime. However, what is here should be sufficient to give even an anime novice a good idea on how to set up and run an anime-styled campaign. And I hope you've enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed putting it all together.

Finally, the author would like to thank Alex "Mecha, mecha, and more mecha!" Fauth, Charles Badger, Erick L. King, James Jandebeur, Joe Rispoli, Max "What do I know about magical girls?" Fauth, Michael "Otaku Burnout" House, Nic "Studio Hybrid" Neidenbach, and William "Fire the Wave Motion Gun!" Jordan for their advice, corrections, and input.

ADDENDUM: MICHAEL'S TOP PICKS

The best way to get a feel for anime is to watch some. Most video rental stores stock anime, and with the rise of the DVD, one can even pick between dubbed or subtitled versions of many titles. When looking for a good introduction to anime in general the most important question you can ask yourself is: "What kinds of stories do you like?" No one anime is the perfect introduction to the media as a whole, although some do a good job of appealing to a wide variety of viewers. Figure out what you like to watch (or read), and find anime set in those genres.

The following are anime the author either owns or has seen himself (and is only a sampling at that). If the list is slanted towards certain genres, then that is the fault of the author, who, naturally enough, only likes certain genres.

Akira: Love it, hate it, or feel completely confused by it, you can't ignore it. *Akira* is considered by some to be the "best" anime movie yet made, and it certainly is visually and technically impressive. A landmark film when released in 1988, it can still hold its own against modern animated films. Adapted from Katsuhiro Otomo's 2,000+ page manga, the film diverges wildly from the plot of the manga (which was still not complete when the film was made), and the original dubbed version made it hard to understand what was happening in the last third of the film. The new subtitled (and dubbed) version fixes many of those problems, and is just beautiful to look at. A "must-see" for those interested in the cyberpunk genre, as well as fans of espers and esper powers. Needless to say, it was a huge influence on the author's *Kazei 5* campaign (available as a Hero Plus e-book).

The Big O: The title translates to "The Great King" in Japanese, and is a reference to the hero's giant robot, which he uses to fight crime. Very reminiscent of *Batman: The Animated Series* in style and execution (mainly due to the fact the same production company worked on both), this series has a strong *film noir* feel to it, and is full of great game ideas.

Blue Submarine No. 6: This post-holocaust anime combines traditional cell animation with computer-generated mecha. The result is visually stunning, although the story suffers from the problem of many anime adapted from a manga – one only gets to see a small part of the whole story and a great deal of presumably important background details are lost. Still, it is worth seeing if only for the visuals.

HAYAO MIYAZAKI

Currently Japan's premiere anime director, Miyazaki has contributed to a number of classic films. Miyazaki loves flying machines, and many of his films include scenes of characters flying. A quick rundown on some of his films includes:

The Castle of Cagliostro: A homage of sorts to 1960's crime caper films, this anime pits world-renowned thief Lupin III against the evil Count of Cagliostro. A fun film for fans of spy films.

Laputa: Castle in the Sky: Borrowing the immense floating city from the novel *Gulliver's Travels,* this movie shows Miyazaki's fascination with flying machines at its finest. Set in an alternate "steam punk" world, the film is a must see for fans of the Pulp era.

Princess Mononoke: At one point Japan's highest-grossing film of all time, this fantasy mixes gods and guns in a fight over the fate of the natural world in the face of man's expansion.

Spirited Away: This film can best be described as a sort of Japanese *Alice in Wonderland.* When the heroine of the film discovers her parents

have been turned to pigs, she must summon up every ounce of her courage to attempt to rescue them.

Bubblegum Crisis: This anime series from the mid-1980s was one of the first to come to America and it quickly achieved cult status among fans. Obviously inspired by the film *Blade Runner,* as well as *Streets of Fire, Bubblegum Crisis* is best known for its music. Although it suffers from being only the initial eight episodes of a 13 episode series (the rest were never made), as well as so-so animation (at least, by today's standards), it should be seen if only so you'll understand the hype. It is also a "must see" for fans of the cyberpunk genre and anyone looking powered armor ideas. Naturally, it was a big influence on *Kazei 5.*

A follow-up to *Bubblegum Crisis* was made titled *Bubblegum Crash,* but most fans find it to be vastly inferior to the original. Two "prequels" have been made as well. There was a three-episode series titled *AD Police Files,* and then a longer, 12-episode show (titled *A.D. Police*). Finally, there is a more recent version of *Bubblegum Crisis* called *Bubblegum Crisis 2040.* A 26-episode TV series, it is a complete reworking of the original story.

