

# MARVEL SUPER HEROES ADVENTURE GAME



# GAME BOOK



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# FOREWORD

Let's face it, you want to be a super hero. No, don't bother denying it. You want superpowers just like the rest of us. You want to fly through the air, lift buses, and fire optic blasts. You want bad guys trembling when you crash through the window. And you want people cheering for you as you smile and tell them you're in control.

Still, the rational part of you says you want a normal life too. You want to walk down the street without being mobbed, you want at least a few of your social engagements to be robbery-free, and you want to spend most of your life outside of a courtroom. You want quiet. You want . . . well, you.

So how do you get both?

Well, we can't give you the eyebeams, but we can give you the next best thing—you can become a super hero for a few hours, save the world, and then go back to your normal life. You can play the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game**.

We worked tirelessly to design a game that feels like a comic book. Playing the MARVEL game is just like walking straight into the Marvel Universe. When the Hulk swings back to clobber you into next week, we want you to flinch—really flinch!

To get that feeling, we turned to the SAGA® game rules, which focus on characterization, story, and action—just like the Marvel comics we all know and love. We want the MARVEL game to be one that *all* the Marvelphiles out there could enjoy, whether first-time roleplayers or dyed-in-the-wool gamers. If you're a "True Believer," then this game is for you!

Open the book and get a taste of that Marvel action. Soon you'll be playing your favorite Marvel heroes in the style in which they were meant to be played—fast, furious, and with plenty of drama. As you play, the only question you'll have is: What is that pounding sound? You know, the one that sounds like Hulk stomping toward you with a fury that could shake mountains to the ground?

Oh, right. That's your pulse.

Welcome to the earth-shattering world of Marvel.

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# THE MARVEL EXPERIENCE

The Marvel Universe! Its very name conjures images of epic battles, star-spanning adventure, and terrifying villainy. The Marvel Universe is composed not of neutrons and protons, but an infinite panoply of love and tragedy, triumph and rage. Mankind's abili-

ties are stretched to unseen limits by gamma radiation and alien technology. And heroism—true, unadulterated heroism—shines brighter than the largest star in the galaxy. All this gives us the most compelling collection of legends since Arthur and Beowulf. It is the Marvel Universe, and it is awe-inspiring.

And now it's yours.

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** gives you the tools to make your own legends, as epic as any found in the World's Greatest Comics. For the span of one afternoon, Captain America or She-Hulk or Wolverine can be right there in your living room—saving the world at your command.

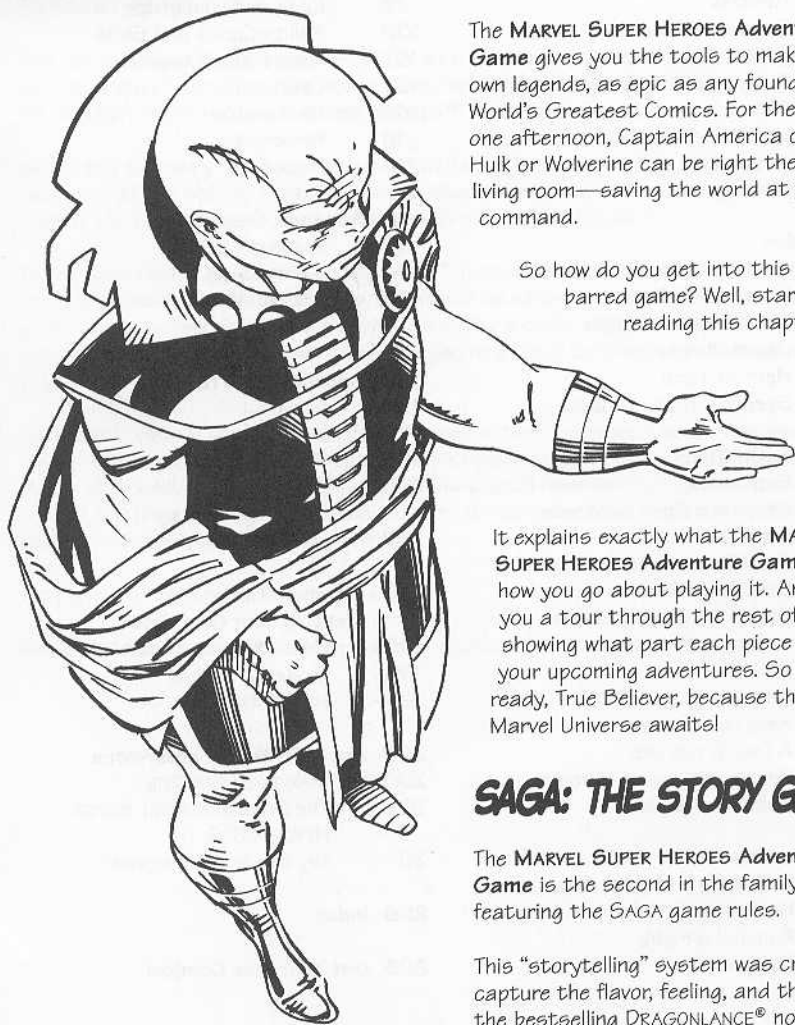
So how do you get into this no-holds-barred game? Well, start by reading this chapter.

It explains exactly what the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** is, and how you go about playing it. And it gives you a tour through the rest of the box, showing what part each piece plays in your upcoming adventures. So get ready, True Believer, because the mighty Marvel Universe awaits!

## SAGA: THE STORY GAME

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** is the second in the family of games featuring the SAGA game rules.

This "storytelling" system was created to capture the flavor, feeling, and themes of the bestselling **DRAGONLANCE®** novels in an



elegant, easy-to-learn roleplaying game: the **DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE® Dramatic Adventure Game**. However, we soon recognized that the game's flexibility made it well-suited for other settings, particularly those in which plot, theme, and characters are key—such as the Marvel Universe.

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** features the standard SAGA action resolution system, in which your heroes can accomplish anything from small tasks to great feats using the cards of the Fate Deck. At the same time, this book introduces some new concepts to the SAGA game rules, to adapt the system for roleplaying super heroes.

All the games in the SAGA family emphasize story and character development over random chance, and ease of play over a system of complicated rules. SAGA games are for players who feel passionately about their game settings—and the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** is for the Marvel Maniac in you!

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

This box comes with a cornucopia of components to satisfy the Mighty Marvel Maniac in you. In fact, it comes with just about everything you will ever need to play the game. The only things you won't find in here are a pencil or two, some note paper, and your love of the Marvel Universe. Here's the scoop on what the components are, and what they're used for.

**The Game Book:** The extraordinary edition you hold in your hands contains all the information you need to spin your own superheroic sagas in the Mighty Marvel manner. The first half of the book contains the rules for playing MARVEL, and the second half is filled with advice for players, tips on storytelling, and rules for creating heroes and action-packed adventures of your own design.

**The Roster Book:** In here you'll find the bravest heroes and most nefarious villains in the Marvel Universe ready for use in your games. Go ahead and look at it now; the meanings of the various numbers will be explained in the **Marvel Heroes** section (page 8). Also, there's a special bonus section on the history of the Marvel Universe.

**The Fate Deck:** This 96-card deck is the heart of the game, and is used much like an ordinary deck of cards. As you shuffle through the Fate Deck, you'll see that instead of the usual card suits there are symbols of five of Marvel's most famous characters (Spider-Man, Hulk, Mister Fantastic, Doctor Strange, and Doctor Doom). On the cards you'll see many familiar faces from the World's Greatest Comics. How the cards fit into the game is shown in the **Action** rules on page 16.

## USING THE RULES

This book contains rules that the players will use. These rules aren't meant to get in your way. This is a roleplaying game, not a ruleplaying game. Spend too much time yapping about rules, and your hero's liable to get a foot in the face. The more you play your role, the more fun you'll have.

After this intro, the *Game Book* kicks off with the anatomy of **Marvel Heroes**. Then we move on to **Action** and **Clobberin' Time!**, where you'll learn to play the pulse-pounding MARVEL way. Then there's a section on **Superheroism**, how to play a believable hero. On the flip side is a bit on **Narration**, the tricks of storytelling. Next up is a section on **Adapting Heroes** from your favorite comics. At the end are appendices on **Skills**, **Powers**, **Hero Creation**, and **Conversions** from other Marvel games.

Throughout the game, you'll see that some rules are printed in grey boxes. These rules are considered optional.

# ROLEPLAYING THE MARVEL WAY

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** is a roleplaying game, a game of imagination and storytelling. Parts of the game will certainly be familiar—for example, you'll see aspects of card games in the use of the Fate Deck—but a roleplaying game is a strange and wondrous thing. Instead of reading about your favorite heroes, you get to speak, act, and even think for them.

In this game, one person, the Narrator, is responsible for reading and knowing the basic plot for a MARVEL storyline, called an adventure (a sample adventure, **Shakedown**, is included starting on page 76). Each player at the table holds the fate of one hero in his or her hands, playing the hero's actions and reactions within the story. As the Narrator describes a scene, the players tell the Narrator what happens next. The Narrator also runs the rules and acts out characters, those Narrator personalities that include super-villains and bystanders.

And it all happens fast. Pretend you're listening in on a MARVEL game, and you'll see what we mean. One player, Michele, is talking in a southern accent and whining about wearing gloves; she's gotta be playing Rogue. Her friend Harold's got his fists up in the air, and the way he's waving them about, you're sure he can see claws coming out of his knuckles; yup, that's Wolverine. And the guy with the boss wraparound shades is making a speech about mutants getting along with humans; uh-huh, Stan's playing Cyclops.

They're all sitting around Mike's living room table. Since he's the Narrator, Mike read tonight's adventure before the others arrived, and knows that the plot involves the three uncanny X-Men being unexpectedly attacked by a Sentinel (and who'd expect that?). Once everyone is ready to begin, Mike describes the scene.

**Mike:** The three of you have driven into Salem Center to do some shopping for the Xavier Institute. The town is bustling with people walking their dogs and just enjoying this beautiful spring day. You need to get groceries plus some paint to finish the repairs from when the Danger Room went crazy last week. What do you do?

**Stan:** Well, Cyclops . . . I mean, I will take the shopping list and hit the supermarket.

**Michele:** Pick me up some sugah, Sugah! While Cyclops is doing that, I'll walk over to the hardware store to see about getting the paint.

**Harold:** I'm leanin' against the jeep. I just wanted to get out of the mansion for a while. If you need a hand, holler. Otherwise, I'll just hang out and cool my claws.

**Mike:** Great! Scott and Rogue go their separate ways, leaving Logan alone. Everything is nice and normal for a while, people passing and chatting pleasantly, until suddenly a little boy points directly over Logan's head and shouts, "Look out, mister! It's comin' straight for you!" What do you do?

**Stan:** Do I see this?

**Mike:** No. Scott and Rogue don't notice anything yet. Harold, what do you do?

**Harold:** I grab the kid and leap away from the jeep! Then I turn to see what he was pointing at.

**Mike:** A gigantic purple robot streaks out of the clear blue sky, landing on and crushing the jeep—it's a Sentinel, and it's looking right at Logan! What do you do?

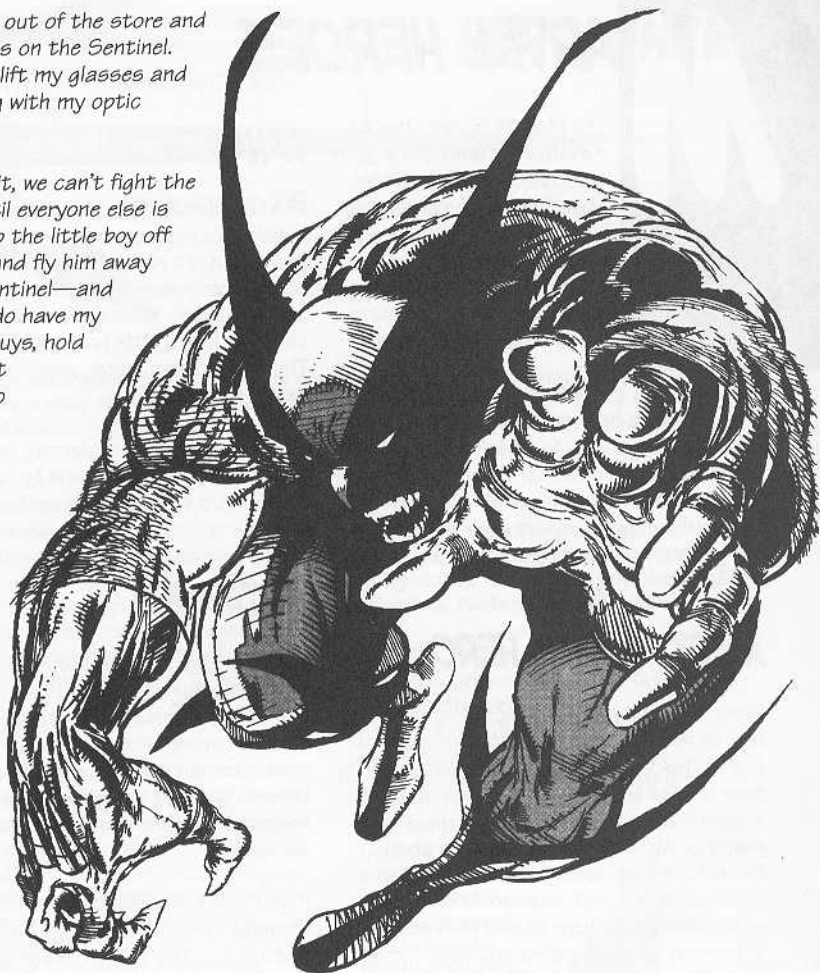
**Michele:** Oh, I definitely notice that!

**Mike:** Yes, you do. In fact, both Rogue and Scott turn when they hear the noise. They see the Sentinel and they also see Logan poised at its feet. What do you do?

**Stan:** I rush out of the store and train my eyes on the Sentinel. I'm going to lift my glasses and hit the thing with my optic blasts!

**Michele:** Wait, we can't fight the Sentinel until everyone else is safe! I scoop the little boy off the street and fly him away from the Sentinel—and yes, Mike, I do have my gloves on. Guys, hold on till we get everybody to safety!

**Harold:** Let Rogue and Cyke take care of that. This tin can just ruined my day off, and it's gonna pay! I extend my claws and leap at the robot's head!



The above scene provides a fine example of the essence of roleplaying. As the game goes on, Mike (the Narrator) will tell the others exactly how well—or poorly—the heroes do at the actions they attempt, and he'll continue to ask them, "What do you do next?" Their answers will shape the course of the story.

Of course, there's a little bit more to it than what you just read. The rules in this book provide quick and easy guidelines for deciding exactly what happens in a given situation, so Mike is free from having to make up everything.

Your games should go something like this, fast and loose. Everyone in the game has to make decisions on the fly, as if their heroes' lives depended on it. Because quite often, they do. Villains crop up out of nowhere, stunning events happen when you least expect it, and plot twists occur at the speed of light. So be ready for it. When someone says "Duck!", don't waste time asking them if they mean Howard.



# MARVEL HEROES

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES *Adventure Game* gives you the chance to play Spider-Man, Captain America, the ever-lovin' blue-eyed Thing, or any of your favorite Marvel heroes. It all comes down to a simple question: Who do you want to be?

Some MARVEL adventures will ask you to play a certain hero, while in others you can play any hero that you and your Narrator agree is okay. The *Roster Book* provides dozens of choices of hero sheets, and there will be more rosters filled with more Marvel personalities. Here's how you read a hero sheet:

## ANATOMY OF A HERO

Since this is a game and not a comic book, heroes need ratings to define how powerful and skilled they are. Don't worry, it doesn't take a Reed Richards to decipher a roster. In order to explain, though, we'll need an example. We've chosen none other than Excalibur's ever-so-cute leader, Nightcrawler. On the next page you'll find a copy of Nightcrawler's hero sheet, with each important element called out by a number that corresponds with the description below. Refer to it as you read this chapter.

## 1. NAMES

The topmost item on the hero sheet is the individual's codename. However, most parents don't name their kid "Juggernaut," so in parentheses beneath the public identity is the individual's civilian name. If the hero has a title (such as "Thor, God of Thunder"), the moniker appears under the hero's name as well.

*Nightcrawler's heroic identity is listed first on his hero sheet, followed by his given name, Kurt Wagner in parentheses beneath it.*

## 2. IMAGES

The hero sheet shows the individual as he or she is usually seen by the public, often in a colorful costume (or "union suit"). Of course, heroes and villains change costumes in the comics all the time. Just keeping track of the Wasp's wardrobe could keep an Avengers continuity czar occupied for weeks.

If you're playing a hero who suddenly changes costumes (or even identities) in the comics, talk the situation over with your Narrator. Unless there is a good reason not to, he or she will probably let you decide whether or not you want to make the change. Work with the Narrator to make any necessary changes to the hero sheet using the rules in the **Adapting A Hero** section starting on page 96.

*The image shows Nightcrawler in costume.*

# HERO SHEET

**6C Strength**      **Intellect 5D**

(4)

**2 Edge \* Hand Size 4(25)**

**③ 12A Agility**      **Willpower 7C**

## ① NIGHTCRAWLER (KURT WAGNER)

[Note: In the *Roster Book*, the abilities are presented in color; for example, Agility is red, and so are the Agility skills such as Acrobatics and the Agility powers such as Wall-Crawling. In black-and-white entries, the related ability suits are noted in parentheses as below.]

**⑦ CALLING:** Adventurer

**HINDRANCE:** Monstrous (8)

(0 Willpower to convince normal people not to run away)

**⑨ PERSONALITY:** Fun-loving, spirited, swashbuckling, adventuresome, good leader, dedicated, religious, worships Errol Flynn, personable (nickname: "Fuzzy Elf"), Teutonic (German catchphrases: "Nicht wahr?" "Liebchen," "Unglaublich!")

### ⑩ HISTORY:

Apparently abandoned by his parents at birth, the obviously mutant child Kurt Wagner was adopted by Margali Szardos, a gypsy sorceress and circus fortune-teller. Kurt grew up in the circus, using his natural agility to become a star acrobat. When he left the circus, Kurt found his foster brother Stefan and was horrified to discover Stefan had become a murderer. Kurt tried to stop him, but as they fought, Kurt accidentally killed Stefan. Villagers found Kurt standing over Stefan's body and assumed he was responsible for the murders. Before the mob could kill him, Professor Xavier arrived and recruited Kurt to join the X-Men.

As an X-Man and later as the Excalibur team leader, Nightcrawler has been one of the most dedicated and constant members of the X-family. Kurt is the son of Mystique, a villain who recently (and unwillingly) served in X-Factor.

### SKILLS: ⑤

Climbing, Swords (Strength skills); Acrobatics, Fast Exit, Piloting, Repair (Agility skills); Mechanics (Intellect skill); Leadership, Performing (Willpower skills)

### POWERS: ⑥

Additional Limb—Prehensile Tail 4 (Agility power)

Blending 4 (Agility power)

Limit: Darkness Only

Teleportation 3 ("Bamfing") (Agility power)

Fusillade, Quick Turnaround

Unique trait: Causes a small smoky implosion, which leaves a sulfurous smell

Wall-Crawling 2 (Agility power)



### 3. ABILITIES

Everyone knows that Mister Fantastic is smarter than the Human Torch, but how much smarter? And the incredible Hulk may be the strongest one there is, but how close does Thor come to matching him? These questions have kept many an argument going on the schoolyard and the Internet.

In MARVEL, these questions are answered by an individual's abilities. Everyone in the Marvel Universe has two physical abilities, and two mental abilities. Strength and Agility are the physical abilities, while Intellect and Willpower are the mental abilities. The exact meanings and uses of each ability is explained below.

If you look at the hero sheet, you'll see that each ability has a number followed by a letter. The number is the *ability score*, while the letter is the *ability code*.

Each ability also links with a suit in the Fate Deck. Strength is green and symbolized by the Hulk, Intellect is blue and symbolized by Mister Fantastic, Agility is red and is symbolized by Spider-Man, and Willpower is purple and symbolized by Doctor Strange. The meanings of these suits—and the significance of the black Doctor Doom suit—are explained in the **Action** chapter.

**Ability scores** measure the raw power an individual has with that particular ability. You can be pretty sure that someone with an Intellect score of 8 has a higher IQ than someone with a score of 7 or lower.

Each ability score fits on a scale of 0 to 30. In the *Roster Book*, most scores fall under the normal human maximum of 10. However, many heroes will have scores of 10 or higher—they don't call them super heroes for nothing, y'know.

An individual's ability scores remain the same throughout the game unless

something happens to permanently change the individual. Even if a permanent change occurs, the hero sheet often lists the original scores noted by an asterisk (\*), as these numbers are often used during the game.

**Ability codes** reflect how good an individual is at putting the ability to practical use. Someone with a Strength code of A is almost certainly a better fighter than someone with a lower code.

The ability codes, listed from highest to lowest, are A, B, C, D, and X. Flip through the *Roster Book*, and you'll find highly-skilled heroes often have one or two codes of A, while less-skilled heroes have mostly C codes. The game effect of codes is reflected in the hero's mastery of his or her powers and skills, and is explained in the **Action** chapter.

**Strength** (green) gauges someone's physical might, muscular development, and stamina. It defines how hard the individual hits something and what he or she can lift. Strength is used to resolve attacks with close combat weapons. It also tells how resistant the individual is to fatigue, poison, and disease. Of the four abilities, Strength is the one that most often ranges into superhuman levels.

*Nightcrawler has a Strength of 6C. He is no stronger or better trained than an athletic normal human might be, and this is reflected in his score and code.*

**Agility** (red) describes the speed of an individual's reflexes and degree of natural flexibility, speed, and dexterity. If a hero has a high Agility, he or she can more easily dodge most projectile attacks, climb walls, and land on his or her feet when taking a tumble. When one person is trying to run away from another, the individual with the highest Agility score will usually prove to be fastest. Agility is also used to employ thrown and fired weapons.

*As we know, Nightcrawler is an amazing acrobat, and often dazzles opponents by*

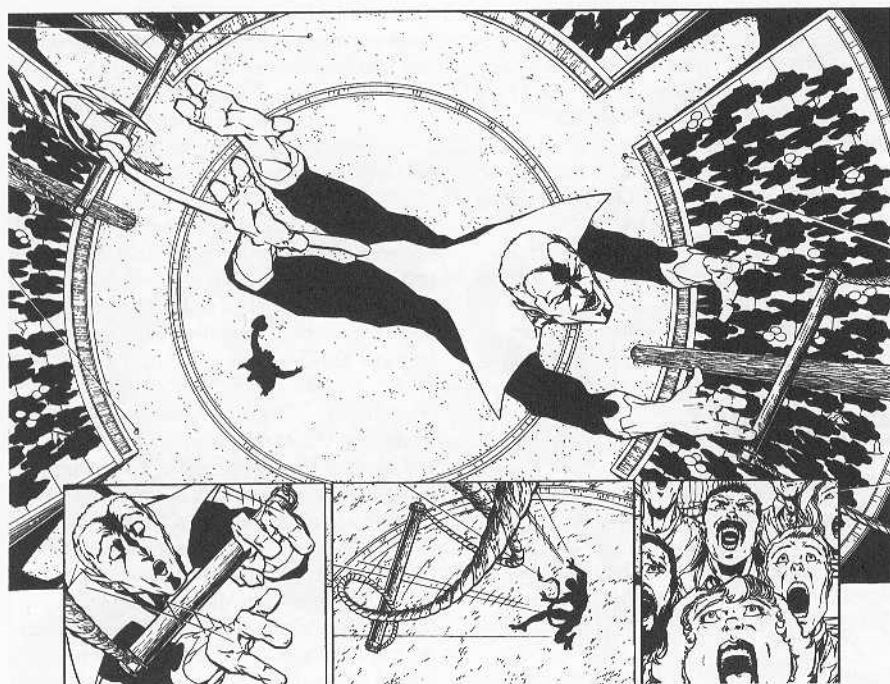
hopping all around them. These skills clearly make him more agile than the average human and even most super heroes, so Nightcrawler has an Agility of 12A.

**Intellect** (blue) measures an individual's ability to reason his or her way out of situations, solve problem, and analyze issues. If a hero has a high Intellect, he or she has a better chance of understanding unknown technology and languages, spotting clues, and anticipating the actions of others.

Nightcrawler has an Intellect of 5D. We can tell that while he is in no way ignorant or slow-witted, clearly his superheroics don't depend on mental acuity.

**Willpower** (purple) defines an individual's emotional strength, force of personality, and mental resilience. It measures the mercy and compassion of super heroes, but indicates the depths of a supervillain's corruption. The self-assurance that comes with Willpower helps a hero defend against attacks on his or her mind and soul.

Although Nightcrawler has received training from Professor X to strengthen his mental resolve, his Willpower of 7C tells us that despite appearances, he is, after all, only human.





## 4. EDGE AND HAND SIZE

Though Edge and Hand Size have very different effects in the game, together they track a hero's experience, never-say-die attitude, and resourcefulness.

**Edge** reflects a hero's ability to find quick answers to the strange situations he or she faces in life—in other words, how likely he or she is to have the *edge* over someone else. This number, ranging from 0 to 4, has a direct effect on cardplay during the game, and is described in the **Action** chapter.

**Hand Size** measures a hero's ability to handle damage that gets through all his or her defenses. It refers to the number of cards from the Fate Deck that hero's player may hold during play, usually 3 to 6. The use of Hand Size during play is explained in the **Action** and **Clobberin' Time!** chapters.

Next to the individual's Hand Size is another, larger number in parentheses. This is his or her **Health**. If you are a player using the hero, it has no effect. For characters played by the Narrator, though, this number defines the individual's endurance. Exactly how Health enters play is seen in the **Clobberin' Time!** chapter.

*Nightcrawler has an Edge of 2 and a Hand Size of 4, telling us that he is a fairly experienced hero (in the same category as Hawkeye and the She-Hulk).*

## 5. SKILLS

Skills are areas of expertise or learned talents. They can be anything from a scientific aptitude to a martial art. Heroes' skills define what they know how to do, such as Hawkeye's skill with bows and Giant-Man's skill with robotics.

Each skill has an ability that it's linked to, shown by color in the *Roster Book*. If a skill

is underlined, it means the hero might well be the best in the world at that skill. The use of skills is explained in the **Action** chapter.

*Nightcrawler's an amazing acrobat, a fencer, and a pilot, among other things.*

## 6. POWERS AND EQUIPMENT

Don't be ashamed to admit it—this is why you're here. People with wings and claws and beams shooting out of their eyes. If not for superpowers, this game would be about—well, it wouldn't be about **MARVEL SUPER HEROES**, that's for sure.

Powers are things normal people can never possess. Marvel heroes use an amazing array of superpowers, and equipment that gives them superpowers. Every power and piece of equipment is listed on the hero sheet. You can refer to the **Powers** appendix to find out exactly what a power does in the game, but your knowledge of the Marvel Universe will allow you an educated guess. If a power is in quotes, that's what the hero calls it even if it's called something else in the **Powers** section.

Each power is linked to a particular ability, shown by the color in the *Roster Book*. The use of the ability's suit is explained in the **Action** chapter. If the power is italicized, it comes from the Equipment Powers listing on page 124.

The number next to the power is its **intensity**, the strength of a power. It is the number the player refers to when his or her hero wants to use a superpower. Intensity is measured on a scale that runs from 0 to 30, just like the abilities. In fact, the two are roughly equivalent; that is, an individual with intensity 8 Mind Control overcomes a foe about as often as a person with an 8 Strength lands a punch, and getting hit by an intensity 16 energy blast hurts just as much as

getting hit by someone with a 16 Strength (and that'd be a lot of hurt).

Nightcrawler has four powers, including his renowned Teleportation, otherwise known as "bamfing." Since he can only teleport over short distances, Nightcrawler's Teleportation power has an intensity of 3.

**Stunts** are ways of using powers to perform tricks, or highly specialized tasks. Usually these are actions the hero has spent quite a bit of time practicing, though a desperate hero will often invent a new stunt to stave off disaster.

Heroes in the Roster Book have stunts listed by their powers. These aren't by any means exhaustive lists of everything the heroes can do; they are merely collections of the stunts they most commonly use. You're free to have your heroes try new stunts, but they are most likely to succeed at stunts the heroes have successfully performed in the comic books.

We see Nightcrawler can use his Teleportation power to perform the Fusillade stunt. This allows him to quickly teleport around a target, striking it repeatedly while at the same time making himself harder to hit.

**Limits** are restrictions on the use of powers and the consequences of using them. They give both the player and Narrator an idea of the "ground rules" for what they can expect a hero to be able to do with his or her powers. The Scarlet Witch, for example, can cause the most improbable of events to occur; however, she is limited by the fact that she has little control over how this power manifests itself.

Nightcrawler's power of Blending into the background can be used only in dark areas, limiting its usefulness. Nightcrawler's habit of leaving a stench behind when he bamfs isn't really much of a limit, so it's listed as a unique trait.



## 7. CALLING

Anyone in the business of fighting supervillains had better have a very good reason. After all, this choice of career can get a person killed, or at least ruin his or her social life.

These reasons are summarized in a hero's calling, the main motivation a hero has for leading this life. A hero that's a Protector is motivated to protect the weak, while an Outcast might just want to be left alone.

As far as roleplaying goes, a calling is a very important piece of data. It gives you an idea of what matters to the hero, what is likely to make the hero mad, and what situations the hero will avoid at any cost. And if you're playing a hero with a particular calling, **events** may crop up which cause the hero to act. For details on the various callings, see the **Callings** list starting on page 104.

*Nightcrawler is an Adventurer. He loves the swashbuckling lifestyle, pretending he is a hero out of an Errol Flynn movie. Life is hard for him sometimes, but he loses himself in the action.*

## 8. HINDRANCES

A hindrance is something that causes trouble or grief in an individual's life. Not every Marvel hero suffers from a hindrance, but we're sure you can think of a dozen different Marvel heroes with serious hindrances. Professor X is wheelchair-bound, Iron Man is a recovering alcoholic, and Spider-Man seems to have the whole world against him. Each of these problems limits the hero in one particular way.

If you're playing a hero with a hindrance, bear it in mind when roleplaying. Overcoming these obstacles is the very heart of what it means to be a hero. For

details on particular hindrances, see the **Hindrances** list starting on page 107.

*Nightcrawler's hindrance is that he is Monstrous in appearance. If he ventures out in public without activating his appearance-altering image inducer, people are likely to react with shock and fear.*

## 9. PERSONALITY

A hero's personality helps you gauge his or her outlook on the world. Everyone reacts differently to being poked in the chest, or vilified on the front page of the *Daily Bugle*. These notes explore the hopes, fears, ethics, and quirks of the individual, plus catchphrases and fighting styles he or she is known to use.

Use these notes to make the hero come to life through your words. Don't say, "Nightcrawler teleports with Rogue." Say, "Hold on, liebchen, this will be a bumpy ride!" If you think like the hero would, he or she will grow and take shape through you.

*We see from his hero sheet that Nightcrawler is a complicated fellow. "Fun-loving" and "swashbuckling," he is also devoutly "religious" and a "good leader." Even if you knew nothing about Nightcrawler, this plus his "German catchphrases" would give you a pretty good idea of how to begin playing him.*

## 10. HISTORY

A hero's history tells you the major events in his or her life. But as you read the histories in the *Roster Book*, one thing will be obvious: No matter how much work we put into it, we can't cover it all. Heck, we barely scratch the surface. For the complete scoop, read the comics. You'll get a litany of tales with which to regale the players while the Narrator orders pizza, and a deeper knowledge of what your hero can do. This is crucial when you want your

hero to do something the Narrator doesn't expect. The apropos sentence begins something like, "But Janey, back in *Bizarre Adventures* #27, Nightcrawler clearly . . ." And Janey just might listen, especially if you've brought your entire comic collection with you.

*This section describes Nightcrawler's origin and the significant events in his life. It covers important people whose paths he has crossed and the teams for which he's risked his life. Most importantly, though, it begins to flesh out the "fuzzy elf" behind the scary face. But it doesn't say everything: It doesn't detail his relationship with sorceress Amanda Sefton, or his*

*involvement with churches, or his long-term friendship with the notoriously recalcitrant Wolverine. For the complete lowdown on Nightcrawler, you should read the comics that star this lovable blue mutant.*





# ACTION

Sure, we all treasure those issues of Marvel comics where the heroes sit around their mansions and hideouts, talking to each other and sharing stories. But look, you don't need a game to simulate that. What you do need rules for is action, and every game

of MARVEL should have its fair share.

When your hero is stuck in Arcade's Murderworld or exploring Galactus's World-Ship, you'll usually want to respond with a heroic action. Whatever you want to do—clobber it, blast it, or try to reason with it—is resolved by your hero performing an action. Actions combine inspiration, strategic decision-making, cardplay, and guesswork into a single maneuver. This section explains how to resolve actions in a dramatic and heroic manner.

## GETTING READY FOR ACTION

After your Narrator shuffles the Fate Deck, you should draw a number of cards equal to your hero's Hand Size. Every other player should too, but the Narrator doesn't draw any cards. Players may keep their cards secret or show them to anyone at the table, but they may not trade cards with other players.

The Narrator starts an adventure by describing the story's opening scene. The example starting on page 6 provides a good sense for what the beginning of a MARVEL game session might sound like. The players describe their heroes' responses to the events unfolding before them, and then the Narrator tells them exactly what happens in response to the heroes' actions. And so it goes.

No matter what scene the Narrator describes, you'll consider many appropriate responses, and choose the one that best suits your hero's personality and available cards. Often, the Narrator will state that the hero successfully performs any simple task you describe without any cardplay at all.

However, when your hero tries to do something particularly risky, or something that has a major impact on the story, the Narrator will tell you that the hero must successfully perform an appropriate action. An action is anything a hero does that the Narrator deems central to the game's developing story. Anything can be an action, but most actions will be things like jumping from rooftop to rooftop, using a superpower, solving a puzzle, or sneaking into a villain's HQ.

More importantly, though, an action is when you use your hand of cards to determine your hero's success or failure at the activity the hero is attempting. On the next page is a description of how these fate cards are laid out.

# THE HAND OF FATE

In the MARVEL game, your fate is in your hands. You draw cards from the Fate Deck, which may be used to resolve success and failure, trigger dramatic events, introduce special guest stars, and unleash other fate-filled game elements. As a player, you hold a hand of fate cards, symbolizing your hero's resourcefulness and resistance to wounds.

Each card's border corresponds to a heroic ability: the Suit of Strength is green, the Suit of Agility is red, the Suit of Intellect is blue, the Suit of Willpower is purple, and the Suit of Doom is black. Each card also has a suit, featuring a hero's face in the upper left corner: The Hulk is Strength, Spider-Man is Agility, Mister Fantastic is Intellect, Doctor Strange is Willpower, and Doctor Doom is, well, Doom.

Each card also has a value in the upper left corner, ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 9 (10 in the case of the Doom suit). This number is printed on a colored aura: White is positive (and has a plus sign), Red is neutral (and has a dot), and Black is negative (and has a minus sign). These features help resolve actions.



The fate cards feature *characters*, whom the Narrator can introduce on a whim. They also display *events* which may occur at dramatic moments, and *callings*, the motivations of heroes that might respond to these events. Finally, the Narrator may keep track of characters' *Health* (the stat used to monitor a Narrator-run character's wounds) by using the tens column on the left and ones on the right.

# PERFORMING AN ACTION

We'll spend the next few pages explaining the rules for performing actions. But before we launch into an expansive exposition worthy of Reed Richards himself, you should be comfortable with the basics. Because, as you'll see, every action your hero performs follows this simple pattern:

***You play a card from your hand and add its value to a number on your hero sheet.***

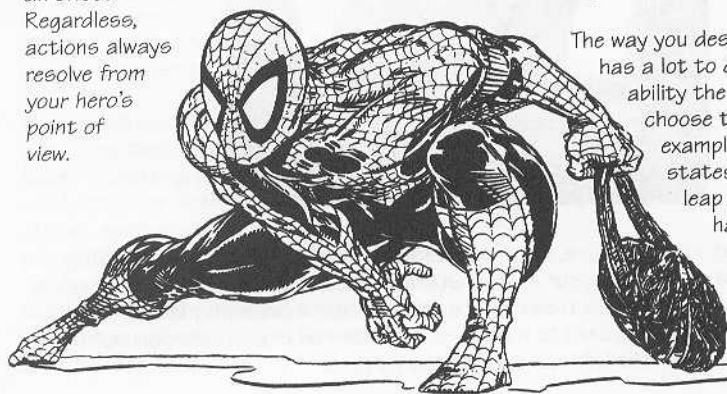
That's the whole secret of the game: adding two numbers together. If your total is equal to or higher than the action's difficulty rating which the Narrator sets, your hero succeeds! If not—well, maybe the Avengers will happen to pass by in time to pull your hero's fat out of the fire. Just don't count on that happening too often.

So, armed with this simple rule, let's see exactly how you perform an action.

## DECLARE AN ACTION

An action begins when you declare what your hero wants to do. This is your choice, but sometimes the Narrator will require an action, perhaps to dodge a punch or resist an effect.

Regardless, actions always resolve from your hero's point of view.



Make your declarations clear and detailed. Trust us, it'll make resolving an action much easier for you and your Narrator (but probably not any easier for your hero). When Spider-Man sees pumpkin-bombs heading for his noggin, don't say, "Spidey avoids the bombs." Instead, say "The web-slinger leaps against the nearest wall, springs off into a handstand, and tumbles as far away as he can!"

