

ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

OFFICIAL GAME ADVENTURE

THE SIDEREAL SCHEMES OF DR. ZODIAC!

By Steve Kenson



INTRODUCTION

So, you want to play **ICONS**? Great! This introductory adventure is intended to get you and your friends right into the action of playing the roles of superheroes safeguarding Our Fair City from the terrible threat posed by Dr. Zodiac! If you are intending to *play* in this adventure, you should *read not further!* The material in this adventure is for the *Game Master's eyes only!* Reading the adventure in advance just runs the risk of spoiling any surprises and ruining the fun for you (and possibly your fellow players).

So, Game Master, if you want to run *The Sidereal Schemes of Dr. Zodiac*, you should first familiarize yourself with the **ICONS** game rules. The adventure has hints and tips on how to run it, but assumes familiarity with all of the rules presented in the game itself. Your players should have also created their heroes, or you need to create enough heroes in advance for everyone who wants to play. The adventure is designed for a group of roughly three to six heroes. Fewer than three may need a boost of a couple extra points of Determination at the start of the adventure, while more than six could get somewhat unwieldy. If you want to have more than six players, increase the opposition in the early chapters of the adventure proportionately.

The adventure assumes the heroes are at least acquainted and willing to work together, but does not assume they are an established team. You may want to have your players go through the **Team Creation** portion of hero creation in **ICONS** to determine things about their team. You can then either assume the team was established beforehand, or allow the players to set things up as the adventure unfolds. In the latter case, allow the players some latitude to change things like team aspects based on the events in the adventure. It's better if the team's aspects are rooted in things that actually happened during the game rather than simply made-up whole cloth, anyway. See the **Choosing Aspects During Play** option in the rules for more about this sort of thing.

The main villain of the adventure, Dr. Zodiac himself, is described at the very end. Other opposition the heroes encounter over the course of the adventure is described in the individual chapters.

The Sidereal Schemes of Dr. Zodiac is broken down into three chapters: the two three involve Lemuel Zodiuss' plans to acquire and begin activating the mystical Zodiac Gems. The last chapter is the big confrontation with the newly empowered Dr. Zodiac, where the heroes have to prevent him from exercising his newfound power.

CHAPTER 1: NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

The adventure begins when the heroes are alerted to a break-in at the museum. There they find a criminal in the process of stealing from the museum's newest display, but the heroes are in for a surprise when the crook turns out to have magical powers!

SOUND THE ALARM!

Start things off by deciding how the heroes find out about the break-in at the museum. There are a number of possibilities, depending on the heroes and their respective backgrounds and capabilities:

- A hero might work for the museum as a curator, security guard, or in some other capacity. The hero can notice the break-in, and have a chance to alert the other heroes or sound the alarm.
- Heroes monitoring the police band can pick up a call to investigate a silent alarm at the museum. They just happen to be close by or can use their powers to get there first.
- A mystic or psychic hero has a premonition of great danger surrounding the museum. When the heroes stake it out to investigate, they notice the break-in and have a chance to act.
- An underworld contact tips the heroes off about somebody acquiring information for a museum job. The heroes are on-hand for the action.
- If all else fails, one or more of the heroes is simply out on patrol and notices something suspicious about the museum (side door ajar, etc.) and investigates.

If you want to get the Determination ball rolling right from the start, encourage the players to describe what their heroes might be doing on an otherwise unremarkable evening and nudge things in the direction of any of their relevant aspects. For example, one hero might be out on a date, while another has a work deadline looming. Getting out of their various commitments in order to slip away and investigate a crime in progress can give the heroes some additional Determination and get the players into the spirit of the things quickly.



THE BREAK-IN

However the good guys arrive at the museum, here is what they find: a man in a black face mask and dark clothing (jacket, jeans, etc.) has slipped into the museum through a side entrance. The lock hasn't been forced and may have been picked, and a night security guard is lying on the floor inside, a short distance from the door. He's unconscious, but otherwise unharmed.

The burglar is Dr. Zodiac, who used magic to gain entrance to the museum (although he wasn't entirely successful in bypassing the alarms) and to stun the guard.