Cowboy Bebop: There are few movies, TV shows, or anime capable of living up to the hype generated about them (*Star Wars Episode 1* for example.). Then there's *Cowboy Bebop.* Combining elements of Hong Kong "heroic bloodshed" cinema, American Westerns, and *film noir* hard-boiled detective stories, along with high-quality animation and an absolutely fantastic soundtrack, *Cowboy Bebop* lives up to its claim of "becoming a new genre itself." This series is highly recommended for fans of cyberpunk, science fiction, and Hong Kong gangster films.

El Hazard: Loosely modeled after Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter of Mars stories, *El Hazard* is probably the best example of the "strangers in a strange land" genre you'll find. The animation is reasonably good, while the fun characters really make the story work well. I recommend you only watch the original series (*El-Hazard: The Magnificent World*), as the sequels and remakes are all of pretty low quality.

Outlaw Star: What do you get when you have a space adventure with everything? You get *Outlaw Star.* This 26-episode TV series has been compared (often unfavorably) to *Cowboy Bebop,* but really the two have almost nothing in common. Unlike *Cowboy Bebop, Outlaw Star* discards the realistic nature of the former series in favor of strange aliens, chi-powered martial artists, spell-throwing Taoist sorcerers, and fast-paced high adventure. It is a fun series, with some great character ideas, decent music, but only average animation. Science fiction/fantasy fans should enjoy it.

56

Project: A-ko: Although dated animation-wise, this stand-alone film is just packed with nonstop laughs as it parodies nearly everything. Nothing is sacred, as alien invasions, giant robots, Jackie Chan, and even American superheroes all get targeted. There is really no plot to speak of, but you won't really care as since the film is such plain fun. Interested viewers can also look for the five follow-up films.

Record of Lodoss War: An epic tale of fantasy done *Dungeons and Dragons* style with all the trimmings. It has everything – a young and inexperienced warrior, a beautiful elf-maiden (two actually), a dour dwarf, an untrustworthy rogue, evil magicians, an honorable black night, dragons, monsters, magic... *Lodoss* has recently been remade and sequel-ized, so try and see the original first. *Fantasy Hero* fans should definitely check this series out.

Silent Möbius: This long-running manga series has been made into two theatrical films (of which only the first was ever available in the United States) and a 26-episode TV series. It is the story of the Attacked Mystification Police and their efforts to defend Tokyo from the decidedly Lovecraftian "Lucifer Hawks." As with many TV series, the animation is decidedly average, but it has some great music. The series is a great source of character and game ideas, and does present a viable campaign set up for interested GMs.

Tenchi Muyo!: Also known as "No Need For Tenchi!" this 13-episode series is almost certainly the best of the "guy with too many girlfriends" genre. Massively popular, it features excellent animation, and episodes 1-6 have one of the best opening themes ever. The series is well written, and is a great source of character and game ideas. Avoid the sequels, however, as they pretty much retell the same story but get worse and worse as they go.

Doctor Atom by Charles Bikle

Background/History: Edison Hamilton was a gifted but arrogant research physicist/engineer who had been working on the RadWear project, an experimental containment suit program for the Pentagon.

Late one night, Edison was testing out the RadWear suit in a reactor cage when, you guessed it, a VIPER assault team broke in, stole the blueprints, and caused a small radiation accident which led to the death of his intern.

Edison woke up later and, to his amazement, discovered he now possessed the ability to generate and control radiation. Returning to the remains of his lab, Edison retrieved and donned the RadWear suit and successfully located and defeated the VIPER agents who had assaulted him earlier.