But don't go overboard. If your description is too detailed, the Narrator may decide that you must split it into two actions. So if you say Spider-Man "leaps against the nearest wall, springs off into a handstand, launches himself at the Green Goblin, and wallops him good," that's too much. The Narrator likely will say that Spidey first has to get out of the way—then he can try to clobber the Goblin.

## ACTION ABILITY

After you describe the action, the Narrator decides which ability is involved. This is how you'll know which number on the hero sheet to use for this action. There are five choices of action ability: Strength, Agility, Intellect, Willpower, and a power. When using a power as an action ability, you will use its intensity (the number by each power name) just like an ability score. So an Energy Blast action uses the Energy Blast power as the action ability, while a Strength action, like lifting a car, uses Strength as the action ability.

The way you describe your action has a lot to do with what ability the Narrator will choose to resolve it. The example above clearly states that Spidey will leap agilely out of harm's way—so the action ability must be his amazing Agility.

## ACTION DIFFICULTY

Once the action ability is selected, the Narrator next decides exactly how difficult the action is for a normal human to accomplish. Is it an easy feat that anyone can perform without thinking twice, or is it terribly difficult? The Narrator then translates the descriptive difficulty into an *action difficulty* rating:

Difficulty Level	Difficulty Rating	Difficulty Level	Difficulty Rating
Automatic	0	Superhuman	24
Easy	4	Unfathomable	28
Average	8	Cosmic	32
Challenging	12	Godlike	36
Daunting	16	Impossible	40
Desperate	20		

In all MARVEL products, the difficulty of an action will be printed in *italics* using this format: **difficulty rating + action ability**. So an action based on Strength that is of average difficulty will be presented as an “*average Strength action*.”

## SKILLS IN ACTION

Skills are fields in which the hero excels. Though anyone can climb a tree, those with the Climbing skill are able to climb most surfaces very well. These skills tell you how your hero has honed his or her basic abilities. Skills are listed in groups on the hero sheet, and all the skills in a group are linked to the same ability.

To use a skill, a hero simply performs an action using that ability. This is no different than any other action, except that the difficulty rating is one level easier than normal. In other words, an action that would usually be of average difficulty becomes easy if the hero is skilled in that field.

*Picture this: Ultron infects the Avengers' computer with a sentient virus, causing the mansion's defenses to attack Earth's mightiest heroes. The Narrator decides that finding a way to deactivate the weapons without wrecking the mansion is a daunting Intellect action. But since Tony Stark has the skill of Weapon Systems, Iron Man only needs to make a challenging Intellect action to avert the danger.*

In many cases, if a hero doesn't have a skill, then he or she can't even try an action involving the skill. The Narrator may let a hero try a skill that he or she doesn't know, but its difficulty rating will be at least one level harder than normal.

If a hero's skill is underlined, it's world-class. See page 22.



## HOW TOUGH IS TOUGH?

The tricky thing about this whole process is that the Narrator won't always tell you exactly how difficult an action is. The Narrator can tell you, of course, but never has to.

On some occasions, your Narrator may say, "The Thing needs to succeed at an average Strength action," but don't count on it. When the battle hangs in the balance, you might hear the Narrator say, "Have the Thing perform a Strength action—and make it a good one!" Obviously this is more than an average difficulty, but is it merely daunting or superhuman? You just can't be sure.

Of course, there will be hints to guide you. Through the course of play, you'll probably try plenty of Strength actions, so you'll be able to make comparisons: "Let's see, forcing open that oak door was daunting, but lifting a school bus was superhuman. Which one is this action closer to?"

The Narrator will do his or her best to use a clear standard of difficulty so that you can make a pretty good guess as to how tough any single action will be. When in doubt, though, give it all you've got!

## USING POWERS AND STUNTS

Most heroes in the Roster Book have powers listed. Power-based actions are generally performed at an easy difficulty level, using the power itself as the action ability.

Some heroes have stunts listed beneath a power in an indented section. These are special ways in which the hero uses the power, but because of complexity or unfamiliarity, he or she doesn't use it as often as the base power. When the hero performs one of these stunts, the action is of average difficulty.

Of course, these aren't the only stunts a hero may try with his or her powers. In fact, the hero can try any action that the Narrator allows (but if you have Spider-Man support a crumbling building using only his webbing, the Narrator is likely to simply rule that it cannot be done). Any stunt that isn't listed on the hero sheet is always performed at a difficulty level of challenging or higher.

It will always be easier for your hero to succeed at an action he or she has performed in a Marvel comic. Knowledge of the Marvel Universe will serve you well in roleplaying the powers. If you feel the Narrator is assigning too high a difficulty level to an action, feel free to politely point out the relevant issues and scenes. In the end, though, your Narrator's decision is final.

## PLAY A CARD

Now that you know what ability your hero is using, and the Narrator knows the difficulty of the action you're attempting, the cards in your hand come into play. By estimating the difficulty ratings you have to beat, and playing your cards wisely, you can ensure that your hero makes the most out of any situation.

In fact, you can pretty much look at your hand and gauge what type of day your hero is having. If your hand is filled with 7s, 8s, and 9s, the hero has a pretty good chance to succeed at just about anything. But if your hand holds no card higher than a 4, it's just one of those days when nothing is likely to go your hero's way.

Select one card from your hand, place it on the table, and add the card's value to the action ability's score. This total is your hero's *action score* for that action. If the action score is equal to or greater than the difficulty rating, the action succeeds. If the total is less than the difficulty rating, it fails.

After you've finished with the addition, immediately draw from the Fate Deck to replace the card you played. This is very important. The cards you hold will determine exactly how successful your hero will be during this adventure.

You may look at your hero sheet and think, "Hey, Captain America's best ability is 12, and the Fate Deck has no card above 10, so the highest action score he can get is 22, right? Is Cap ever going to succeed at a superhuman action?" Of course he is—this is *Captain America* we're talking about! There are two special rules of cardplay, **Trump** and **Edge**, that let heroes get numbers higher than usual.

## TRUMP

Each ability is linked by color to a suit of the Fate Deck, called the *trump suit*. If the card you play from your hand is from the suit that links with the action ability, your hero gets a *trump bonus*. Flip the top card of the Fate Deck and add it to the action score. If the card flipped is also of the trump suit, repeat the process until the flipped card is from a different suit.

**Doctor Doom  
(Doom)**



**Hulk  
(Strength)**



**Doctor Strange  
(Willpower)**



**Spider-Man  
(Agility)**



**Mister Fantastic  
(Intellect)**



## WORLD-CLASS SKILLS

Some heroes in the Roster Book have skills that are underlined. This indicates that not only is the hero skilled in that area, but his expertise is world-class. This means the hero is possibly the best in the world at the skill.

A hero with a world-class skill gets the standard reduction in the difficulty rating for actions involving that skill—and something more. Any action involving a world-class skill also receives an automatic trump bonus, or autotrump.

When your hero has autotrump, any card you use for the action is considered to be trump unless it's from the Doom suit (Doom cards are never trump). If the bonus card is of the base suit that would ordinarily be trump for this action, you draw the next card from the deck, and continue until you flip a card that isn't base trump. Automatic trump bonuses never apply to cards drawn off the Fate Deck.

Let's see what would happen if Hawkeye shot an arrow at a target on the other side of a chain-link fence. The Narrator rules this is a desperate Agility action. Since Hawkeye has the Archery skill, though, he drops the difficulty to daunting. Monte, who's playing Hawkeye, has three Doom cards and a 4 of Intellect, with no cards high enough to achieve a daunting action. However, as Hawkeye's Archery skill is world-class, Monte gets autotrump. If he plays the 4 of Intellect, he gets to flip the top card of the deck and add it to his action score. If that card is from the Agility suit—the actual trump suit for this action—he'll add the next card too.

The suit's symbol will help remind you of the types of actions for which that suit is trump. If your hero is performing an Agility action, you'll want to play a card bearing the Spider-Man symbol, and cards with a Hulk symbol are good for Strength actions. The cards best for Intellect actions show a Mister Fantastic symbol, and a card with Doctor Strange gracing it helps during a Willpower action.

While you get a trump bonus for playing in the correct suit, there is no penalty for playing a card from any of the other suits, unless the card bears the stern countenance of Doctor Doom (see page 26).

In rare cases, you may not want trump; say the Leader's trying to take over your hero's mind, and causes your hero to clobber a friend. If you want, you can choose not to take the initial trump bonus—this is called *pulling punches*. Once you do accept the trump bonus, though, you must add the bonuses if the bonus card is also trump.

To see trump in action, let's say Captain America discovers a bomb in a crowded subway station, hidden there by minions of the sinister Red Skull. Sue, who is playing Cap, wants the star-spangled Avenger to throw the bomb so far down the tunnel that none of the bystanders will be hurt by the explosion. The Narrator tells Sue that this will require a superhuman Strength action (a difficulty of 24).

Cap's Strength is 10, and Sue's hand consists of a 9 of Doom, a 6 of Intellect, a 7 of Strength, and an 8, 7 and 5 of Willpower. No card will give Sue enough points to let Cap succeed. However, by playing the 7 of Strength, Sue gets a trump bonus. Flipping the top card of the deck, she gets a 4 of Strength—another trump card, so she continues! The next flip reveals a 6 of Doom. Adding Cap's Strength to the three cards gives him an action score of 27 ( $10 + 7 + 4 + 6 = 27$ ), more than enough to succeed. Cap foils yet another of the Red Skull's nefarious schemes.

## EDGE

How is it, we asked ourselves as we designed this game, that Cyclops instantly judges the angles of reflection on every surface in a room, bounces his optic blast off six different objects, and hits his target at exactly the right spot to do the most damage? We could only figure that his experience shows him ways to bend the rules—so that's what we did too. We gave him an Edge over other heroes.

At the start of this section, we said you could play only one card from your hand. Well . . . that's not exactly true. If the value of the card you play is equal to or lower than your hero's Edge, you can play another card from your hand. You can continue doing so until you play a card with a value higher than the hero's Edge or you run out of cards. Don't redraw till you are done playing all your cards.

Only the final card played is used for the purpose of deciding trump. In other words, even if you lay down three cards in the trump suit, if the fourth card you play is from some other suit, your hero gets no trump bonus for that action.

Say in the *Cap-meets-bomb* situation on the previous page, Sue's hand was a little different. Say it was a 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9 of Intellect (um, it's a hypothetical example). All those Intellect cards won't get her trump on a Strength action, but she's pretty confident. She plays the 1, which isn't over Cap's Edge. She plays the 2—same deal. She plays the 4—ditto. And she plays the 9, which is over Cap's Edge. Sue adds those together for a colossal 16, adds in Cap's 10 Strength, and gets a 26, which beats the 24 difficulty. The Red Skull still loses.

## PUSHING TO THE LIMIT

Marvel heroes are forever yelling at each other to think just a little harder, or make the flame just a little hotter, or hold the dam just a tiny bit longer. In the game, you can raise any ability score or power intensity by the value of one card from your hand. But this has a cost, because you do not redraw this card. This has the same effect as wounds (see page 38). If you run out of cards, your hero drops unconscious and the action fails before it begins.

For example, say Storm needs to counter a freak hurricane from destroying Phoenix—the city, that is. Storm's Weather Control is 13, and her Edge is 2. Tey, who's playing Storm, has these cards: 1, 4, 6, and 8, none of them Intellect cards (the trump suit for Weather Control). Best case scenario gets Storm a 9, which when added to her 13 gets a 22—a good score, but Tey guesses it's not good enough. She thinks a million lives are worth a little sweat, so she pushes her Weather Control by blowing out the 8. She then performs her action, adding the 1 and 6 to her pushed 13 Weather Control for a 20. The Narrator reveals that Storm hit the difficulty of 28 dead-on, so she quells the wind. Tey redraws to replace the 1 and 6, but not the push card. With luck, she won't have to do that again any time soon.

Just so there's no confusion, let's tie all these various ideas together: After the Narrator has told you the action ability and decided on the action difficulty, it's time for you to play a card. You may play one card from your hand. If that card is equal to or lower than your hero's Edge, you may play one more card from your hand. This process repeats until you either play a card higher than your hero's Edge or stop. If the last card you played is of the trump suit for this action, you may flip the top card of the deck and add it to your total. If that card is also from the trump suit, repeat the process until the card flipped is from some other suit.

Now, add the values of the action ability and all the cards in this action. This is the action score. Once you've figured out the action score, your work is done.

## RESOLUTION

Determining if an action succeeded or not is a simple task. If the action score is equal to or greater than the action difficulty, the action succeeds. If not, it fails.

Using this information, the Narrator describes the results of success or failure, and continues with the next "what do you do?" proposition—just like before.

## CLEANUP

After the action is completed, place all the cards that were played into a discard pile next to the Fate Deck. The only cards that aren't discarded are any Doom cards you played from your hand. The Narrator keeps these face up in front of him or her—and you'll see them again (see the **Opposed Actions** section).

If you forgot to draw to replace the card(s) you played during the action, do so now. If you don't, later on there may be some dispute as to how many cards you should be holding in your hand. You can't play the cards you redraw to affect your current action, but you can use them to affect the next one.

When the deck runs out of cards, the Narrator should reshuffle the discard pile.

## ACTION CHECKLIST

1. You declare an action.
2. Your Narrator decides the action ability and difficulty.
3. You play a card, using Edge and trump rules. After you're done playing cards, redraw cards to replace them.
4. You add the value of the card(s) to your ability score to get an action score.
5. If the Narrator says your action score is equal to or greater than the difficulty, your hero succeeds in the action. Otherwise, your hero fails.
6. The Narrator applies results and moves on to the next action.



## AN EXAMPLE OF ACTION

Jeff and Ed are playing a MARVEL adventure. Ed is the Narrator, and Jeff's hero is Nick Fury (check the Roster Book for Nick's entry). Ambushed by a slew of Hydra agents, Nick's trying to stay free long enough to contact S.H.I.E.L.D. for some backup. We pick up the story as Nick runs into a cul-de-sac.

**Ed:** As you race through the dark, you can hear the Hydra agents close behind. The alley you're in ends in a T-intersection. You have to make a snap decision—which way do you go?

**Jeff:** Left . . . no, I go to the right, running as fast as I can.

**Ed:** Oh! Bad choice. You've turned into a dead-end alley, and find yourself looking up at a 12-foot cement wall. Behind you the splash of five assassins running through the puddles grows ominously louder. What do you do?

**Jeff:** Are there any doors here? Windows? A dumpster? Anything!?

**Ed:** Nope. Just some loose garbage blowing around your feet. The Hydra agents are almost here. What do you do?

**Jeff:** I'll jump up, grab the top of the wall, hoist myself up and over, and get away!

**Ed:** Very heroic! But the wall is 12 feet tall, and the ground is slimy and wet. You know this isn't going to be easy.

**Jeff:** I know. I know. But I don't have any other choice—I lost my gun when that Hydra goon

jumped me a few alleys back. I've got to get over that wall.

**Ed:** Okay. This is going to be a desperate Strength action.

**Jeff:** Okay, I'm gonna play a 2 of Strength. That's below my Edge, so I'll also play a 3 of Agility, which is equal to my Edge, and top it off with a 5 of Strength. Trump!

**Ed, flipping the top card of the deck:**  
Hmmm . . . a 4 of Intellect—pretty average.

**Jeff:** My Strength is 8, so  $8 + 2 + 3 + 5 + 4$  gives me an action score of 22.

**Ed:** You only needed a 20. You claw your way up the wall just as the Hydra agents round the corner. As you roll to the other side, chunks of cement explode off the wall as the assassins open fire. You're safe—for the moment. What now, hero?



# OPPOSED ACTIONS

Every action we've talked about has involved only your hero trying to accomplish a particular task. But the Marvel Universe just doesn't work that way. Something was missing from the examples—bad guys! Sure, Hawkeye can fire an arrow at a target, but how well does he do when that target is the nimble Taskmaster?

When an action involves not only your hero's talents but those of a target as well, we call it an *opposed action*. You can tell an opposed action if an ability is listed in parentheses at the end of the action description. Thus, an average *Strength (Strength)* action pits your hero's raw physical might against that of his or her opponent (anything from an arm-wrestling contest to a desperate battle to push your foe into the path of a laser-cannon). Most actions in a MARVEL game will be

opposed, particularly those discussed in the *Clobberin' Time!* chapter.

So how does an opposed action work? Pretty much the same as any other action. The only differences are in determining the action difficulty.

## THE OPPOSITION SCORE

When you declare an action that will be opposed, the Narrator sets the difficulty rating as usual. In fact, the base difficulty of an action doesn't change. The difference comes in the form of the force working against the hero.

In an opposed action, the difficulty rating is increased by the value of the opposition score (the numeric value of the ability or power listed in the parentheses). In other words, say the Thing is grappling with Annihilus (whose Strength is 16). In this *easy Strength (Strength)* action, the

## THE DOOM BANK

In all the Marvel Universe, there is no more menacing villain than Victor von Doom. Not even the mightiest hero can simply shrug off the threat posed by the Lord of Latveria. That is why the suit with Doom for its symbol represents misfortune and possible disaster for heroes in the MARVEL game.

Every time a player plays (not draws) a card of the Doom suit, the Narrator collects the card rather than placing it in the discard pile. This collection represents the fickle finger of fate.

After you finish playing your card(s), the Narrator may add one, some, or all of the cards from the Doom Bank to the difficulty rating. Suddenly, your stellar success turns into an abysmal failure. The Narrator can add it to *anything*: an opposition score when the Abomination's jumping on your hero's back, say, or when you're trying to heal your pal's wounds. Anywhere, any time. But always at a bad time.

The Narrator may use Doom Bank cards *before* you select a card. It's a way to tell you, "The villains have your number." This may let you change your cardplay tactics—assuming you get over your paralyzing dread of the power of Doom.

The Narrator has to use Doom cards by the end of the game. So not only is the Doom card you play going to come back to haunt you, it'll come back *soon*.

difficulty rating increases from 4 all the way up to 20 (4+16).

In the case of a hero action opposed by a group of individuals, the foe with the highest opposition score resists the action for the entire group.

## THE NARRATOR CARD

Sometimes, just the knowledge that there's someone out there working against his or her designs is enough to rattle a hero, making even the easiest actions more uncertain. So anytime a character or other force opposes a hero's action, the Narrator flips the top card of the deck and lays it face-up on the table, adding its value to the difficulty rating. In other words, every opposed action automatically becomes 1-10 points more difficult before the actual opposition is accounted for.

The Marvel Universe is filled with situations where heroes are forced to second guess their best plans for fear that the villain has prepared for such an attack. No matter how tough an opponent is, the worst pressure comes from a hero's own mind. Flip through your comic collection; the Narrator card represents every time you see a hero thinking, "Please let this work—if it doesn't, I'm done for!"

Narrator cards never count as trump.

To wrap this all together, say Tim's hero, Luke Cage, wants to get through a locked door—but the Rhino's holding it shut. Tim's hand of cards is a dramatically average four 5s of Strength (okay, this is getting a little too hypothetical). Battering down a door is probably an average Strength action, so Luke would normally need an 8 to succeed—typically no problem for a guy with a 13 Strength.

But because the Rhino's behind it, the difficulty is 8, plus the Rhino's Strength of 19, plus the value of the Narrator's card, a 3. That's a whopping 30 difficulty, so Luke needs to add 17 points to his 13 Strength. He'd better play a 5 of Strength and hope he gets at least two trumps. (Of course, the integrity of the door is another matter. It's probably splinters after one push.)



# HERO VS. HERO

Heroes don't only slug it out with villains. In fact, in the Marvel Universe it is unnervingly common for heroes to brawl with other heroes.

If you mix it up with good guys played by the Narrator, the confrontation is resolved in the same way any other opposed action would be. If, however, you pit your hero against another player's hero, it's a slightly different matter.

The Narrator decides what the difficulty rating is, and which hero is the active hero (from whose perspective the action occurs). Usually, it's the one who throws the first punch, but if there's a question, the Narrator can go by who has the highest Agility. After that, he or she can pretty much sit back and watch the show.

The action begins as always, the active hero playing cards (including trump and Edge bonuses) to create an

action score. The difficulty rating is increased by the opposition score as usual, but instead of adding a Narrator card, the opposing player plays a card from his or her hand and uses normal trump and Edge rules.

The action is resolved as always. If the action score is greater than or equal to the modified difficulty rating, the action succeeds. Otherwise, it fails.

If the contest continues, the player whose hero was on the defensive for the previous action gets to play the active role for the next action.

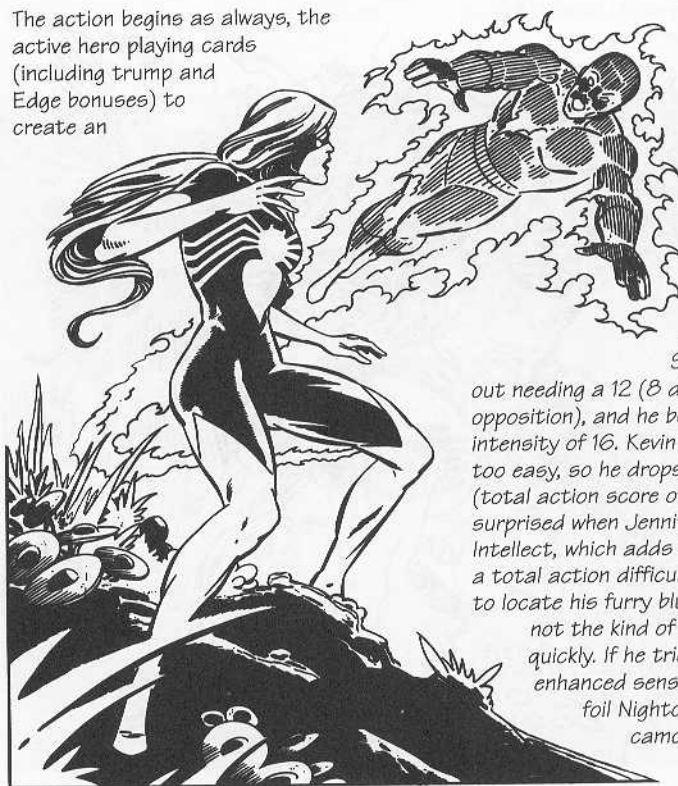
Picture Kevin's hero Wolverine and Jennifer's hero Nightcrawler playing tag. As usual, Nightcrawler has hidden himself very well, and Wolvie is using his Enhanced Senses (Vision) to spot his friend. The Narrator rules that Wolverine will use his

Enhanced Senses (intensity 16), while Nightcrawler will use Blending (intensity 4). The action will be of average difficulty (8), and Wolverine will play the active role.

Neither player holds any cards under his or her hero's Edge, nor any trump cards.

So Wolverine starts

out needing a 12 (8 difficulty + 4 Blending opposition), and he begins with a power intensity of 16. Kevin decides this will be too easy, so he drops a 4 of Strength (total action score of 20). But isn't Kevin surprised when Jennifer plays the 9 of Intellect, which adds to the 12 difficulty for a total action difficulty of 21. Wolvie fails to locate his furry blue teammate, but he's not the kind of fellow to give up that quickly. If he tries again using his enhanced sense of smell, he would foil Nightcrawler's Blending camouflage.



# SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In a roleplaying game, all sorts of odd little circumstances pop up that aren't really actions. For instance, if Spider-Man is swinging across Manhattan, trying to get from Four Freedoms Plaza to Empire State University in less than five minutes, how do you tell if he succeeds? While the Web-Slinging itself is a power-based action, it really tells you nothing about how quickly Spidey goes.

In this case—and any time you're playing the MARVEL game and you don't know what rule to use—the answer is probably *aura readings*.

## AURA READINGS

On page 17, where we described the features of a fate card, we discussed the card's *aura*. Cards in the MARVEL game have one of three auras: white (positive), red (neutral), or black (negative). These auras can be used as kind of a luck barometer.

Whenever the Narrator is uncertain as to the outcome of a situation, and no sensible action presents itself, he or she will perform an *aura reading*. The Narrator flips the top card of the Fate Deck and looks at the card's aura, which will give him or her some insight into what will happen next.

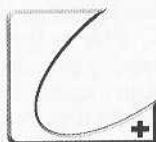
If the aura is *positive*, the situation favors the heroes. In a race against the clock, they arrive just in the nick of time. A rocky ledge that threatens to crumble under their feet somehow manages to hold together long enough for them to escape. When they look out the window to check the weather, it's sunny and beautiful.

If the aura is *neutral*, the situation is neither good nor bad for the heroes. If there is danger afoot, it doesn't strike,

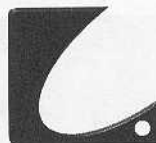
but continues to loom just ahead. An accident that could've been catastrophic instead turns out to be merely embarrassing. The terrain they're traveling over is steep and rocky, but provides no major obstacles.

If the aura is *negative*, things go poorly for the heroes. They've exhausted the ammo or power reserves on their weapons. As they try to sneak across the roof of Grand Central Station a little boy points and shrieks "Look up there!" at the top of his lungs. The rookie cop on the beat doesn't know they patrol this locale and starts shooting because he's certain they're really the Frightful Four in disguise.

Picture Luke Cage trying to keep a car, teetering on the crumbling edge of the Brooklyn Bridge, from crashing over the side. Holding the car is certainly a Strength action, but Kevin, the Narrator, wants to know if the bridge is strong enough to support the weight. Kevin draws a card, gets a negative aura, and all of a sudden Luke, the car, and a chunk of the bridge fall into the East River.



POSITIVE



NEUTRAL



NEGATIVE



# C LOBBERIN' TIME!

This is what it's all about: Super heroes going mano-a-mano with the darkest of villains. Whether a minor brawl with common thugs or a do-or-die clash with the most powerful beings in the universe, fighting is the way of life for super heroes.

MARVEL fights are fast and frenetic. Cards fly left and right, damage is dealt in horrendous amounts, and nearby structures face destruction. A fight consists of a dizzying series of blows that continue until one side emerges triumphant.

But how do you do it? Start with this simple rule:

***Fighting is like any other action.***

While that's not all you need to know, it's something everyone, particularly the Narrator, should keep in mind during a MARVEL game. As far as the rules go, there's no difference between your hero punching through a brick wall and standing toe-to-toe slugging it out with the Rhino—except that the Rhino hits back.

## EXCHANGES

A fight breaks down into a series of *exchanges* in which both sides in the fight get to try to do something—usually knock the other side into next week.

An exchange is roughly the amount of time covered by a panel or two in a comic book. During this time (generally less than 30 seconds), each individual in the fight can move, use his or her senses, perform one action, and respond to attacks that come his or her way. All the mayhem in a single exchange is considered to happen *simultaneously*, so even if your hero lands a haymaker on an opponent, the villain will still have a chance to get one last attack in before slipping into slumberland.

Although you'll deal with the heroes' and villains' attacks separately, you should bear in mind that a fight is one big, chaotic mess. The heroes and villains don't stand there politely saying, "Okay, now it's your turn to hit me." To keep things as organized as possible, though, an exchange is broken down into five steps.

### STEP

Step One: Opening Moves  
Step Two: Actions  
Step Three: Counteractions  
Step Four: Results  
Step Five: Closing Moves

### WHAT HAPPENS

Surprise, Narrator card, recovery, events  
Declaration, hero actions  
Resisting character actions  
Assign damage, consequences  
Contingent actions, fleeing, continuation



## STEP ONE: OPENING MOVES

Before you get into the meat of an exchange, there are a few details that need your attention. If this is the fight's first exchange, you may have to determine whether one side or the other is surprised. But first, the Narrator draws a card.

### NARRATOR DRAW

Almost every action in an exchange will be opposed, many of them by characters. Characters don't have hands of cards, so one card is drawn to add to the action's difficulty rating (as discussed on page 27).

With all the different actions and counteractions going on, this could get pretty confusing, so in an exchange the Narrator flips only one Narrator card to use for all of the actions that require a card. The Narrator lays down the card face-up in front of him or her, but it stays there until the exchange ends. On the next exchange (assuming there is one), the Narrator discards it and draws a new card.

### RECOVERY

In your extensive research into the Marvel Universe, you've probably noticed that, even in the middle of a cataclysmic combat, heroes and villains often get a second wind. Recovery is one reason they can keep going even when they're taking a terrible pounding. When the Narrator card is revealed, the Narrator should use it to perform an aura reading.

If the aura is positive (white), all heroes who've been injured during this fight may draw one card and add it to their hands. If some characters fight alongside the heroes, the Narrator adds the Narrator

card's value back to the wounded characters' Health. This draw may be used to recover only from wounds suffered in the current fight. You can't use this draw to bring your Hand Size up to a number larger than it was at the fight's beginning.

If the aura is neutral (red), no one regains any cards or Health.

If the aura is negative (black), the Narrator card's value is added to any wounded foes' Health. This draw may be used to recover only from wounds suffered in the current fight. The Narrator can't use this draw to raise a character's Health to a number larger than it was at the fight's beginning.

### EVENTS

Every card bears on its face an event (see page 65). At this point in the exchange, the Narrator may announce that the event on the current Narrator card occurs—and the Narrator decides what its effect will be. If this happens, you must look at the card's calling (found below the event), and if the calling matches your hero's calling, the event touches a nerve. This new turn of events calls to one of his or her major motivations, suggesting a burning need to respond to it.

This is roleplaying, of course, and you certainly aren't required to do anything in particular. However, if your hero does nothing in response to so central an issue in his or her makeup, the Narrator may decide you're not roleplaying in character. When it comes time to hand out a response bonus (see **Self-Improvement** on page 54) at the adventure's end, your hero may be less well rewarded if you didn't give him or her an adequate reaction to one of these events. Events are discussed in greater detail in the **Narration** chapter.

## SURPRISE

There are several ways a fight can start. Most often the two sides will know about one another and at some mysterious point in time (often when one side yells, "Get 'em, guys!") hostilities erupt. But occasionally, one side may lie in wait, hoping to ambush their foes, or the two groups may accidentally stumble upon one another. In these cases, some heroes or villains may be so surprised that it takes them a moment to react to the situation.

Any hero who was unaware of approaching danger must attempt an *average Intellect* (Agility) action, the Narrator using the lowest of the foes' Agility scores as the opposition score (a group is only as quiet as its loudest member, after all). Heroes who succeed at this action have some flash of intuition that allows them to jump from relaxation into combat mode; they may act normally throughout the exchange. Heroes who fail the action are caught completely off guard. They are surprised, and can't perform actions during this exchange; they can, however, perform counteractions (see Step Three) if a villain directs an attack at them.

What if the heroes catch the villains unawares? Almost the same thing. The hero with the lowest Agility score must attempt an *average Agility* (Intellect) action, the Narrator using the highest of the characters' Intellect scores as the

opposition score (a wary adversary will warn his or her partners when danger approaches). If the hero succeeds in this action, the foes are taken by surprise and get no counterattack during the first exchange. If the hero fails, though, something tipped off the villains, and the exchange proceeds normally.

Blind and unconscious heroes can't surprise or avoid surprise.



## STEP TWO: ACTIONS

In this step, all heroes who aren't surprised or unconscious may try one action. Before declaring those actions, the players may spend a few seconds crafting strategies or comparing notes on how the various parts of the fight are going. You can ask the Narrator to describe what your heroes see and feel; you may also have your heroes move around, switch foes, or duck behind a trashcan (though that's hardly the picture they'd want to see splashed across the *Daily Bugle*).

Still, the MARVEL game is fast-paced, and there's only so much a hero can do in one exchange. If you spend too much time hemming and hawing over your hero's next move, the Narrator may ask you to hurry up or risk your hero losing an action.

The players go around the table describing the actions their heroes' will attempt. Your hero's action can be hitting a foe or something else in the vicinity, using a power, or any other single deed you can think of. Your hero also can move around a bit and use his

or her senses. Keep the declarations simple and direct; if the action you're describing contains more than one or two "and"s or "then"s, the Narrator will probably rule that you're describing two separate actions. Alternatively, the Narrator may say that your action will take longer than most others, and that you won't be allowed to play cards for the action until the next exchange.

Once the descriptions are given, you attempt the action exactly as discussed in the **Action** chapter. It's a little bit simpler, though, because most combat actions will either be *easy* or *average* in difficulty. Balling up your fist and slugging someone, and using your powers in a basic manner are both *easy* actions. Restraining your foe, and using a known stunt for one of your powers are both *average* actions. The Narrator next adds in the opposition score and the Narrator card, you play a card (or cards depending on trump and Edge), and if your action score is equal to or higher than the difficulty rating, you succeed.

## DAMAGE

If you succeed at hitting someone, the next question is: How much did it hurt?

Some result is obviously going to take place, but not right now. Remember, the activity in an exchange all happens simultaneously. Jot down or make a mental note of your action score (or better yet, leave the cards sitting in front of your hero sheet), as your action score will determine the **Results** of your success.

## LONGER ACTIONS

Sometimes you'll declare an action so involved it takes longer than one exchange to complete. You can't declare any other actions during the exchanges in which your hero is performing the action. Your hero can always abandon a task midway through—but if you're repairing your getaway vehicle, you might regret not finishing what you started.

## AIMING

Aiming is an action where your hero spends an exchange to aim a distance attack or weapon at a target. If, instead of attacking, the hero aims at a specific target, the difficulty rating for the attack on the next exchange is reduced to 0 for that target only.

Aiming applies only if your hero and the target are at firing distance (see the next page). Cardplay and opposition values still apply to an aimed attack.

While aiming, your hero can't switch targets, dodge attacks, move, or even talk to anyone in a voice loud enough for the target to hear. Doing any of these prohibited actions eliminates the benefit of aiming.



## DISTANCES

During a fight, questions like "Can my hero get to Electro in time?" and "Do Cyclops's eyebeams reach far enough to blast Sabretooth?" will pop up. How close do heroes have to be to effectively battle their foes? In the MARVEL game we settle this question with a simple system of distances. It is up to the Narrator to decide and keep track of the distance between the heroes and villains during a fight.

Closing or widening the gap between a hero and foe (or maintaining the same distance when the foe tries to charge or flee) requires a successful easy *Agility* (Agility) action. If the hero succeeds, he or she may close or widen the gap by one distance category (striking distance to firing distance, for example).

**Striking Distance:** Any time that two combatants can get close enough to lay their mitts on one another, they're within striking distance. As long as they can get to one another in the space of one exchange (within a dozen feet or so), they are considered to be at striking distance. This is the only distance at which physical brawling may occur, and firing most projectile weapons (guns and bows, mostly) gets one difficulty level harder at this distance.

**Firing Distance:** When the combatants aren't close enough to pummel one another, but a projectile or thrown weapon is effective, they're within firing distance. This could be anywhere from 10 or so feet to 100 yards or more. Brawling is impossible at this distance, but most distance attacks are possible as long as the combatants have an unobstructed line of sight to one another.

**Visual Distance:** If the combatants can see one another but are too far away for most projectile attacks, they're within visual distance. Telepathy, psychic blasts, and artillery usually work at visual distance, but nothing else does (with exceptions for cosmic beings like the Silver Surfer). The best the heroes can hope for is to keep their foes in sight long enough to close the gap and engage them in battle.

Say you want your hero to reprogram a malfunctioning Doombot, which your Narrator says will take five minutes. That's ten exchanges! The other heroes and characters will get to perform ten actions each before the programming is finished.

## DURATION

Most occurrences in fights are instantaneous. They're declared at the start of an exchange, completed during the exchange, and finished by the end of the exchange. But some powers take time to energize, and others last for multiple exchanges. If something takes or lasts longer than ten minutes, you don't need to track it during the fight. If the interval is much shorter than that, some method of timekeeping is required. For that the Narrator might use an *aura duration*.

Aura-based timekeeping depends on the Narrator's draw for the exchange. When an effect won't occur for a variable amount of time, it triggers upon the Narrator's next *positive draw*. If you're checking to see whether an effect with an *aura duration* ends, it does so on the Narrator's next *negative draw*.

## PILE-ONS

Combatants within striking distance can raise their action or opposition scores by piling on the same target. When multiple combatants attack the same individual, add +1 to each of their scores for each attacker. This bonus affects damage as well.

The disadvantage of piling on is that the target can direct one attack at all the attackers. If the target does this, the target's attack is penalized by -1 for each combatant participating in the pile-on. Only one action score is generated for this attack, though it may have different effects depending on the abilities of those participating in the pile-on.

## STEP THREE: COUNTERACTIONS

The bad guys aren't simply going to stand idly by while your heroes pound them into hamburger. They're going to try to pound back. Remember, though, every action in the MARVEL game happens from the hero's point of view.

The Narrator begins by telling you what the characters are up to: where and how they move, what powers they use, and who they try to hit. Then, you can describe your hero's reaction to any attack. Most often, the correct response is that your hero "tries to dodge the attack." But if your hero is not surprised, and didn't use a power or ability during the action step, he or she may use one in a defensive action.

Dodging an attack is an *easy* Agility (\*) action. We put an asterisk (\*) in there since the opposition ability or power will depend entirely on the attack aimed at your hero. In most cases, it will be the foe's Strength, Agility, or relevant power. Avoiding a mental or magical attack is often an *easy* Willpower action opposed by the relevant power.

If your hero is unconscious, he or she can't avoid any attacks.

If your hero succeeds at this defensive action, the villain's attack misses. If the action fails, however, your hero is about to see some stars. The Narrator will add the villain's relevant ability score or power intensity plus the Narrator card (and any Doom cards used) to the action difficulty. This total will be used to figure out the **Results** of the attack.

## HERO VS. HERO

As we noted in the **Action** chapter, too often heroes come to blows with one another. This is handled the same as any other fight, except that during each

exchange there is no counteraction step. The heroes take turns slugging one another until they come to their senses, or one or more of them can't sense anything.