The heroes find the criminal in front of an open glass display case in the museum wing dedicated to ancient Babylon. The case is open and the man lifts something out of it, an ancient-looking metal breastplate of some sort. Unless the heroes attack immediately from ambush, the crook has a chance to turn and see them. Give the players an opportunity to issue threats or heroic demands for the bad guy to surrender. Then the fellow holding the breastplate snaps at them, low voice muffled behind his mask:

"Fools! You are too late! What happens now is written in the stars — a pity you will not have the opportunity to see it fulfilled."

Then a shimmer of light—red and green—appears between the burglar and the heroes, transforming into four humanoid figures! One of them points at the heroes and a burst of red energy sends them flying out of the room! The blast effectively gets a slam result on them, but does no other damage initially. Award the players a point of Determination.

If any of the players tries to interrupt Dr. Zodiac's brief soliloquy or stop him before the attack, let them try, but have them blown back by the same burst of energy before they can do anything. The challenge is that the Cardinal Signs of the Zodiac Gems will keep the heroes occupied while their summoner makes good his escape! If one of the heroes jumps Dr. Zodiac from ambush and manages to get a hit in, his Stamina should prevent it him taking him out immediately. Although staggered, he still summons the avatars to deal with the heroic interlopers.

FIGHT IN THE MUSEUM!

Dr. Zodiac has temporarily called upon the power contained in the four Zodiac Gems now in his possession: Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn, summoning their avatars into being. They are humanoid figures, two with animals heads (a ram and a goat) one like a giant crab standing upright on human-like legs, and a four like a man wearing a blindfold, but still acting as if able to see.

A blast from the Aries avatar hurls the heroes through the broad entryway out into the main hall of the museum, where the newly summoned avatars rush to attack! This distraction provides Dr. Zodiac with the opportunity to work the spell he needs to vanish from the museum with the breastplate and gems, letting his servants deal with the troublesome heroes.

THE CARDINAL SIGNS: ARIES, CANCER, LIBRA, CAPRICORN

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 3
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 6

Powers: Each of the four avatars possesses the power of one of the Zodiac Gems:

- **Aries:** Explosive Blast 7 (energy ram)
- **Cancer:** Invulnerability 8, Strike 5 (slashing)
- **Libra:** Reflection 8
- **Capricorn :** Leaping 7, Strike 7 (bashing kicking attack)



Libra moves to block any heroes from re-entering the hall before Dr. Zodiac can escape. He appears to “catch” attacks with his right hand, shifting the energy through his body and returning it with a wave of his left hand. Aries, Cancer, and Capricorn move to attack. They get the drop on the heroes because of the initial blast, so have their targets make tests to avoid the initial attacks before giving the heroes their panels.

Dr. Zodiac secures his prizes on the first page of the fight, then casts a Teleport spell to disappear from the museum, leaving the avatars behind to deal with the heroes. Any hero who manages to make it past Libra on the first page gets into the ancient civilizations wing just in time to see Zodiac vanish in a shimmer of light.

If the fight goes on for longer than 10 pages, or the Cardinal Signs somehow manage to defeat all the heroes, their summoning fades, and they vanish. The same happens when the heroes defeat them.

If You Break It...

To add some fun challenges to the fight, keep in mind the heroes are in a *museum*, full of valuable, even irreplaceable, artifacts and displays. The Zodiac avatars care nothing about this, and will blast through glass display cases or hurl priceless statues or other objects at their foes. Award heroes who take up the challenge of preserving the museum’s displays at the cost of a tactical advantage an additional point of Determination.