The next day the morning headline of *The Metro-Gazette* read, "Dr. Atom Foils VIPER Raid!" Edison grimaced at the garish alias he'd been given, but felt a secret, addictive thrill in the previous night's activities….

Fast forward a few years later – Doctor Atom has become one of the city's most well-known heroes, and through careful lobbying, has established Visionary Force, a prominent and formidable hero team.

Personality: Although Edison enjoyed being a scientist, he now knows that that was just a precursor to his becoming a superhero. He loves everything about the lifestyle: the attention, the respect, the unbelievable experiences and secrets, flying through the city with a famous actress/model in his arms.

He'd even grown to enjoy the combat.

In his heart-of-hearts, Edison is secretly glad this all happened (even with the regrettable death of his intern, whose name he'd never bothered to learn) and enjoys the fame, wealth, power, and opportunities that being a famous superhero has provided him, and does not look kindly upon anyone or anything that might jeopardize his position. He is ambitious and reasonably skilled at "superhero politics."

To others, Dr. Atom comes across as a little tightly wound and controlling, except in matters of scientific mysteries and phenomena. Strangely, his territoriality doesn't extend to matters of science, and he will tend to get along better with science-related heroes.

Quote: "I'd be more than willing to entertain any intelligent conversation of this matter at a later date."

Powers/Tactics: When fighting with a group, Doctor Atom likes to position himself at the edge of the battlefield, high above the ground so he can blast from afar while directing his teammates (whether they want him to or not). Often he'll hold a half-phase action so he can assist a teammate if necessary.

If fighting alone against a single opponent, Edison will fly in and blast from close-range. In either case, Doctor Atom usually avoids hand-to-hand combat, because it irritates him.

Campaign Use: Doctor Atom can be used as a rival hero who subtly undermines the PCs at any opportunity. The degree of that rivalry could just be a consistent tension or could escalate to violence and sabotage. Dr. Atom could also be an occasional source of information relating to physics or radiation phenomena.

Appearance: Doctor Atom: The colors of his modified RadWear armor are metallic red and blue with golden highlights and trim, and the hydrogen atom as an insignia. The style of his costume changes a bit, partially to accommodate improvements, but mostly to spark interest with the public and the media. The current design is a streamlined metallic blue bodysuit with metallic red gloves, boots, and belt, and gold visor and insignia. Naturally, his powers give off a faint red glow, but often his style of armor will change the hues so that his powers will be brighter and more varied in color.

Edison Hamilton: In contrast, Edison's style of dress is more standardized and predictable. He wears typical college professor garb and a lab coat over it when working in the lab.

BOOTCAMP

Periodically, Hero Games artist Storn Cook uses his experience in the gaming industry to help out new artists. Storn ran an artist bootcamp contest with Doctor Atom's appearance description as the test. Many artists put forth some excellent renditions of Doctor Atom, and Don Mangan was chosen as the bootcamp winner. Out of the deal, as well, many talented artists brought themselves to Hero Games' attention, so you may be seeing some new names on the credits pages of future books.

artwork by Don Mangan

Doctor Atom

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 HTH [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
28	CON	36	15-	
13	BODY	6	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll: 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
3	PD	0		Total: 25 PD (22 rPD)
6	ED	0		Total: 30 ED (24 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	0		
50	END	-3		
35	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 106

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"
Flight: 18"/36"

Cost	Powers	END
16	*RadWear Protective System:* Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (armor; -½)	0
3	*Radiation-Insulators:* Power Defense, 5 points; OIF (armor; -½)	0
22	*Life Systems:* Life Support: Self-contained breathing, safe in high radiation, all terrestrial diseases, chemical, and biowarfare agents and poisons; OIF (armor; -½)	0
17	*Radiation Sensors:* Detect Radiation, Analyze, Ranged, Rapid x100; OIF (armor, -½)	0
8	*Communications Array:* High Range Radio Perception (Hearing); OIF (armor, -½)	0
10	*Radar:* Radar	
23	*Atomic Elemental Control:* 46-point reserve	
23	1) *Atomic Shield:* Force Field (14 PD/16 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END, +½)	0
37	2) *Atomic Blast:* EB 12d6	6
23	3) *Atomic Flight:* Flight 18", Reduced Endurance (½ END, +¼)	2
60	*Atomic Regulators:* Variable Power Pool, 45 points; OIF (armor, -½)	
	Sample Powers	
(23)	*Molecular Dispersion:* Teleport 15" with Position Shift	3
(30)	*Reactor-Field:* Absorb Energy 9d6, Divided Between END and STUN; Costs END (-½)	4