If a hero attacks another hero without visible provocation, the Narrator may make the target attempt an action to avoid being surprised. Should this action fail, the attacker gets the benefit of surprise.

In hero-vs.-hero battle, the smarter heroes get to hear what the other heroes plan to do before committing to an action. Each exchange, the player whose hero has the lowest Intellect score (break ties by draw) declares his or her hero's action first. The player whose hero has the next lowest Intellect then declares his or her hero's action, and so on till all players have declared. After hearing someone declare, a player can change declarations and make the hero's action *contingent* (page 40). No one can change declarations in response to a declaration change.

After everyone has declared, actions are then resolved normally.



## STEP FOUR: RESULTS

By this step, every hero and character in the fight has had a chance to attempt one action. Maybe your hero hit one of the adversaries, and maybe got hit in return. Now it's time to find out what it all means.

Attacks that don't hurt yield effects listed under their powers, or a result of the Narrator's choosing. But when a painful attack hits, you need to deal with wounds.

### INFLECTING WOUNDS

When you're in the cape-and-cowl business, bringing the bad guy to justice is the name of the game. Sadly, most villains don't give up after a stern talking-to; you have to hurt them. Your action score tells how much damage your hero inflicts.

Take the action score and subtract your opponent's defense (equal to his or her Strength for a physical or energy attack, or Willpower if your hero used a mental or magical attack). The result is the number of wounds your hero inflicts on the target. The number of wounds is subtracted from the character's Health. When the character's Health drops to zero, he or

she falls unconscious and doesn't wake up until the Health rises above zero. Unconscious characters may still be hit. Hitting an unconscious opponent is an automatic action (difficulty 0). Any added wounds the unconscious character suffers knocks the character into a coma. Comatose characters don't gain the restorative bonus associated with the Narrator card; they are seriously injured and need medical treatment as soon as possible. If a comatose hero receives yet another hit, he or she may suffer serious injury (see page 41). Obviously, this is not at all heroic; intentionally bringing a person to the brink of death is considered attempted murder, and your hero will probably suffer for it.

### SUFFERING WOUNDS

Okay, so the Super-Skrull smacked your hero right in the kisser—what does it mean to you? Does your hero black out? Does it even hurt at all?

Take the villain's relevant ability score or power intensity, and add any modifiers like weapon damage bonuses and pile-ons. Then, as described above, add the value of the Narrator card plus any cards the Narrator played (or chooses to play now) from the Doom Bank. From that total, subtract your hero's Strength for a physical attack (or Willpower, if it's mental or magical dam-

## WEAPONS

In MARVEL, the most popular weapon is the bare-knuckled fist. But some heroes use ordinary weapons like guns and knives and clubs. These add their damage bonus to damage only. Their damage bonuses are listed as plus-a-number, such as "+2."

Damage Bonus	Weapons That Have This Damage Bonus
+1	Slingshots, rocks, needles, broken bottles, whips
+2	Hatchets, knives, arrows, zip guns, boomerangs
+3	Needle pistols, spears, manhole covers, stun guns
+4	Swords, rifles, revolvers, battleaxes
+5	Oversized weapons, lasers, well-aimed cars, most magic weapons
+6 or more	Thor's hammer, Valkyrie's sword, bazookas

age), and that's the number of wounds inflicted.

Your hero will feel the impact of these wounds in the number of cards you continue to hold in your hand. You must give up from your hand cards of a total value equal to or greater than the number of wounds your hero suffered. *Do not draw to refill your hand.* It remains diminished until you have time to recover. When you have no cards left in your hand, your hero is unconscious.

An unconscious hero may still be the target of attacks. If he or she gets hit again, though, the hero goes comatose. Comatose heroes get no cards back regardless of the aura on the Narrator card; they are quite injured and should be given medical treatment as soon as possible. If a comatose hero receives yet another hit, he or she may suffer serious injury (see page 41).

## COLLATERAL DAMAGE

When Marvel heroes have a fight, the scenery often fares much worse than either the hero or villain does. Cars get smashed, walls tumble down, and entire city blocks sometimes crumble. Property damage is the one thing you can count on in just about every fight scene in just about every Marvel comic.

In a MARVEL game, you'll find enough urban deconstruction to keep Damage Control busy well into the 21st century. There are no hard and fast rules, but the Narrator will be getting some advice along those lines in the **Narration** chapter. So be careful when and where your hero lands a solid blow, because the opponent is going to go flying into whatever happens to be behind him or her (and you'd better hope it's not a commuter bus). Likewise, when your hero gets tagged by a good blow, expect the hero to go

## ARMOR

In MARVEL heroes have defense equal to their Strength, so most of them don't wear any extra protection. But a few heroes wear additional unpowered armor, and some (like the Thing) have extra-tough hides. In this case, their hero sheets list Body Armor plus-a-number, such as a "+4" defense bonus. Defense can also be improved through nonphysical means, such as distractions.

Shields can be used as armor or weapons, but not both in the same exchange. A shield can block only one attack or inflict only one attack per exchange. If your hero carries a shield, you must choose whether you're using it for offense or defense during the exchange (the default is defense).

### Defense Bonus

- +1
- +2
- +3
- +4
- +5
- +6 or more

### Armors That Have This Defense Bonus

- Heavy leather, wooden shields, flak jackets
- Chain mail, kevlar, bulletproof glass, riot shields
- Plate armor, stone skin, metal shields, most exoskeletons
- Titanium armor, diamond skin
- Adamantium armor, most magical armor
- Juggernaut's armor, Captain America's shield



crashing through a wall or window, or at least knock over a fire hydrant. That's just the way things are in the Marvel Universe.

Of course, your hero can always intentionally destroy a structure. This isn't technically an opposed action, though the Narrator likely will use the object's Strength as a resistance factor. When

your hero destroys an object, be sure to describe the full effect that you want to occur, along the lines of, "I tear the telephone pole out of the ground and smack the Rhino into that building across the street." Your Narrator will tell you whether or not you get what you want. If you do, there's likely to be some angry phone customers in the neighborhood.

## MONITORING HEALTH

The Narrator will need a way to represent each of his or her characters in the battle. Each character has a Health score, which shows how much damage he or she can survive. If you're narrating, you can track this in your head or on paper.

Alternatively, you can draw a card for each character and arrange them from left to right in alphabetical order of the characters they represent. Ignore the characters on the cards. Then lay another card face down across each card so that it represents the character's Health. The tens column is on the left and the ones column is on the right. (Thus, for a character with a Health of 17, lay the top card so that the edge is under the 10 on the left and the 7 on the right.) If the character suffers damage or regains Health during the fight, adjust the score by moving the top card to reflect the new Health.



## STEP FIVE: CLOSING MOVES

The card playing and number crunching is done. All involved in the fight know who they hit, and who hit them. The only question remaining is: What now?

### UNRESOLVED ACTIONS

Some actions that started in this exchange took time to develop. Any contingent actions (see below) may, at the Narrator's discretion, occur now. Once that's done, it's time to let the dust settle and assess the situation.

One way to tell if the fight's over is to see which heroes and characters are still conscious. If everyone on one side is knocked out, the fight's done. With luck, your hero was on the winning side. Proceed with the **After the Fight** details.

If at least one member of each side is still awake, though, the fight's not over yet. With the battle incomplete, a few simple

yet key decisions must be made. The most important of these is whether or not your hero is going to stick around or try to get his or her battered body out of harm's way.

### FIGHT OR FLIGHT

First, the Narrator asks if any conscious characters want to flee the fight. Then the players say whether their heroes want to try to get away. This is all handled as described in the **Distances** sidebar on page 35. Villains have an annoying habit of getting away as soon as they get out of sight, so keep your eye on them.

It's also possible at this time for members of either side to throw up their hands and surrender. But if the other side chooses not to accept the surrender, the heroes or characters with their hands in the air must make a successful action to avoid being surprised during the next exchange.

If there is anyone left standing within combat distance of one another, the fight continues on with another exchange. Go back to Step One.

### CONTINGENT ACTIONS

Each hero gets one action per exchange, but some things happen later. A grenade might go off after it hits, or a hero's action may cause a rocket to fire into the air. Effects that occur at the end of the exchange happen as *contingent actions*. They occur after the main actions and counteractions are finished, and after damage is dealt.

Spells constitute a large category of these effects. To take effect at the end of an exchange, a spell must have been declared as the hero's action. As noted under the power description of Magic, a "dabbler" mage (intensity 9 or less) must draw a card at this stage. If the card's value is above the mage's intensity in Magic, the spell fizzles. Otherwise, the spell goes off now. Its effect may create a new action, counteraction, and/or results mini-step inside this exchange.

In a player hero vs. player hero fight, a player whose hero has a higher Intellect than others in the fight may wish to change his or her declarations after hearing other declarations. After changing declarations, the player makes his or her hero's action contingent, and performs no actions during the hero actions step.

## AFTER THE FIGHT

When the fight is over, there are still a few minor details to work out. Not the least of these is what to do regarding the various wounds sustained in the fight.

Assuming the fight is truly over (no one's playing possum or waiting in the wings to launch a surprise attack) and the heroes won, the players may fill their hands up to the Hand Size they had at the fight's start. Given a moment or two to rest, the heroes catch their breaths and prepare to press on with the business of doing good. The only exception to this is if the Narrator rules that one or more of the injuries sustained during combat were serious (see below).

If the villains won, though, there is no telling exactly what will happen. The adventure and the Narrator will dictate what the heroes see if or when they open their eyes.

Whether the heroes won, lost, or merely got through the fight, once it is over the story goes on (unless the story has reached its conclusion). Taking the various effects and results of the combat into account, the Narrator describes the new situation, fills you in on any important events you may have missed while in the

## SERIOUS INJURIES

If a hero is hit while comatose (or some other such calamity occurs), he or she doesn't recover immediately. Even a superpowered body requires time to mend itself. At the end of a fight in which your hero receives such wounds, the Narrator will flip a card to see how long you can expect the hero's performance to be hampered. On a positive aura, it's a strain, and you'll recover one card per day. On a neutral aura, it's a sprain, and you'll recover one card per week. But on a negative aura, it's a break (and an unlucky one at that), and you'll recover cards when the Narrator says so.

The Medicine skill can help restore damage in combat (see the **Skills** appendix).

Death is a very rare event in the MARVEL game. Death occurs only when the Narrator says so, and even then it has a strange habit of being temporary.

thick of it, and resumes the standard pace of roleplaying. "What do you do next?"



## A SAMPLE EXCHANGE

Once again, the world's working against Spider-Man (being played by Shawn). The wall-crawler's battling the rampaging Rhino in icy Manhattan, while J. Jonah Jameson rails at him. But what Spidey doesn't know

is that Electro waits in the wings for a chance to strike! The exchange begins:

**Opening moves:** The Narrator, Paul, draws the 2 of Strength with Machine Man. Spidey has the Unlucky hindrance, so Paul draws a second card to see if it's worse; Paul draws the 3 of Willpower with Clea's event Adulation—too positive for his tastes, Paul thinks. Since the 2 of Strength's event is Power Surge, Shawn's got a bad feeling that it'll aid Electro.

Spider-Man was slightly injured, and Shawn was down one card. Since the substituted Narrator card's aura is positive, Shawn redraws one card.

Paul now needs to know if Spider-Man is surprised by Electro's appearance. Not hardly. Spider-Man's patented spider-sense starts screaming a warning. His 18 intensity Danger Sense eliminates the chance of surprise.

### Hero actions:

Shawn figures that Power Surge is going to be an amazing blast by Electro, so Spider-Man leaps off the highly conductive ice and into the air—grabbing J. Jonah first. With Jonah fighting being manhandled, it's an opposed action. Paul says that normally, picking up a struggling person would be an average Strength (Agility) action, but Spidey can only use one hand



since he's web-slinging. So Paul says it's a daunting Strength (Agility) action (16), modified by Jonah's Agility (4) and the value of Paul's card (2).

This makes the opposition score 22, and Spidey's Strength is "only" 14. Shawn looks at his hand: 2 of Doom, 4 of Strength, 4 of Willpower, 4 of Intellect, 7 of Willpower. He's got two choices to make up the 6-point gap: play the 4 of Strength and hope for a good trump, or bank on the 7 of Willpower. He decides to play the 2 of Doom, and since it's not above Spidey's Edge, he can play again. He plays the Strength card, raising his action score to 20 (14 + 2 + 4). He flips the top card of the deck for his trump bonus, and it's a 1! Normally, that'd make him fail, but it's the 1 of Strength. This gets another trump card, the 5 of Intellect. His action score is 26, so he picks up the squawking Jameson.

Paul collects the 2 of Doom, and stores it in the Doom Bank for later use. Shawn redraws, getting a 5 of Strength and a 4 of Willpower.

**Counteractions:** First, the Rhino charges at Spider-Man, who needs an easy Agility (Strength) action to dodge. But Paul decides it's hard to dodge when you're trying to pick up a publisher, so he raises the difficulty to daunting (16). The Rhino's Strength is 17 but, because he has the Bruiser hindrance, he uses his Agility (2) for this action. Counting the 2 from the Narrator's card, the Rhino's opposition score is 4, adding to the 16 for 20! Spidey uses his Agility of 14. Shawn must play 6 points of cards but, not knowing this difficulty target, he underestimates the Rhino's charge. He plays the 4 of Intellect for an 18, redraws a 7 of Agility (oh, now he gets trump!), and winces as the Narrator tells him he's in for some pain.

Electro blasts the ground. Since this action is only going to affect the ice, Paul draws a card, gets a neutral result, and assumes it succeeds.

**Assign wounds:** The Rhino's damage is his Strength (17) plus Horns (+5) plus the Narrator card (2). Spidey suffers 24 wounds, minus 14 for his Strength. Shawn's on the horns of a dilemma, so to speak. He must lose at least 10 points in cards, but which ones? Maybe three 4s? Or a 7 and a 4? Shawn wants to lose the fewest cards, so he drops the 7 and 4 of Willpower. He doesn't redraw.

**Closing Moves:** Contingent actions occur. Electro's blast affects only those on the ground: Electro (who's immune) and the hapless Rhino. Since it's character-to-character, Paul draws, gets a positive aura, and gives the Rhino the full effect of the Power Surge. Paul decides to double Electro's Electrical Control to 28 (he hit a power line or something), adds the 2 from the Narrator draw, for 30 damage. The Rhino subtracts 22 for his defense (17 Strength +5 Body Armor), and loses 8 out of his 17 Health, which Paul adjusts.

Everybody done? Nope. Jonah tries to escape, jabbing Spider-Man with his pen. Paul deems it a challenging Strength (Strength) action for Spider-Man to hold on. Jonah's got a 4 Strength. Adding the 2 from Paul's card gets his opposition to a 6, plus the 12 difficulty makes it an 18. Shawn figures that playing the 5 of Willpower will be enough for this action. That gets the 14 Strength Spider-Man to a 19 action score (1 point more than necessary), but Paul cruelly throws in the 2 of Doom for a 20 difficulty. Jonah pops his belt loose, dropping from Spidey's hands and over the Bugle's roof!

And that's where the exchange ends, with Spidey in pain, the Rhino a bit shocked, J. Jonah hanging over the edge by just one hand, and Electro crackling with rage. And then it all starts again. . . .

# SUPERHEROISM

Somewhere in each of us, there is a super hero waiting to be unleashed. Each of us would like to think that when the building is ablaze or robbers storm the bank or aliens invade, we would react swiftly, decisively, and forthrightly. Finding a

drop of courage in a tide of fear, that is the essence of superheroism.

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** gives you the chance—and the responsibility—to act like a super hero. It may seem obvious what that means, but there are many facets to heroism. As you roleplay your hero—either one from the roster books or one of your own invention—empathize with that creation. Speak in the first person, and consider every action as you would your own. Most of all, identify with the hero. Don't say, "The Thing attacks." Say, "I attack!" or even better, threaten the villain with a mighty, "I'm gonna knock ya all da way back ta Yancy Street!" If you make the Narrator flinch, you know you've done your job right.

(Of course, if your six-year-old brother Bobby really wants to play Stretcho, and he somehow misses the nuances of Mister Fantastic's thirst for technology, he's still got the character down. There's no wrong way to roleplay, after all.)

Above all, remember that Marvel is an action-oriented game. And that action can come from you. Don't leave all the storytelling to the Narrator. Act heroically—kick in the door, save the girl, break the code, leap off the bridge. After all, if your hero's gonna be denounced on the front page of the *Daily Bugle*, it might as well be for something memorable.

## HERO QUALITIES

As you roleplay your hero, consider these facets that every hero has:

### UNIQUENESS

Delve into what makes your hero unique. Spider-Man doesn't talk, act, or feel like Mister Fantastic. They can work together, but they're not alike. Spider-Man's speech is flippant and upbeat; Mister Fantastic is erudite and humorless. Spider-Man often acts before he thinks; Mister Fantastic is often so busy thinking that he forgets to act. Spider-Man is awash in his personal life; Mister Fantastic's wife occasionally fears that he doesn't know he has a personal life.

Be aware of when you are joining the hero in his or her evolution. Are you playing the Invisible Girl or the Invisible Woman? Carefree Daredevil or martyr Daredevil? Emotional Vision or Emotionless Vision? Giant-Man or Yellowjacket? Characters change over time in more than costume; change with them.

### MOTIVATIONS

Follow the hero's calling, and you'll find a common bond with the hero. None of us may be as patriotic as Captain America, but we can feel a closeness to the ideals he embodies. This requires following through on those beliefs, however. When a school is on fire, have the Captain rescue the children—and then rescue the American flag. Not only will it make an awe-inspiring story when the game is over, but it will tie you to your hero's motivations.



Explore your hero's fears and doubts. Wolverine knows he has a savage side, and if it is unleashed, he can never be sure he won't regret his actions. And Rogue can never use her full powers without the slightest tremor, fearing she will once again re-enact the accident that crippled Ms. Marvel. The hero is richer for his or her frailties, and every team is stronger when it helps its own.

## PLACE IN SOCIETY

Some heroes do good in more ways than one. In costume or out, these heroes take leadership roles that transcend violence. Reed Richards and Tony Stark are world-renowned inventors, not just Mister Fantastic and Iron Man. Matt Murdock is an attorney who defends the poor, not just a costumed Daredevil. Every person has aspirations, and society finds ways to harness those aspirations to its greater good. Some are leaders, some are followers, and some are iconoclasts seeking their own road. But all combine for a vibrant world.

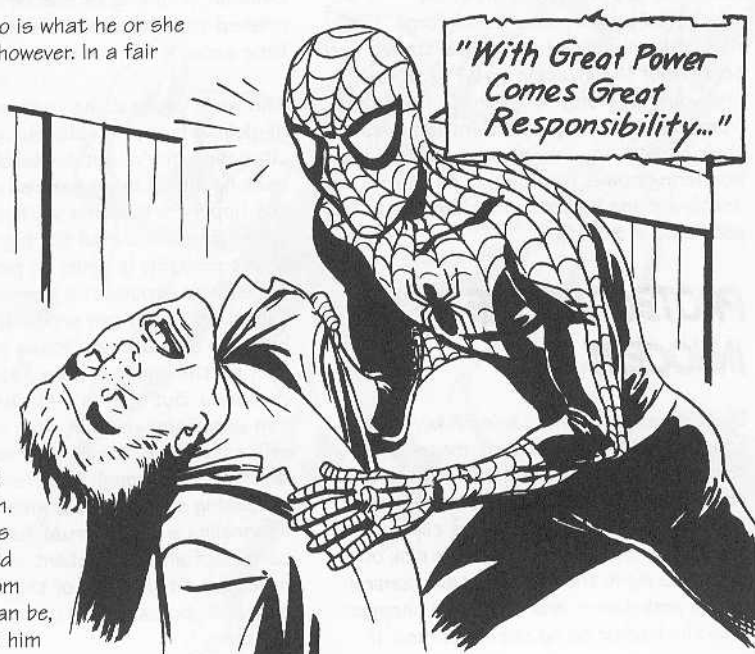
Not every hero is what he or she wants to be, however. In a fair world, Scott Summers would be a leader of humans and mutants alike. But the world is not fair, and Cyclops leads a group of mutants united by the fear the outside world feels for them. Cyclops knows that the world stops him from being all he can be, but has given him

responsibility for the lives of his fellow mutants. Heroes may be more or less than they would be without powers, but they're still human.

## FRIENDS AND FOES

In every life, there's a supporting cast of characters that keeps the person going through the day. Whether loved ones or archenemies, these supporting characters keep the person's life interesting. Even loners have people who care about them—perhaps trying to kill them, but hey, that's caring.

As you play, remember that your Narrator is bringing to life all the characters in your hero's world, and they can only be vibrant if you play off of them. Even a solo game of MARVEL should be spent in company—in the course of a single session, Spider-Man might meet J. Jonah Jameson, Mary Jane Watson-Parker, the Green Goblin, and Venom. And each encounter will be memorable in a totally different way.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE

So you want to be a super hero, huh? Okay, we can see that. But what would it be like? When you roleplay a hero in the MARVEL game, you need to expect that your days are going to be anything but boring. If you really were a super hero, your typical day would run something like this:

## WAKING UP

You'd likely start your day waking up to an alarm. And not the kind of alarm you're thinking of. We're talking a 5 a.m. high-pitched police distress siren from the waterfront, where a band of blue-skinned Atlantean barbarians has come ashore seeking vengeance against the surface dwellers. Outnumbered and outgunned, the police need your help—or thousands will die. Without a shower or a drop of coffee, you don your full battle regalia and wing your way to the scene, yawning all the way.

When you get there, you greet an exhausted and terrified police force. The rest of Manhattan hasn't even turned over to learn of the invasion on WFSK-Radio, and you're the only thing that stops them from waking up with an Atlantean spear in their chests. You swing into action, wondering how it is that you do more death-defying before dawn than most people do in a lifetime.

## PROTECTING THE INNOCENT

By 6:25 a.m., Manhattan's Friday rush hour has started, and that means one thing—bus crashes. And out of control ambulances on the George Washington Bridge. And traffic helicopters clipping each other over Pier Four. In the nick of time, you right the bus, and take control of the ambulance, and steer the chopper into the harbor so no one is harmed. If

you're lucky, you'll get a few seconds for a breather before the next crisis goes out over the police scanner.

Humanity's worst enemy is its own clumsiness. But hapless as they might be, people are your responsibility. The mayor's on the radio again extolling Manhattan as the safest city on Earth, and somehow, it's your duty as a superheroic citizen to make sure he's not lying. But there's always far more than you can handle.

## CRIMEBUSTING

8:30. Some nut's cleared the sleep from his eyes to get a better view through his sniper scope. He's got Councilman So-and-So in his sights, because he didn't vote for the Municipal Indoor Gardening Act or something. Now, seconds count. If you hit him too quickly, he'll panic and fire into the crowd. If you hesitate, he'll blow the councilman away. You talk him down, and while his paranoid brain processes your heartfelt words, you destroy his gun. You drop the gibbering perp off at Bellevue, doubting he can be cured but relieved that he won't be on a balcony any time soon.

And while you're doing that, more all-points bulletins echo through the cityscape. You've got to assume that the bank holdup is being handled, since it's in the Upper Forties and you're down in the Lower Seventies. And the high-speed chase probably is going to peter out somewhere around the jammed Lincoln Tunnel. Still, you can probably reach the hostage standoff at Stane Industries, as long as the captors have a long list of demands. But this is just the crime you can see: Somewhere in each of those office buildings, someone is laundering drug money through an offshore account, or making a secret deal with a hitman, or channeling a child's trust fund into the coffers of an anti-mutant militia. You'll never get to the root of the problem, but at least you can clean up around the fringes.

## INVESTIGATING

By 10:00 you've freed the hostages, but the Stane plant took a whipping. In the fracas, the terrorists beat a fast retreat. Calling themselves the Earth Liberation Front, they stormed the eco-unfriendly Stane Industries with hazmat suits and poison gas rifles. Though you can sympathize with their cause, ELF's methods leave a lot to be desired. The police are baffled, but you caught the sweet scent of daffodils in the clouds of poison. Not much of a clue, but you'll take it.

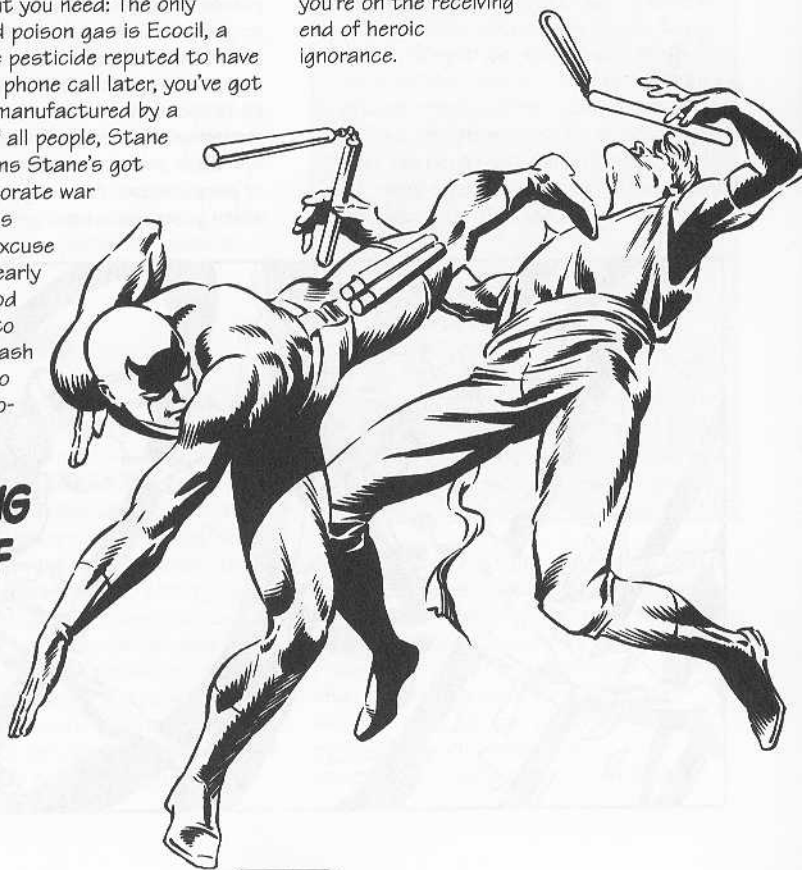
This, of course, is why you have a secret identity. (Well, okay, you also need to pay the water bill, and showing up to work at 10:45 might not be good for the long-term utility payments.) A quick Internet search gets you the hint you need: The only daffodil-scented poison gas is Ecocil, a supposedly safe pesticide reputed to have military uses. A phone call later, you've got proof: Ecocil is manufactured by a subsidiary of, of all people, Stane Industries. Seems Stane's got an internal corporate war masquerading as terrorism. You excuse yourself for an early lunch (not a good plan, you think to yourself), and dash over to Stane to bust the pseudo-terrorists.

## DEFENDING YOURSELF

By 2:15, you wonder where the day went wrong. The feds and the cops are on your backside, all because Stane Industries

security cameras caught you entering the subsidiary building. Remote alarms triggered, and the Avengers answered the call. Staring down the Wasp and Iron Man, you tried to explain why you were standing in an office of poisoned chemical workers with a canister of hot Ecocil in your hands. All in vain, of course. Now you're dodging Firestar's microwave bursts all the way down Seventh Avenue. Won't that look good on TV.

More times than you can count, you've fought against people who are supposed to be your allies. You've come to accept that something about superpowers prompts heroes into rash decisions and uninformed judgments. Since hesitation can mean an ice-blast in the face, sometimes it's best to capture first and ask questions later. Unfortunately, now you're on the receiving end of heroic ignorance.



## EXPLORING

2:48. You're tired of running. A hooded figure beckons you down a dark alley, but when you reach the end, the enigmatic lurer fades into the shadows. Something troubles you about this alley, as if it's not quite right in the universe. Carefully, you pop open a mysterious silver door and hear the melodic strains of samisens. One step and you realize you're not in Manhattan anymore. You're in an ancient Chinese fortress, alone save for the giant jade dragon that stands motionless atop the highest tower. And from somewhere, you catch the faint scent of daffodils.

That can't be a coincidence, so you explore the grounds. And what grounds they are: mammoth ceremonial gongs, glistening waterfalls, jade idols to angry gods. The age of the citadel suggests you may be the first human to visit this fort since the Great Wall was built. But not the first being, since you are swiftly swarmed by dog-faced gargoyles coming out of the stone walls. Though you beat back the initial onslaught, you collapse under their weight and soon see only blackness.

## FACING SUPER-VILLAINS

You awaken hours later in a dank cave, chained against an ancient rock surface. Gargoyles circle a boiling pot which smells of flowers. Before you a shadowy ruler sits upon a colossal throne of gold and ruby. You see a flowing robe bearing the design of a leonine dragon, and the glint of colored rings on the man's serpentine fingers. The figure stands and you can see his maliciously arched eyebrows. His voice booms, "Bow, foreigner, and face the wrath of—the Mandarin!"

As you struggle to regain your strength, you listen to the Mandarin unfold his evil scheme. He has cultivated a rare flower that blooms only once a century, whose tiniest petal can be distilled into a virulent poison that could devastate an urban neighborhood. Using his alien rings of power, the Mandarin has transformed this flower into a seedling bomb, which he plans to teleport over Manhattan in mere moments. Once loosed, the seeds will spread in the winds and poison the millions of people below! A horrifying plan, and one which you must stop.



## SAVING THE WORLD

You've heard that speech before, or least dozens like it. While the megalomaniacal villain rattles on about his dreams of domination, you regain your strength and pull against your chains. And while the Mandarin laughs at your attempts to break the super-reinforced bonds, he hasn't strengthened the weak and aged walls. You rip the chains out from the wall, which crumbles behind you. You scatter the gargoyles with swings of the chains and advance on the Mandarin.

But at that fateful moment a cave-in begins, dropping stone after stone into the volatile seedling mixture. The Mandarin flinches, fearful that his poisonous weapon will consume all with the cave. He teleports away, disappearing from your clutches.

As the gargoyles flee, you break through the weakened cave walls and rush back to the silver portal. Catching a last glimpse of the epic jade dragon crashing down on the tower, you cross the boundary into Manhattan, saving the world from a plot which cannot be completed for another hundred years.

## APOLOGIZING

A glimpse at a darkened streetclock, and you realize that it is 9:55 p.m.! The danger has passed, and so has the critical 4:00 meeting you swore up and down that you'd attend. It's also far too late for you to meet your friends for the Broadway show they paid a cool mint for. You dream up yet another inventive excuse about your car or your aunt or your class reunion, and then call a half dozen answering machines with carefully constructed apologies. You also leave a message with Damage Control, hoping you remembered to pay your hero insurance premium before they get that bill for the destruction of the Stane plant.

## PLAYING THE VILLAIN

If your Narrator trusts you implicitly, you might get a chance to try another point of view: the villain. Playing the villain allows you to plot and fret and brag about your master plans, all the while struggling to avoid the interference of those pesky super heroes. You get to build deathtraps and construct secret lairs and blackmail the world if they don't meet your eminently reasonable demands.

Being the villain means you get to design the schemes that the heroes must foil. You must choose a hideout that no one could ever find, design the superweapon that stops them when they do, and plan an escape route when your superweapon mysteriously malfunctions. Do your research: Find out where the heroes are most vulnerable, and exploit those weaknesses. Mercy is a trait for the weak.

Just remember: You can be evil, but there's no point in being vicious. Plotting to take over the world is one thing; blowing up a hospital is quite another. Brutality is nobody's idea of fun roleplaying. If you find yourself veering in these directions, the Narrator likely will do everything to stop your villain—and might even take the villain away from you. MARVEL's just a game, after all.

Swinging into the night, you're sure that a dozen emergencies await you before you'll hit the sack sometime well after midnight. You wonder how normal people spend their Friday nights: dinner and a movie, perhaps, or attending the kid's concert recital. Wouldn't that be nice, you think as you're pummeling an arsonist into unconsciousness. Wouldn't that be nice indeed.



# CONTRADICTIONS OF HEROISM

Super heroes struggle with the contradictions of heroism every day. Being human (most of them), they must reconcile natural human tendencies with unnatural superhuman powers. Throughout play, your hero will probably deal with all of these contradictions. And if you think your hero has problems, just take a look at the life of your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man.

## GREAT POWER AND GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Spider-Man found out the hard way that anyone who doesn't treat superpowers as a blessing finds that they become a curse. After gaining great agility and strength, the ability to stick walls and a powerful danger sense, the wall-crawler

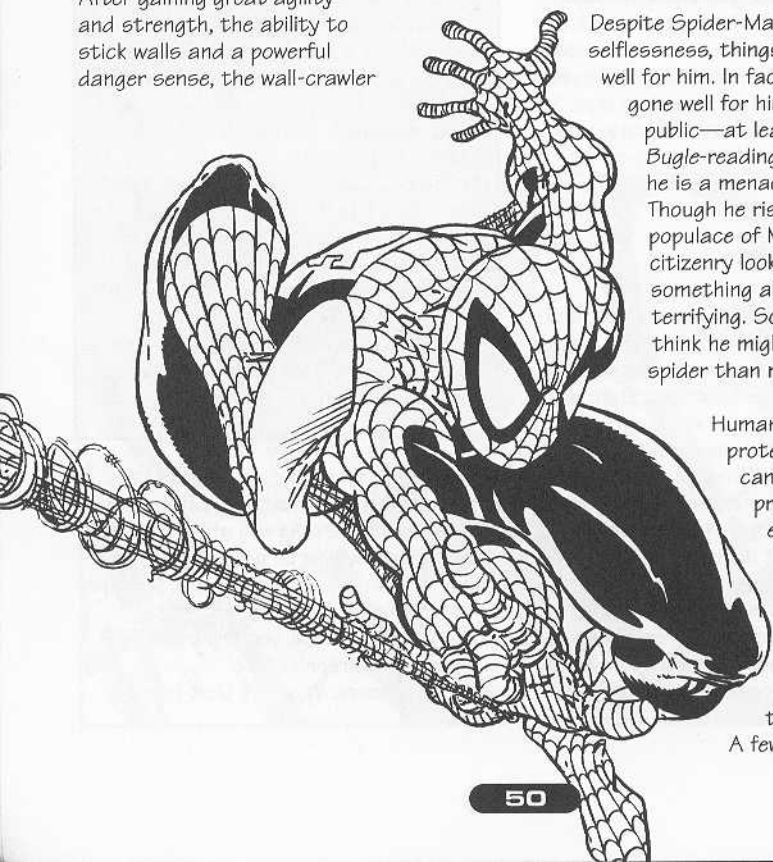
rushed into the life that beckoned him—TV stardom. Using his spider-powers only for money, he let a petty criminal run by rather than stopping his escape. Shortly thereafter, that criminal killed his Uncle Ben, leaving his beloved Aunt May a widow. Spider-Man gazed into the abyss that day, and found inside himself the courage to lay aside personal goals and fight for justice.

If your hero does not use his or her powers for good, someone will undoubtedly suffer—probably your hero. The super heroes who do have good samaritan streaks take a dim view of those who don't, and clashes are inevitable. Worse, those super heroes likely will have the law and the press on their side. Unless your hero's calling demands otherwise, fight for humanity or face the consequences.

## POPULARITY AND FEAR

Despite Spider-Man's newfound selflessness, things didn't always go well for him. In fact, they've never gone well for him, because the public—at least the *Daily Bugle*-reading public—believes he is a menace to society. Though he risks his life for the populace of Manhattan, the citizenry looks at him and sees something alien, something terrifying. Some New Yorkers think he might even be more spider than man.

Humanity wants to be protected, but it often can't look its protectors in the eyes. Differentness is hard for people to swallow, but the strong ones among them look at the person beneath the strange visage. A few heroes have



overcome this—Captain America, Mister Fantastic—but only through years of selfless acts and public relations. And even then, the public can still be fickle, as some who value only normality wait for the slightest provocation to pounce. If you expect your hero will be embraced by an unwavering public, you may be in for a rude awakening.

## **VIGILANTISM AND THE LAW**

As bad as public antipathy can be, it's worse when that antipathy comes armed. Spider-Man has stared down a police special more times than he can count, each time because the police had misinterpreted his heroism for villainy. And the lack of trust from the authorities goes far beyond mere .38 calibers. A simple case of mistaken identity once caused New York's mayor to call the Thunderbolts out with a warrant for Spider-Man's arrest—and one of his fiercest foes leading the charge.

Politicians, police, and soldiers especially are wary of costumed vigilantes, who don't go through training, don't have review boards, don't need warrants and executive orders, and don't have the limits of simple humanity. All citizens of the Republic must obey the laws, but super heroes often flout some of the most cherished of those laws—innocent until proven guilty, no illegal search and seizure—in pursuit of supposedly higher goals. Your hero can struggle against this view, but trust will be hard to come by unless super heroes all act like the sworn agents of law enforcement. That day will be a long time coming.

## **VIOLENCE AND RESTRAINT**

Spider-Man watched the Green Goblin push his beloved Gwen Stacy off a bridge, and heard the sound of her neck snap. He swore that he would make the Goblin pay

with his life. But when he had the Goblin in his hands, Spider-Man couldn't kill him. The Goblin's apparent death that day was an accident, for Spider-Man could not trade the warmth of compassion for ice-cold revenge.