INVESTIGATING THE TAKE

Once the Zodiac avatars are defeated—or have beaten the heroes—and vanished, the good guys have an opportunity to investigate the theft. They can turn up the following clues and information:

- The lock on the side door was either picked or opened with a key, it hasn't been damaged or forced. Dr. Zodiac actually used magic, something a mystic hero with Supersenses or the Occult specialty could pick up with a Difficulty 3 Awareness test.
- The intruder tripped a silent alarm in the building, but otherwise the museum's security cameras and other alarm systems were blacked-out. They show nothing but static during the time of the robbery, another use of Dr. Zodiac's magic.
- If anyone suggests that the avatars were reminiscent of the zodiac, an Intellect test (Difficulty 5) identifies the four likely signs as cardinal signs, all associated with beginning or instigating.
- The items missing from the display are an ancient breastplate and four gemstones: a garnet, a sapphire, a diamond, and an opal. The breastplate is believed to be ceremonial rather than designed for actual combat, perhaps worn by an astrologer-priest in ancient Babylon.
- The display is new, just opening to the public, and the missing items were loaned to the museum by a Mr. Carl Congdon, a local collector of antiquities. The display was set to open tomorrow.
- If anyone tries to reach Mr. Congdon, they learn he is hosting a small gathering on board his yacht, the *Sharky*, as a prelude to tomorrow night's opening and fundraiser for the museum.

Pay close attention to speculation offered by the players (in- or out-of-character). If it sounds interesting, consider working it into the overall plot of the adventure, if you can. For example, if somebody speculates that Congdon may be behind the theft, essentially robbing himself to cover the crime, perhaps it's true and he's secretly working with Dr. Zodiac! You're not beholden to make every musing of the players a part of the story, but it can tie things together nicely when they come up with a good idea, and it makes you look good for having "thought of it"!

If the heroes stick around for the police to show up, the cops' reaction depends a great deal on how the heroes handle things. After all, they are alone at a crime scene, with no evidence or eyewitnesses of what caused the ruckus. Once the museum guard wakes up, he can tell the police only one man entered the building and that he didn't look like any of the heroes. Naturally, the police are suspicious unless the characters are known and trusted heroes.

The detective in charge is, Lucy "Luce" Tiebolt, recently promoted to the rank of detective. She can be a sympathetic ally, inclined to give the heroes the benefit of the doubt, or a hard-nosed, by-the-book type, depending on which seems the most interesting to you. Should the cops' game traits be needed, see the **Stock Characters** section of **Icons**.

CHAPTER 2: TROUBLED WATERS

MEANWHILE...ABOARD THE SHARKY,
PLAYBOY CARL CONGDON'S FABULOUS
YACHT...



A private reception and fundraiser on board the *Sharky*—the yacht of Mr. Carl Congdon—is Dr. Zodiac's next target. The heroes may figure out Congdon's collection is threatened from their investigation at the museum, or they could pick up a call for help radioed from the yacht (or sent from a guest's cell phone). If they are with the police at the museum, the call could come in over the officer's radios as well.

The yacht has already left dock and heroes lacking the necessary movement powers have to figure out how to get there. If the heroes are on good terms (thus far) with the police, they may be able to borrow a police or Coast Guard boat, otherwise, it's up to them to come up with something. At the worst, a player can spend Determination to retcon a solution, such as a contact at the waterfront.

Dr. Zodiac has transported on board the *Sharky* and called upon the four avatars of the Zodiac gems he took from the museum. As the cardinal signs initiated the events, now the fixed signs support them and will complete the components that he needs. Taurus is able to tear open the small safe in Congdon's cabin, but one of the zodiac gems—the Gemini Moonstone—is missing! Only Pisces, Sagittarius, and Virgo are to be found.

Therefore, Dr. Zodiac and the avatars have to search for the moonstone. Fortunately, the gems are attuned to each other, so it does not take long to learn Congdon had the moonstone set into a ring that he wears. This forces the villain and his henchmen on-deck to take the ring from Congdon by force. It should be about this time that the heroes arrive to save the day!

DON'T ROCK THE BOAT

Once again, Dr. Zodiac has his avatars keep the heroes occupied while he struggles with Congdon for possession of the ring. Some things to keep in mind as you stage the fight:

- The yacht is fairly substantial, but not a cruise ship. There are a dozen or so of Mr. Congdon's guests on-deck, along with another dozen or so crewmembers and servers hired to work the reception. Any of these bystanders are potential hostages, or may be thrown overboard by the violence during the fight. Similarly, any of them might be able to aid the heroes with a well-timed retcon by one of the players.
- The yacht's overall material Strength is 5, so most of the avatars (and some of the heroes, no doubt) have the potential to punch or blast through the hull or otherwise damage it. That causes the boat to start to sink, and the passengers to panic, scrambling for life-jackets or simply jumping overboard.