Perks
2	Reputation: renown in the scientific community 14-	
2	Reputation: famous superhero 11- (worldwide)	
3	Federal Police Powers	
6	Money	
10	Base/Vehicle Contribution, or other	

Skills
2	*Atomic Applications:* Power (INT-based) 14-; OIF (armor, -½)
3	Analyze Radiation 13-
3	Bureaucratics 12-
3	Computer Programming 13-
3	Electronics 13-
1	High Society 8-
1	Mechanics 8-
2	PS: Research Scientist 11-
3	Scientist
2	1) SS: Physics 13-
1	2) SS: Powered Armor Engineering 11-
3	3) SS: Radiation Physics 14-
1	4) SS: Robotics 11-
1	5) SS: Theoretical Physics 11-

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 294

Total Character Cost: 400

200+ Disadvantages
10	Distinctive Features: Sets Off Radiation-Detectors (Not Concealable, Major Reaction, Requires Special Senses)
10	Hunted: PRIMUS 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Character is Easy to Find, Mildly Punish)
25	Hunted: VIPER 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Character is Easy to Find)
15	Psychological Limitation: Arrogant (Common, Strong)
10	Psychological Limitation: Aversion to Killing (Common, Moderate)
10	Psychological Limitation: Scientific Curiosity (Uncommon, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Territorial/ Sense of Entitlement (Common, Strong)
10	Rivalry: all popular superheroes, including PCs (Professional, Outdo/ Embarrass)
10	Social Limitation: Accessible, Spends Most of Time in Hero ID and Can Usually Be Located at Visionary Force HQ
15	Unluck: 3d6
10	Vulnerability: 1½x STUN from Magic (Common)
10	Vulnerability: 1½x Effect from Magic (Common)
50	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 400

Doctor Atom

Isidor "Izzy" Einstein by Leah Watts

> In the days of the prohibition era when New York State enforced the Volstead Act, a short, fat man, smoking a huge cigar, leaned over the bar.
>
> "Have you heard the latest story?" he whispered to the aproned bartender.
>
> "No," said the bartender, "go ahead."
>
> "You're pinched," said the short, fat man.
> — *New York Times*, February 18, 1938

On January 17, 1920, the Eighteenth Amendment to the US Constitution went into effect. It was now illegal to make, sell, or import alcohol for beverage use anywhere in the United States. Prohibition was not a popular law, and many people immediately began to break it.

The man who became known as "Prohibition Agent #1" though, almost managed to make Prohibition popular. In fact, in 1924, when a newspaper writer wanted to compliment the newly appointed chief inspector of Scotland Yard, what he typed was, "He's a veritable Izzy Einstein."

Background/History: Isidor Einstein was born in Tarnow, Austria, on August 8, 1880. He emigrated to the United States when he was 15, and became a US citizen a few years later.

His father, who had also come to the US, wanted his son to become a rabbi, but he wasn't interested. Instead "Izzy" (as he became known) worked as a salesman. He married Esther Sattler in 1906, and settled down to raising a family.

When Prohibition started, Einstein was working as a postal clerk, making $40 a week. With a wife and four sons to support (not to mention his father), he thought the slightly better paying job of Prohibition Agent would be a good move.

Einstein almost wasn't hired, though. The short, fat, and almost 40 year old man didn't fit the interviewer's idea of a detective. Einstein pointed out that if no one thought he looked like a detective, he'd be able to get in places where other agents couldn't. Finally, the interviewer was persuaded and hired him.

(One author, in a retrospective article, suggested that Einstein got the job by mentioning some politician friends. Appointments to the Prohibition Bureau *were* controlled by political patronage, and his work for the post office would have given him the necessary contacts. However, most sources agree that Einstein simply talked the interviewer into a job.)