It's a war out there. The forces of evil are not afraid to use lethal force, and need to be met with a forceful response. But true heroes find that they can't devolve to the level of villains without a moral price. With few exceptions, heroes cannot and will not take the lives of their foes. To most, all life

## **ILLEGAL ACTIVITY**

Heroes get a lot of leeway. The authorities understand that sometimes a crimefighter must rip up Midtown Manhattan to save New York. But some things are just plain illegal. The government takes a dim view of the following actions:

**Committing crimes:** So-called heroes who rob banks, steal cars, kill, or endanger the lives of innocent people are no better than the villains they fight. Breaking the law in order to preserve it is rarely tolerated.

**Withholding evidence:** Equipment used in crime is evidence that must be turned over to the authorities. A hero who keeps weapons or equipment used in a crime is withholding evidence, in effect stealing from the state. Even destroying equipment reduces the state's chance to convict the villain.

**Vigilante action:** Unless in law enforcement, a hero is just a private citizen. He or she can make a citizen's arrest and turn criminals over to the law. The hero cannot break the law in order to capture a crook, nor act as judge, jury and executioner. Any hero who takes the role of punisher is asking for big trouble from the law.

## AMERICAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The standard procedure for handling a crime is often cumbersome. A suspect is brought into a police station or agency headquarters for questioning. Police must release an uncharged suspect within 24 hours, but federal agencies can hold suspects longer in cases where national security is at stake. If charged with a crime, the suspect is usually jailed at a local police station. Super-powered criminals are generally disarmed and their powers neutralized somehow.

The suspect is brought before a judge. A trial date and bail are set. If a suspect pays the bail, he or she is released from jail. Most of the bail is returned to the suspect at trial. To be found not guilty, the accused must make a *challenging Intellect* action if innocent, or a *desperate Intellect* action if guilty or framed. Known mutants must always make a *desperate* action, regardless of innocence.

If found guilty, the criminal is sentenced. In unusual cases, the sentence may be exile to an alien's home planet, or the loss of powers. A criminal sentenced to a prison term can be paroled after serving a month per year of the sentence. To be paroled, the person must make a *challenging Willpower* action, or a *desperate Willpower* action if this is not the first time the criminal has been in prison.

All this assumes fair hearings. If that's not the case, there's always escaping. Jailbreaking occurs quite frequently, especially from such super-villain holding facilities as the Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane. Escaping always involves at least several *desperate* actions, and should be roleplayed as a separate adventure.

is precious. The few heroes that ignore this maxim find that the rest of the hero community will not accept them. The acts of some mutants and morally ambivalent heroes such as the Punisher have made this situation far worse for heroes in recent years. If your hero uses fatal or crippling tactics in apprehending super-villains, gratitude will be hard to come by.

## HONESTY AND MASKS

Even before he decided to become a crimefighter, Peter Parker understood that he had to wear a mask. If not, he knew, everyone close to him would be in danger. And in those few cases where he has let his guard down, danger has surely followed. The Green Goblin knows his identity, and Parker fears that any moment he will strike at him through those he loves.

People will expect your hero to stand up for truth and honesty. But that position is less tenable with that don't-trust-me sign on your hero's face. If your hero won't let his or her face be seen, expect doubt. But if the public knows who your hero is, he or she will be mobbed and threatened in the most private of places. And who wants that? Few heroes have found an easy way out of this dilemma.

## PERSONAL REWARD AND CHARITY

Everyday after risking his life to save Manhattan from the depredations of the Kingpin and the Hobgoblin, Spider-Man comes home and worries how he's going to make his house payments. The paycheck of a spot-news shutterbug isn't all that great, especially with so many shots coming out blurry. Every so often, he swings by the local branch of Stark Solutions and muses how cool it would be to have the carefree life of a wealthy executive like Tony Stark.

Face it, the super hero gig doesn't pay well. In fact, it usually doesn't pay at all. Of course, with superpowers like your hero has, he or she could easily get a job in construction, or at least demolition. But that doesn't save lives. Somehow, the bills must get paid. Even if your hero is independently wealthy, it'll probably all go south once the armor comes out of the briefcase. After all, while your hero's on the Moon fighting the Red Ghost, his or her competitors are spending their time taking advantage of that unexplained absence.

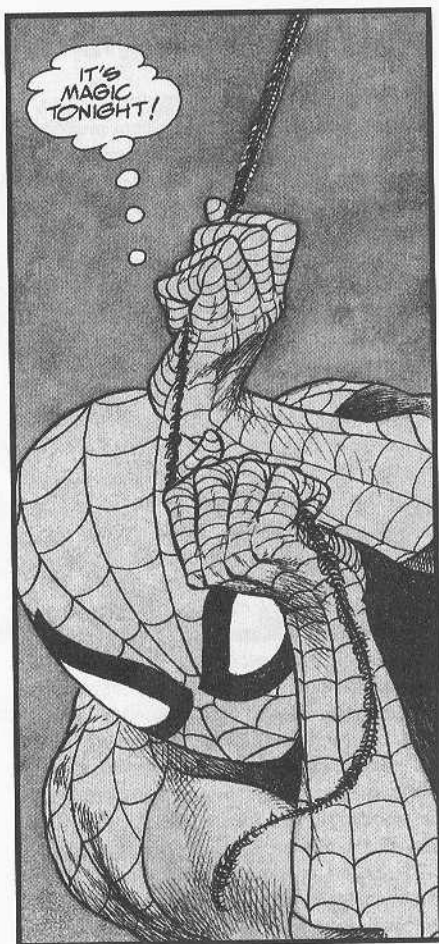
## UNIQUENESS AND TEAMWORK

Spider-Man is a loner. On a few occasions, he's tried the superteam thing—the Fantastic Four, the Avengers, the New Warriors, and so on—only to swing out through the skyline treasuring his independence. But hold on a moment. If he likes being a loner so much, how come so much of his time is spent in the company of other heroes? Seems like every month, he teams up with Daredevil or Doctor Strange or Man-Thing or (heaven forbid) Frog-Man.

Whatever makes your hero unique, it'll be complemented by the uniqueness of other heroes. Your hero can't be good at everything unless you're playing Galactus, so you'll need partners at least some of the time. Someone's got to watch your hero's back. Still, it is nice to get all of the glory sometimes. And if your hero's working alone, he or she doesn't have to watch anyone else's back.

## HIGH POWER AND HIGH RISK

The scariest of these contradictions haunts Mary Jane every night. Even though her husband is blessed with super-strength and unbelievable agility, there



may come a moment when that's not enough. Of course, Peter should be able to dodge any bullet—except for perhaps the one with his name on it.

Your hero may have the most amazing powers known to mankind, but his or her choice of lifestyle invites danger, often of the lethal kind. Super-villains don't usually pull their punches or shoot to distract. Some of them are trying to kill your hero. They might not often succeed, but every now and then someone's luck runs out. Play your cards right, or your hero might be next.

# SELF-IMPROVEMENT

After putting his or her neck on the line, your hero may change in exciting and unpredictable ways. At the end of every adventure, you'll get the chance to make a change on your hero sheet—assuming the adventure went well. That change comes in the form of a 1-point *response bonus* to add to one of your hero's scores. Think of it as a reward for your hero's hard work, or perhaps a chance to advance the general entropy of the Marvel Universe. In the world of comics, change is a constant.

A response bonus can be used for any one of the following changes with only your say-so:  $+/-1$  Strength,  $+/-1$  Intellect,  $+/-1$  Agility,  $+/-1$  Willpower,  $+/-1$  to an existing power's intensity, a new power stunt, a new piece of equipment (following the equipment rules), a new name, a new image, or a new limit to a power. All of these replace previous listings, except for new stunts and equipment. You should give an explanation of the change that's plausible for the situation, but the Narrator generally won't take the choice away from you. The Narrator may stop you from making a change if he or she feels you're focusing too hard on one ability, however.

With your Narrator's approval, you can instead get your choice of: a new power at intensity 1, a one-letter increase in one ability code (with an additional skill, as described on page 100), a one-letter reduction in an ability code (with a loss of skill), removal of a power, elimination of a power limit, redistribution of up to 5 points of current power intensities, a new calling, or a new hindrance. However, all of these require a compelling justification on your part of how the current chain of events leads up to such a change. If the Narrator accepts your explanation, you get to make the change. Otherwise, you've burned your response bonus.

There are three changes where convincing your Narrator won't necessarily make it so:  $+1/-1$  Edge (and thus Hand Size), a new

world-class skill, and elimination of a hindrance. These change only when your hero has made a major advance in his or her life: leading a team through a set of world-shaking adventures, say, or staying away from the source of an addiction for a year. You'll have to plead your case to the Narrator, and even then he or she will have some major questions for you.

Maximums and minimums still apply, of course. Heroes can't have base ability scores above 20, Edges above 4, gadgets they can't build, or more than three hindrances. Changes don't cause additional effects from hero creation, so a new limit does not raise a power by  $+2$  intensity. (Think of the Silver Surfer suffering an extreme limit to his Space Flight when Galactus removed its ability to work outside the Earth's orbit. This obviously didn't make his Space Flight stronger.)

In the above paragraphs, there were mentions of negative response bonuses, like  $-1$  Intellect. Who'd choose that? Well, you wouldn't, but your Narrator might. . . .

All this assumes your hero responds to all the events that motivate him or her. The Narrator likely will be triggering events at a dizzying pace. Something seems to happen every exchange, and all of it will be competing for your hero's attention. To what should your hero respond? The simple answer is, respond to anything that appeals to your hero's sense of duty, sense of adventure, or any other sense the hero has. But the more complex answer is that no matter what else your hero responds to, you'll be very unhappy if your hero fails to respond to anything that triggers off his or her calling (see page 14).

Below the event on every fate card is an associated calling, such as Protector or Greed. If your hero has that calling, he or she is beckoned to heed the event. If your hero tries his or her best to react in character (Protectors rescuing, Greedy people stealing, that sort of thing), your hero may change in a positive way.



But if you don't respond appropriately, your hero may still change—but not necessarily in a way you'd like. Failing to respond to even one such event can cost you the choice of your end-of-adventure response bonus. There may well be a change in your hero, except this time the Narrator gets to make the choice. Your hero might get an exciting new limit, or hey, how about a shift in intensities? Maybe Wings? Maybe Susceptible to Fire? Who knows? The point is that you don't.

The Narrator has to follow the rules: If your hero takes on a new calling, for instance, then your Narrator must explain how the events suggest your hero has fulfilled his or her old calling. And if it's an Edge change or elimination of a hindrance, he or she will have to do some fancy explaining. Of course, if your hero has just caused a major disaster and has been kicked out of a team, maybe your hero does deserve a lower Edge. But that magnitude of change should be scarce.

Of course, sometimes you have to choose between your major goal and the crisis of the moment. Completing the main goals of the mission will also get your hero a response bonus, assuming the hero's at all motivated to be on the mission. A Protector might be fighting the Brood



invasion (the main goal) to save the people of Earth, and still may respond to an asteroid hurtling at a space station along the way (the Endangered Innocents event) to save those people on board. The true heroes are the ones that manage to accomplish their goals and respond inventively to the unpredictability of life.

Over many sessions, a hero can change quite a bit. A new look, buffer muscles, a new power or two, and you might be looking at a hero with an identity crisis. This happens to heroes all the time: Storm got a mohawk, Captain America became Nomad, and Hercules became a bum. But they all stayed heroes, and weathered the changes.

# NARRATION

All right, players, it's time to get lost. We hear the latest X-Men's at your local comic shop, so go check it out. The next section is for the Narrator's eyes only. (Okay, we admit that probably didn't work, but you can't blame us for trying.)

Everything in this section and the next is aimed at you, the Narrator. Your role is different from that of everyone else at the table. Each of the players is myopically focused on playing his or her one hero. You've got to bear the entire weight of the



Marvel Universe on your back. But before you despair, take heart that you get to know what's going on, and the players don't. Here's some help in bringing the Marvel Universe to life in your own living room.

## NARRATING A MARVEL ADVENTURE

As Narrator, you've got ultimate power. You control all the characters, set up all the threats, and make all the rulings. Since you've got that amazing power, you might expect us to give you tips on how to beat the heck out of the heroes. Well, it turns out we do have one tip for you about pounding the heroes into mush.

Don't.

Look, the players have come to you to have a good time, not to see how easily you can beat them. Even though players play the heroes and you play the villain, you're not really in competition with each other. You're both trying to create the most fun comic book story you can. So along with your great power comes, as Mr. Parker might say, great responsibility.

Throughout the course of a MARVEL game, you'll need to:

**Describe:** You're the only one at the table who knows the plot of the adventure. You describe what the heroes see and what happens in each scene. You also speak and act for all the Narrator characters in the game, including the villains.

**Interpret:** You listen to what the players say they want their heroes to do, and then interpret the effects of cardplay and events in the adventure. When a new situation crops up, new interpretations are always required.

**Judge:** Players often have different interpretations of what should occur, especially when it comes to rules

questions. You listen to all sides, and then decides what occurs. In all cases, your decision is final.

## NARRATING TIPS

Keep in mind a few concepts as players make their way through your adventures.

**Keep up the pace.** Remember why the players are here: They want to play heroes as if they were in a comic book. That means your plots must run like gangbusters, brimming with twists and turns and slambang action. Though not every moment should be a fight or a test of the heroes' abilities, pacing should never drop.

**Not everything goes the heroes' way.**

Just because they're playing the good guys doesn't mean they get to win all the time. They usually pull things out in the end, but often after serious setbacks. Your players will learn to accept setbacks as long as they feel they have a chance of success.

**Not everything goes the villains' way.**

Just because you're in charge doesn't mean you get to win all the time. The heroes need a chance, even if they don't know it till the end. It's great fun for heroes to foil an evil plot, and not fun to fail when you've tried your best. So don't blow up the world; you might need it tomorrow.

**Reward the heroes for their actions.**

When heroes succeed, they should know it. Most aren't in the long-underwear business for the money, because there isn't any. They usually have goals that they want to achieve, and you can help them. You'll be giving out a response bonus to each hero at the end of each adventure, but till then, make sure that they at least get some applause when they save the world.

# NARRATING ACTIONS

Actions must challenge the heroes. As the heart of the MARVEL game, the actions you require of your players will go a long way to

defining the game. As such, they should be specific and meaningful to the players.

Actions should also trigger good roleplaying, not hinder it. They should come with fascinating and sometimes terror-inducing descriptions. Players should be given opportunities to speak in character when faced with an action, and others should have a chance to spur them on or predict their failure.

When designing actions, you should consider these parameters:

1. What ability makes sense? Will powers help?
2. How hard would it be for an average person to perform the action?
3. Who, if anyone, opposes the attempt? With which ability?

## ASSIGNING ACTION ABILITIES

Use the ability (Strength, Agility, Intellect, Willpower) or power that makes the most sense in the situation. Vary the mix a great deal; don't keep testing

the strong hero's Strength or the hero will become a one-trick pony. However, stay consistent on the action abilities for very common actions; dodging should always use Agility and resisting psychic attacks should always use Willpower.

If you can't decide on an action ability, flip a card. Use the suit of that card as the action ability, or a power if a Doom card comes up.



# ASSIGNING DIFFICULTIES

You decide how difficult the action will be, and assign a numeric difficulty rating. The rating assumes that the individual attempting the action wants it to succeed, and that he or she has any chance of success at all. After all, a snake can't catch a football regardless of whether or not it's supposedly easy.

Normally, it's best to keep difficulty ratings secret, as real people never truly know how hard something is in life. Players must guess what cards to play themselves, rather than expect you to spell it out for them.

Difficulty can be any number from 0 to 40, and should relate to the chances for a normal human to perform the action. After all, leaping a 30-foot chasm may be common in comics, but the long-jump record in our universe is still under 30 feet.

The following entries describe the range of action difficulty.

**Automatic (0):** If it's something a hero can always do in normal situations, it's automatic. Opposition can make such an action harder, but the difficulty is still 0. Examples: changing costume (Agility), dialing a phone number (Intellect).

**Easy (4):** If a hero almost always expects to succeed at the action, it's probably easy. There is a risk of failure, especially when below-average individuals try it. Examples: catching a lobbed football (Agility), lifting a heavy crate (Strength).

**Average (8):** Average actions can be accomplished by most super heroes, but normal people sometimes find them difficult. Examples: landing after a 10-foot drop (Agility), finding one's way through Manhattan with a street map (Intellect).

**Challenging (12):** Challenging actions give most heroes pause, though those with beyond-human abilities can do these at

the drop of a hat. Examples: cracking a code (Intellect), hitting a bullseye at 50 paces (Agility).

**Daunting (16):** Normal folks won't try daunting actions unless their lives depend on it, and even heroes can't assume success. Examples: grabbing a flagpole and swinging onto a rooftop (Agility), designing a supergun (Intellect).

**Desperate (20):** Desperate actions test even the strongest of super heroes; even the best of normal humanity succeeds at desperate actions only once in a blue moon. Examples: lifting a Buick (Strength), resisting knockout gas (Willpower).

**Superhuman (24):** Superhuman actions can't be performed by normal people, no matter what they do. Heroes must be beyond-human in the ability to achieve these results. Examples: lifting a truck (Strength), dodging lightning (Agility).

**Unfathomable (28):** When tasks of this difficulty are done, news spreads around the world. Super heroes can achieve these occasionally. Examples: holding up a collapsing house to let people escape (Strength), memorizing the OED (Intellect).

**Cosmic (32):** Even the most potent of heroes are daunted by cosmic tasks. Such actions are sometimes doable for cosmic forces, but not for mortals. Examples: making an Ultimate Nullifier (Intellect), ignoring Galactus-level hunger (Willpower).

**Godlike (36):** These actions are the province of gods, who might even think twice about trying them. Examples: seeing through the illusions of the Shaper of Worlds (Willpower), holding up a mountain (Strength).

**Impossible (40):** No one can perform impossible actions often, though nothing is truly impossible in the age of super heroes. Examples: breaking Captain America's shield (Strength), hauling Manhattan back to its rightful place (Strength).



## ASSIGNING OPPOSITION

If a character is opposing a hero's actions, use the appropriate ability on the character's sheet or abbreviated listing. Use the same standards you would for choosing a hero's action ability. If you're making up a character on the spot, draw a random card and use that card's value as the opposition, assuming it's a normal human. If you want a larger value, add the values of two or even three cards.

You can add cards from your Doom Bank at any time. You should save these for the most dramatic or pivotal moment. Once you use a Doom card, don't forget to return it to the discard pile.

## TOTALING THE RESULT

When a hero performs an action, you should have the player total the results. Announce the difficulty and results of the action when it's all done, unless there's a value in keeping it secret (as if someone fails to spot the Invisible Woman).

## MATERIAL STRENGTHS

When heroes try to lift or damage objects, you should assign a difficulty rating based on the object's material strength. A hero must make an *average Strength* (material strength) action to damage or lift the item. When a material is fashioned into armor or a weapon, divide its material strength by 4, rounding down, and you'll get its damage bonus or defense bonus.

Wakandan vibranium is a natural metal that absorbs impact. Antarctic vibranium dissolves materials of its material strength or less. Adamantium is a superhard manmade metal; it's been alloyed with vibranium once, to make Captain America's shield. Uru, an Asgardian mineral, makes up Thor's hammer and Odin's spear and mace.

Material Strength	Examples	Weight Equal to . . .
0	Paper, flesh	A roller skate
1	Balsa wood, glass	A skateboard
2	Wood, cloth	A bicycle
3-4	Gold, leather, hard rubber	A kayak
5-6	Lead, silver, bone, hard plastic	A moped
7-8	Bronze, fiberglass, rock, kevlar	A motorcycle
9-10	Diamond, iron, concrete	A small car
11-12	Reinforced concrete, steel	A luxury car
13-14	Advanced steel alloys	A minivan
15-16	Titanium alloys, Antarctic vibranium	A truck
17-18	Wakandan vibranium	A yacht
19-20	Adamantium, magical metals	A jet plane
21-25	Adamantium-vibranium alloys	An oil tanker
26-30	Uru, Silver Surfer's board, Celestial armor	A freeway

## SAMPLE ACTIONS

To show how to design actions, we'll open up the cornucopia of traps and riddles in Arcade's Murderworld. When designing such a place, "Surviving Murderworld" is not a good action: Murderworld should require a veritable smorgasbord of different actions. Some actions that might occur there include:

### • Break Out of Manacles

An average *Strength* (material strength) action

The 9 material strength of the iron manacles adds to the difficulty of this action. As soon as a manacle is broken, sensors activate and pump in the fear gas.

### • Resist Fear Gas

A daunting *Willpower* (Poison) action

The passage is filled with fear gas, a poison of intensity 12. Failing in this action means the hero has to be led through the corridor. Until they leave the corridor, all actions for fearful heroes increase by two difficulty levels (8 points).

### • Dodge Acid

An easy *Agility* action

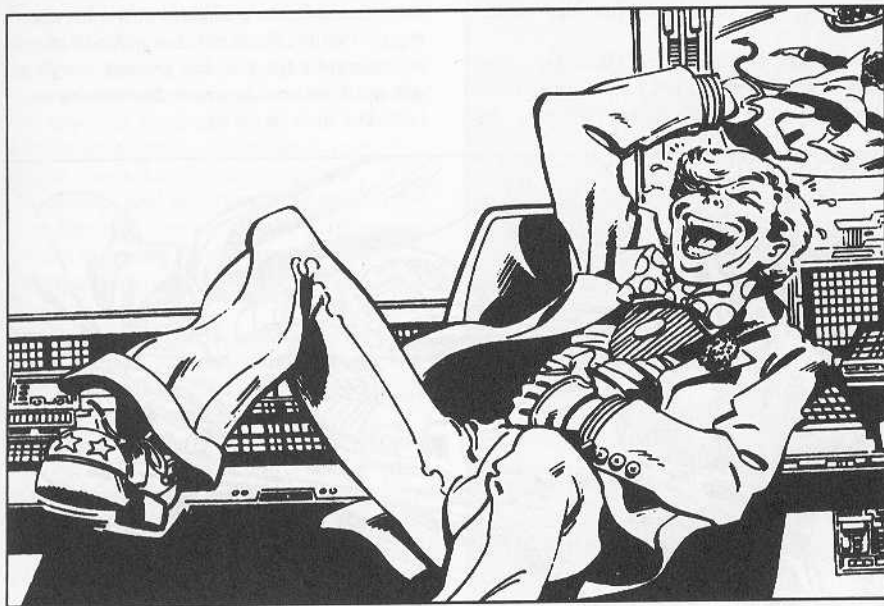
The acid isn't intended to hurt the heroes, but if not dodged, it inflicts 8 damage points. The acid is intended to burn a riddle into the floor. Each hero hit by acid will obscure one of the nine words, chosen by the value of a random card. The acid spells, "WHY DID THE CHICKEN WINDER CROSS THE ROAD WINDER?"

### • Get Hint to Riddle

A challenging *Intellect* action

If a hero succeeds in the hint action, he or she is told, "This looks like a very old joke with a new word added twice, so the answer is probably the old answer with that word added." The answer is, "To get to the other side winder." When that answer is said, Sidewinder from the Serpent Society attacks. (Note that this isn't, "Get Answer to Riddle." You shouldn't pose a teaser without letting players think it through.)

This tour through Arcade's Murderworld could require as many as several dozen of these actions in rapid succession.



# RUNNING A FIGHT

Narrating a fight is almost exactly like narrating other actions, except that there's a lot more of them all at once. When you're narrating a fight, the most important thing to remember is that it must go quickly. An exchange is supposed to represent about 30 seconds or so, so you can't let it take 30 minutes.

Your primary role in a fight is to keep the chaos organized. Players will be declaring actions, throwing cards, and talking up a storm throughout the fight. You need to make certain you go through all the steps and apply all the results.

Everything you need to run a fight is in the **Clobberin' Time!** chapter. To maintain control, remember the steps in the fight sequence.

Give the players time to think—but not much. While you handle opening moves, the players should form their plans. After a few seconds, ask for declarations. If they're not ready, warn them that you'll delay their actions if they delay much longer. If they still don't come up with anything, make their actions contingent.

Keep track of characters' Health in whatever way is easiest. You can use the monitoring system on the cards (see page 39),

## STEPS IN THE FIGHT SEQUENCE

**Opening moves:** Draw a Narrator card, apply the event if you want, check recovery

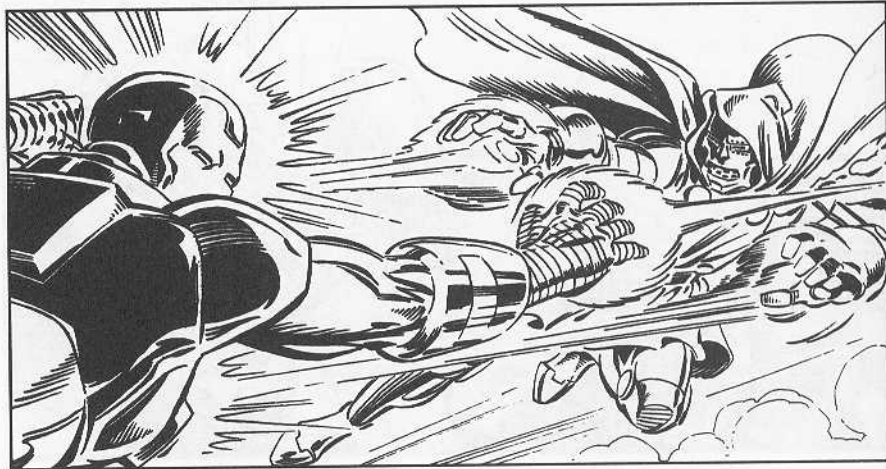
**Actions:** Let the heroes declare and perform actions

**Counteractions:** Declare characters' intent, have players perform counteractions

**Results:** Apply wounds, apply other effects

**Closing moves:** Resolve contingent actions, see if fleeing occurs, start again?

or just keep notes on a piece of scrap paper. A key event in an exchange is the recovery. If you get a negative result on your card draw, this means all your characters not fighting alongside the heroes regain Health. So if a dozen minions of Annihilus are lying on the ground, they'll all get up. Whether they rush the heroes or rush the door is up to you.



## CHARACTERS IN BATTLE

Without foes, the heroes will just fight among themselves. (Try it without foes just once, and you'll see what we mean.) That's where your characters come in. Your characters should be nearly—but not quite—as challenging as the heroes.

The first step is selecting a foe—or better yet, several foes. Unless you're running an everybody-pile-on-the-Super-Adaptoid game, fighting a group of opponents is more challenging than fighting one foe. One possibility is a major foe and a bunch of minions: Kingpin and his thugs, say, or Doctor Doom and his robots. Another is a unified group of villains, such as the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. And there's always the classic hero-team-versus-hero-team conflict, where the Avengers take on the X-Men because of mind control or just an extreme difference of opinion.

Your characters should be as predictable and strategic as they would be if roleplayed by players. A good indicator is Edge. A high-Edge character should be able to think his or her way out of any fight situation, while a low-Edge person won't. The Rhino is no Magneto; he'll bash away at his foes forever. But Magneto will have a dozen strategies, and will be ready for anything the heroes throw at him. Before an adventure, plan what your major characters will do in various situations, and how they'll escape or deal with failure. There will still be surprises, natch, but you'll be prepared for most eventualities.

Your characters don't technically perform game actions, but they will do things that affect one another. As your heroes look on, a villainous character may attack a virtuous character, for example. If this occurs, don't take time performing an action. Just flip a card and apply the aura: if positive, the attempt works; if negative, it doesn't; and if neutral, it works or doesn't work depending on your reading of the odds.

## GRANTING NEW STUNTS

Quite often during fights, players will want their heroes to develop new stunts to save their bacon. Perhaps the dam is about to burst, and the hero with Object Duplication wants to fuse his or her own body with the dam wall to hold it together. This is creative and strategic roleplaying, so it should be encouraged.

However, it should seem difficult. At minimum, a new stunt should be *challenging* difficulty, which is a 12. But that score is attainable by a great many heroes, especially if unopposed. So you should vary the difficulty based on the hero as much as the situation. If the hero has, say, an 18 intensity power, a new power stunt should be at least a *superhuman* (24) difficulty, or the hero will succeed in the action every single time. But after the hero's mastered the stunt (doing it at least a few times), drop the difficulty to *average*, unless it's exceptionally hard.

As noted under **Stunts** in the Powers Appendix, if a hero tries a stunt and fails, he or she can't do it *ever*. This is harsh, but it encourages creativity and stops the cascading "okay, I try again!" refrain. You can always give a player a second chance at a stunt, but make sure he or she knows that you're granting a big favor.

Sometimes the players ask for the unattainable. Perhaps the same dam is about to burst open, so Cyclops wants to melt the granite wall, fusing the cracks in the dam. Well, it just doesn't work that way. Cyclops has a force beam, not a heat beam. You can always remind the player of this embarrassing misstep, or you can let the hero attempt the action at a *secret* difficulty of *Impossible* (40). The latter's usually more fun, because while the fusion won't work, it's guaranteed to have some neat consequences (Cyclops punches the dam inward, for example).

## WHAT IF THEY SPLIT UP?

If the player heroes split up outside of a fight, it's usually no big deal. You switch your attention back and forth between the two groups, resolving one situation and then another. While the first group of players is roleplaying their heroes' encounter with the giant robots, the other group of players is making popcorn.

In a fight, though, keep the exchanges running on a one-to-one basis. If one group of heroes gets actions during an exchange, so should the other group. As long as it aids the pacing of the game, you can warp time a bit, so one group's actions may take five minutes and another's takes 30 seconds.

Each group can't know what the other knows, unless they have commlinks or telepaths or somesuch. So if one group blows up the bridge, the other group won't know this as they're careening toward the bridge in their Jeep. As Narrator, you should enforce this rule rigidly: *The players can act on only what their heroes know.*

Still, there's an old axiom in roleplaying games: "Never split the party." That's because Narrators can take advantage of a small group's reduced strength. The Narrator can throw multiple threats at the split groups that they could easily defeat when united. So the group without the mage gets hit with the magical threat, and the group without the psychic gets hit with the telepathic threat.

And then there's the old ping pong dodge, which takes advantage of the warped time between one groups' actions and another. It works something like this: Your heroes have barricaded themselves in the chapel in Dracula's castle. One of them has to go out and radio the townsfolk, but some of the others are too wounded to move from their relatively safety. They arrange a signal: three raps on the door.

Then one hero flies out in the form of a bird, and the fun begins. You resolve some of the bird-man's actions: fly up the stairwell, escape the wolves, radio for help. And you resolve some of the trapped heroes' actions: apply first aid, repair the armor. Then you switch to the bird: hide from the ravens, fly down the stairwell, rap on the chapel door three times. Then back to the other heroes, who hear the knock and immediately open the door. And that's when Dracula steps through, having telepathically monitored their actions, and tears into them with his fangs.

How'd this work? Well, you never said that the events were happening at the same time. As you ping ponged between the groups, the bird-guy did a bunch of actions while his friends did far less. So Dracula showing up before he came back was reasonable, and the heroes have only themselves to blame for splitting up.

Of course, your players will throw popcorn at you for this.





# EVENTS

There's only one thing that's predictable in Marvel comics, and that's *unpredictability*. Super heroes never know what's coming around the next corner: an adoring fan if they're lucky, a rampaging tyrannosaur if they're not. The MARVEL game brings that larger-than-life uncertainty to roleplaying by introducing *dramatic events*, things that happen when the heroes least expect them.

In the upper right corner of each fate card is an event. They have names like *Cry for Help* and *Compromising Information and Structural Collapse*. They're triggered at moments of dramatic tension, not all the time. If you decide that something in the previous exchange was a potential turning point, or that something major is going to occur this exchange, that's a good time for an event.

It's your prerogative to decide if an event adds to the story you're telling. If not, you can ignore the event. Once you decide to keep an event, announce the nature of the event before actions begin. That way, the heroes have a chance to react.

Events can be bad for the heroes, but they can be good as well. The hero's lying unconscious in the rubble, so the villain reaches to pull off the hero's mask and . . . *Police Sirens start wailing!* The villain flees, so the hero's identity goes unrevealed. When events occur, the world doesn't usually stop and applaud. Whatever crisis or tense situation was going on before the event continues, and this new X factor needs to be dealt with as well. You can have sometimes three or four events occur in the same fight, with one event maybe triggering a side confrontation. After all, nothing spices up a humdrum fight quite like a fire, the arrival of the press, a power

What's a potential turning point? Think of it this way: They're the moments when somebody is one panel away from saying, "What the—!" Some classics are:

When the hero gets knocked out  
When the villain is about to be captured  
When the superweapon is fired for the first time  
When the hero is out on a date  
When the evil mutants destroy something  
When the battle goes over a cliff  
When powerful radiation is unleashed  
When there's a press conference going on  
When the flying car goes out of control

And perhaps most importantly:  
*When things get dull.*

overload, a touch of xenophobic hysteria, and a rift in space opening up.

Events are unplanned, so they require you to make up part of the plot as you go along. When you wing it, you'll make decisions on the fly about previously unquantified actions, unmapped sites, and unwritten documents. Thus, it behooves you to introduce creative but simple events so the players don't require more information than you're prepared to give. And the events should be introduced quickly, lest you have a backlog of events to juggle later on.

If you need to introduce characters from thin air, check the back half of the *Roster Book*. In addition to villains, you'll also find statistics for normal humans, aliens, and animals. Don't waste your players' time creating unique stats and character traits for one-shot characters. Use the stats for a lawyer, give him a Boston Brahmin accent, serve the hero with the subpoena, and get that lawyer out of harm's way before the hero does something he or she will regret under oath.

## SPECIAL GUEST STARS

*Quick quiz:* Say one of your players' heroes is falling out of an airplane. She can't fly or teleport, but she can plummet like a stone quite convincingly. Wondering how you're going to avoid pounding her flat, you rely on the trusty Fate Deck to get a dramatic event. You draw and get the Sub-Mariner's card, featuring the event *Refusal of Authority*. Uh oh, that doesn't sound like you can stretch it, unless you're planning to empower her to order gravity to take a day off. What to do?

The answer is right before your eyes: The Sub-Mariner, in all his princely glory. There's no way a gallant like Namor will let a helpless woman fall to her death. And so Namor flies up with those winged feet of his, catches the heroine, begs a kiss, and drops her off on the nearest rooftop.

You can decide if an event is the *dramatic entrance* of a guest star. This appearance doesn't trigger the event on the card. Characters introduced in this way don't always stick around for very long, because the focus of the game should be on the player-run heroes and the mission they're performing.

About one-sixth of the time, a random draw will produce a Doom suit card featuring someone less than heroic. This could mean a fight or a new element to whatever villainous activity was previously occurring. If Spider-Man is easily beating up the Rhino and the Narrator decides a dramatic entrance should occur, drawing in Electro could provide just the shock the overconfident Spider-Man player needs. When Electro makes his dramatic entrance, he gets a chance to make a surprise attack as described on page 33.

And of course, even a super-villain might save a falling super hero. It might not necessarily be the ideal rescue, but it's better than hitting the pavement.

## EVENTS AS STORY HOOKS

These dramatic events can happen in violent and nonviolent situations; they can be hooks to get into a plot without the heroes planning it. If the heroes are sitting in their mansions or offices, a dramatic event can interrupt their coffee breaks. You can simply draw a card and start a perilous adventure in motion.

Say Mister Fantastic is in his laboratory creating a brand new supergadget. As he pounds in the final doohickey and screws on the final whatzit, he crosses his fingers and lights up the thingamajig. You

draw and get the event *Sudden Transformation*. Suddenly, a blue-orange fireball from the gizmotron lashes out through the side of Pier Four and transforms an errant jetskier into a colossal firebreathing pteranodon. Now the FF must rush into action to save Manhattan, and find out whose dastardly sabotage (Parnival Plunder? Sauron?) caused the prehistoric malfunction. Voila, instant adventure!

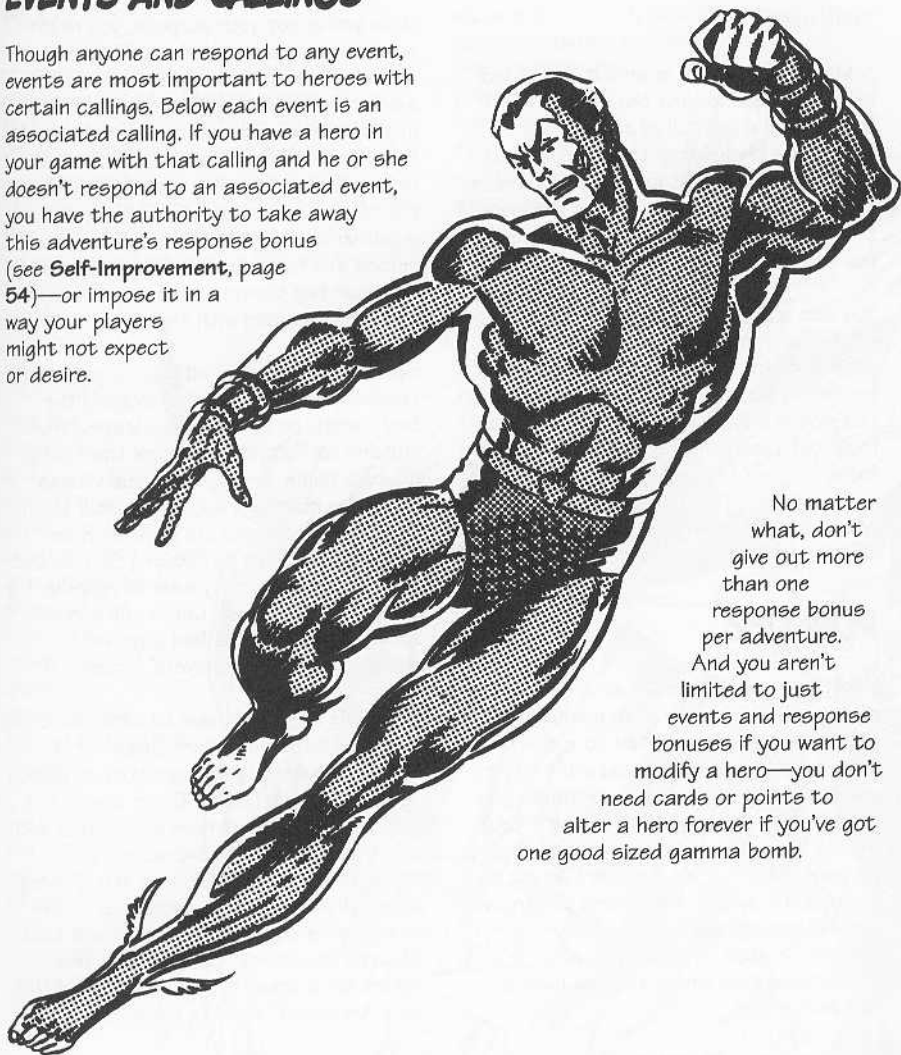
Another use of these events is to redirect your heroes if they've fallen off the track of your adventure. Draw a card and use the event to bring them back on course. Perhaps your heroes are stuck at a crime scene with no clues (even though you know that the phone number to the villain's lair

is circled in the Yellow Pages in the kitchen cabinet, and why haven't they looked there?). If you draw and get, say, *The Press Arrives*, have an annoying and rumpled city beat reporter show up and interview the hapless heroes—and accidentally spill the beans about his exclusive knowledge of the whereabouts of the master criminal.