***THE FIXED SIGNS:
TAURUS, LEO, SCORPIO & AQUARIUS***

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 3
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 6

Powers: Each of the four avatars possesses the power of one of the Zodiac Gems:

- **Taurus:** Strength 7 (Stamina 10)
- **Leo:** Blinding Blast 7 (deafening roar), Strike 5 (slashing)
- **Scorpio:** Affliction 6 (poison touch)
- **Aquarius:** Water Control 7 (attacking, moving, shaping)

As with the museum fight, run things for up to ten pages, or until one side loses. If the heroes hold their own or win, then Zodiac snatches the ring away from Congdon just as they do so.

CATCHING A WAVE

During the struggle, Mr. Congdon pulls his assailant's mask off. "Zodius!" he gasps, just before the villain sucker punches the shocked philanthropist, pulling the ring from his finger and holding it up with a laugh of triumph!

If the heroes are still fighting the avatars or about to turn their attention towards him, Dr. Zodiac lashes out with the power of the Aquarius gem and a massive wave rises up out of the water behind the yacht, headed to shore! Offer Determination to anyone who's going to try and stop it. If Zodiac needs an additional distraction, he might throw the stunned Mr. Congdon overboard as well.

Let the players come up with their own ideas about stopping the tsunami now rushing towards the shore. They need a massive success against difficulty 7 to avert any damage or injury and they have only three pages to achieve it. Lesser outcomes can add-up to success: two moderate successes equal a major success, and two major successes equal a massive success. So, for example, if the heroes manage two moderate and a major success in their three pages, then they manage to stop the wave in the nick of time.

Choose the tests based on what the heroes try to do: generally it will be a test of one or more powers, but it could also be clever uses of Strength, Coordination, or Intellect. Encourage stunts and teamwork to get the job done.

That Sinking Feeling

If stopping a tidal wave is totally out of the heroes' league, you can have Dr. Zodiac blast a hole in the hull of the yacht instead, leaving the heroes to rescue hapless passengers and crew as the boat quickly sinks. For an added element of danger, throw in some hungry sharks attracted to all of the commotion and looking to grab a quick "bite" unless the good guys manage to ward them off. (See the great white shark in the Icons **Creatures** list for game traits.)

THE NEXT STEP

Once the heroes have averted disaster, they can check-in with the passengers and crew of the *Sharky* (either safe on board the yacht or being rescued by the Coast Guard if it sank). Carl Congdon calls to get their attention, then tells them the mysterious thief escaped with one of the guests from his party, and he also knows who he is!

Congdon got a good look at the man who has been causing trouble for the heroes all night and his name is Dr. Lemuel Zodus, a former astronomer with the city observatory run by the university. He was dismissed from his position due to psychological issues, a nervous breakdown or some such. The man he abducted is Dr. Gordon Lyton, the director of the observatory, who was responsible for his dismissal! Before they vanished, Congdon heard Zodus tell Dr. Lyton, "Now it begins anew where it ended!"

It should not be difficult for the players to figure out Dr. Zodiac is returning to the observatory where he once worked. If it is, you can roll the dice where the players can't see for a "secret" test and just tell the player of the hero with the highest Intellect the information, or have Congdon or someone else blurt it out as a last resort.

CHAPTER 3:

OUR FATE IS IN THE STARS

The observatory located is on the highest point of an island off the coast. You can set it elsewhere (a mountain outside the city, for example) but be aware the Pisces avatar will be considerably limited in that case. The heroes can get to the island under their own power, or with assistance from the authorities or even Mr. Congdon, who is happy to loan them one of his boats (a fast speedboat) to get them out there.