Izzy Einstein's first assignment was to close down a Brooklyn speakeasy that some other agents had failed to close. He spent some time observing the clientele, and then went home to change into clothes that were a closer match for what they were wearing. He walked in to the speakeasy unsuspected, and ordered a near beer[1] from the bartender. After the bartender and customers finished laughing, Izzy said good-naturedly that he was new in town and didn't know New York ways, but he'd be willing to buy a pint of whiskey if it didn't cost too much. The bartender sold him the whiskey, and Izzy had his first arrest.

That first case set a pattern Izzy would follow for the next five years. His specialty became blending in with the customers to get proof of illegal alcohol sales.

Soon after his first arrest, Izzy is credited by some with inventing an evidence-collection device that many other agents used. It consisted of a small bottle hidden in an inside pocket, with a rubber tube leading to it from a funnel. To get a conviction under the Volstead Act, walking out of a place with liquor on your breath wasn't enough, the agent needed to bring in some booze to be analyzed. Buying a bottle to go, as Izzy did in his first case, would serve, but not all speakeasies sold bottled alcohol. Therefore, the bottle and funnel arrangement – Izzy would order a drink, distract the bartender (often by handing him a bill to change), and send the drink down the funnel instead of down the hatch. The bottle could then be corked, labeled, and turned in with the arrest paperwork.

After a few more cases, Izzy decided he could use some help and talked his friend Moe Smith into joining the Prohibition Bureau. The two shared a common approach to catching lawbreakers, though Moe wasn't anywhere near the publicity hound Izzy was. Both men were Freemasons, but once they started working for the government, one can wonder if they ever had time to get to lodge meetings.

Their list of disguises is almost too long to print. When the Democratic Party held their national convention in New York, Izzy and Moe were there passing as delegates. A soft-drink parlor near Van Courtlandt Park was visited by eleven men in muddy football uniforms, who delightedly announced that the season was over and they could break training. When the owner pulled out some booze, the team leaders were revealed as Izzy and Moe. (The rest of the "football team" were also agents.) As Italian fruit

artwork by Chris Watkins

[1] "Near Beer" contained less than ½ of 1 percent alcohol, and was legal under Prohibition.

peddlers whose wagon had broken down, they caught a livery stable owner who was carting barrels of wine.

Izzy raided speakeasies as a musician (he described his violin playing as "I ain't no Heifetz, but I could earn a living,"), as an ice deliveryman, as a dockworker, as a Polish mill worker, and as an opera singer. He passed himself off as a judge to get the goods on a private club limited to lawyers. He was a Texas rancher, a college student, a street cleaner, assorted salesmen, a gravedigger, and an anti-Prohibition protester. Sometimes he could even get liquor by telling the truth – "Care to sell a pint to a deserving Prohibition agent?"

There were several times Izzy (with or without Moe) was sent to other parts of the country by his superiors. He kept track of how long it took him to find illegal booze in each city. New Orleans held the speed record with 35 seconds; it seems the cabdriver who picked Izzy up at the train depot was selling bootleg out of his taxi.

Corruption was rampant in the Prohibition Bureau, but Izzy was never even accused of taking a bribe. There is only one occasion on record where he was offered a bribe; after he confiscated ten barrels of whiskey, the bootlegger offered to give Izzy his wife if Izzy left the whiskey behind. (Izzy passed on the offer; the lady's reaction is unrecorded.)

I have been unable to find any evidence that Izzy faced discrimination in his work despite his being both an immigrant and a Jew. Granted, a lot of the time he was working in immigrant neighborhoods. However, the Protestant and nativist organizations that would have discriminated against him were also in favor of Prohibition. After Izzy staged a major raid in Detroit, Henry Ford put his anti-Semitism aside in favor of his anti-alcohol beliefs and congratulated Izzy.