You should give your players some leeway here. They don't have to succeed, just try. If they earnestly try to have their heroes respond to an event, don't be a stickler for details. They're playing *their* heroes, not *your* heroes. But hey, if a player running Captain America blithely ignores a civilian in perilous danger, nail the player. That might be a guy with a shield, but it ain't Captain America.

## EVENTS AND CALLINGS

Though anyone can respond to any event, events are most important to heroes with certain callings. Below each event is an associated calling. If you have a hero in your game with that calling and he or she doesn't respond to an associated event, you have the authority to take away this adventure's response bonus (see **Self-Improvement**, page 54)—or impose it in a way your players might not expect or desire.



No matter what, don't give out more than one response bonus per adventure. And you aren't limited to just events and response bonuses if you want to modify a hero—you don't need cards or points to alter a hero forever if you've got one good sized gamma bomb.

# ADVENTURE DESIGN

If you've run roleplaying games before, you know that the players' heroes are the most important part of your adventures. You focus the adventure through them, letting them dictate the pacing and the direction of the plot. You give them time to think, to explore, to develop their characters.

Yeah, right.

A MARVEL adventure is an out-of-control bullet train pummeling the rails at Mach One toward a bus full of people. Your heroes are trying stop the train, or derail the train, or at least jump out the window. That is, if they can even get to the train in time. That is, if they even find out the train exists.

You see, a good MARVEL adventure is written with the heroes as an afterthought. A super-villain rarely plans heroes into a scheme for world domination. The plot is clever, fiendish, diabolical, and foolproof. Good thing most heroes aren't fools.

When laying out a MARVEL adventure, consider the following factors:

## PURPOSE

First, your adventure needs a *raison d'être*, a reason to be. One possibility is that you've always wanted to run an adventure like it: Maybe you want to re-enact the Kree-Skrull War, or maybe you want to see what it would be like if your heroes were thrust into a domain of pure gamma radiation. Your players might even prompt the adventure: A hero tinkers with technology beyond human ability to control, or goes in pursuit of a mysterious man who claims to have all the answers.

It's always a good idea to design your adventure with a personal connection to

the players' heroes. Kidnap someone close to them, or offer the promise of a cure to their horrible afflictions. Have a super-villain call them out for personal combat, or blow up a building in their home town. Whatever the connection, the players then will have a reason to complete the adventure no matter what happens.

## CHARACTERS

Once you've got your purpose, you need someone to enact it for you. That means choosing characters appropriate to the adventure. These can be characters who might otherwise be run by players: Nick Fury can give the heroes a covert mission, or they can intercept a distress call from the Wasp. Characters don't have to be superheroic: Alicia Masters can tell the heroes she fears for the FF's safety, or a child can beg them to save her mommy from the bad man with the gun.

Speaking of bad men with guns, you need a threat. Perhaps a cyclone ravaging the Southwest, or a lethal virus leaping from mutant to mutant. But more than likely, it'll be a villain, or maybe several villains. Some are masters, such as Doctor Doom or Ultron. And some are minions, from lowly street punks to invading Skrulls. But whoever they are, they have to represent a threat to the heroes. Check out comic books to gauge if the bad guys will measure up to your players' heroes.

The villain or villains have to care about the purpose of the adventure. Juggernaut wouldn't be seeking a magic book of demon summoning, but Doctor Doom might. The Super-Skrull doesn't have much truck with the drug trade in the Bronx, but the Kingpin's up to his thick neck in it. Having an old villain make an unexpected return when the heroes least expect it is a time-honored tradition in comic books, and makes for a great cliffhanger. ("Could this be—Annihilus?" Fade to black. . .)

Sometimes, you'll need a character for whom there are no statistics. Published

adventures write them in shorthand, such as:

**Mutant biker warlord:** Strength 8D, Agility 5D, Intellect 4X, Willpower 6D, Health 17. Brawling, Driving, Intimidation. Ability Boost (Strength) 8. Equipment: Bike chain +2, Motorcycle with front-mounted machine gun +4. Calling: Greed. Hindrance: Frenzied.

## PLOT

In some games, a plot is a carefully orchestrated sequence of events. In MARVEL, a plot is something an evil supervillain creates in the depths of an underground lair, all the while fuming that those blasted heroes won't get in the way this time. As you create the plot for your adventure, put yourself in the mindset of the threat you've created. How would the villain take over the world? And what contingency plans would he or she have when those infernal heroes do show up? The villain is your focus, and the reason your heroes aren't sitting around sharing war stories.

For example, say you want the nefarious Kingpin to kidnap a congressman. Figure out why the Kingpin would do that

(say, to blackmail the congressman into voting against a crime bill). Then figure out how he would do that (have goons hijack the plane in between Dulles and LaGuardia). Then figure out how the heroes will get involved (hearing a distress beacon, or being on the plane itself). As long as it all makes internal sense, you can weave the plot into appropriate scenes.

For plots, you can always crib from somewhere. Pick a comic or novel or TV show and recast it, adding elements that suit your game. Just don't pick a source your players know by heart, or your surprise ending won't be much of a surprise.





# STORYBOARDING

Storyboarding is the art of telling a story in scenes. Unless you're planning to make everything up as you go along, you should give a few minutes' thought to the scenes that will make up your adventure.

A key element in storyboarding is how long you want the adventure to last. If you've only got a half hour, you're most likely looking at a fight. But if you've got two hours, you can have an adventure with three or four scenes. Four hours allows a wildly branching plot structure, and several sessions can make an epic. Write the story to fit the time you've allotted, and you'll wrap up on schedule.

Once you know the adventure's length, lay out the story's beginning, middle and end. The beginning of an adventure should have some action; for example, beginning with a brief fight quickly involves the players in the adventure. The middle of the adventure should involve plot development and enigmas to be unraveled, and perhaps a defeat for the heroes. The end of the adventure can have multiple conclusions, depending on how the heroes reached that point. Regardless of what happens, your epilogue should leave open possibilities for the future.

The storyboard at right (from the adventure "Shakedown," which appears later in this chapter) doesn't try to determine which heroes are running through it. The story is *villain-centered*, following the plot that the Mole Man sets in motion. It's a flexible plot, allowing certain scenes to occur either before or after other scenes. The arrows are directional, so that the underground confrontation can lead to the assorted disasters, or vice versa. It's possible to skip entire scenes; for example, the heroes may not learn of the taking of hostages (a critical event in the plot) until they find them at the underground confrontation.

A villain-centered adventure should include contingency plans for when things don't go the villain's way, such as the escape route at right. As a general rule, a villain should have at least one plan per point of Edge. This means that the Rhino won't have any options if the rug's pulled out from under him, but Doctor Doom will have multiple options. This is why no matter what evil deeds Doctor Doom commits, he never, ever gets captured.

"Shakedown" is a *nonlinear* adventure, meaning events can happen in different orders. If you've got less time to prepare, you might want to consider a *linear* adventure, where the scenes can be plotted out in a straight line (e.g., first the ambush, then the pursuit, then the final battle, then the voyage home). This has the disadvantage of seeming staged, but the advantage of not having scenes that may be skipped entirely. And that's less work for you.

## PACING

MARVEL pacing has just one rule: *Don't ever let up.* Once you've plunged the heroes into the thick of it, hit 'em left, hit 'em right, and don't let them catch their breath. Unless, of course, it suits your plot to give them a few moments to think ("Hey, wait a minute! The Thing isn't green! That must have been the Impossible Man!").

In the Marvel Universe, *time is flexible.* After all, the Fantastic Four debuted in 1961, but it's still only been about a decade of Marvel time. Your games should mirror this: If a player says she wants her hero to research a clue in a library, test her with one action and get her hero out of there. It shouldn't take an hour to get across town; it should take as long as it takes to say, "I want to get across town."

## SAMPLE STORYBOARD

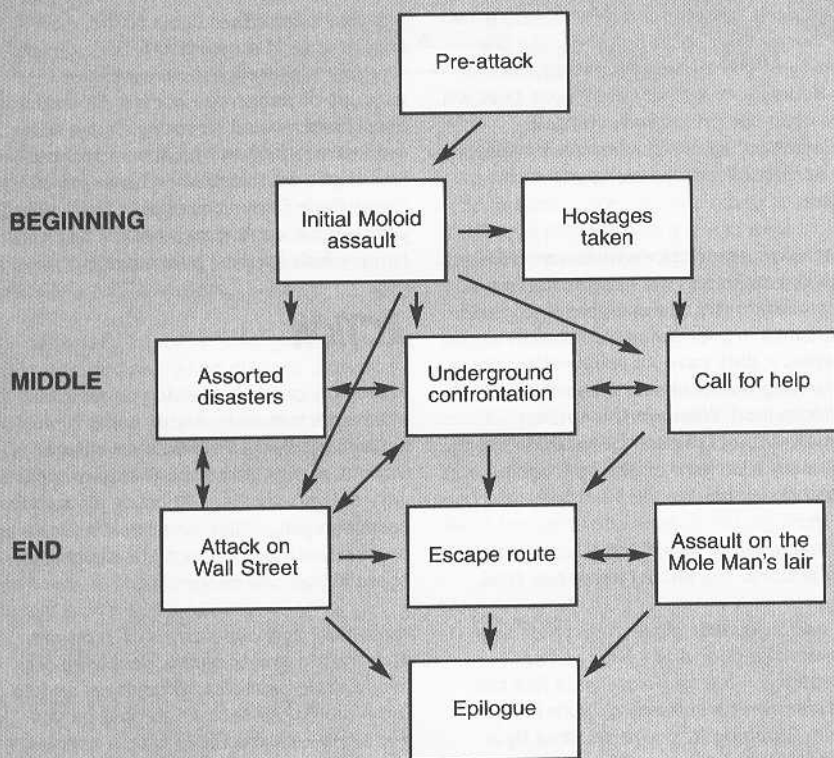
The plot of the adventure "Shakedown" is that the Mole Man attacks New York, and only the heroes can stop a terrifying disaster. The adventure has three parts, a beginning, middle, and end. There are periods before and after the crisis as well.

Each part contains several scenes, which can occur in any number of orders. However, some scenes clearly follow others, such as the assault on the Stock Exchange, which cannot occur until well after the initial Moloid assault.

**Beginning:** The Mole Man begins his attack on Manhattan. **Scenes:** Pre-Attack, Initial Moloid Assault, Hostages Taken.

**Middle:** The subterraneans plan to make a major raid on Wall Street. **Scenes:** Assorted Disasters, Underground Confrontation, Call for Help.

**End:** The Mole Man enacts his final plan of revenge. **Scenes:** Attack on Wall Street, Assault on the Mole Man's Lair, Escape Route, Epilogue.



## AESTHETICS

One of your most important tasks is to describe sights and sounds. If you do this right, your players will feel like they're right there. Appeal to all the senses: for example, smell is a powerful sense, especially for trained trackers like Wolverine and Tigra. Describe actions the heroes attempt, and the consequences of those actions. Don't say, "You knock him back." Say, "You knock him back into a bus, crushing the engine and causing passengers to stream out the emergency door."

When heroes enter a place, their first impressions are paramount. Don't leave out key details you'll need later: Letting the players know the room smells like burnt almonds will send the chemically-adept ones running for cover. But do leave out things they could not know, like the identity of the shadowy figure standing in the doorway, or the key weak spot that will split open the prison wall. Instead, describe the figure's flowing black cape, or the serpentine cracks along the rock facade.

Personalize descriptions wherever possible, as different heroes will see the same things differently. For example, if you have X-Mutants in your group, you could describe a dark cave as being rather like the underground tunnels where the Morlocks lived. Whereas the winding corridors of a high-tech installation may remind an alien hero of the spaceship which carried him or her from home.

A cardinal sin of narrating is mandating hero actions. You should never say this:

*You see a gigantic glass tube that runs between the floor and ceiling of the laboratory. A murky yellow liquid fills the container and a humanlike figure floats within. **Touching it**, you're shocked by a blast of electricity.*

Here you've told the players what their heroes did, even if they didn't want to touch the glass tube. Describe what they see and hear, but don't anticipate what they'd do. Trust us, they'll make plenty of boneheaded decisions without your help.

## DIALOGUE

Comics need wisecracks from Spider-Man, menacing snarls from Wolverine, and life-threatening speeches from Ultron. Your game needs these too. You can sketch dialogue in advance, but never read directly from a page; that'll sound stilted. Plan your voices and subjects, but let words come naturally. Dialogue around your actions can also help; a "Meanwhile . . ." or "Lest we forget" can help evoke the mighty Marvel spirit.

Let your characters come to life, even if they're gone in a heartbeat. For example, say your players want an eyewitness account of dangerous doings. An ordinary stockbroker would be boring. But a wide-eyed street person who seems half-mad—now that's material. When he warns of "them little fellers that live in the sewers," your heroes won't know whether to trust him or chalk it up to pure insanity.

## ACTION

How many comic books do you remember which start or end without some kind of action? Similarly, a MARVEL adventure without action is like the Avengers without Jarvis—you can have it, but it just won't seem complete. Plan for action to occur at key moments throughout the adventure, especially at the bookends.

You'll need to make dozens of decisions about actions and fights. Decide quickly about action abilities, difficulties, and so forth. Don't hesitate or go back on your decisions—unless faced with a concise, compelling argument. Players get one shot



to change your mind, then you're on to something else. For example, if a player says he wants his hero to reprogram Ultron, you might say it's impossible, until he points out that his hero has skills in Robotics and Computers.

It's especially important for you to be quick and decisive when players disagree with each other. The outcomes of fights ride on your decisions, so make them fairly and with finality. Players should understand early on that not everything's going to go their way, as heroes don't win all the time. But you should understand early on that you can't win all the time either, or your players won't come back.

The Doom Suit is your friend. Players will play cards from the Suit of Doom all the time, as there are just too many to avoid it. When a player plays a Doom card or draws one as a result of trump, make a big deal about taking it into your Doom Bank. And try to use it against the player who played it—and fast.

Most importantly, death should be a rare event. Leave doubt when death supposedly occurs, and don't kill anyone you don't absolutely have to kill. After all, heroes don't kill villains. There are plenty of other ways for heroes to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

## TWISTS

That said, nothing spices up a game more than snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Throw in a twist that makes the players rethink their strategies in the heat of conflict. Overconfident players get used to relying on one weapon to get them through. For a twist, take out that weapon. The Defenders wouldn't have had much to do if Doctor Strange wasn't clocked by a big rock every now and then. Once their main weapon is out, your players will have to think on their feet.

Of course, the first thing your players may think of is to call in the big guns (assuming, of course, that they aren't the big guns). Oddly, the Avengers Mansion switchboard always seems to be jammed with calls, and the Fantastic Four are never in their headquarters when you need them. Your players should get used to solving their problems themselves, unless you think they need help in a big way.

## SURPRISES

Random events keep your game from resembling a planned series of plot devices. Use events early and often, and

always at decisive moments. Though in fights you should refrain from events outside the Opening Moves step, it's your prerogative to cause an event whenever you want. Of course, any time a player declares an action the hero's never done, that's a great time to see if a hazmat spill occurs.

You're never forced to trigger an event, however.

Don't be afraid to wing it. Your players won't even know you're flying without a net if you keep events humming along. And if you worry that you're going to get caught making stuff up on the fly, just make a snap decision about a critical event, force a dodge against unnoticed darts flying from the walls, and shuffle a bunch of papers. That'll teach those nosy players.

## CLIFFHANGERS

Adventures don't always end in one session, just like comic plots don't always wrap up in one issue. When you're going to have another session, end the current one at a critical moment—an impending defeat, a shocking revelation, a near-death experience. Push the car over the cliff, but





don't let it land. When you resume next time, your players will be nervously brimming with energy, wondering if you really would detonate that nuclear bomb with their heroes at ground zero.

If you end this way, don't award response bonuses for completing the adventure; after all, they haven't. Record or set aside the cards the players had in hand at the moment of the cliffhanger, and don't answer any questions till the next game session.

## THE GRAND FINALE

Most storylines end with a final confrontation between the heroes and the forces that threaten them. By this stage, the standoff should mean something to the heroes. How they feel about the threat may determine whether the story ends with a bang or a whimper. The heroes and villains may duke it out for all the marbles, or the heroes may try to talk the powerful mutant out of leveling the city. Whatever the confrontation, it should be tense, dangerous, and without a guaranteed outcome. That way, if the heroes do win, they'll have something to celebrate.

A good grand finale can take a while to finish. Plan on spending at least a half hour in the final conflict, and maybe as much as an hour. If you've got five heroes and five villains going toe-to-toe, also expect a great deal of property damage.

If the heroes are in danger of losing, figure out a way for them to score a partial victory at least (unless you're planning on continuing the adventure next week). Even if they don't capture the Taskmaster (and no one ever does), they can foil his plan to start a new crime academy. No one likes to end up beaten and devastated, unless they learn a clear lesson—and get another shot at the bad guy soon.

Just don't pull a *deus ex machina*, where a godlike figure appears out of nowhere and solves the adventure while the players watch. The *Infinity Gauntlet* series may have been a great read, but having Adam Warlock step out of the shadows and settle everything makes a lousy end to a roleplaying adventure.

## THE EPILOGUE

In the epilogue, you follow the ending of the adventure with a quick assessment of the state of things. Two heroes unaccustomed to working together might shake hands and go their separate ways, for example. Perhaps the heroes have changed in their powers or group dynamics. Villains may be jailed or pursued in vain through their secret escape routes. Regardless, the epilogue should be resolved quickly and leave open the possibility of future adventures.

At this stage, you should decide whether the heroes succeeded with their goals. If so, give each of the players a 1-point response bonus, assuming they don't have an unused one already. This should occur for everyone, unless the goals achieved weren't in line with a hero's calling (e.g., if a captive Mystique assisted the X-Men, she's not going to get a response bonus—unless she gets away, that is).

Once the epilogue is over, wrap up the game and prepare for the next session. You've finished a successful adventure; now you have to top it.

# STARTUP ADVENTURE: SHAKEDOWN

"Shakedown" (or, if you prefer, "Just Another Moloid on The IRT") is a startup adventure that you can run for your players. You could have your players use the Fantastic Four, four or five of the X-Men listed in the *Roster Book*, or perhaps a subset of the Avengers as their heroes, but they can play any heroes this side of the Silver Surfer (this isn't a comic dilemma after all).

This adventure allows opportunities for investigation, roleplaying, and lots of action. It's written loosely so that you have room to improvise. You should read the entire adventure, plot out how you think the game will proceed, and plan how best to present the story to the players. If the players fall off track, use a dramatic event to steer them back to the adventure.

The plot is a classic, harkening back to the very first issue of *Fantastic Four*: The Mole Man takes revenge on the surface dwellers. To get a look inside the villain's mind, here's Ol' Moley himself to explain his dastardly plan of blackmail to his mindless minions (think high-pitched and lots of stick-rapping):

**"Heed me, my Moloids! It has been ages since the surface dwellers shunned me and ridiculed me, and still they do not bow and scrape beneath my feet! This injustice has gone on too long!**

**"But now, my revenge will be total! I will strike the prideful surface dwellers where they will feel it most: in their pocketbooks! I will bring their system of commerce to its knees, driving their world into economic ruin! Then, when they seek salvation and purpose, I will become their savior, showing them a new way—free from money, free from cares, free from independent thought!**

**"My attack on the world's financial centers will begin with the capture of that horrid symbol of excess, the New York Stock Exchange! After years of searching, I have found the Tremblor, a device of Deviant technology which lets me summon lava-spouting earthquakes at a thought.**

**"But first, I need something—or rather, someone—to power it. There is a surface dweller . . . a mutant who calls himself Rictor, who can make the earth move with a wave of his hands. He shall be my unwitting pawn, and I will cleverly cover his kidnapping with a series of other such attacks! And then, when he is lashed to my Tremblor, the world will quake with fear! So say I, the Mole Man!"**

## PRE-ATTACK

Your heroes begin the game in Manhattan. If they're not natives, invent a reason for them to visit New York for a vacation or an exchange program or something. If they are New Yorkers, they might be at work or school, hanging out with friends, or patrolling the streets in their costumed identities. This is your opportunity to set the scene; describe some of the sights and smells of the Big Apple to make the players feel like they're really there.



In order to get everyone in the proper mood, you can run a short scene where one of the heroes spots a mugger stealing an old woman's handbag. The heroes should take some action to stop the crime—through use of their powers, brute force, or a quick-witted plan. Allow them to succeed fairly easily, building their confidence.

Overall, however, the situation should be relatively serene. All of which will be shattered in a heartbeat.

If the heroes check, the newspaper headlines note that an Empire State University seismology professor predicts increased geological activity in and around New York City. Also, the business news reports that London's Fleet Street financial community was shut down because of unexplained blackouts.

If the heroes want to interact with any of the people on the street, you'll need some characters (and Manhattan is filled with characters). Make them up on the spot, letting them react to the heroes' actions as you see fit. Normal humans usually have ability scores between 3 and 5, and a 10 Health. That doesn't mean they're bland, of course. Remember, this is New York. Anything can happen.

## INITIAL MOLOID ASSAULT

At a pivotal moment of your choosing, the ground starts shaking as if affected by an intensity 8 Earthquake (see Earthquake in the Powers Appendix). As the ground moves, have every player play a card. If the card has a positive aura, the hero suffers no damage. Otherwise, the hero suffers 8 damage points (remember to subtract the hero's Strength from that damage). This scene allows you to make sure that everyone understands how damage works before they enter combat.

After that sudden quake, the ground erupts and out come the Moloids! The main danger is a mole monster, a 10-foot-tall, four-legged critter with sharp jaws. The mole monster is accompanied by a number of humanoid Moloids equal to the number of player heroes. Their instructions are to wreak general destruction and kidnap one hostage (they don't care who). Describe the Moloids and mole monster to the players. Tell them what these creatures look like and what they do, then ask the players what their heroes do in response.

If the heroes choose to attack these subterranean savages—and they surely will—the mole monster and most of the Moloids will focus on defending themselves. But one Moloid will try to complete the goal of kidnapping a hostage and taking him or her to the underground lair. Run the fight until the heroes overcome the Moloids, or all the heroes retreat or fall unconscious.

If the Moloids take a prisoner at the conclusion of this battle, it might be someone close to the heroes or a total stranger. Your choice of victim will affect the players' attitudes toward the rest of the adventure.

When you run the fight, use these statistics for the Moloids:

**Moloids:** Strength 4X, Agility 3X, Intellect 1X, Willpower 1X, Health 10. Invulnerability to Mental Control (no defense against Emotion Control). Equipment: stick +2 damage. Calling: Soldier.

**Mole monster:** Strength 22X, Agility 2X, Intellect 1X, Willpower 1X, Health 30. Teeth +6 damage. Digging 15, Invulnerability to Mental Control. Hindrance: Bruiser (the mole monster attacks using Agility rather than Strength, although Strength is used to calculate damage). Because the mole monster is such a colossus, you might use the Pile-On rules (see page 35).

As this fight occurs, several other things happen at the same time. First, other Moloids appear and take **hostages** throughout New York. Second, tremors cause **assorted disasters** all around town. Finally, the Moloids rendezvous in their **underground lair** in the subway tunnels; if any Moloids escape the heroes, they make a beeline for the subway lair. See below for details.

## HOSTAGES TAKEN

Moloids appear in a dozen places around New York, and in each place (except maybe where the heroes were), they take a prisoner. If after the fact the heroes check with a news source, police records, or some other contact, they can learn the names of the victims. And there's a chance they might recognize one of them.

### Location (North to South)

A high school in East Harlem  
The Calhoun Club  
Roosevelt Island tram station  
The Magical Child bookstore  
The Gem Theater  
Holy Ghost Cathedral  
Empire State University  
Damage Control HQ  
Cord Conglomerate offices  
Yancy Street  
Coney Island

### Hostage

Schoolteacher Laetitia Burns  
Millionaire Eldridge P. Calhoun  
Tram conductor Jimmie Lee Wilde  
Wax sculptor Perdita Baldwin  
Ambulance driver Charles Q. Smith  
Army chaplain John Madsen  
Student Julio Esteban Richter  
Administrative assistant Melvin Fudd  
Researcher Albert Wayne  
Street tough "Little Vinnie" Cordero  
High schooler Bonnie Furay

Some of these sites are important in the Marvel Universe: The Cord Conglomerate created the Mauler armor, for example, and Damage Control is a super-disaster cleanup agency. But there's only one hostage whose name players might recognize: Julio Esteban Richter is better known in hero circles as the X-Force member Rictor, whose mutant power is the ability to cause earthquakes. This is no coincidence: The Mole Man staged the rest of these kidnappings to cover the kidnapping of Rictor. Julio was at the university meeting with Professor Lance Barton, the seismology expert who warned of geologic activity. If the heroes seek Barton out, he is a caffeine-driven man who fears for New York's safety. The aptly named Richter was helping him track these geologic events, when the Moloids attacked and spirited him away.

Your players can learn this information however you choose, but you should give them a chance to figure it out for themselves. If some of their heroes have ties to the X-Men or can get access to files on heroes (like police or Avengers records), you can let those heroes attempt average Intellect actions to identify Richter by his codename. However, X-Force will be unavailable; see **Call for Help**.

## ASSORTED DISASTERS

Throughout the city, the mini-quakes cause disasters. You may want to confront the heroes with one or two of these in order to test their heroic natures and cover the Moloids' escape. Solving most of these disasters involves using powers and abilities to save innocent lives.

The sights and sounds of these situations are crucial; describe the facade of a building cracking, or a car careening out of control. Describe the innocent folk who are in danger's path. Play this up for a while. Have one disaster fall close on the heels of another for as long as it keeps your players interested, then get back to the main adventure.

Alternately, you can make this the main adventure if the players are having fun saving Manhattanites. The main point is that the players enjoy themselves. If they do not rescue Rictor, then another set of heroes will get around to it eventually.

It's important to let the heroes succeed in saving people; there's nothing fun about innocents dying. If there's a down side, it should be that the Moloids escape, not that the heroes fail in their relief efforts.

Possible disasters (and types of actions they may call for) include:

- A bus careens over a bridge (Strength or Agility actions);
- A subway faces a wall of water as a sewer line explodes (power actions based on Transmutation or Water Control);

- Gargoyles fall off a rooftop toward pedestrians below (power actions based on Flight or Lightning Speed);
- Downed electrical lines threaten schoolkids (power actions based on Electrical Control or Absorption);
- The frame of a building under construction must be supported as workers flee (Strength action);
- A broken gas main causes a dock fire (power actions based on Cold Control or Fire Control)
- A chemical firm must be evacuated due to a hazmat spill (Strength actions to avoid breathing the poison);
- A cave-in traps a treasured dog in a basement (Agility actions to avoid triggering a collapse).

Use whatever crises you like, but tailor them to your heroes' abilities. For example, Spider-Man might be good at stopping the bus, which might be a *desperate Agility* action. And the Thing might be able to support the construction site, a *superhuman Strength* action. Also, be flexible enough to allow heroes to use a variety of powers or abilities in any given situation. With the sewer line explosion, for instance, your heroes may come up with inventive ways to save the day without using the listed powers. If it sounds good to you as the Narrator, let them do it!

## CALL FOR HELP

Your heroes may want some backup. Manhattan is crawling with heroes, listed in this box set's roster and upcoming roster books. But at the start of the adventure, your player heroes may have trouble getting them to help. Everybody in New York is dealing with the attacks and quakes, saving civilians and hunting down Moloids. So the heroes may see the New Warriors fly by on their way to stop a disaster, and can even interact with them for a time. But a siren will ring out, and suddenly the heroes' new allies will have to dash, leaving the heroes alone to face their predicament.

Because of Rictor's disappearance, the heroes may think to call X-Force or X-Factor. Both these teams have been alerted to Rictor's kidnapping, and are out looking for him. And the key word is "out." Your heroes can leave a message for the teams, but they won't be able to find them.

## UNDERGROUND CONFRONTATION

If the heroes follow the Moloids into the subway system, the Moloids will do their best to lose the heroes. Of course, if they've got a mole monster with them, the beast will go right through the subway walls, possibly tearing up the train tracks and endangering the subway cars and passengers. Moloid tunnels will collapse one exchange after the mole monsters dig them, so the heroes must follow close behind. Regardless, the Moloids should be easy to follow, since they've got the brains of manhole covers. They will leave trails of rubble, scratches on the walls, and whatever else will tip off the heroes to their escape routes.

## THE MOLOID BASE

No matter how the heroes get there, they should eventually discover the Moloid tactical base (okay, they're hardly tactical, but work with us) deep below the IRT station at 14th and Broadway. At least a dozen Moloids (but no mole monsters) are at the base, plus all the hostages except Richter. The hostages are barricaded in a room with plenty of air and food, but not much else. If the heroes *don't* attempt a rescue, they should turn in their capes and cowls.

The Moloids will try as best they can to drive invading heroes out of their base. They can attack with sticks and are particularly good at piling on their opponents. See their statistics under **Initial Moloid Assault**.

The Moloids' prime motivation is to protect their valued treasure, some sort of flat plastic object. They will toss this back and forth to keep it from the heroes, but the heroes should



eventually end up with it. It's a subway map, of all things, with all the sites of the earlier Moloid attacks circled in red. Of course, the heroes may not recognize this fact, but the hostages can point it out right away. The heroes also will notice that another site is circled, this one in thick green: Wall Street Station.

If the heroes ask the police or check with any reputable source, they find out that no one spotted any Moloids anywhere near Wall Street. It should quickly become obvious that this will be the Mole Man's next target, however, the truth is even more sinister than that: the Mole Man's target is the New York Stock Exchange itself, located directly above the Wall Street IRT Station.

## ATTACK ON WALL STREET

The Mole Man and his forces began their attack on Wall Street shortly after they kidnapped Rictor. The Mole Man lashed Rictor to the Tremblor (a gigantic Kirbyesque contraption that shakes and rumbles like there's no tomorrow), strapped it to the back of two massive mole monsters, and pounded through the subway station and onto the floor of the NYSE pit just as the evening bell rings. (The earlier earthquakes did not close the exchange, they merely made it a slow trading day.) As the traders scramble for cover, a lava-spewing volcano erupts from the center of the pit, and Moloids pour out taking everyone prisoner. On every news station in New York, the Mole Man announces he and his mighty Tremblor will destroy the Stock Exchange and kill the planet's foremost financial experts unless the world bows down before him!

Luckily, your heroes discovered the Mole Man's plans just in time. They arrive on the scene mere moments after the diminutive dictator makes his demands, and a massive fight surely will ensue. The Mole Man's army contains a hundred Moloids and a dozen mole monsters.

Each exchange, the Mole Man uses the Tremblor to cause part of the building to shake. Heroes watching this will see the helpless Rictor wracked with pain as he struggles to keep his mutant power from being used to cause any further damage. It doesn't work. Each exchange, the Mole Man, standing partially shielded by Rictor so that heroes will think twice before attacking him directly, will collapse a wall on a hero or open up the floor into an even greater pit. These tactics will waylay the characters who come with your heroes, and only your heroes can reach the Mole Man.

As many characters as you like may join your heroes in this climactic battle. The Avengers, Spider-Man, or the New Warriors may make it to the Stock Exchange just in time to lend a hand. (In fact, X-Force or X-Factor are very likely to make it, for reasons explained in **Call for Help**.) All you have to do is increase the number of Moloids attacking the building. But make sure your heroes do the important stuff: attack the Mole Man, reveal the plan, save Manhattan. The other heroes can spend their time beating up Moloids and mole monsters aplenty, but the spotlight should never wander from the players and their heroes.

The heroes probably can't beat all the Mole Man's servants, but they don't have to. The Moloids are useless without their leader. All the heroes have to do is put a scare into the Mole Man, and he'll take off running. If the heroes successfully inflict 10 wounds on the Mole Man, or defeat half his army, he will retreat into the bowels of the earth to plot his next spectacular act of revenge. Like all good superweapons, the Tremblor comes with an escape pod. If the Mole Man panics, he will leap into the machine, which fires straight into the earth. The exhausted Rictor tumbles out, and the Tremblor collapses in on itself in a spectacular death throe. When the dust settles, the Mole Man is gone, his Moloids are in complete disarray and flee into the earth as quickly as they can, and there's nothing left but **Epilogue: Of Moles and Men**.

**Mole Man:** Strength 3X, Intellect 8C, Agility 2C, Willpower 5D, Health 25. Deviant Lore, Geology, Leadership. Enhanced Senses 10 (Touch, Hearing, Infravision), Radar Sense 3, Resistance to Fire 14, a visor which gives Protected Senses 14 (Vision), and a staff which can create intensity 10 Tremors (mini-quakes require everyone in firing distance to make an average Agility (Tremors) action to avoid losing an action). Calling: Vengeance on surface dwellers.

**Hindrance:** Susceptible to Sunlight (compensated by visor).

**Rictor:** Strength 6D, Intellect 4X, Agility 4X, Willpower 5D, Health 17. Brawling, Survival. Earthquake 14 (Instant Seismology, Tremors), Earth Control 5. Calling: Adventurer. Hindrance: Guilt-Ridden (O in all abilities if he causes a fatal quake).

## EPILOGUE: OF MOLES AND MEN

Despite all the commotion, Manhattan is not that badly scarred—at least by its admittedly high standards. Damage Control will rebuild the Stock Exchange, and go to work on the assorted sewer mains, collapsed basements, and wrecked subway stations. And the heroes, assuming they defeated the Mole Man, will be canonized in the headlines of every newspaper in New York—well, except for maybe the *Daily Bugle*. The Mayor of New York will congratulate them and hold them up as exemplars of heroism. In all, the players should end the adventure with the knowledge that they are the ones who saved Manhattan this day.

Meanwhile, the Mole Man sits on his subterranean throne and thirsts for revenge.

The heroes may decide that they want to hunt down the Mole Man and bring him to justice. This would be the focus of a completely separate adventure that you, the Narrator, would have to plan out. In doing so, you should review what happened in "Shakedown," read as many comic books featuring the Mole Man and his Moloids as humanly possible, and think seriously about the question "What happens next?" This is your chance to write your own chapter in the history of the Marvel Universe.

To help you out, we provide the following tidbits.

### ESCAPE ROUTE

The Tremblor punched a tunnel into the earth that's wide enough for two or three heroes to walk abreast down it. It cuts into the earth at a steep angle, and the ground caved in behind it. Any heroes who can move through solid earth, though can easily follow the trail.

Alternatively, the Fantastic Four have had several dealings with the Mole Man in the past, and their records contain detailed information about his known lairs. If the players were using the Fantastic Four as their heroes, they can simply access this information. If not, they can approach Reed or any other member of the team and ask for it.

### ASSAULT ON THE MOLE MAN'S LAIR

If the heroes follow the Mole Man into the earth, they find him in his lair. Present in his caverns, which feature Rushmore-sized images of the Fantastic Four on the rock walls, are at least 10,000 Moloids and 100 mole monsters. This is the Mole Man's home, and he will not be threatened or bullied here. At least, that's what he thinks. He certainly will have several secret weapons at his command, and may even have laid a trap or two for the heroes in the meantime. Again, his thralls will panic if he panics, and they will spirit him away into the shadows if things look too bleak.





# THE MANDATES OF VILLAINY



Physically, there is little difference between heroes and villains; both have tremendous powers and abilities. It is the villains' outlook that separates them from their unworthy foes. Heroes want to be liked; most villains prefer to be feared. Heroes want help the world; most villains want to help themselves to it. Heroes compromise; most villains see no need for such a weakness.

Despite these broad sweeps, there are as many different types of villainy as there are villains. Some act out of greed, some act out of mischief, and some act out of mania. Some are villains only because they see no other outlet, while some are villains only because their powers need to be let out. And then there are the true super-villains, those who seek to dominate and

subjugate all they survey. But for all these different villains, there is an equal and opposite heroic reaction. Whatever their motivation, villains exist to keep heroes in action.