Dr. Zodiac does not wish to be disturbed, so he has set the four remaining gem avatars to guard the approach to the island. They try to stop the heroes as soon as they arrive, with Pisces leaping from the water to try and drag a hero under. Virgo coordinates their actions and can even power stunt a Mental Blast off her Telepathy (award the attacked hero a point of Determination). Gemini splits and both of them teleport around the fight to harass and distract the heroes while Sagittarius peppers them with fiery arrows.

As in the previous battles, run things for up to ten pages. If the fight is still going on, the heroes win by default as the avatars shimmer and fade, Dr. Zodiac reaching the apex of his ritual. If the heroes lose, they wake up alongside Dr. Lyton to witness the apotheosis of Lemuel Zodius. Move on to **The Observatory**.

THE MUTABLE SIGNS: GEMINI, VIRGO, SAGITTARIUS, PISCES

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 3
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 6

Powers: Each of the four avatars possesses the power of one of the Zodiac Gems:

- Gemini: Duplication 1, Teleportation 3
- Virgo: Telepathy 7
- Sagittarius: Blast 7 (fiery “arrows”)
- Pisces: Aquatic 7, Aquatic Animal Control 6

THE OBSERVATORY

In the main area of the observatory, under its sliding dome, Dr. Lyton is tied to a chair in front of the main telescope, where he can witness Dr. Zodius, standing in the midst of a complex diagram painted on the floor of the room. Candles burn at twelve points around him, the flames glowing in different colors, and the dome is open, allowing starlight and moonlight to pour into the otherwise darkened room.

If the heroes were defeated by the avatars in one of the previous two fights, they wake up here, chained to the metal railing of the catwalk that runs around the perimeter of the circular chamber. Dr. Zodius wants them to witness his success along with the man who mocked his brilliant insights. Take the opportunity to mockingly greet the heroes and summarize the information from Dr. Zodiac’s background for them; it’s his “origin flashback” and opportunity to gloat.

If the heroes fought their way past the last of the Zodiac avatars, then they manage to enter the observatory chamber just in time to see Zodiuss triumphantly complete his ritual. He cried out his victory to the stars as multicolored light floods into the room, surrounding him, and the twelve Zodiac Gems rise up, forming a spinning wheel that flies into place on the breastplate he wears. A final burst of light blasts away the overcoat and remaining dark clothing he wears, revealing Dr. Zodiac in full costume for the first time. He calls out:

"The power of the sidereal signs is *mine!* Now, bow down before your new master ... Dr. Zodiac!"

THE FINAL FIGHT

Give the heroes whatever opportunity they want to tell Dr. Zodiac what he can do with his offer to surrender. Then it's an all-out fight!

The final fight should be tough: after all, Dr. Zodiac has all the powers of the Zodiac Gem combined! The first thing he does is react to a hero's attack by using Gemini's power to split into two; if the attack misses, it goes in-between the duplicates. If it hits, it only hits one of them. The two "Doctors Zodiac" then attack the heroes!

It isn't all bad news: it turns out when Dr. Zodiac duplicates, he splits the gems' power between his selves. So one the first listed power-set, and the other has the second. Zodiac himself may discover this when he tries to use a power he no longer has.

POWER-SET ONE

- Aries (Bloodstone): Explosive Blast 7 (energy ram)
- Libra (Peridot): Reflection 8
- Taurus (Sapphire): Strength 7 (Stamina 15)
- Scorpio (Opal): Affliction 6 (poison touch)
- Gemini (Moonstone): Duplication 1, Teleportation 3
- Sagittarius (Topaz): Blast 7 (fiery "arrows")

POWER-SET TWO

- Cancer (Emerald): Invulnerability 8, Strike 5 (slashing)
- Capricorn (Ruby): Leaping 7, Strike 7 (bashing kicking attack)
- Leo (Diamond): Blinding Blast 7 (deafening roar), Strike 5 (slashing)
- Aquarius (Garnet): Water Control 7 (attacking, moving, shaping)
- Virgo (Sardonyx): Telepathy 7
- Pisces (Amethyst): Aquatic 7, Aquatic Animal Control 6