Izzy was reprimanded several times for his publicity seeking. His superiors objected to a subordinate getting all the positive press when they were hardly ever mentioned. Finally, on November 13, 1925, Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith were fired. The official reason was "for the good of the service," and in fact, their names had simply been added to a list of approximately 150 other agents who were scheduled for firing. The real reason, as stated by a supervisor who refused to be identified, was, "The service must be dignified. Izzy and Moe belong on the vaudeville stage."

Wayne Wheeler, legal counsel (and unofficial boss) of the Anti-Saloon League, tried pulling strings to get them rehired, but with no success. Ironically, Wheeler had insisted that Prohibition agents not be covered by Civil Service rules. Had he not used the offer of patronage to get the Volstead Act enacted, the most successful agents the Prohibition bureau ever had could not have been fired out of hand.

Izzy's bosses weren't the only ones who thought he belonged on a stage. The day the firing was announced, a telegram arrived at his house from vaudeville promoter Charles Dillingham, offering him a six-figure contract. Izzy declined, instead choosing to become a life insurance salesman, a job that let him spend more time at home with his family.

Izzy Einstein left the Prohibition Bureau with an impressive record. Alone or with Moe Smith, he had arrested 4,932 people, with a conviction rating of 95 percent, and confiscated over 15 million dollars (1920s' currency) worth of illegal alcohol. Twenty percent of the Prohibition cases dealt with by the New York City courts before 1926 were brought in by Izzy.

In 1932, Izzy Einstein published his memoirs, titled *Prohibition Agent #1*, and dedicated to the people he had arrested "hoping they bear me no grudge." Several of them bought life insurance from Einstein, so it would seem they didn't. He proved his talents didn't include foretelling the future, when in his book he stated, "The day when Prohibition is repealed will not be in our lifetime." One year later, the Twenty-First Amendment brought Prohibition to an end.

The physical strains of his prohibition work apparently caught up with Einstein. In February of 1938, he went into Manhattan General Hospital, where his right leg was amputated. Post-surgical infection set in, and Izzy Einstein died on February 17, only 57 years old. He was buried the next day in Mount Zion Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Personality/Motivation: Izzy Einstein was not a committed "dry," as those who were opposed to the use of alcohol were termed. In fact, as a Jew he was allowed to buy 1 gallon of wine per year for religious use, and he always bought it and used it. He thought Prohibition should be enforced because it was the law, not out of any deep feelings. His son Albie Einstein believed catching criminals became a game to his father.

Einstein brought a great deal of courage to his work. On one occasion, the bartender he'd just arrested pulled out a revolver and shoved the barrel against Einstein's stomach. Einstein looked at the man, then brushed the gun aside. "Put that up, son," he said, "murdering me won't help your family." The bartender put the gun down and went in quietly.

Einstein was never formally trained in psychology, but he knew how people thought and acted. Whether he was getting evidence on a saloon in an immigrant neighborhood or raiding a fancy restaurant that still offered a wine cellar, he could match the expected behavior of the

FOR FURTHER READING

Most general histories of Prohibition will have at least a few Izzy stories. *Ardent Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* by John Kobler would be a good start, as it includes an interview with Einstein's son Albie.

Izzy Einstein's book *Prohibition Agent #1* is long out of print, but should be findable through inter-library loan. It concentrates on his experiences as a prohibition agent.

A check of the *Reader's Guides to Periodical Literature* for the time period 1920-1925 can identify articles on Prohibition and Izzy, though you would need access to the magazines (paper or microfilm) to get much use from this.

Jackie Gleason and Art Carney teamed up for a TV movie titled *Izzy and Moe*. While their acting is quite good, the script is not on speaking terms with the facts. Do not use this movie as a reference unless you can confirm any information from other sources.

clientele (right up to the point when he pulled out his badge).

Quote: "There's sad news here. You're under arrest."

Powers/Tactics: The government issued guns to prohibition agents, but Einstein never carried his. It's possible he didn't know how to use it – the Prohibition Bureau didn't start providing any training to agents until 1927, and Einstein left Austria at too young an age to have served in the Hapsburg military.