The higher their Edge, the more likely villains are to have underlings who share their villainous goals—or at least are willing to go along for the ride. The most impressive power of super-villains is their seemingly endless ranks. While the heroes in Manhattan number in the hundreds, the number of super-villains in Manhattan seems to be well into the thousands.

As Narrator, the villains are your domain. With that awesome responsibility comes a need to develop villains as different personalities. Where Doctor Doom has class, Annihilus has craven paranoia. Where the Green Goblin brims over with hate, Ultron dispassionately strikes out at those he deems inferior. And while the Kingpin patiently spins his webs of intrigue and corruption, the Wendigo lashes out uncontrollably. Each of them reacts differently, but all must be stopped before the innocent suffer.

As noted in the section on callings (page 104), villains with dark motivations are free of the moral restrictions against committing crimes. This makes all villains with these callings—Greed, Demolisher, Vengeance, and World Domination—extremely dangerous. Villains with these motivations also have a hard time changing their ways, which accounts for the number of occupied cells at the Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane. Since most of these villains face multiple life sentences and penalties for jailbreaks, few of them will surrender to authorities without a tooth-and-nail fight.

But in the end, the villains always come up short. The heroes may take losses, and the world may never be the same. But no villain gets everything he or she wants, and all of them pay in some way.

## VILLAINOUS PLOTS

In most MARVEL games, villainy forms the major story impetus. MARVEL adventures are cast from the villain's point of view, with the heroes along for the ride. Most important to the design of such a story is the villain's plot, the twists and turns that only a diabolic brain (such as, say, yours) can invent.

A plot should always have contingency plans, backdoor escapes, and ways of calling in reinforcements. When you lay out a storyboard, a villain should generally have one plan per point of Edge; if the first one folds, the second one is attempted. The details depend on the villain and his or her calling.

**Demolishers** often have no obvious plan other than savaging the architecture of central Manhattan or picking off innocent bystanders. But there's always a deeper agenda: the Juggernaut wants to find Xavier, Bullseye wants to prove that life is random. If thwarted in their often primitive aspirations, they will cut a swath of destruction that undoubtedly will lead to increasing disasters.

**Greed**-driven villains are thieves, which is a pretty wide spectrum. The low-grade Rhinos of the world usually have a pretty simple plan: hit the jewelry store, make sure there's an escape route, rendezvous with the boys later. But the Kingpins, those schemers who sit at the hearts of vast criminal empires, always have a dozen contingencies, and cut off any trail that may bring a hero to their windows.

**Vengeance**-motivated villains devote pathological numbers of hours to planning baits and traps that gleam with deviousness. They take into account all known powers and weaknesses of each hero they face, and often have a unique tactic planned against each one. The Green Goblin will always focus on Spider-Man first, but the Grim Reaper considers all the Avengers he may face in his revenge.

**World Domination** types usually have the most detailed and researched plots of all. They have to calculate not only for a few super heroes, but for any number of allies and military forces. Thus, they never attack until the right moment, when surprise is on their side and the media is not far behind. No intelligent dominator would launch a scheme without a plan for when it is beaten back. Doctor Doom and Magneto may have different reasons for wanting to conquer the world, but their plans are similarly intricate and terrifying.

## VILLAINOUS RESOURCES

For most heroes, it's not all that important how much money they have. Captain America isn't rich; his alter ego, Steve Rogers, is an artist. But the Living Legend of WWII has connections with S.H.I.E.L.D., the Avengers, and half of the U.S. Government, so Cap usually gets what he needs. It doesn't particularly matter, because heroes are never going to use their money for anything. Okay, maybe finding a cure for some disease or other, but nothing important.

Ah, but villains, that's another matter. Villains use their money for building underground lairs and making powerful weapons and—oh sure, heroes do that too, but the point is that *villains run out*. They have to keep replenishing their cash and supplies, because heroes always destroy their stuff. And unless they're Doctor Doom and have a small country they can tax, there's only one method that seems to supply the needed capital: crime.

If you have a nemesis villain in your game, there's a chance that every month, he or she will need more money or components for some nefarious scheme. Draw a card each month, and if the result is greater than the villain's Edge, he or she is compelled to commit (or have some henchgoons commit) a crime that potentially will result in exposure. Quite



often the target of the crime is related to the villain's goals: Perhaps a professor must be kidnapped so that a vital piece of the rocketship can be built, or a particularly oversized ruby for the psychic laser, or a rare hide of a near-extinct predator for the villain's mantelpiece.

Invariably, the crime will call the villain's nemesis heroes to action. A smart super-villain will have a backup plan, or even use underlings instead of being there. If the villain is lucky, the heroes won't be able to trace the villain back to his or her lair. But, of course, the heroes always trace the villain back to his or her lair.

The villain does have the choice of not committing the crime, of course. But being who they are, villains are usually mixed up with less than savory types. This can start ugly gang wars, challenges from lackeys, and sabotage. If a villain does not act on the need for cash or other items, draw a card every week. If the draw is higher than the villain's Edge, a mutiny of some kind will erupt. What type depends on the villain, but at the very least it will endanger morale in the ranks of the henchmen, and powerful backers will drift away.

Note that it doesn't matter what circles the super-villain runs in; this happens to everyone. Even if the villain is the absolute ruler of some darkling dimension, there will be something on another dimension that the villain needs—without which, some of the thralls may start doubting their monarch's omnipotence.

## BUILDING A BETTER DEATHTRAP

Of course, when faced with a captive hero, most real-life evildoers would just shoot the hero in the head. And many comic book villains would consider it. But for most, those villainous hindrances interfere to save the hero: Overconfident, Obsessive, Fatally Vulnerable. Faced with these

personal challenges, the villain of comic books turns to an infallible replacement for his or her own hand: the properly constructed deathtrap.

A deathtrap is the ultimate achievement in hero-killing construction. By all tests, it is inescapable. Of course, the tests never include the death of the hero, which is where the deathtrap inevitably falls down. Even adamantium walls and 4,000-ton pressure ceilings and fall-away floors into acid never seem to do the trick.

Part of it is the basic good fortune of heroic types, but even more causal is an essential flaw of villainy: *The deathtrap builder does not truly want the hero to die.* Sure, he or she may talk a good game (part of the design, allowing the evildoer to describe the grand scheme to the soon-to-be-powder hero). But anyone who would use anything more complicated than a .357 Magnum secretly wants to have the hero test his or her ingenuity against the builder's, and death is almost incidental.

Deathtraps should reflect the builder's tastes and peccadilloes. *Arcade's Murderworlds* are over-the-top tour-de-forces of hilarity, or at least he thinks so. But *Kraven the Hunter's* deathtraps are *Most Dangerous Game*-style arenas of jungle combat, with the hero as the prey. And *Doctor Doom's* deathtraps are cold, calculating, deliberate, and pretty much, well, inescapable.

When designing a deathtrap, make it complicated and cruel. A good deathtrap is tough enough to challenge the players and thwart their heroes' most obvious strengths. But leave in at least one flaw—a manhole cover under the floorboards, or an accomplice who cannot bring herself to kill the hero. And don't worry if your heroes miss that flaw, because they'll always come up with one you didn't think of.

## LOSING UNGRACEFULLY

Super-villains lose a lot. Dozens, even hundreds of times. And many of them get quite upset about it. If possible, a defeated villain should not go quietly. When a villain is knocked unconscious or is otherwise in danger of losing, he or she must do something that makes the defeat at least a bit gratifying. Even if the villain cannot do anything, if the value of the Narrator's card is equal to or less than the villain's Edge, one of the following events happens anyhow. That's because a grade-A super-villain knows the meaning of losing ungracefully.

When villains are in danger of losing, they are advised to:

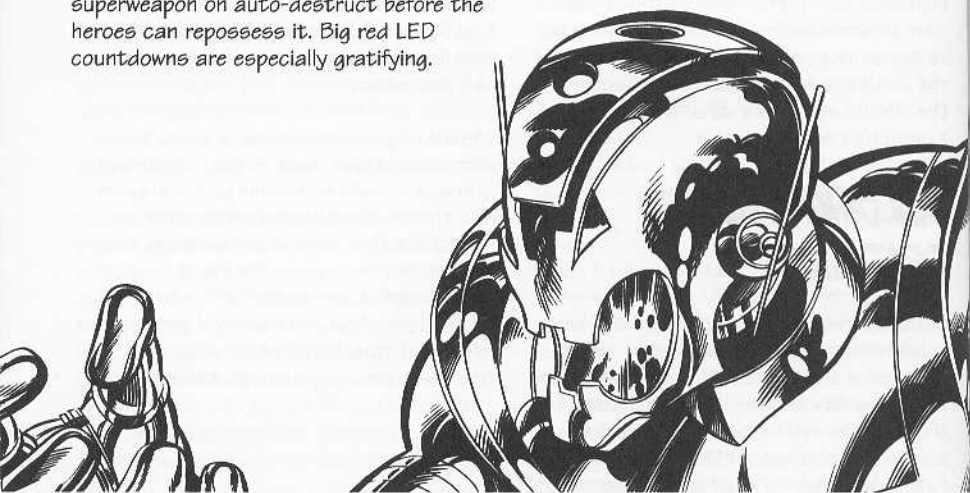
**Create a distraction.** Nothing prevents an embarrassing capture quite like a hostage situation. Whatever the heroes' main goal, the villain can distract his or her nemeses by creating a violent or dangerous distraction. Fire's good, and a meteor shower's even better.

**Destroy your superweapon.** Heroes love nothing better than to steal the villain's hard-made devices and use that technology for good. The villain should stop that occurrence by setting the superweapon on auto-destruct before the heroes can repossess it. Big red LED countdowns are especially gratifying.

**Sacrifice an underling.** It is unacceptable for a super-villain to go down before his or her henchpeople do. If this embarrassment starts to develop, the villain should draw the heroes' focus to an underling. Releasing a swarm of minions on the world is far more distracting to heroes than one measly super-villain.

**Take someone with you.** It's never quite enough, but a villain can gain a partial victory by firing that last missile or energy bolt at the weakest of the heroes. One less X-Man or Avenger certainly evens things out a bit. The down side is that if the villain stays conscious, he or she is sure to attract a blizzard of heroes.

**Go out with a bang.** Without any question, the most important last-ditch effort is to cause a spectacular explosion. Heroes frequently forget to collar the villains when they're running out of the flaming laboratory. And if they don't make it out, well, more's the better. And of course, amid all the chaos and fire, the last thing any hero will be able to prevent is the villain's escape.





## ONLY THE GOOD DIE YOUNG

So your player heroes have killed Doctor Doom and you're wondering what to do now. All right, we'll break this to you gently:

You can't kill Doctor Doom. It doesn't happen. Now, you're saying, cardplay and tactical decisions and blah blah blah. Look, there are rules to this villain-death thing. Doctor Doom has a 4 Edge for a reason, since he is the world's best at not being caught in his supervillainy. But all villains have a modicum of resiliency. Even if they do everything they can to destroy the villain utterly, the heroes will learn that you still have to follow these rules:

**Rule 1: The body is never found.** Without a body, there's no proof of death. And without that, there's no death. This applies regardless of whether the villain was last seen in the heart of an explosion or falling down a smokestack to certain doom. The villain lives and will return to trouble the hero another day.

**Rule 2: If the body is found, it's never the villain's body.** Even though it appears that way, the villain is not dead. The body in hand is a clone, an artificial construct, or

a shapechanger who has died in place of the villain. The villain lives and will return to trouble the hero another day.

**Rule 3: If the body is found and it was the villain's body, it's never the villain's mind.** If the villain was any kind of scientist or even knows any scientists, the villain's mind is not dead. He or she has mind-transferred into another human, a machine, a computer, or the cosmos. Through superhuman reconstructive effort, the villain lives and will return to trouble the hero another day.

**Rule 4: If the body is found and it was the villain's body and mind, someone else will become the villain.** The villain's offspring, spouse, ally, artificial construct, or pet will take on the fallen villain's mantle. The villain has left some method of power transference in a secret lair, and the new villain will take on this role with relish. With thoughts of newfound revenge, the villain lives in spirit and will return to trouble the hero another day.

**Rule 5: If the body is found and it was the villain's body and mind and nobody else becomes the villain, it wasn't a good enough villain anyway.** Get to work, because now you need a new villain to trouble the hero another day.

# RUNNING A SERIES

Some games of MARVEL are one-shots: The players pick heroes from the Roster Books or create them from scratch, and then play a one-session adventure. Such adventures can spill over into two or more sessions, but when they're over, they're over. For something a little more long-term, try a series of adventures.

A series will hang together or fall apart depending on whether the players find continuity from one adventure to the next. Reward and growth is critical here; if the players can't see change and development in their heroes, they won't keep coming back. Most published adventures give both a one-shot feel and a series feel, as you can connect these adventures into one seamless, ongoing story.

MARVEL series are as varied as comics. As Narrator, you should work with your players to find the style of series that appeals to everyone. Are your players fight-oriented, or do they want to explore the nuances of roleplaying? Do you want an epic adventure, or a series of smaller-scale games? The choice is up to you. You can switch between series styles, choosing appropriate heroes each time. Or combine several styles into a series as unique as your players.

The following pages detail nine archetypal series styles. With each style comes source material, classic comics that may help you envision these adventures.

## ROCK-'EM-SOCK-'EM

This is a straight-up throwdown, punctuated only by unscheduled periods of unconsciousness. Such carnage can occur for any number of reasons: mistaken identity, justice, stopping the monster, you name it. Whatever the stated cause, MARVEL gives you the tools for hours of nonstop action.

These series are flurries of cardplay and declarations. You monitor the frenzy, and play the opposition to the hilt. Characters should act like they would if one of your players played them. Throw in wild events willy-nilly, and bring in surprise foes when they're needed. And if a player hesitates, don't be afraid to take away a hero's action. When the player's hero is one punch down on Juggernaut, that'll learn 'em.

These series may seem empty after a while, since players often want to explore their heroes' motivations between slugfests. Let them. If they're truly action-oriented, they'll be pounding something before you can say, "It's Clobberin' Time!"

**Source material:** The world's heroes fight for the Grandmaster in *Contest of Champions* #1-3, Spider-Man kicks the stuffing out of Firelord in *Amazing Spider-Man* #270, the Thing and the Hulk clash in *Incredible Hulk* #350 (among others).

## STREET-LEVEL

Manhattan needs protection, and who better to do it than your heroes? Crime, violence, vehicular disasters, monsters, and other hazards of modern life abound, keeping hero busy every day of the week. So many innocents, so little time.

A street-level game shouldn't be limited to low-grade punks. Something should hold it together: the web spun by the Kingpin, the funding of a HYDRA offensive, the randomness of Typhoid Mary. Interweaving the elements of these plots leads your heroes on a quest for justice, peeling back the layers of the plot like an onion till they reach the core. Pinning the crimes on anyone higher than a mid-level mob boss will be hard, but diverting the tide can be just as good as stemming it.

Street-level series make good solo games. When it's just you and a player, bombard the hero with hostage dramas and liquor store robberies and cats in trees. When

the night's over, the hero should be exhausted and the player thrilled.

**Source material:** Daredevil busts a drug addict who robbed Santa Claus in *Marvel Fanfare* #7, the original Kraven the Hunter ends his pursuit of Spider-Man in *Amazing Spider-Man* #294, the Marauders murder the subway-dwelling Morlocks in *X-Factor* #10.

## EXPLORATIVE

On the flip side, an explorative series has the heroes venturing into the unknown. They've gone into the Negative Zone portal, or on safari in the jungles of Wakanda, or into the Microverse courtesy of Pym particles. Consumed with passion for the undiscovered, the heroes stray far from home, hoping for a glimpse of wonder.

Such a series requires you to invent details of the universe that no one has ever seen. If the players can quote you chapter and verse, it's hardly explorative. Use elements from real world research and fiction. And don't shy from the unexpected: a Deviant temple

hidden in the Savage Land, or a spacecraft at the bottom of the sea. Your players will gratefully explore that which seems out of place.

A classic hook in such an adventure is to take away the players' sense of control. That means blowing up the heroes' ship, or giving their guide amnesia, or robbing them of the device that makes them big again. This heightens urgency, and a belief that their heroes' destiny is in their hands. Just make sure you've thought of a way they can get back, or preferably several ways. Players are notoriously inefficient at finding that one needle you've buried in the haystack; best to have two or three.

**Source material:** Doctor Strange enters the dimension of Eternity in *Strange Tales* #138, the FF explore the Negative Zone world of Ootah in the sideways *Fantastic Four* #252, Cloud reveals him/herself as Ego the Living Planet in *Defenders* #150.





## IDEALISTIC

The world is mixed-up, but your heroes have the answer—or someone much scarier does. Either the heroes or their foes want to convert the world to their cause, finding common ground through persuasive argument or devastation. Humanity's strength lies in its diversity of opinion, and the heroes must protect that diversity or cut away the destructive elements.

An idealistic campaign can be a war of words, but the strength of divergent beliefs guarantees that it will turn into a war of another sort. Still, many people will change their beliefs at the report of something stronger than their will. Sometimes all it takes is the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

When running an idealism-centered campaign, introduce elements that make the idealists doubt their creed: persuasive opponents, personal tragedies, problems their beliefs can't solve. If they come out ahead, their beliefs will grow stronger. If not, they will have to search their souls for answers.

**Source material:** Captain America turns down the nomination for president in *Captain America* #250, the X-Men confront a mutant-hating reverend in *Marvel Graphic Novel* #5 ("God Loves, Man Kills"), the Squadron Supreme tries a radical solution to an alternate Earth's problems in *Squadron Supreme* #1-12.

## PATHOS

The Marvel Universe is a dark, dark place. Mutants are hunted for powers they did not request, and demons roam the land thirsting for vengeance. Radiation turns men into beasts, and the best of people face the worst of times. To date, even your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man

has seen the deaths of his uncle, his girlfriend, her father, his aunt, and his clone.

You can inject pathos into a game in the themes of such comics as *X-Men* and *Silver Surfer*. No matter what your heroes do, nothing goes their way. They eke out small victories on the edges, ever aware



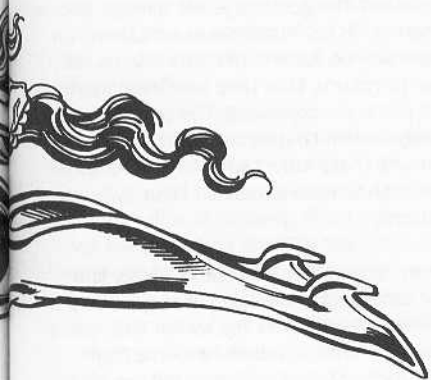
that their lot in life is to be mocked by fate. The best they can hope for is a haven from the cruel world outside.

You can take pathos too far, however. It can become cliché and repellent if you pour it on too thick. Keep in mind that even the X-Men have fun every now and then.

**Source material:** Ilyana Rasputin contracts the Legacy Virus in *Uncanny X-Men* #303, Daredevil drops Bullseye from a great height in *Daredevil* #181, Captain Marvel dies in *Marvel Graphic Novel* #1 ("Death of Captain Marvel").

## BATTLE-SCARRED

War is hell. When the final conflict is declared, the gloves come off. With no rules, battle is fast and lethal. Winners lick their wounds and declare victory; losers, if they're lucky, are captured. Many opportunities exist for superbeings to go to war: World War II, the Kree-Skrull War, the Brood invasion, the Killraven freedom march, Genosha's civil war, Ragnarok, Onslaught. And even with all those battlegrounds, combatants still take lethal agendas to the streets of New York.



A war-centered series has one element that generally takes a back seat in most other games: death. And often lots of it. The rules for wounds in MARVEL work overtime to avoid death, but you're entitled to make it a little more realistic if it helps the tenor of your game. Just remember: Even in the fires of war, life is not cheap. The death of even one soldier should be regretted.

Unless, of course, it's the Brood.

**Source material:** Sgt. Fury challenges Baron Wolfgang von Strucker in *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* #5, the Avengers enter the Kree-Skrull War in *Avengers* #89–97, the Maestro breaks the Hulk's neck in *Future Imperfect* #1.

## FUTURE-PAST

A time-traveling series can explore worlds that haven't even been born yet. Your heroes may wish to cross the boundaries to the 31st century, or enter the super-conformist world of the year 2099. They can meet King Arthur, or prevent an assassination attempt on George Washington. With time machines and dimensional portals littering Marvel Earth, you can reach anywhere—or anywhen.

Modern heroes can go forward in time machines, or you can focus on residents of those far-flung futures. You can also go back in time to the Stone Age or realms of fantasy. Just remember that no timeline is the one true timeline of the Marvel Universe. Time bends around key events, spawning parallel universes with divergent realities. So even if your heroes muck up the dawn of life itself, they've only created a new reality, not destroyed their own.

As with explorative series, time-travel series take off if there's no obvious way back home. Every time and place has a method of altering reality, whether through sacrifices to cannibalistic gods or superscience. Just remember the cardinal rule of time travel: Unless you're Nate Grey, you can never meet yourself.

**Source material:** Sentinels take over America in *X-Men* #141–142, the Guardians of the Galaxy join the Avengers against Korvac starting in *Avengers* #167, Doctor Doom and Iron Man struggle in a medieval world in *Iron Man* #150.



## COMIC RELIEF

Of course, you can always play just for a lark. Your players may want to assume the roles of the Great Lakes Avengers, or residents of the Planet Poppup on a spree in Manhattan. Invariably, some of the more serious denizens of the Marvel Universe will interfere with the shenanigans, and then the fun can really begin.

At the drop of a hat, an enjoyably cerebral humorous game can always devolve into oceans of slapstick comedy. At least, with any luck it will. Just be sure to paint the strokes as broad as possible, with no price too cheap for a laugh. And nothing is funnier than a normally serious character like the Punisher or Galactus being the butt of a practical joke. And the chaos that will invariably ensue thereafter.

**Source material:** Aunt May becomes Herald of Galactus in *Marvel Team-Up* #137, the Impossible Man arrives on Earth in *Fantastic Four* #11, Spider-Man teams up with Howard the Duck in *Spider-Man Team-Up* #5.

## VILLAINOUS

All-villain games are, to put it mildly, a hoot. When playing villains, your players let loose with sides of their personas they generally prefer to keep in check. Villains get to commit crimes, battle heroes, and scoff at the law. They get underground lairs, secret militias, and laser death rays from space. In short, they get *cachet*.

The most important tip to remember when running an all-villain game is this: *The villains get to do all the work.* Your players may not realize this at first, but since MARVEL adventures are written from the villain's viewpoint, they'll have to plot the games out. You can figure out which heroes you want to bring to stop them—and stop them you will. Villainous games may contain minor victories for the bad guys, but the good guys will almost always clean them up. Kicking and screaming on their way to Ravencroft, the villains will vow to return, this time with even more evil plans for conquest. The trick is to always seem to give them the chance to win, yet make sure that they can always trace their failure back to their own actions.

When running such a bizarre game, turn the tables on the villains. If they kidnap a billionaire software king, watch their plans change when he reveals he is the High Evolutionary. And villainous nature will win out. Even if the High Evolutionary forces them to test his super-advanced prototypes, they'll probably realize they can use his tech to set themselves up as criminal powerhouses. And that's when your heroes will show up and bring them to justice. They'll vow to return, naturally.

**Source material:** Doctor Doom and the Sub-Mariner battle hordes of humanoids in *Giant-Size Super-Villain Team-Up* #2, Venom fights his counterpart in *Venom: Carnage Unleashed* #1-4, the Masters of Evil fool the world in *Thunderbolts* #1-10.

# NONLINEAR STORY HOOKS

In most roleplaying games, the player heroes are the center of attention, and that means the story has to follow them. Heroes start at place A, advance through setting B and person C, and finally conquer opponent D. This is called a linear plot structure, as it follows a straight line from beginning to end.

But in MARVEL, the story is the focus. In some sense, you don't care where the heroes are, as long as they're somehow connected to the path of events you're unraveling. This gives you tremendous freedom to play with your players' brains. You can do this through nonlinear "hooks," which are tricks you can use to keep your MARVEL games vibrant and spontaneous. But like all things spontaneous, these hooks require careful planning and timing, or they'll fall flat.

Hooks yank the players in directions they had not foreseen, and thus should often occur at pivotal moments in the game, when adrenaline is highest. When your heroes have crashed through the walls of the super-secret lair and finally come face-to-face with the villain, who turns toward them and fires the ultra-powerful superweapon from which there is no escape. . . . Yeah, that's a great time for a hook. At that point tell the players to put their cards to the side, and bring on the hook.

You'll enjoy these hooks only if your players are true roleplayers, and take switching roles seriously. Your players can use hooks against you, for instance by having their new villains surrender to their old heroes. If they refuse to play along, it's their loss, and you'll know not to use hooks with that group again.

# THE MEANWHILE HOOK

The simplest hook is the "Meanwhile . . ." gimmick, suggested by those scene-shifting captions of yesteryear. To bait the hook, get the heroes into a situation that looks bleak, either because they're overpowered or don't have all the facts. Then, when the situation is direst, stop the action and collect the players' hero sheets.

While they protest, hand them new heroes and plunge them into a different but related adventure that's going on at the same time as their original adventure. It's best if the heroes in the Meanwhile hook are related in some way to the original group, or can affect the actions of the other group. When the new heroes trigger a crucial event (or fail in their attempts to do so), switch back to the original heroes and pick up where you left off.

As an example, say Cerebro has sent the X-Men to a deep underground installation, where a helpless mutant is imprisoned. The X-Men battle the villain's radio-controlled super-robots, and it looks like they will lose. As the heroes are backed into a corner, you switch to the Avengers, who followed a lead to a strange disturbance at a power plant above the installation. At the power plant, the heroes battle bomb-throwing robots, who inadvertently destroy the power plant as the Avengers escape. This plunges the underground lair into darkness, and severs the robots' commlink with their controller. Suddenly, the robots are much easier to beat, and soon the X-Men reach the villain's inner sanctum.

## THE FLASHBACK HOOK

No comic is complete without flashbacks; heck, Marvel once devoted a whole month's books to flashbacks. And your games won't be complete without them either. One way to bait this hook is to leave out some information or event that is crucial to making it out of a scene alive and triumphant. Get the heroes in deep, and as they approach the solution, tell the players to put aside their cards and draw new ones. Shift their heroes back in time, to another adventure or a quiet hour at home. Run them through a new adventure where, after effort, they gain the data or cause the event that allows their present-moment heroes to win. Then shift back and see if the lessons of the past lead to the victories of the present.

*Here's how it might work: The Fantastic Four rev up Reed's new Exploratory Craft and launch it into the Negative Zone. There's a malfunction and power flickers, but Ben steers the craft into the great beyond. Some time later, they receive a distress beacon from Blastaar's world and head in for battle. They beat Blastaar to a pulp and rescue four prisoners lying on the floor. Stunningly, the prisoners resemble a negative-image Fantastic Four! You bring your shocked players back to the point where the malfunction occurred, and a Negative Zone version of the FF is created. Then you take them through the new team's totally different adventures in the Zone, culminating with an ambush by Blastaar. The real Fantastic Four fight Blastaar and rescue the negative FF! Then all eight of the Fantastic Four must use both Reeds' geniuses to merge their bodies before both teams' molecules become unstable. (How you pull off the last bit we're going to leave in your capable hands.)*

## THE UBERPLOT HOOK

One of Marvel's greatest innovations is the cross-team epic, such as *Contest of*

*Champions*, *Secret Wars*, or the *Infinity Gauntlet*. In these thunderous events, superteams split into various groups, all attacking the same problems from different ends. You can replicate this in your games, though it requires some effort. Spin an uber-adventure that requires multiple points of attack: a battle against villains, a race against time, a negotiation, whatever. And then have the players play different groups of heroes each session. Find a way to draw each group into the conflict, and wrap it all up with the heroes of your (or their) choice.

*A way to do this might be to have Mister Fantastic (whom you're playing) send pairs of Avengers to stop the immortal Kang the Conqueror's minions from killing the great leaders of the past. Thor and Hercules save Genghis Khan, Captain America and the Sub-Mariner save Churchill, the Falcon and the Black Panther save Shaka Zulu, the Black Widow and the Scarlet Witch save Lenin, and the Black Knight and the Swordsman save King Arthur. And then tie it together by sending Iron Man and the Vision to battle Kang himself in an epic finale in the far future.*

## THE OTHER SIDE HOOK

If there's one thing the *Thunderbolts* comic settled forever, it's that a team of villains can be just as interesting as a team of heroes, if not more so. At some point, your players may want to see things from the villains' perspective. So let them. Even if you don't run an all-villains game, you can spice up a game by switching to the villains' point of view for a while. A good way to bait this hook is to lure the heroes to the villains' lair, and have them fight the villains' underlings. And just as it seems that the heroes will overwhelm the villains' defenses, have the players put aside their cards and take up the villains' "hero" sheets. Now the challenge becomes thwarting the heroes for whom victory seemed assured. Of course, once the



villains gain the upper hand, that's a good time to switch back.

Say Spider-Man, Luke Cage, and Iron Fist are combing the streets for the creeps who stole a rare metal. They find some street thugs, who, after a careful working over, divulge that the criminals are in a warehouse down by the docks. The heroes enter the warehouse, only to learn that it's a trap! While the players wonder what will

alternate timelines stemming from pivotal events in history (e.g., "What if Captain America became president?"). You can use a similar hook when despite—or because of—your best efforts, your players really bollix your carefully laid plans. If events get out of hand, see them to the logical end, even if it's a disaster for the heroes. Then pivot the situation around a key event, shunting the chaos to another timeline and changing that key event. Go from that point and watch

befall their heroes, give them Electro, Rhino, and the Green Goblin. Tell them to lay out the deathtrap that will bring the heroes to their knees. And once they've done this, give the players back their heroes and watch them struggle to get out.

## THE WHAT IF? HOOK

This one's a classic, and can get you out of many jams. In 1977, Marvel began publishing *What If?*, a comic which explores

your relieved players steer their heroes to victory. (Just don't do it too much, or your players may come to depend on it.)

So imagine this: The X-Men are holding back the Super-Skrull, when one player decides it would be a smashing idea for Rogue to absorb the Super-Skrull's powers. She's right, because she loses control and proceeds to smash the X-Men with the Fantastic Four's powers. As the Rogue/Skrull laughs triumphantly, you decide this would be a good time to invoke the question, "What if Rogue had not absorbed the Super-Skrull's powers?" and restart the fight from that moment on.



# ADAPTING A HERO

That *Roster Book's* brimming over with mighty Marvel heroes and villains. And there will more rosters available at your friendly neighborhood game store. But hey, we couldn't squeeze the entire Marvel Universe in there, or even in a dozen roster books. So

the time will come when you need, say, the stats for Speedball, and you're pretty sure we won't publish them before your game tonight. In that case, you should adapt the hero or villain using these guidelines.

Note that we said *guidelines*. With a lot of characters, especially obscure ones, it's hard to figure out exactly what their scores and powers might be. Take your best guesses, and improvise where you need to. Just don't let the improv get out of control: Forbush-Man is definitely not as strong as Thor. As you know, half the fun of the Marvel Universe is debating who is stronger than whom. In many cases, there is no absolute truth, so make your best guesses, but remember that the Narrator has the final word.

## NAMES AND IMAGES

As a player, picking a hero is often the hardest part of the game. You can be anybody your Narrator says you can be. (Most Narrators, of course, are a little shy on letting players play Galactus.) Flip through your comic collection and you'll get plenty of ideas.

The Narrator may require you to use the heroes at a specific point in their career (most likely the one that synchs up with the part of the Marvel Time Line that the campaign uses), or you may be allowed to choose which version you want to play. Some heroes change costumes, identities, powers, and abilities at the drop of a hat. Are you playing the Beetle, or are you playing MACH-1? This isn't a trivial choice.

If you're playing a lesser-known hero, it's a good idea to bring a comic book that shows the hero in costume. That way, you don't have to say "No, the red heart on the black facepaint is on the left side of my face" over and over.



# ABILITY SCORES

You'll need to give your hero scores in the four abilities: Strength, Agility, Intellect, and Willpower. Each ability tracks on a scale of 0 to 30, where 30 is—well, it's out there. Most heroes have ability scores between 3 and 9, with one ability score possibly reaching 10 or higher. Flip through the *Roster Book* and look at the examples. No hero can have a base ability of 0 or 1. The mortal body can't handle scores above 20 for any sustained length of time, so generally heroes can't have base abilities above 20.

Use these charts to find where your hero fits in the Marvel scheme of things.

## STRENGTH

Score	Description	Examples
0	Insubstantial	Ghosts
1	Weakling	Aunt May, Franklin Richards
2	Low-strength human	Molecule Man, Baron Mordo
3-4	Average-strength human	Ant-Man, Scarlet Witch
5-6	High-strength human	Cyclops, Black Widow
7-8	Pro-athlete-level human	Daredevil, Iron Fist
9-10	Maximum unaltered human	Captain America, Sabretooth
11-12	Enhanced or peerless strength	Beast, Tigra
13-14	Far stronger than human	Spider-Man, Luke Cage
15-16	Unbelievably strong	Rogue, Super-Skrull
17-18	Overwhelmingly strong	The Thing, Sub-Mariner
19-20	Ultimate limit of mortals	Thor, Hulk (when calm)
21-25	Otherworldly	Nightmare, Hulk (when angry)
26-30	Cosmic	Galactus, Celestials

## AGILITY

Score	Description	Examples
0	Immobile	Supreme Intelligence
1	Lump	Mojo
2	Low-agility human	Blob, Juggernaut
3-4	Average-agility human	Doctor Octopus, Hulk
5-6	High-agility human	Invisible Woman, Iceman
7-8	Pro-athlete-level human	Black Widow, Hawkeye
9-10	Maximum unaltered human	Captain America, Iron Fist
11-12	Enhanced or peerless agility	Beast, Nightcrawler
13-14	Far faster than human	Spider-Man, Hela
15-16	Unbelievably agile	Mephisto
17-18	Overwhelmingly agile	Lockheed
19-20	Ultimate limit of mortals	Silver Surfer, Nightmare
21-25	Otherworldly	Odin
26-30	Cosmic	The Runner

# INTELLECT

Score	Description	Examples
0	Mindless (0 IQ)	Man-Thing
1	Animal or severely disabled (25 IQ)	Awesome Android
2	Low-IQ human (50 IQ)	Rhino, Devil Dinosaur
3-4	Average-IQ human (75-100 IQ)	Absorbing Man, Sandman
5-6	High-IQ human (125-150 IQ)	Elektra, Hawkeye
7-8	Genius-level human (175-200 IQ)	Green Goblin, Arcade
9-10	Maximum human (225-250 IQ)	Iron Man, Giant-Man
11-12	Enhanced or peerless intellect (275-300 IQ)	Mister Fantastic, Doctor Doom
13-14	Far smarter than human (325-350 IQ)	Dormammu
15-16	Unbelievably smart (375-400 IQ)	Mephisto, Eternal Uni-Mind
17-18	Overwhelmingly smart (425-450 IQ)	Korvac, Kree Supreme Intelligence
19-20	Ultimate limit of mortals (475-500 IQ)	High Evolutionary, Uatu the Watcher
21-25	Otherworldly (500+ IQ)	Galactus, Ego the Living Planet
26-30	Cosmic (off the charts)	Celestials

# WILLPOWER

Score	Description	Examples
0	Unaware	Sentinels
1	Mind slave	AIM soldiers, minions of Annihilus
2	Low-will human	Electro, Rhino
3-4	Average-will human	Rage, Stryn
5-6	High-will human	Iceman, Ka-Zar
7-8	Dauntless human	Storm, Scarlet Witch
9-10	Maximum unaltered human	Wolverine, Spider-Man
11-12	Enhanced or peerless will	Captain America, Professor X
13-14	Far tougher than human	Ultron
15-16	Unbelievably strong-willed	Dr. Strange, Loki
17-18	Overwhelmingly strong-willed	Dormammu, Odin
19-20	Ultimate limit of mortals	High-Evolutionary, Uatu the Watcher
21-25	Otherworldly	Galactus
26-30	Cosmic	Celestials

# EDGE AND HAND SIZE

When you assign your hero's Edge, think about the hero's never-say-die quality, courage, street sense, and authority. Most importantly, Edge tells you how long your hero is likely to remain standing after others go down. This is reflected in the ability to play multiple cards in difficult situations. Remember, Edge is a measure of the hero's experience. A hero has to be pretty darned good to qualify for an Edge score of 3, and only the best of the best ever progress beyond that. Again, use the chart below to gauge where your hero fits into the Edge scale.

Take a look in the *Roster Book* at Captain America and Venom. Venom outclasses Cap in Strength, and they're roughly equal in most of the other abilities. Venom's got horrible teeth, web-slinging, and blending into the background. Cap's got a shield. Who you gonna bet on?

If you read the comics, you know the smart money's on the flag-waver. That's because Cap has over fifty years of experience and has gone toe to toe with some of the most powerful and insidious villains ever to threaten mankind. Although Venom has the advantage of an alien intelligence and strength, he's been in the hero business only for a few short years. So, in the end, Cap's going to have an *edge* over Venom, the *edge* of experience. He's always going to hit Venom in the right spot, always going to be just a little to the right of Venom's teeth, always going to see Venom just as he's about to leap from the shadows, always going to have the *edge*. This is seen in Captain America's 4-Edge, the highest any mortal (and most immortals) can have. Venom's got a 2-Edge—not bad, certainly, but he's no Captain America.