Second, the heroes do not have to go *mano-a-mano* (*a-mano*) with Dr. Zodiac. They can try defeating him in a straight-up fight, and may well have the Determination and resources they need to do it, but he's a tough opponent: with Reflection 8 and Invulnerability 8 and some substantial attacks. They might start looking for other ways to overcome their opponent. The following are just two possibilities:

Divided You Fall

The heroes might key into Dr. Zodiac's massive ego as his weak point. His duplicates think entirely alike, to the point of each considering himself the "real" (and therefore ultimately superior) Dr. Zodiac! Some successful taunts and comments about that fact can cause Dr. Zodiac's two halves to turn on each other!

It isn't easy, it takes a massive success against the villain's Willpower (difficulty 9). Like with the tidal wave previously, the heroes can take on this challenge in stages: two minor successes equal a major success, and two major successes equal a massive one. On the other hand, a failure wipes out the equivalent of a major success (that is, a major or two minor successes), forcing the heroes to keep trying. On the other hand, a failure allows for determined effort.

Test the appropriate abilities use by the heroes, likely Willpower, but possibly also appropriate powers or even Intellect or Awareness, depending on the approach taken. Encourage players to get creative in explaining how they try and pit the divided Dr. Zodiac against himself.

If the heroes succeed, the duplicates fall to arguing, then attack each other, creating a powerful mystic feedback that knocks them both out in a brilliant explosion, leaving a single (unconscious) Dr. Zodiac behind.

The Fickle Stars

Dr. Zodiac's ritual set-up remains in place after he assumes the mantle of his power. Heroes with some occult specialty or powers, or just daring enough, might try reversing the ritual, stripping their foe of his powers!

This also requires a massive success against difficulty 9 (Zodiac's Willpower) and the villain quickly becomes aware of what the heroes are trying to do. He focuses his efforts on stopping the hero or heroes involved in the ritual, forcing the others to run interference for them. If the lead character in the ritual makes any other test, including defending, the ritual is disrupted and loses the equivalent of a major success (a major or two minor successes).

Intellect (including Occult specialty) is likely the ability for this test, although Magic power level can substitute, and heroes can use focused effort to substitute something else, if they can provide an explanation for it.

If the effort succeeds, Dr. Zodiac's two selves are forcibly pulled back together. He convulses, and the Zodiac gems explode from his breastplate in a shower of multicolored light. Dr. Zodiac stands for a moment, powerless and beaten, before crumpling to the ground, unconscious.

CONCLUSION

Once the heroes defeat Dr. Zodiac, they simply have to await the arrival of the authorities, alerted by Mr. Congdon. Police and Coast Guard units show up and the cops take Dr. Zodiac into custody. Any earlier suspicion that might have fallen on the heroes is dispelled by Dr. Lyton's testimony, as Zodiac told him his entire scheme, and he witnessed the villain's defeat by the heroes.

Regardless of how Dr. Zodiac loses, the Zodiac Gems appear to have lost their supernatural properties. No one else can tap into the powers the gems offered, nor call upon the avatars Dr. Zodiac did. The police prefer to take the gems into custody as evidence, to eventually be returned to Mr. Congdon, their rightful owner. Congdon wants to donate them to the museum for further study, but is grateful enough to the heroes to follow their suggestions, if phrased properly. The heroes also have some time before the authorities show up to do something else with the gems, if they prefer, from dropping them into the ocean to finding a safe hiding place. The gems do display one unusual property: they are completely invulnerable, and any attempt by the heroes to destroy them in order to remove them as a danger fails.

If Dr. Zodiac defeats all of the heroes in the last chapter, the story is not over. The triumphant villain leaves his fallen foes and departs, so they can Dr. Lyton can tell the world what they have witnessed. You can take a look at some of the ideas in the **Further Adventures** section for what Dr. Zodiac plans to do next with his considerable power. In the next adventure, the heroes get another crack at their new foe! Dr. Zodiac could even become a team challenge for the group.