Einstein usually credited his success to greed and stupidity on the part of the speakeasy operators, with a little luck on his part as well. It's hard to challenge the stupidity, not when Einstein could stand next to a picture of himself posted by a speakeasy owner as a warning and still buy liquor. The luck is also hard to argue. On one occasion, Einstein was on his way to work when a truck driver tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he was the person the driver was supposed to deliver to. (Einstein took the whiskey, Bacardi, and driver downtown with him.)

On the other hand, Einstein put in a lot of effort on his job. He was willing to spend days or weeks working his way into the status of "trusted customer" if necessary. While he belittled his use of disguise, any Caucasian who could pass as Negro in 1920s' Harlem (there was a deli selling liquor on the side) was talented at stage makeup.

One note that needs to be made – Einstein's Everyman TF is for horse-drawn vehicles. He never learned to drive an automobile.

Campaign Use: Between 1920 and 1925, Izzy Einstein would be an effective Contact for a law enforcement PC. He should be bought with the adders for "very useful skills" and "significant contacts of his own," but should have a low Contact roll because of the bureau's habit of sending him all over the country on short notice. If the PCs are on the other side of the Volstead Act, they'll likely have at least one run-in with Izzy.

After 1925, Einstein could still be used as a Contact. For some reason, his *New York Times* obituary states that he was an active agent until 1928. While this is probably a simple mistake (the writer also goofs on the year Prohibition ended), it's certainly possible that he was offering advice to active agents for the first few years after he was fired. The longer it's been since he was fired, the less he should cost as a Contact, since attrition in the Prohibition Bureau and changes in bootlegger tactics will gradually eliminate his adders. At repeal, his knowledge of illegal alcohol smuggling becomes mostly irrelevant. There is little point in buying him as a Contact post-repeal unless a character wants a

link to the Jewish or immigrant communities in New York City.

Of course, if the PCs are looking for insurance after 1925, you can always send Einstein over to sell them some.

Appearance: Izzy Einstein was 5'3" tall, and weighed 235 pounds. He had black hair (but is going bald) and dark eyes. He wore whatever was needed for the current job – from white tie and tails to battered overalls.

Isidor "Izzy" Einstein

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 HTH [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
11	CON	2	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3 1/2d6
14	COM	2	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	1		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	0		
22	END	0		
21	STUN	0		

Total Characteristics Cost: 51

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
6	*Sharp:* Enhanced Perception (+2 to all PER Rolls)	0
5	*Lucky:* Luck 1d6	0

Perks
12	Contact: Assorted friends and other Prohibition Agents (12-, useful skills/resources, group)	
2	Perk: Concealed Weapon Permit	
2	Perk: Limited Federal Police Powers	
3	Perk: Membership: Freemasons	
6	Reputation: Honest and Effective Prohibition Agent (large group, 14-) +2/+2d6	

Skills
3	Acting 13-
10	Cramming (x2)
5	Concealment 13-
5	Conversation 14-
9	Deduction 15-
7	Disguise 14-
3	High Society 13-
3	Linguist
0	Language: German (native)
4	Language: English (imitate dialects)
3	Language: Hungarian (native accent)
3	Language: Polish (native accent)
3	Language: Yiddish (native accent)
1	Language: Russian (fluent conversation)
1	Language: Spanish (fluent conversation)
1	Language: Italian (fluent conversation)
1	Language: French (fluent conversation)
1	Language: Chinese (basic conversation)
5	Persuasion 14-
4	PS: Salesman 13-
4	PS: Prohibition Agent 13-
3	PS: Play Harmonica 12-
4	PS: Play Trombone 13-
4	PS: Play Violin 13-
5	SS: Psychology 14-
7	Sleight of Hand 14-
7	Streetwise 15-

Total Powers and Skills Cost: 142

Total Character Cost: 193

	75+	Disadvantages
	25	DNPC: Family (Wife, 4 sons, father; normal, 8-, group)
	10	Psychological Limitation: Loves The Spotlight (Common, Moderate)
	10	Social Limitation: Famous (Frequent, Minor)
	15	Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Frequent, Major)
	10	Reputation: "This Man Is Poison" 14- (speakeasy owners/operators only)
	48	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 193

Isidor "Izzy" Einstein