**Hand Size:** Your hero's Edge score tells you his or her relative experience level, but what does this mean in the game? It directly reflects the number of cards you can hold for the hero's actions. The higher your hero's Edge score, the more cards you can hold, and the more choices you have at every step of the game. You start play with a number of cards equal to your hero's Hand Size, and usually draw back up to that number after playing cards. Damage points are paid out of your hand, so a high Hand Size usually means the hero can suffer more damage.

Add two to your hero's Edge and you'll get the Hand Size. Hand Size also generates the Health stat, which is only used by the Narrator to determine how much damage a Narrator-run character can suffer; players never use this statistic.

Look at the chart below and see where your hero falls.

Edge/ Hand Size	Description	Examples	Health
0/2	Normal human	Most humans	10
1/3	Inexperienced	Jubilee, Rhino, Hydro-Man	17
2/4	Experienced	Iron Fist, Rogue, Green Goblin	25
3/5	Authority figure	Spider-Man, Cyclops, Kingpin	30
4/6	The best anywhere	Captain America, Magneto, Dr. Doom	40
5/7	Cosmic force	Death, Eternity	50



# ABILITY CODES AND SKILLS

Now you'll decide how well-trained your hero is at using his or her abilities. Each of the four main ability scores needs an alphabetical ability code next to it. If your hero has devoted his or her life to pectoral presses and triathlons, he or she will be very good at using Strength. That said, he or she may not have had time to become a science-obsessed bookworm like, say, Giant-Man. It's all in priorities.

Start by considering the skills you think your hero should have. Consider special tactics like throwing objects and ricocheting beams off walls. Write down skills from the list on the right, then decide your hero's ability codes. The codes—A, B, C, D, and X—tell you how many skills your hero has in each ability. Skills aren't superpowers; they're areas of expertise that anyone can learn, given time, aptitude, and training. A skill reduces difficulty in an action testing its ability for that purpose only. For example, Archery helps with Agility actions using bows, while Dimensional Geography aids Intellect actions concerning other realities.

As a general rule, heroes will not have more than one A code, and even the exceptional ones rarely have more than two. Examine the heroes in the *Roster Book*—even the greatest heroes in the Marvel Universe have a few C or D codes.

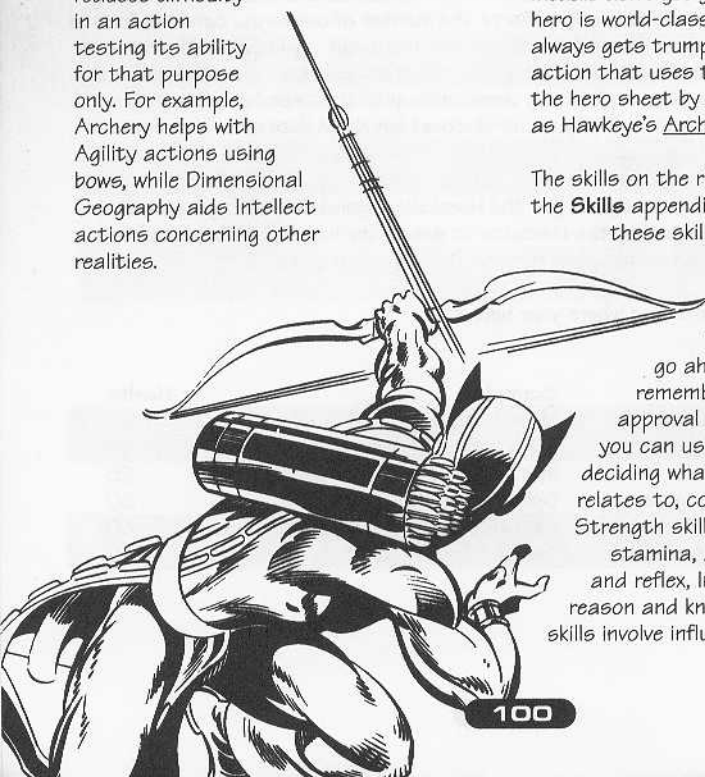
You generally can tell how many skills a hero has in each ability by the code next to the ability score. The closer the ability code is to the front of the alphabet, the more skills it provides. An ability code cannot get higher than an A, so generally, four skills is the most a hero can have in an ability.

Code	Rating	Number of Skills
A	Expert	4
B	Highly trained	3
C	Student	2
D	Beginner	1
X	Novice	0

In exceptional cases, heroes are *world-class* in one skill, meaning that they are one of the very best in the world. Just being amazingly good doesn't cut it; even Olympic gold medals don't get your hero this laurel. If a hero is world-class at one skill, he or she always gets trump when performing an action that uses that skill. This is noted on the hero sheet by underlining the skill, such as Hawkeye's Archery skill.

The skills on the right are fully detailed in the **Skills** appendix. You're not limited to these skills, however. If you want to

make up a new skill, make sure it's not too powerful, and then go ahead and create it. Just remember that it will require the approval of your Narrator before you can use it during play. When deciding what ability a new skill relates to, consider these categories: Strength skills involve power and stamina, Agility skills involve speed and reflex, Intellect skills involve reason and knowledge, and Willpower skills involve influence and sensation.



# SKILLS IN SUIT ORDER

## Strength Skills

Axes  
Boxing  
Brawling  
Climbing  
Clubs  
Garrotes  
Hammers  
Hyper-Breath  
Knives  
Martial Arts Weapons  
Natural Weapons  
Shields  
Sonic Slam  
Spears  
Swords  
Whips  
Wrestling

## Agility Skills

Acrobatics  
Aerial Combat  
Archery  
Artillery  
Boomerangs  
Construction  
Contingent Attack  
Demolitions  
Disguise  
Driving  
Equestrian  
Escape Artistry  
Fast Exit  
Flinging  
Gadgetry  
Marksmanship  
Martial Arts  
Navigating  
Piloting  
Repair  
Ricochet  
Skating  
Skiing  
Sleight of Hand  
Slings  
Surfing  
Thievery

## Intellect Skills

Scientific Genius\*  
Aeronautics  
Archaeology  
Architecture  
Assessment  
Astronomy  
Biochemistry  
Biology  
Bionics  
Chemistry  
Computers  
Criminology  
Cryptography  
Dimensional Geography  
Electronics  
Energy Control  
Espionage  
Genetics  
Geology  
History  
Journalism  
Law  
Linguistics  
Lore  
Mechanics  
Medicine  
Mythology  
Occult  
Oceanography  
Photographic Memory  
Physics  
Psychiatry  
Radiology  
Robotics  
Sociology  
Spacecraft  
Super-Physiology  
Time Machinery  
Trivia  
Weapon Systems

## Willpower Skills

Animal Handling  
Art  
Finance  
Intimidation  
Law Enforcement  
Leadership  
Manipulation  
Meditation  
Mental Control  
Mesmerism  
Military  
Observation  
Performing  
Photography  
Politics  
Survival  
Taunting  
Teaching  
Tracking  
Trance  
Writing

\* This skill breaks the rules of ability codes by allowing the hero up to eight starting science skills (and over time, as many science skills as he or she chooses), but no other skills. See the Skills appendix for details.

# POWERS AND EQUIPMENT

Most heroes have some form of superpowers or specialized equipment. To figure out what your hero has, compare the hero to other heroes in the *Roster Book* and scan the alphabetical list of 111 powers on the facing page.

Regardless of where it comes from, a power is rated much like an ability. Each has an intensity which runs from 0 to 30, just like ability scores. The two are roughly equivalent; that is, an intensity 15 telekinetic can move things just as well as someone with 15 Strength—though from across the room, of course.

Take a look at the chart below to judge your hero's intensity for each power your hero has. Ordinary weapons and armors have damage bonuses instead (such as +4). These damage bonuses are never more than +10 (and only very rarely above +7).

Intensity	Examples
0	Normal humans with superpowers
1	Professor X's hoverchair's flight
2	Sub-Mariner's flight, Nightcrawler's wall-crawling
3-4	Nightcrawler's teleportation, Magneto's telepathy
5-6	Tigra's lightning speed, Luke Cage's regeneration
7-8	Doctor Doom's magic, Cable's telekinesis, Invisible Woman's invisibility
9-10	Ant-Man's insect control, Gambit's explosions, Vision's solar blast
11-12	Phoenix's telekinesis, Giant-Man's size alteration, Iceman's cold control
13-14	Archangel's flight, Spider-Man's wall-crawling, Storm's weather control
15-16	Doctor Strange's magic, Wolverine's regeneration, Professor X's telepathy
17-18	Quicksilver's speed, Human Torch's fire control, Magneto's magnetism
19-20	Hulk's resistance to most things, Silver Surfer's cosmic energy control
21-25	She-Hulk's leaping, Electro's resistance to electricity
26-30	Hulk's leaping, Galactus's energy control

## STUNTS

Each power may have one or more stunts your hero can perform. Check the power listing, and if you know your hero can do a stunt, write it down. If you don't see a stunt listed, make up a name for the stunt and record it. Record the stunts under the power, and use the intensity and trump suit of the power.

## LIMITS

If you know of any limits to your hero's powers—for example, Nightcrawler's Blending power works only in the dark—record them under each power. In order to be considered a limit, the condition must at least halve the number of circumstances that the power can be used, or halve its effectiveness in all situations. See the **Limits** in front of the **Powers** Appendix on page 121, or under each power listing. Remember that you should create your own limits for the hero if you don't find the appropriate one listed here.

## POWERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Ability Boost  
 Absorption  
 Adaptation  
 Additional Limb(s)  
 Additional Sensor(s)  
 Affliction  
 Air Control  
 Alchemy  
 Animal Control  
 Animal Form  
 Animation  
 Astral Projection  
 Blending  
 Blinding  
 Body Armor  
 Body Transformation  
 Chi  
 Claws  
 Cold Control  
 Computer Link  
 Corrosion  
 Cosmic Awareness  
 Cosmic Energy Control  
 Danger Sense  
 Darkforce Control  
 Density Control  
 Detection  
 Digging  
 Dimensional Travel  
 Disintegration  
 Duplication  
 Earth Control  
 Earthquake  
 Electrical Control  
 Elongation  
 Emotion Control  
 Empathy

Energy Blast  
 Energy Conversion  
 Energy Reflection  
 Energy Sheath  
 Enhanced Senses  
 Ensnarement  
 ESP  
 Fire Control  
 Flight  
 Force Field  
 Gestalt  
 Gravity Control  
 Horn(s)  
 Hyperlinguistics  
 Hypnosis  
 Illusion  
 Image Summoning  
 Imitation  
 Immortality  
 Invisibility  
 Invulnerability  
 Kinetic Control  
 Leaping  
 Life Drain  
 Life Support  
 Light Control  
 Lightning Speed  
 Luck Control  
 Magic  
 Magnetic Control  
 Mind Control  
 Nullification  
 Object Duplication  
 Paralysis  
 Phasing  
 Pheromones  
 Plant Control

Plasticity  
 Poison  
 Postcognition  
 Power Amplification  
 Power Duplication  
 Power Theft  
 Precognition  
 Prehensile Hair  
 Protected Senses  
 Psi-Screen  
 Psychic Blast  
 Quills  
 Radar Sense  
 Radiation Control  
 Reality Warping  
 Regeneration  
 Resistance  
 Shadow Control  
 Shapeshifting  
 Size Alteration  
 Sonar  
 Sonic Control  
 Space Flight  
 Stun Blast  
 Teeth  
 Telekinesis  
 Telepathy  
 Teleportation  
 Time Control  
 Time Travel  
 Transmutation  
 Wall-Crawling  
 Water Control  
 Waterbreathing  
 Weather Control  
 Web-Slinging  
 Wings

# CALLINGS

Why is your hero a hero? Okay, it is a pretty cool job, but your hero still has to have a reason for being a hero. That's where your hero's *calling* comes in.

Each calling has four cards which relate to it in the standard Fate Deck. In some cases, a hero may seem to have more than one calling (like Wolverine, who sometimes seems to fit in the Vengeance or Soldier callings). In these cases, pick the calling that best fits the hero at this point in his or her career.

Four callings are villainous and are marked with an asterisk (\*). These callings—Demolisher, Greed, Vengeance, and World

Domination—give a powerful “freedom”: the freedom from moral responsibility. The Narrator may require an occasional Willpower action before allowing heroes to commit acts that run counter to their callings. This includes but is not limited to theft, use of crippling force, and especially murder. (Of course, super heroes can break and enter into a super-villain's lair without performing this action, though the law still frowns upon it.)

The callings are:

**Adventurer:** Your hero seeks to recapture a spirit of adventure that humanity has lost. He or she will go to often foolhardy lengths to revitalize this hedonistic, adventuresome spirit. Examples: Hawkeye, Hercules, Nightcrawler, Wasp.





**Animal Nature:** Your hero has a savage side that must be kept in check. He or she must struggle to control these feelings, or give in and lose control. *Examples:* Morbius, Tigr, Werewolf, Wolverine.

**Demolisher\*:** Your hero causes destruction for destruction's sake. Demonstration of raw power causes a sense of pride, no matter what the cost. *Examples:* Absorbing Man, Juggernaut, Sabretooth, Super-Adaptoid.

**Exemplar:** Your hero feels he or she symbolizes a race, class, historical legacy, or subgroup that needs greater visibility. He or she seeks a high profile, but not personal notoriety. *Examples:* Black Knight, Captain Britain, Falcon, Thor.

**Explorer:** Your hero devotes his or her life to the discovery of new ideas and environments. He or she believes the theoretical is often as powerful as the practical. *Examples:* Giant-Man, Mister Fantastic, Moondragon, Stingray.

**Glorhound:** Your hero seeks publicity for personal accomplishments. Only the adulation of the people will satisfy this individual's longings. *Examples:* Human Torch, Luke Cage, She-Hulk, Wonder Man.

**Greed\*:** Your hero is overwhelmed by desire for wealth. Even when great wealth is achieved, more must be gained. *Examples:* Electro, Kingpin, Rhino, Taskmaster.

**Guardian:** Your hero desires to protect beloved persons or places. Threats to those loved ones trigger the strongest responses in this individual. *Examples:* Daredevil, Doctor Strange, Invisible Woman, Phoenix.

**Idealist:** Your hero stands for a cause for which he or she would gladly die. Challenges to these beliefs provoke strong reactions from this individual. *Examples:* Captain America, Cyclops, Professor X, Sabra.

**Investigator:** Your hero loves unraveling human mysteries, whether of crime,

science, psychiatry, or another field of inquiry. It is especially satisfying when that work helps others. *Examples:* Beast, Black Widow, Doc Samson, Forge.

**Majesty:** Your hero leads a people and acts as the preserver of their interests. Personal power is wielded for their benefit. *Examples:* Black Bolt, Black Panther, Clea, Sub-Mariner.

**Mentor:** Your hero acts to encourage responsibility and competence among his or her charges. Testing the students' abilities is a high priority. *Examples:* Agatha Harkness, Banshee, Stick, White Queen.

**Outcast:** Your hero is hated or feared for some quality, possibly a mutant power or a past allegiance. He or she may want to be left alone, or will only ally with those who are free of the bias. *Examples:* Hulk, Nate Grey, Polaris, Quicksilver.

**Peace of Mind:** Your hero seeks self-perfection or freedom from inner demons. He or she may suffer inner conflicts, or overcomes them and keeps spiritually balanced. *Examples:* Iron Fist, Moon Knight, Shang-Chi, Wolfsbane.

**Protector:** Your hero lives to protect innocents from harm, regardless of who or where they are. Seeing folks in danger brings out in your hero an overwhelming desire to lend a hand. *Examples:* Archangel, Colossus, Shadowcat, Storm.

**Repentant:** Your hero acts to gain redemption for past sins. Only through the doing of good deeds can your hero feel at least partially cleansed. *Examples:* Ant-Man, Elektra, Gambit, Silver Surfer.

**Responsibility of Power:** Your hero is saddled with undesired powers, but feels he or she must act selflessly. He or she may grab normalcy if it comes along, but otherwise will persevere. *Examples:* Iceman, Iron Man, Spider-Man, The Thing.

## CHANGING CALLINGS

Heroes can change callings, but only after major events. A calling can change only after being fulfilled or superseded by another calling. If your Narrator agrees, you may change it during play. The villainous callings (*Greed, Demolisher, Vengeance, and World Domination*) are particularly difficult to abandon for another. After completing an adventure that leads a hero to question his or her villainous calling, the Narrator may allow the player to simply change to a more suitable calling or to attempt a Willpower action to see whether the hero can overcome the lure of darkness.

For an example, let's look at Namor, the Sub-Mariner. A very complex hero, Namor has had at least five callings in more than a half-century of heroism. At first, he was an angry Guardian over the sea, once trying to destroy New York with a tidal wave. But in World War II, he put aside this anger to become a Protector in fighting the forces of fascism, and even saved Winston Churchill's life once. When he suffered amnesia and wandered the Bowery, he sought only Peace of Mind. When restored, he tried to take Vengeance against surface dwellers for the apparent destruction of Atlantis. But this revenge seemed hollow when Atlantis re-emerged as a power, and he settled into the Majesty of leadership.

**Soldier:** Your hero prizes following or giving orders unless it conflicts with his or her moral code. He or she may fight for money or duty, but ultimately fights for personal validation. Examples: Bishop, Cable, Nick Fury, Silver Sable.

**Thrill-Seeker:** Your hero acts because of a hedonistic desire for danger and risk. Events that heighten his or her adrenaline are highly prized. Examples: Black Cat, Nova, Psylocke, Sersi.

**Uncontrolled Power:** Your hero cannot control his or her own powers without monitoring. This may overcome your hero's reason and force actions that he or she would regret. Examples: Franklin Richards, Havok, Rogue, Scarlet Witch.

**Vengeance\*:** Your hero seeks revenge against someone for some real or imagined slight. Any sacrifice to gain that vengeance is acceptable. Examples: The Green Goblin, Loki, Super-Skrull, Venom.

**Vestige of Humanity:** Your hero isn't fully human, but envies the full emotions of others. The closer your hero can get to

human, the happier he or she is. Examples: Adam Warlock, Warbird, Machine Man, Vision.

**World Domination\*:** Your hero wants dominion over as many people as possible. Resistance to his or her will can trigger violent responses. Examples: Annihilus, Doctor Doom, Leader, Magneto.

**Youthful Exuberance:** Your hero recklessly pursues the life of a superbeing with the wide-eyed joy of youth. Such an individual is bored easily, and not good at listening to instructions. Examples: Cannonball, Jubilee, Kymaera, Meltdown.

# HINDRANCES

Nothing gets called a hindrance if it helps you, pal. A hero with a hindrance suffers major penalties in the game. If you play someone with a hindrance, you must follow its rules, no matter how much you might not want to. And that'll be a lot of the time. But hey, think of it this way: It'll build character.

If your hero has a hindrance, you can't simply ditch it. It'll haunt you throughout play. Even if the cause of the hindrance is removed, your hero still suffers fallout from living with the hindrance so long. And hindrances don't stay away for long. After all, Professor X may have been able to walk around for a while, but he's still in that chair. Take your hindrance seriously, because it'll be with you a long time.

In fact, it's impossible to have a trivial hindrance. You can't choose *Physically Disabled* and then say you've got a bunion on your toes. You can't choose *Obsessive* and say you're nuts about Elvis. And if you're *Fatally Vulnerable* to Cyanide—well, geez, we all are. It's got to mean something to you.

But it can't overwhelm your heroes, or they won't be interesting. Xavier is fascinating because he struggles for peace from his wheelchair, not because he complains about it. Make the hindrance a key element of your hero, but not the only element.

## EFFECTS OF HINDRANCES

Hindrances generally cause one or more scores to fall to 0 in certain situations as described in the listings that follow.

Actions to resist the effects of a hindrance are always *desperate Willpower* actions. Succeeding in this action allows a contingent action that is temporarily free of the effects of the hindrance. Characters with hindrances never succeed in resisting a hindrance unless there is a good story reason.

If you create a new hindrance, it should be as debilitating as any on this list.

**Addicted:** Your hero suffers a paralyzing addiction to some harmful substance or source. Lack of the substance for a day drops Willpower to 0 until the substance is administered. If a chance to get the substance arises, the hero must make a *desperate Willpower* action or seize the opportunity at once. There are also crippling long-term effects to addiction, but they're beyond the province of a game.



Examples: Cloak (life energy), Iron Man (alcohol), Morbius (blood).

**Bruiser:** Your hero couldn't hit the broad side of a barn, but will level it if he or she does. When your hero tries a physical attack, he or she must use Agility rather than Strength when determining the

action score. This changes the attack's trump suit to Agility

as well. If the hero hits, calculate damage normally based on his or her Strength score. Your hero must have a minimum of 11 Strength and a maximum of 4 Agility to possess the Bruiser hindrance. Examples: Hulk, Juggernaut, Rhino.

**Fatally Vulnerable:** Your hero suffers damage from the touch or absence of a common substance. After enough exposure or deprivation, he or she will die. You have 0 defense against the source of damage,

and will lose one card (or 5 Health) per exchange of contact. During exposure, your hero may not heal wounds regardless of powers or the aura on the

Narrator's card. Once no longer exposed to or deprived of the substance, your hero heals normally—but if you drop to 0 cards while under the effects of the hindrance, the hero dies. Fatally Vulnerable characters are killed at 0 Health if in contact with the source. Examples: Dracula (sunlight, running water), Attuma (lack of water).



**Frenzied:** Your hero loses control in battle, falling into a killing rage which can endanger allies. If the frenzy takes hold, he or she won't accept surrender and will fight to the death. Your hero has 0 Intellect, and must succeed in a *desperate Willpower* action in any exchange where there are still conscious foes to fight. Once in the frenzy, your hero cannot stop attacking, pull punches, or do anything to lessen damage; only by making a new *desperate Willpower* action can you quell the rage. If anyone restrains the hero, you must make a *desperate Willpower* action to avoid making that individual the target of your hero's next attack. A Frenzied character never succeeds in these actions. Examples: Wolverine, Venom.

**Guilt-Ridden:** Your hero is plagued by guilt over a past failure, usually involving death or serious injury. Whenever he or she is placed in a similar situation, the hero falls to 0 in all ability scores. Examples: Giant-Man (making sentient robots), Rogue (absorbing memories).

**Hateful:** Your hero has a consuming hatred for something (not just a single person). He or she will go far to find the object of revulsion and destroy it. If your hero doesn't rush to obliterate the object of antipathy upon encountering it, he or she is reduced to 0 in all abilities. Examples: Bastion (mutants), Punisher (criminals), Man-Thing (fear).

**Kid:** Your hero is under 13. Beyond the obvious disadvantages (can't drive, can't vote, can't reach the top shelf), the hero has a 0 Intellect for any Intellect action. This hindrance is ignored if he or she has a skill that reduces difficulty for the purpose of that action. Examples: Franklin Richards, most of Power Pack.

**Lightweight:** Your hero is superhumanly strong, but has little impact when he or she strikes a foe. When your hero succeeds at a physical attack, Strength is 0 for totaling damage. Thus, the Strength score can affect only whether the attack succeeds, not damage. Cards

are used as normal for figuring damage. Your hero must have a 11+ Strength to have the Lightweight hindrance. Examples: Loki, Enchantress.

**Monstrous:** Your hero doesn't look remotely human, or is so disfigured that normal humans (those with 0 Edge) run in fear on sight. Your hero has a 0 Willpower when trying to convince someone with an Edge of 0 not to flee. Those with the Monstrous hindrance needn't make actions against others' Monstrous appearances. Examples: Man-Thing, Nightcrawler.

**Naive:** Your hero is innocent of the ways of society. He or she trusts in the inherent goodness of all creatures and assumes that all others do as well. Your hero has 0 ability scores for making and dodging surprise attacks, and you must always declare your hero's actions first. Examples: Longshot, Silver Surfer.

**Non-Corporeal:** Your hero does not have a physical body. This reduces his or her Strength and Agility to 0 unless he or she somehow is in mental control of a real body. This hindrance does not provide this control, however. While non-corporeal, the hero cannot be affected by physical attacks. Examples: Proteus, the Shadow King.

**Obsessive:** Your hero has a consuming passion for something or someone, and strives to satisfy this desire. If your hero doesn't rush to the object of desire upon encountering it, he or she is reduced to 0 in all abilities. Examples: Arcade (games), Kraven (hunting).

**Overconfident:** Your hero is without fear—but not in a good way. Failing to believe he or she can be harmed, your hero won't use full abilities and weapons until things get very bleak. Any card you play with a value of 7+ is treated as a 0 of that suit, and you can't declare pushes. This hindrance vanishes when you are reduced to 2 or fewer cards (or below 10 Health). Examples: The Leader, Ultron.



**Physically Disabled:** Your hero suffers a physical misfortune which makes a common action such as seeing or walking difficult to perform. (A disability corrected by a power, such as Daredevil's radar-offset blindness, is not a hindrance.) This hindrance reduces an ability to O in certain situations:

Disability	Restriction
Amputee	O Strength for actions involving the missing limb or limbs
Blind	O Agility in fights, cannot make or dodge unseen surprise attacks
Deaf	O Agility for actions involving actions from behind and surprise
Mute	O Willpower for offensive actions which involve speech
Paralyzed	O Agility in fights and movement
Unable to walk	O Agility in fights and movement

Even if cured, your hero suffers a long period of adjustment. He or she can't have a score in the affected ability greater than the number of months since losing the disability.

Examples: Rick Jones (unable to walk), Alicia Masters (blind).

**Panicky:** Your hero can't distinguish minor threats from major ones, and acts impulsively without husbanding resources. Any card you play of 4 or less is treated as if it were a O of that suit; Edge cards still apply, but they have O value. Cards pulled off the deck after you play trump count as full value. Panicky characters gain no value from Narrator draws of 4 or less. Examples: Songbird (Screaming Mimi), Toad.

**Phobic:** Your hero is terrified of something, and will flee the dread object. If your hero doesn't run away from the object of fear upon encountering it, he or she is reduced to O in all four abilities. Examples: Dracula (garlic), Mole Man (sunlight).

**Susceptible:** Your hero is especially vulnerable to a single form of common attack, such as mind control, fire, or cold. If you're playing a Susceptible hero, your hero has O defense against such an attack. Examples: Iceman (fire), Sub-Mariner (dehydration).

**Transformative:** A common occurrence causes your hero's personality to be subsumed by a persona that the hero finds repulsive. A desperate Willpower action must be made every exchange to avoid the change. Your hero may not remember what occurs while transformed. If you're playing a Transformative hero, you

lose control while changed—the Narrator may ask you to continue playing, but has final say over your actions. Examples: Hulk, Werewolf, Puck, Ghost Rider.

**Triggered-Powerless:** Your hero loses all of his or her powers when within firing distance of an object or material—or when separated from it. If you're playing a Triggered-Powerless hero, all affected powers are reduced to O intensity and lose all special features when this occurs. This can occur if the hero is a high-tech hero, and loses his or her equipment. If the condition is rectified, powers return at 1 intensity per exchange, or when the equipment is restored. This hindrance can only be chosen if the hero has a power of at least 10 intensity. Examples: Annihilus (loss of cosmic control rod), Dracula (stake through the heart).

**Unlucky:** Your hero is plagued by bad luck. When your hero will be affected by the Narrator's draw (for example, if the hero is wounded and would regain cards on a positive draw), the Narrator draws two cards and applies the worst. Characters with the Unlucky hindrance also cause this effect, with the card applied being the one worst for that character. If individuals on both sides of a conflict have this hindrance, they cancel each other out. Examples: Spider-Man, Rick Jones.

# PERSONALITY

Write down a few personality notes which will help your roleplaying. This includes what the hero likes and dislikes, whether the hero's a leader or a follower, weird personal habits, nationality, and even speaking style. Check through the Roster Book for examples if you're having trouble.

If your hero has a catchphrase or two that everybody knows, write them down. And then use them. Luke Cage may not say "Sweet Christmas!" much any more, but if you're playing him, everyone will be waiting to hear it. Why disappoint your fans?

# HISTORY

Without a dazzling origin and history, a hero ain't nothin' but a sandwich. Think of those fragments you'll never forget. You know, like from *Amazing Fantasy* #15: "Accidentally absorbing a fantastic amount of radioactivity, the dying insect, in sudden shock, bites the nearest living being. . . ." (Well, okay, it was an arachnid, but you know what we mean.) Every super hero has a stirring story of how he or she got into the cape-and-cowl business. And a dozen different impressive stories since.

Developing a history comes from reading the comics, plain and simple. However, there are books and comics you can go to if you're looking for help. For example, the classic (but long-

out-of-print) *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe* encyclopedia series gives a current-to-1994 look at most of the Marvel heroes and villains or you can use *Marvel Universe®* by Peter Sanderson for a more recent account. You don't have to be a completist on this, but you should know the big moments or you'll make a serious faux pas ("Uh, no, Kitty, you haven't been called Ariel for a long, long time.")



# A

## PPENDIX ONE: SKILLS

Skills are fields of expertise that anyone can master, given enough time and natural aptitude. They are gained according to ability codes in Strength, Agility, Intellect, and Willpower. An X code provides no skills in that ability, a D provides one

skill, a C provides two skills, a B provides three skills, and an A provides four skills. Generally, a hero can have up to four skills in each ability.

Heroes are assumed to know basic skills at their base ability scores. Anyone can throw a club, drive, read, and intimidate a thug at their Strength, Agility, Intellect, and Willpower scores. Skills lower the difficulty of any related action by one level. If used defensively, these skills may raise the difficulty of a foe's actions by one level. Some skills allow actions that those without the skills can't try; these actions are given difficulty ratings, and skills don't modify them down.

Heroes who are world-class in a skill (denoted in the roster books by underlining) automatically get trump when using the skill.

You can create any skill you like, as long as your Narrator approves.

### STRENGTH SKILLS

These skills use Strength as the action ability. Strength skills are related to physical might, stamina, hand-to-hand fighting, and resisting damage. If the hero has two suitable skills for the same action (such as Swords and Martial Arts Weapons), only one applies.

**Axes:** Battle axes, hatchets, and other chopping weapons. Your hero can reduce

the difficulty rating when striking with a battle axe, logging, or throwing a hatchet.

**Boxing:** The sweet science. Boxing applies only if the hero uses his or her fists (gloved or bare) to attack. If you declare it, you can divide your hero's total action score between two fist attacks, the second being a contingent attack.

**Brawling:** This skill lets the hero inflict bloody damage when using fists, claws, teeth, or any other natural attack. If your hero reduces a foe to 0 cards or 0 Health this way, the foe goes comatose. These actions—bites, eye gouges, kidney punches, and so on—are generally frowned upon in hero circles.

**Climbing:** Scaling vertical surfaces. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating when resisting wind and acrophobia while scaling buildings, trees, cliffs, and other vertical challenges.

**Clubs:** Anything from a blackjack to a telephone pole, assuming the hero can lift it. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating when throwing the club or staff.

**Garrotes:** Strangling cords, piano wires, and even bare-handed choking. If the hero wounds the target, he or she may make a contingent action to begin strangulation. This is an average Strength (Strength) action. If it succeeds and the target does not damage the hero, the hero inflicts 4 damage points on each exchange thereafter, assuming the strangulation continues. The stranglehold remains in effect until either the hero lets go or suffers damage from the target.

**Hammers:** Objects used for pounding things into other things. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating for throwing hammers, plus carpentry and other such actions.

**Hyper-Breath:** Blowing really hard to knock people over. This feat can be performed only by those with an 11+ Strength. Your hero must make an *average Strength (Strength)* action, and those whom the hero succeeds against are knocked back and lose their action for the exchange.

**Knives:** Objects that are small, sharp and easily concealed, from daggers to hypodermics.

**Martial Arts Weapons:** A catchall for the shuriken, sai, nunchaku, and oriental swords and daggers, including the katana and wakizashi.

**Natural Weapons:** Claws, quills, horns, teeth, and the like.

**Shields:** Normally defensive, shields can also be thrown. A shield can either absorb its defense bonus in damage from one attack or to inflict its bonus in damage for one attack in a single exchange, but not both.

**Sonic Slam:** Smashing the ground or one's fists together to produce a sound wave. This feat can be performed only by those with an 11+ Strength. Your hero must make an *average Strength (Strength)* action, and those whom the hero succeeds against are disoriented, losing their action for the exchange.

**Spears:** Long, sharp, and painful pole weapons. Your hero can use this skill for throwing or stabbing with javelins, tent poles, and anything else shaftlike.

**Swords:** Any long-bladed weapon, from an epee to a scythe. If the hero chooses not

to attack, he or she may parry with a sword, adding the sword's damage bonus to Agility when dodging.

**Whips:** Anything that's cracked to inflict damage on or entangle a target. This skill lets the hero snag an object that's within firing distance on an *average Strength (Agility)* action. If this is an opponent, the whip entangles the opponent as a contingent action. The opponent can make an *average Strength (Strength)* action to break free on the next exchange.

**Wrestling:** The gentle art of holding on and never letting go. This skill can be used only if your hero is using bare hands. If the hero damages the target, he or she may make a contingent attempt to hold on. This is an *average Strength (Strength)* action (or the same action to avoid this, if the wrestler is a character). If the hold succeeds, the same damage is dealt the next exchange, and can't be dodged. The contingent hold action must succeed every exchange, or it is broken.



# AGILITY SKILLS

These skills use Agility as the action ability. Agility skills are related to movement, speed, digital manipulation, throwing, firing, and reflexes. If the hero has two suitable skills for the same action (such as Aerial Combat and Acrobatics), only one applies.

**Acrobatics:** Gymnastic movement. Your hero can tumble, swing from ropes, walk across thin beams, and leap through windows. The hero may reduce the difficulty rating when trying to lessen damage from falls and dodging attacks, if the hero has sufficient room to move acrobatically.

**Aerial Combat:** Fighting in the sky. Your hero may use Agility instead of Strength to attack while flying. The hero can use Agility instead of Intellect for declaration order during aerial combat.

**Archery:** Use of any sort of projectile weapon that fires arrows.

**Artillery:** The handling of really big guns. Artillerists tend to work in groups, but use

the highest Agility of the team members to attempt the action.

**Boating:** Piloting any waterbound vehicle, from a jetski to an ocean liner. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating to avoid rapids, spot land, build rafts, and other life-saving tasks while on water.

**Boomerangs:** Small objects which are thrown to inflict damage and then somehow return to the thrower's hand. A hero with this skill can catch his or her boomerangs without fear of damage.

**Construction:** Building things. When trying to construct a familiar object, the hero may reduce the difficulty rating to avoid making mistakes.

**Contingent Attack:** Your hero can divide his or her Agility and pre-cardplay modifiers between two Agility-based attacks each exchange, making one of them contingent. Cards can be played to each attack.

**Demolitions:** Blowing things up with volatile explosives, generally smaller than a cruise missile.





**Disguise:** Making yourself look like someone or something else.

**Driving:** Piloting any landbound vehicle, from a motorcycle to an eighteen-wheeler.

**Equestrian:** Riding horses and other four-legged beasts, with or without wings. Your hero can use his or her Agility to control the mount and perform tricks (see *Animal Handling*).

**Escape Artistry:** Getting out of dangerous places. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating to squeeze through ultra-narrow corridors, squirm out of ropes, and undo handcuffs from behind.

**Fast Exit:** Your hero can attack physically and move to firing distance before any foe can complete an action that affects the hero. But make sure you've properly analyzed the situation, because if even one of the opponents has an Intellect higher than your hero's Agility, any of the opponents can redirect actions toward your hero, and he or she can't dodge any of them.

**Flinging:** Throwing any easily hefted object (though "easily" varies from hero to hero). This skill can turn playing cards and feathers into lethal projectiles and is good for tossing grenades.

**Gadgetry:** Disassembling something mechanical in order to make something else. This skill reduces the difficulty of the creation of any item if a suitable item is available for dismantling.

**Marksmanship:** Modern personal firearms of all types—handguns, rifles, shotguns, submachine guns, including laser, stun, and concussion varieties.

**Martial Arts:** Your hero may use Agility instead of Strength to attack. This changes the attack's trump suit to Agility as well. The hero also can reduce the difficulty rating to reduce damage from falling. If the hero doesn't attack, he or she can reduce the difficulty rating to

catch any thrown object that can be lifted by the hero, negating impact damage.

**Piloting:** Working knowledge of most 20th century aircraft. Even in a small spaceship, your hero has an intuitive understanding of which flashing light is the accelerator and which is the brake.

**Repair:** Repair and modification of items, but not the building of new items.

**Ricochet:** The bouncing of a weapon off one target and into another. A hero using a ricochet can target two individuals with a single throw, halving the action score for each. The second target is hit as a contingent action. If the hero desires, he or she also may ricochet the weapon back into his or her hand. A second use of this skill is to launch a surprise attack by bouncing a weapon off something behind the target; this makes the attack contingent but reduces its difficulty. This skill can be used with some powers, such as Energy Blast and Web-Slinging.

**Skating:** Twirling and dashing with wheels or blades on or under your feet. This also covers the use of skateboards.

**Skiing:** Launching yourself down snowy mountains or across water at high speeds.

**Sleight of Hand:** Stage magic. Your hero can make small items appear and disappear by a combination of misdirection and swift, fluid gestures. The hero can also use this skill to pick someone's pocket by making an average Agility (Intellect) action.

**Slings:** Anything spun to inflict damage, from a staff sling to a bullroarer.

**Surfing:** Hanging ten. Generally, this is done on water, but you never know.

**Thievery:** Picking pockets, moving stealthily, and opening locks of all sorts. Your hero can also reduce the difficulty rating in securing locks and making locks and keys.

# INTELLECT SKILLS

These skills use Intellect as the action ability. Intellect skills are related to knowledge, reason, invention, science, energy manipulation, and logic. If the hero has two suitable skills for the same action (such as Robotics and Mechanics), only one applies.