Carl Congdon is sufficiently impressed with the heroes that he might offer his financial backing so they can stay together as a team and continue their work. You can make him an ongoing supporting character in the series, or his various interests might keep him so busy that he rarely has time to show up. Mr. Congdon's passion for antiquities can also provide other plot-hooks in the future, uncovering occult or even alien artifacts.

EXTENDING THE ADVENTURE

The Sidereal Schemes of Dr. Zodiac is written as a fairly straightforward story of just a few chapters, a chance to get a feel for *Icons* and how it plays, but you can stretch things out if you prefer a longer game. The easiest thing to do is extend Dr. Zodiac's search for acquire the twelve gems he needs, with the heroes following clues to the other gemstones in exotic places around the world. Some might be in the hands of museums or private collectors while others remain hidden in ruins, buried in far off places, or even lost with the fabled realm of Atlantis beneath the sea!

One possibility for extending the adventure without giving the heroes too many opportunities to thwart Dr. Zodiac along the way is for the villain to take hostages or otherwise come up with some means of coercing the heroes into finding and collecting the gems *for* him! You can then run a series of mini-adventures, each chapter focused on a particular gem and a challenge suitable for that zodiac sign. Once the heroes have all the gems in-hand, go on to **Chapter 3** in this adventure, where Dr. Zodiac takes on the gems' powers.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Although *The Sidereal Schemes of Dr. Zodiac* concludes with the rogue astrologer's defeat, the story isn't over! You can use Dr. Zodiac, the Zodiac Gems, and other elements of this adventure in future Icons tales with your heroes.

Once Dr. Zodiac has mystically "attuned" to the gems in this story, he retains a connection to them, although the heroes and the authorities are not aware of it. Once he's had the opportunity to plan things out in prison and gather a few simple materials, he enacts the occult ritual needed to summon the gems to him and escape! He may go underground for a time, evading the heroes searching for him, or go directly to a new grandiose scheme.

Some further adventures involving Dr. Zodiac may include the following:

The Gemini Alibi

Rather than escape from prison, Dr. Zodiac claims undue mental influence: he was possessed by the mystic gems! His claim seems well founded when "Dr. Zodiac" reappears, committing spectacular crimes, while Zodiac is still in prison. While the defense moves ahead with their claim of mental incapacity, the heroes investigate this "new" Dr. Zodiac, who is actually Zodiac, using the power of Gemini to split into two: his costumed and "innocent" identities. He plans to get the charges dropped and walk out of prison a free man!

Horrorscopes

Respected and trusted heroes have embarked on a crime spree! The sudden spate of unusual behavior is due to the influence of the Zodiac Gems, coupled with a magical ritual, allowing Dr. Zodiac to control certain people according to their zodiac birth-sign! Controlling the heroes was just the beginning, and a means to steal the information and materials needed for a more ambitious ritual that will extend Zodiac's power over the entire world!

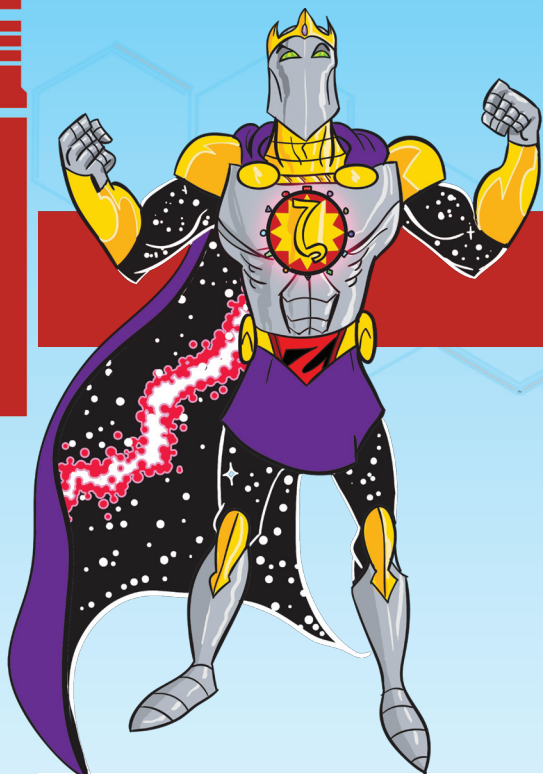
The Stars Are Right

The Zodiac Gems were not created out of a whim, but a need to harness the power of the stars to hold an ancient and eldritch evil at bay. Dr. Zodiac's tampering and claiming their power for himself has upset an important balance. Now a new cosmic conjunction is approaching, and cracks are appearing in the very foundations of reality itself. Unless the heroes can find the ancient Keys to the Zodiac left behind by long-ago wizards, all of creation may be doomed!

The Zodiac Circle

While Dr. Zodiac prefers to keep all the power of the Zodiac Gems for himself, he also understands the value of "strength in numbers" when it comes to dealing with heroes. So he recruits the "Zodiac Circle" an alliance of super-criminals with powers enhanced by one of the gems each; Dr. Zodiac retains most of the power, but shares a portion with each of his twelve cohorts. Together, they are a formidable group! Can the heroes handle being outnumbered and still find a way to overcome their foes?

DOCTOR ZODIAC



QUALITIES

MASTER OF THE ZODIAC!
TOUCHED BY DESTINY
UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS

ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'1 WEIGHT: 185

FIRST APPEARANCE:

POWERS

WIZARDRY - (Magic)

ZODIAC GEMS - See Below

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ASTROLOGY - MASTER
ASTRONOMY
POWER EXPERT (Magic)

STAMINA

11

CHALLENGES

PERSONAL - BELIEVES FATE IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS
SOCIAL - "THEY DOUBTED MY BRILLIANT INSIGHTS!"
WEAKNESS - DEPENDS ON THE ZODIAC GEMS FOR HIS POWERS

Zodiac Gems: As a result of this adventure, Dr. Zodiac also possesses the powers of the twelve Zodiac gems, as follows:

- Aries (Bloodstone): Explosive Blast 7 (energy ram)
- Cancer (Emerald): Invulnerability 8, Strike 5 (slashing)
- Libra (Peridot): Reflection 8
- Capricorn (Ruby): Leaping 7, Strike 7 (bashing kicking attack)
- Taurus (Sapphire): Strength 7 (Stamina 15)
- Leo (Diamond): Blinding Blast 7 (deafening roar), Strike 5 (slashing)
- Scorpio (Opal): Affliction 6 (poison touch)
- Aquarius (Garnet): Water Control 7 (attacking, moving, shaping)
- Gemini (Moonstone): Duplication 1, Teleportation 3
- Virgo (Sardonyx): Telepathy 7
- Sagittarius (Topaz): Blast 7 (fiery "arrows")
- Pisces (Amethyst): Aquatic 7, Aquatic Animal Control 6

Dr. Lemuel Zodiuss has been fascinated with the stars since childhood. That fascination led the shy and bookish young man to study astronomy. He wanted to plumb the depths of the cosmos and learn the secrets behind the shining patterns of the stars.

Although devoted to his studies and eventually earning a doctorate, Zodiuss remained a mediocre astronomer. His studies of the history of his discipline led to a growing fascination with astrology, the ancient wisdom of how the stars influenced fate. Fascination grew into obsession, as Zodiuss became convinced the stars were determiners of the future, dictating destiny, and that he played an important role in their pattern. His work suffered and his fringe theories began creeping out, until he was laughed out of the scientific community and dismissed from his university position, told to seek psychiatric help.

Sinking even deeper into his obsession, Dr. Zodiuss stumbled upon scattered fragments referring to “the Zodiac Gems,” ancient stones imbued with the power of the constellations themselves. He pursued the fragmentary leads, plumbing the depths of arcane texts. His psyche seemed to crack open, and he learned some elementary magic, but remained focused on his goal.

Now he has found the Zodiac Gems, unearthed after all these years, and so close at hand! With a conjunction of the heavens approaching, Zodiuss is certain the forces of fate have conspired to bring him to this place and time. He will claim the Zodiac Gems and with them the power to change the future of the world itself! All those who questioned his insights will bear witness to the rise of ... *Dr. Zodiac!*

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