**Scientific Genius (special skill):** This dedication to science over all other pursuits applies only if the hero has an Intellect of 8 or more and an Intellect code of A, and an X code in all other abilities. This allows the hero to start with up to eight Intellect skills with the word *science* in italics in their descriptions. Scientific geniuses have no limit to their number of skills, as long as all of them are sciences.

**Aeronautics:** The *science* of flight. Your hero knows about wind velocity, aerodynamics, speed control, and the harsh effects of gravity.

**Archaeology:** The *science* of ancient treasures. Your hero knows a great deal about paleontology, historical records, and ancient sites.

**Architecture:** Designing and recognizing designs of buildings and other large structures.

**Assessment:** Your hero can tell the difficulty of many tasks and judge the abilities of others. If you take a full exchange to analyze a person or task, you can learn the difficulty of a task or one ability score or intensity of an individual.

**Astronomy:** The *science* of the stars. Your hero can use this skill to plot a course through the solar system.

**Biochemistry:** The *science* of life processes of plants and animals. Your hero knows about drugs, organic poisons, and diseases of all types.

**Biology:** The *science* of living creatures. Your hero understands animal and plant taxonomy, can predict the behavior of unknown species, and knows what eats what. Specialties include ichthyology (fish) and ornithology (birds), among many others.

**Bionics:** The *science* of replacing living tissue with mechanical constructs. Your hero can fashion artificial limbs, prosthetic wings, mechanical organs, and cybernetic Intellect-altering tools.

**Chemistry:** The *science* of chemicals. Your hero can develop new formulas, develop antidotes for inorganic poisons, and identify chemicals by smell, touch, and taste.

**Computers:** The *science* of electronic intelligence. Your hero can program computers, design computer-run equipment, and control—to a certain extent—artificial intelligences.

**Criminology:** The *science* of the criminal mind. Your hero can find clues at crime scenes, analyze patterns of criminal behavior, and guess where crimes will occur.

**Cryptography:** The art of codes. Your hero is particularly good at analyzing, solving, and making codes and other puzzles.

**Dimensional Geography:** The *science* of leaving this plane of existence. Your hero has catalogued alternate realities and new dimensions.

**Electronics:** The *science* of electricity. Your hero can analyze and build electronic devices, from as small as a vacuum tube to as large as a power plant.

**Energy Control:** The use of any Intellect-based Control power, except the use of Energy Blasts.

**Espionage:** The art of spying. An espionage-trained hero can notice small clues, operate spy equipment, and tell when someone is on his or her trail.

**Genetics:** The science of genes. Your hero understands mutations, the effects of radiation on cellular matter, and even new life forms.

**Geology:** The science of the Earth. Your hero comprehends volcanic activity, the geology of the surrounding land, and types of rocks and minerals. He or she may also use equipment for finding oil and predicting earthquakes.

**History:** The science of humanity's past. Your hero knows of lessons from past events that may have an impact on the modern day. If the hero is transported back in time, he or she can pass for a native of the past time period.

**Journalism:** The reporter's art. Your hero has skill with and access to many sources of information. If a hero with this skill makes a *challenging* action, he or she can find out pretty much anything that's at least semi-public knowledge within a day.

**Law:** The workings of the legal system. Your hero has an extensive background in the law of the United States or some other jurisdiction. He or she may reduce the difficulty rating for a client who is in danger of being convicted of a crime (see **American Criminal Justice** on page 52).

**Linguistics:** The science of words. Your hero can understand at least the basics of any terrestrial language, and may reduce the difficulty rating to comprehend even alien languages.

**Lore:** The science of studying a culture. Your hero must pick a group of people to study (Incans, Deviants, Kree, etc.). Your hero then has a basic grasp of nearly all of that culture's knowledge.

**Mechanics:** The science of machinery. Your hero has an intuitive understanding of how inorganic parts come together to make machines work.

**Medicine:** The science of health. Your hero knows complex medical procedures, from first aid to surgery. The hero may make a first aid *average Intellect* action to restore a card or the value of a random card in Health to a combatant who fell unconscious during the previous exchange. Your hero also can perform medical treatments that will help heal serious wounds, but these ministrations cannot take place during fights.

**Mythology:** The study of classical myths, which may seem all too real in a world where Thor, Hercules, and Dracula walk the earth. Your hero should treat this like the Lore skill above when considering either a real-world or purely fictional culture.

**Occult:** The study of mystical practices. Your hero learns of magical societies, antiquities, runes, and forgotten lore. This skill is required if the hero wants to create magic items.

**Oceanography:** The science of the seas. Your hero knows how currents work, the complexities of depth, the patterns of marine life, and the dangers of pollution to the ecosystems.

**Photographic Memory:** An amazing skill which allows the hero to remember anything he or she saw or learned. A successful *average Intellect* action requires the Narrator to repeat anything the hero might have come across (if the Narrator can remember it).

**Physics:** The science of physical laws. Your hero understands spatial geometry, flight, light and sound, and the motions of planets and stars.

**Psychiatry:** The science of the human mind. Your hero can tell if an individual is under mental control. The hero may be able to heal emotional scars and fractured psyches, given time.

**Radiology:** The science of radiation. Your hero understands the different kinds of radiation, including its careful handling and the dangers of its effects on humans.

**Robotics:** The science of robots. Your hero can make and dismantle unintelligent servitors with complex programming. A hero with this skill can even rewire a robot programmed for evil into one with only servile intentions (temporarily, at least).

**Sociology:** The science of human interaction. A hero with this skill can predict how a person or group of people will react to an event with some accuracy. If the hero does not attack in an exchange, he or she can always launch an undeclared contingent action.

**Spacecraft:** The science of building space transports. Your hero understands how spaceships work and how to repair them.

**Super-Physiology:** The science of super powers. This specialized skill allows the hero to gauge a superbeing's power intensities and work to reduce or enhance those power levels over time.

**Time Machinery:** The science of time travel. Another rare skill, this allows the construction of machines that allow transport through time. (Obviously, the Narrator has complete control over whether a hero gets this amazing skill.)

**Trivia:** A mishmash of specialized knowledge. Your hero has one or more subjects in which he or she is an acknowledged expert. This can be anything: old movies, military history, sports, rock music, comic books, you name it.

**Weapon Systems:** The science of complex weaponry. Your hero can build and dismantle high-powered guns and guidance systems.

## WILLPOWER SKILLS

These skills use Willpower as the action ability. Willpower skills are related to control of individuals, emotions, persuasion, artistry, mental toughness, and magic. If the hero has two suitable skills for the same action (such as Mesmerism and Leadership), only one applies.

**Animal Handling:** Training animals to perform tricks. Your hero may reduce the difficulty rating to teach a trick that an animal is capable of, such as fetching, stealing, jumping, and so forth.

**Art:** Creating works of art, either for personal gratification or for sale to others. This includes painting, sculpting, and graphics, among other disciplines.

**Finance:** Capitalism at its finest. Willpower may be used in all business dealings.

**Intimidation:** Terrifying someone into doing or saying what your hero wants. Your hero performs an average Willpower (Willpower) action against an individual, and if successful, gets the individual to reveal or go along with what the hero desires, at least temporarily.

**Law Enforcement:** Cops, robbers, and other interested parties. In addition to familiarity with police agencies, the hero may legally carry a gun and make arrests if active in law enforcement.

**Leadership:** Keeping a team together and focused on goals. If the hero completes an average Willpower action, all allied heroes gain +1 on all actions. But once this inspiration is triggered, if the hero leaves the scene or blacks out, all allies suffer -1 on all actions until the hero returns.

**Manipulation:** Getting people to do what you want without letting them know it. This includes scheming, seduction, and other such machinations.

**Meditation:** Concentration so intense that it focuses mental powers. Your hero may reduce the difficulty rating of any Willpower-based action if he or she spends one exchange meditating first.

**Mental Control:** The use of all nonsensory powers that have Willpower trump suits.

**Mesmerism:** Low-grade mind control. If your hero succeeds in an *average Willpower* (Willpower) action, he or she can gain information and implant post-hypnotic suggestions. Thralls won't act counter to their own desires. A hypnotic command fades a few hours after it is given.

**Military:** Understanding of the armed services. Your hero may reduce the difficulty rating to lead troops or understand a military commander's strategies.

**Observation:** The use of all sensory powers with Willpower trump suits, plus a general ability to tell when something is interesting or out of place.

**Performing:** Acting, singing, dance, mime, broadcasting, striptease, or any other form of performance entertainment. Your hero can attempt an *average Willpower* (Willpower) action to distract someone from his or her intentions for one exchange.

**Photography:** Shutterbugging for fun or profit. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating for any action involving a still or motion picture camera.

**Politics:** The art of oration and political strategy. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating to influence others to his or her views. This skill aids in dealing with the complexities of bureaucracy.

**Survival:** Dealing with the rigors of outdoor life. Your hero can use this skill any time he or she is faced with natural challenges, such as frigid cold, desert heat, starvation, and loss of direction.

**Taunting:** Cracking wise in combat, to the detriment of easily irritated opponents. If your hero spends at least one exchange talking up a storm (and you must do so for the hero), he or she may attempt an *average Willpower* (Willpower) action to cause an opponent to attack the hero with his or her bare fists or another instantaneous attack. If so enraged, the opponent cannot make surprise attacks or use any skills to modify the difficulty of the attack.

**Teaching:** Passing on one's wisdom to others. If another hero is interested in using a response bonus to gain a skill (see **Self-Improvement** on page 54), a teacher who knows that skill can help that hero gain it.

**Tracking:** Following prey through any environs. Your hero may reduce the difficulty rating to catch the track, and then doesn't need to try further actions unless there is a chance of losing the track. Distractions—rivers, perfume factories, crowds, and so forth—require new actions.

**Trance:** Meditation so deep that the outside world seems to slip away. Your hero may enter a trance which slows body functions to such a level that he or she may be assumed dead (making an *average Willpower* (Intellect) action to fool observers). A hero in a trance reduces the need for food and water to a minimal level, and may heal serious wounds in days.

**Writing:** Expressing oneself in, um, one's, well, you know. Your hero can reduce the difficulty rating when writing persuasive fiction or nonfiction.



# A PPENDIX TWO: POWERS

This massive appendix contains complete power listings for the major superpowers encountered in the Marvel Universe. You should never think of this list as limiting, however. If you want to create a new power, make sure your Narrator approves and

then put it into play.

You can choose a power from the list, or by drawing a card from the Fate Deck and choosing a power belonging to that individual. If you use this latter method, you can alter the form and source of the power. For example, if you draw Cyclops, you can give your hero an Energy Blast, but make it come out of his or her hands.

## STUNTS

In addition to base powers, your hero can have one or more stunts for each power. A stunt sometimes gives a hero a power described elsewhere in this appendix. In such a case, the hero gains the base power, but none of the stunts listed for it. Unless stated otherwise, stunts operate at the intensity of your hero's power.

Your hero can create new stunts, even ones that aren't in this appendix. To try a new stunt, state the effect your hero wants to achieve, and use your action for that exchange to try the stunt. Your Narrator will set a difficulty rating for the stunt. This is usually quite high, but you can do a few things to stack the odds a bit in your favor.

A stunt is most likely to succeed if the hero's already done it in comics, especially a recent one. This is your best argument for a low difficulty rating. If you've got the issue in which it occurs, having it nearby wouldn't hurt. If your hero hasn't tried it

already, you can argue that the new stunt triggers off one your hero can already do. (Still, we wouldn't suggest arguing that your hero can strap on chains and pull the atypically buoyant isle of Manhattan through the far-too-narrow Verrazanno Narrows, even if you do have the No-Prizeworthy issue of *Champions* in which Hercules supposedly did it. Some things your Narrator is just way too smart for.)

If your hero achieves the difficulty rating that your Narrator sets, your hero can do the stunt for the rest of his or her career, assuming the powers stay roughly the same. In fact, your Narrator will drop the difficulty one level after your hero does it the first time. But if you fail in the action, your hero can't do the stunt ever. So make sure you have the right cards and the most persuasive arguments.



# LIMITS

As a general rule, powers get stronger as they get restricted. Limits provide a means of narrowing the base effect of the power in exchange for greater intensity or more stunts. Assuming a limit is approved by your Narrator, it will allow you to add points of intensity when creating a new hero. (The Roster Book builds these adjustments into the power listings.)

Limits should halve the number of circumstances in which the power can be used, or halve its effectiveness always. If the limit is already in the power description (as Spell-Focused is part of Magic), it doesn't count as a limit. Here are some examples of limits:

**Animals-Only:** Only affects animals of 0 or 1 Intellect.

**Blocked:** Does not affect some very common objects or substances.



**Charged:** Limited number of charges before disappearing.

**Degradable:** Weakened by 1 point of intensity each exchange.

**Gender-Specific:** Affects only those of one gender.

**Increased Difficulty:** The difficulty rating of the action is doubled.

**Infrequent:** Requires 24-hour or similar wait before it can be used again.

**Line of Sight:** User must see the targets to use the power.

**Masochistic:** Causes the user to suffer wounds equal to the power's intensity.

**Preventative:** Prevents user from taking any actions while in use.

**Short Duration:** Stops if the Narrator's draw is negative.

**Situational:** Works only in certain situations.

**Spell-Focused:** Needs gestures and incantations; delays until end of exchange.

**Touch:** Works only if subject is touched.

**Trance:** User must be in a trance for at least one exchange to activate the power.

**Triggered:** Works only if a certain event occurs to cause the effect.

**Uncontrolled:** Activates whether or not the user wants it to work.

**Unpredictable:** Narrator draws a new card; fails if the draw is negative.

As an example, the Scarlet Witch has a high-intensity Reality Warping power. However, it is severely limited by the fact that she never knows how it will work. And because she has the Unpredictable limit, it won't work much of the time. But when it does, hoo-boy. . . .

Other limits can be designed, but they must be at least as restrictive as the ones above. The Narrator has final say on whether a limit is acceptable. If your hero gains a limit during play, it does not trigger a corresponding intensity increase.

# POWER SOURCES

A hero's powers can come from any one of a hundred different sources, but a few recur with amazing regularity. Individual powers are not linked to specific sources; any power can come from any source approved by the Narrator.



**Learning:** Some powers are gained by seeking self-improvement. Learned powers can be improved through study and are usually vulnerable to amnesia.

**Heredity:** A power can be passed on from a parent. Such powers manifest as a dominant family trait and are surprisingly hard to ditch. If your hero gains powers this way, the history built into such a power usually makes the hero easy to find, and comparisons to his or her progenitors, favorable or unfavorable, will be legion.

**Racial:** If your hero is from another society or race, he or she may come with some odd features (see **Humanoid Races** and **Critters** in the *Roster Book*). These are usually easy to spot, but very difficult to nullify. Humans come with no special traits except our galaxy-renowned indomitable spirit and creativity.

**Mutation:** A mutant hero manifests genetically-derived traits not possessed by either parent, usually at puberty. Mutation has increased dramatically with the dawn of the nuclear age, as have fears of mutants. Mutations can be tracked by mutant-locating powers and are vulnerable to some nullification devices.

**Radiation:** If your hero doesn't sprout wings at puberty, you can take comfort in the knowledge that a blast of radiation can provide those wings at a remarkably accelerated rate. Of course, it can also turn your hero into the Hulk. Besides its lethality, radiation is notoriously unpredictable, and further irradiation can alter powers without warning. Geiger counters can track some irradiated heroes.

**Power Transfer:** Many beings and devices can imbue permanent powers. Androids and Heralds of Galactus are created this way, as are Inhumans who breathe the

mutating terrigen mist. Still, as the Silver Surfer and Terrax learned, the source of the gift can often take away these transferred powers.

**Possession:** Other beings and devices imbue their powers by taking control of an individual. The host gains the powers of the possessor in exchange for his or her mind. Possession can be uncovered by mind scans, and is assailable by exorcism.

**Equipment:** If your hero has a cube or magic sword or supercomputer that gives powers, loss of equipment equals loss of powers. Also, unless an item is permanently bound to the hero, anyone can use the device with some success. So don't worry if your hero loses a device, it'll return soon—and we don't mean that in a good way.

## EQUIPMENT

As the Beetle can tell you, a good suit of powered armor can make up for a lifetime of insecurity. And while a magic cloak might not be make one Sorcerer Supreme, it can sure levitate like nobody's business. Whether magical or technological, equipment is the source of more power than all the world's mutations combined.

One rule governs equipment: *Equipment can do anything that powers can do.* Of course, equipment can break, rust, combust, and fall apart in any number of ways. Relying on equipment is risky, as it can always be destroyed. And then your hero's just a mope in a shredded suit.

A piece of equipment generally has only those abilities endowed by its creator. If its creator is the Shaper of Worlds, well, then it can do pretty much anything. But those items created by mortals have boundaries of size, power, defense, and usefulness. Success in creating something always comes from careful research.

Of course, the user of the item doesn't have to be the creator. The item can be

inherited, à la the Black Knight's Ebony Blade; bestowed, along the lines of Captain America's shield; bought, such as S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Mandroids; stumbled upon, such as Juggernaut's ruby of Cyttorak; or stolen, as with the Hobgoblin's "borrowed" Green Goblin paraphernalia. In the strangest of series, a player may even play a piece of sentient equipment, such as Apocalypse's Ship.

## MAKING EQUIPMENT

A creator can endow an item with powers within his or her fields of expertise. For magical powers, the creator will need the skill Occult and at least some power in Magic. For technological powers, some science skills probably will be necessary.

When the hero makes a piece of equipment, the Narrator sets a difficulty rating and the hero must equal or exceed that number in one Intellect action. At minimum, the difficulty will be the total of the item's intensity and (if more than one) the number of different powers the item has.

Magical artifacts generally just have powers from this appendix, though a few are sentient and can move on their own. Technological items often have a bewildering array of esoteric powers without which the user might be heading into battle unprepared. Or at least without headlights.

Any item smaller than a house is assembled from the list of powers in the appendix and on the next page. A car, for example, may have powers of Lightning Speed, Lights, an Alarm, and Passenger Compartments. Add Flight, a Projectile Weapon, a Tractor Beam, a CPU, and EMP Protection, and you're closer to a space fighter plane. Ditch the Passenger Compartment and the Lights, and you might have a suit of powered armor. If you want a helicopter or a skyscraper, you're going to have more features than one person can design.

## EQUIPMENT POWERS

These special powers round out equipment (and are italicized in roster entries):

*Alarm:* Alerts the user when tampered with.

*Anti-Theft:* Causes its intensity in damage points when tampered with.

*Automatic Return:* Will return on its own to a person or place.

*Backup Power:* Auxiliary power sources when main power fails.

*Basic Movement:* Can move on its own.

*Coded:* Can be used only by those with the code.

*CommLink:* Can communicate by radio waves or other method.

*CPU:* Has a computer's central processing unit for direction.

*ECM:* Has electronic countermeasures from detection and targeting.

*EMP Protection:* Has full protection from electromagnetic pulses.

*Firefighting:* Quenches fires that occur in or outside of the item.

*Firing Weapon:* Fires a bullet, arrow, missile, or other projectile.

*Homing System:* Can locate objects by tracers or tracer beams.

*Lights:* Can project lights. See "Light Control" for guidelines on light intensities.

*Passenger Compartments:* Can hold more than the user.

*Randomizer:* Fires randomly at many targets, negating Danger Sense.

*Sensor:* Can track beyond its field of vision.

*Sentience:* Can think for itself with an Intellect score equal to its intensity.

*Striking Weapon:* Has a club, knife, shocker, or any other strike attack.

*Tractor Beam:* Can drag items of its size or less.

*Unbreakable:* Can't be damaged, but damage can still pass through it.

*Unremovable:* Can't be taken away—not even by the hero who uses it.

*Unstable Molecules:* Adapts to a hero's superpowers.

*Voice Modulator:* Can speak on its own.

*Worthiness:* Requires a test before anyone can use it.

Of course, equipment also can have any power listed in this appendix. Most pieces of equipment use a single intensity for all their powers; for example, Iron Man's powered armor has the same intensity for its powers of Sonic Control and Protected Senses (listed later in the **Powers** Appendix), as well as EMP Protection (listed above). However, some pieces of equipment possess varying intensities, when one power is clearly stronger than another.

## EQUIPMENT TRUMP SUITS

For simplicity's sake, an easy trump suit mnemonic applies to equipment: *Use the trump suit of the ability needed to make it.* High-tech gizmos need brains, magical items need a dominant will, hammers need physical power, and bows need manual dexterity. See the chart below for the right trump suit for your hero's item.

Trump Suit	Items Using That Suit for Trump
Intellect	High-tech items (powered armor, hyper-goggles, submarines)
Willpower	Magic items (spellbooks, crystal balls, magical wands)
Strength	Striking equipment (unpowered armor, swords, metal claws)
Agility	Fired and thrown weapons (guns, bows, javelins)



# POWER TERMINOLOGY

The next section provides complete descriptions of the general powers available to heroes created for the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game**.

**Name:** The base power is identified by a name, listed alphabetically for ease of location. For both established Marvel heroes and player-created heroes, the power name can be unique to identify that hero's particular power and its variations. In a roster listing, a power also may have a name unique to the hero, and this is in quotes. Cannonball's power is called his "Blast Field," although his power in game terms is Kinetic Control with a few stunts like Flight and Repulse Field.

**Trump Suit:** Each power has a suit for determining trump. Strength powers have to do with physical attacks and resistances; Agility powers involve manipulation of the hero's body and movement; Intellect powers focus on controlling energies and objects; and Willpower powers have to do with mind control and sensation.

**Exemplars:** Some heroes in the Marvel Universe who possess the power appear under this heading. It is important to note that not all heroes who have a certain power are listed; those mentioned are simply representatives. Also, heroes in the comics may use their powers somewhat differently or more creatively than the listed description due to their experience. These differences are usually noted on their roster sheets.

**Related Powers:** This category indicates powers that are often linked together, or that a creative hero might combine for unusual effects.

**Description:** The power descriptions detail the effects of each power. In general, powers require an *easy* action to use, with the power itself serving as the action ability. Stunts (including those that refer to other powers) require *average* actions to use. Most heroes can ignore these actions unless the power is opposed, in which case the action is modified by the opposer's cardplay and relevant ability score or intensity. If a hero is the target of a character's use of a power or stunt, he or she usually must make an *easy* action using the relevant action ability (Agility for dodging, say).



**Stunts and Limits:** Some limits and power stunts are detailed in this section. They give both the Narrator and player ideas for using the power in new and unique ways, but aren't meant to be limiting. If a hero wants to attempt a stunt he or she hasn't yet developed, the difficulty goes up by at least one level.

# POWER DESCRIPTIONS

## ABILITY BOOST

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Hulk, Iron Fist

*Related Powers:* Chi

Ability Boost allows immediate self-improvement in one ability score (chosen in advance). This power adds its intensity in points to that ability score, up to a maximum total of 20. This effect lasts for an aura duration. After the exchange, the score drops back to its original level, regardless of the effects that causes.

When part of a suit of powered armor or other piece of equipment, Ability Boost usually just raises the hero's ability score to the intensity level while the equipment is active.

*Stunt—Dual Ability Boost:* Your hero can boost two abilities at once, each limited by the power's intensity total.

## ABSORPTION

*Trump Suit:* Strength

*Exemplars:* Sebastian Shaw, Strong Guy, Sunspot

*Related Powers:* Energy Conversion, Energy Reflection

Your hero can absorb a certain type of damage (examples include fire damage, cold damage, or kinetic damage). Absorptions of different damage types must be chosen separately. Any attacks made in the specified mode inflict no damage on the hero, up to the intensity of the Absorption. Damage totals greater than the power's intensity are suffered as normal, as if the Absorption were additional defense.

*Stunt—Absorption Boost:* This is a specialized form of Absorption that allows heroes to convert energy into Strength. Your hero still absorbs up to the power's intensity in energy of whatever form, but now temporarily enhances his or her own body with it. The hero's Strength score increases by a number of points equal to the power's intensity up to a total score of 20. The heightened Strength lasts for an aura duration, and then drops to normal.

*Stunt—Absorption Conversion:* Your hero transforms the absorbed energy or force into another kind of damage-causing effect. This new damage cannot be redirected without a power or stunt that does so (e.g., Fire Control).

*Stunt—Absorption Healing:* Damage is not only absorbed, but it can be used to restore your hero's health. This requires one exchange fully devoted to healing after the damage-causing effect is absorbed. For every 10 wounds absorbed, the player redraws one lost card, up to no more than the hero's base Hand Size. (Characters gain one-half the absorbed damage in Health, up to their maximums.)

## ADAPTATION

*Trump Suit:* Strength

*Exemplars:* Mantis, Husk

*Related Powers:* Life Support, Shapeshifting

Adaptation physically changes your hero's body to suit hostile environments. After an exchange during which the hero must concentrate, he or she can effect a change in physical aspects such as looks, skin, lung capacity, and resistance to natural damage sources. Your hero can adapt to the strength of an alien planet's natives or to breathing methane atmospheres. The power adapts to environments, not situations; a hero can't grow wings if pushed off a cliff, but can grow gills when plunged into water. Similarly, your hero will gain no resistance to being struck, but may gain Resistance to Fire if among the

Lava Men. Maximum resistances are at the power's intensity and last for days or weeks at a time.

**Stunt—Life Support:** While using this power, your hero doesn't have to breathe, eat, or sleep.

**Stunt—Situational Adaptation:** An average *Adaption* action allows your hero to consciously adapt his or her body to a situation. Without the physical need to make such a change (such as in preparation for an attack), it takes a full exchange to effect such a forced alteration. *Willed Adaptations* last while your hero concentrates on them.

## ADDITIONAL LIMB(S)

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Spiral, Doctor Octopus, Forearm, Scorpion, Nightcrawler

**Related Power:** Wings

Your hero has an additional arm, leg, tentacle, or prehensile tail. Extra arms allow the hero to lift multiple objects at once, while an extra pair of legs makes the hero a centaur, allowing a kick attack. A prehensile tentacle or tail can be used with the hero's normal Agility score, allowing quick movement through trees, vines, poles, and wires.

Your hero can make one additional physical attack with the additional limbs. This additional attack is a contingent action, with the Strength score of the new limb equal to its intensity. Other logical contingent actions can be performed, such as lifting multiple objects.

**Stunt—Constriction:** Your hero's limbs can perform a hold as a contingent action after an undodged attack. This attempt requires an average Strength (*Additional Limb*) action to break free, or the next exchange's attack cannot be dodged. The victim can try this escape action every exchange, but it costs an action.

**Stunt—Detachable:** Your hero's extra limbs can detach and still be controlled at up to firing distance. The hero can feel sensations with these limbs even if they aren't attached.

**Stunt—Extension:** Your hero's limbs can extend as if they had *Elongation*.

**Stunt—Seven League Strides:** Your hero can cross firing distance in one exchange and still take an action.

**Stunt—Telescopic Attack:** Your hero can make a surprise physical attack at firing distance. This can work only if the hero isn't in a fight at the time he or she tries this stunt.

## ADDITIONAL SENSOR(S)

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Doctor Strange's Eye of Agamotto

**Related Power:** Enhanced Senses

By physically growing, attaching, or altering additional eyes or other sensory organs, your hero automatically gains one *Enhanced Senses* power.

**Stunt—Wandering Eye (or Ear or Whatever):** Your hero's additional sensor can move on its own and transmit information back as if using the equivalent of ESP.

## AFFLICTION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Brood Queen, Mojo, Pestilence

**Related Powers:** Corrosion, Poison

Your hero can inflict horrible diseases by making an easy *Affliction* (Strength) action. These diseases may start immediately or have a prolonged onset time, at your choice. Once the disease sets in, it attacks the victim with its intensity in damage points every exchange. If the victim falls to 0 cards or 0 Health, he or she drops into a coma. Someone with the Medicine skill can keep the victim from suffering damage or dying as long as

he or she makes an *easy Intellect* action to do so every day, opposed by the intensity of the disease.

Your hero can cure the diseases he or she causes, just by touching the victim.

**Limit—Toxic:** Your hero gives off disease at all times and cannot cure them. This can either cause damage equal to the power's intensity to all within striking distance, or cause disease as above. If your hero is in a containment suit, this limit is controlled.

**Stunt—Aging:** Your hero can accelerate the aging process. This disease can advance the victim forward a number of years equal to the power's intensity, or multiply the subject's aging rate by the intensity (i.e., the subject ages the intensity in years per actual year). The hero cannot kill the subject with this power, but can make the subject old and feeble.

**Stunt—Aging Reversal:** Your hero can decelerate a target's aging process. This disease can subtract a number of years equal to the power's intensity, or divide the subject's aging rate by the intensity (i.e., the subject ages one year only after the passage of a number of years equal to the intensity). The hero cannot kill the subject with this power, but can drop him or her back to the moment of birth.

**Stunt—Alien Implant:** Your hero can implant an alien egg. The hero makes an *average Affliction (Agility)* action, and if any damage gets through defense, the egg is implanted. On the exchange after the implantation, the egg hatches as a contingent action; this will inflict its intensity in damage or take over the victim's mind. Anyone with *Regeneration* can fight off these implants by making an *average Regeneration (Affliction)* action.

**Stunt—Disease Remission:** Your hero can arrest any disease by making an *average Affliction* action, opposed by the disease's intensity.

**Stunt—Mind Rot:** Your hero can choose to infect a victim with a mind-rotting

disease. Instead of causing damage upon onset, it reduces the victim's Intellect and Willpower by the intensity.

## AIR CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Storm, Crystal

**Related Power:** Weather Control

Your hero may manipulate air and winds. The hero may also use air as a distance weapon, inflicting up to the power's intensity in damage with hurricanelike winds. Any form of Force Field repels this attack. The hero may also generate winds of intensity strength.

**Stunt—Air Elementals:** Your hero can create beings of pure air, with Strength and Agility scores equal to the power's intensity. It requires a full exchange to create each elemental. While your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control these beings; if the hero falls unconscious, they dissipate at the end of that exchange. These creatures suffer double intensity damage from earth attacks.

**Stunt—Air Shield:** Your hero may create shields of wind of up to the power's intensity in force that serve as an equal defense against physical attacks. This can entirely block any wind attack.

**Stunt—Downdraft:** Your hero can flatten targets with a blast of air. The hero performs an *average Air Control (Strength)* attack on each individual below, and if successful, the target loses an action. One action score is generated for the attack, though individual Strengths will vary the difficulty.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Hyper-Breath:** Your hero can blow air so hard that it knocks people over. The hero must make an *average Air*

*Control (Strength)* attack on each individual in the area, and if successful against a victim, that victim loses an action. One action score is made for the attack, though individual Strengths will vary the difficulty.

*Stunt—Pressure Control:* Your hero can influence existing weather phenomena. At most, he or she can push a developing storm in some desired direction, or blow a bank of fog out of an area, both by succeeding at an average *Air Control* action, opposed by the intensity of the weather condition. Your hero cannot create these weather conditions, however.

*Stunt—Resistance to Pressure:* Your hero gains *Resistance to Pressure*. This protects against vertigo and other such forms of disorientation.

*Stunt—Tornado:* Your hero can generate a tornado that inflicts damage equal to the power's intensity upon anyone within firing distance. The hero must make an average *Air Control* action to control the tornado each exchange; if this control is ever lost, the tornado acts randomly for one exchange and then dissipates. If your hero is trying to control an existing tornado, he or she can make an average *Air Control* action, opposed by the intensity of the storm.

## ALCHEMY

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Diablo, Alchemy

*Related Power:* Transmutation

Your hero can change any single element into another pure element, assuming a maximum material strength equal to the power's intensity. The power requires an easy *Alchemy* action to work, which is usually only an issue when opposed by the *Agility* of someone trying to move the element (or perhaps someone who is a moving element, such as the 107 members of the Elements of Doom). This power offers a veritable periodic table of power stunts, a few of which are listed below.

*Limit—One Element Only:* Your hero can only make one elemental change, such as affecting only metals or only being able to change lead into gold.

*Limit—Temporary Transmutation:* The changes last for an aura duration only.

*Stunt—Animation:* Your hero gains *Animation* over objects composed mostly of one element.

*Stunt—Choking:* Your hero can blanket an area with choking gas, or change all the oxygen in an enclosed room to nitrogen. This inflicts the power's intensity in damage each exchange after the first to anyone in the area, or to one individual.

*Stunt—Disguise:* By manipulating elements, your hero can transform his or her appearance as if he or she had *Plasticity*. This provides none of the other characteristics of *Plasticity*.

*Stunt—Dustcloud:* Your hero can kick up dust to reduce visibility to striking distance. This cloud affects everyone within firing distance.

*Stunt—Elemental Animation:* Your hero gains the stunts *Air Elementals*, *Earth Creatures*, *Fire Elementals*, and *Water Elementals*, listed under their respective *Control* powers. It requires a full exchange to create each elemental. While your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control these beings; if the hero falls unconscious, the beings dissipate at the end of that exchange. These creatures have *Strength* and *Agility* scores equal to the power's intensity, and last as long as the hero concentrates on them. Once the hero ceases concentration or falls unconscious, the elementals collapse at the end of the exchange.

*Stunt—Explosion:* By changing an element into plutonium or somesuch, your hero causes an explosion which inflicts the power's intensity in damage to everyone within firing distance.



## ANIMAL CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* The Falcon, Moonstar, Ant-Man

*Related Powers:* Empathy, Plant Control

Your hero can talk to animals and influence their actions. Most animals can't really speak, but communicate by verbal and nonverbal signals. This power cannot be used to control humans.

To control the actions of an animal, your hero must succeed with an *easy Animal Control (Willpower)* action. If successful, you dictate the animal's actions as long as the hero concentrates on the control. The *Animal Handling* skill reduces this action's difficulty by one level for a hero.

**Limit—One Animal Type Only:** Your hero can only affect one type of animal, such as birds, reptiles, or aquatic animals. Alternately, your hero can affect only one animal (such as the Falcon's Redwing), which becomes his or her companion.

**Stunt—Animal Summoning:** Your hero can conjure one or more types of animals, to a maximum of one per point of intensity.

**Stunt—Animal Telepathy:** Your hero can read the minds of animals (such as they are), as if he or she had Telepathy at 1 intensity.

**Stunt—Basal Ganglia Control:** Your hero can control the basic brain cells of any creature descended from an animal that the hero can control. By making an *average Animal Control (Willpower)* action, the hero can cut off the victim's ability to breathe or move, at a loss of one card (or 5 Health) per exchange. If the hero fails in this action on any exchange, the victim immediately recovers, unless unconscious.

**Stunt—Memory Dredge:** Your hero can make a controlled animal recall anything it has sensed.

## ANIMAL FORM

*Trump Suit:* Agility

*Exemplars:* Wolfsbane, Man-Wolf

*Related Power:* Shapeshifting

Your hero can transform into any normal animal, or any human-animal hybrid. The hero is assumed to be in control of these transformations and retains his or her normal Intellect and Willpower, unless he or she has the Transformative hindrance (see **Hindrances**). The change requires a full exchange to occur, whether from human to animal or vice versa. Your hero cannot attempt any actions during that exchange.

See **Critters** in the *Roster Book* for minimum statistics of animals. The hero's intensity must be at least equal to the minimums in each ability. For human-animal hybrids, either Strength, Agility, or both may be raised to the intensity. Hybrid forms are humanoid in all but cosmetic features (fur, snout, tail, and so forth), though your hero gains all natural physical attacks, senses, and movement as well. The hero uses his or her own Willpower and Intellect for skill-based actions. Most animals have ability codes of X, though some have skills such as Tracking.

**Limit—One Animal Type Only:** Your hero can only become one type of animal, such as a falcon, a wolf, or a fish.

**Stunt—Animal Control:** Your hero gains Animal Control over animals related to his or her form while in the transformed state.

## ANIMATION

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Diablo, Sersi, Black Talon

*Related Powers:* Earth Control, Telekinesis

Your hero may cause inanimate solid objects to move and attack at mental command. These can be striking distance

or firing distance attacks. This power doesn't work on gases or liquids unless those particular stunts are chosen.

An object's properties are based on its form. Swords slash, boulders tumble, and ropes ensnare. All use the animator's power intensity as their Agility scores and their Strength (see **Material Strengths** on page 60). If the hero ceases concentration, the object collapses at the end of the exchange.

**Limit—One Object Only:** Your hero can animate only one type of object, such as ropes or juggling balls.

**Stunt—Gas Animation:** Your hero's powers work on the air and other gases.

**Stunt—Limited Sentience:** Your hero imbues the animated objects with 1 Intellect and Willpower. The objects can remember sights and sounds, repeat messages, and fetch objects, but otherwise are rock dumb.

**Stunt—Liquid Animation:** Your hero's power works on liquids.

**Stunt—Necromancy:** Your hero can animate dead bodies with a mockery of life. The skeletons and zombies so created have Strength and Agility scores equal to what they had in life, but 0 Intellect, Willpower, and Edge. If an animated corpse is missing parts such as legs or arms, it may not be able to do all actions. (This is not Raising the Dead. For that, see **Immortality**.)

**Stunt—Object Swarm:** Your hero animates many small objects, pummeling all chosen targets as if the items were thrown. The hero makes one *challenging Animation (Agility)* action for all affected, or an *average Animation (Agility)* action if focusing all the objects on one target.

## ASTRAL PROJECTION

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Professor X, Doctor Strange

**Related Power:** Detection (Astral)

Your hero may separate his or her astral form and travel throughout this dimension and others. While the physical body lies dormant, the astral body, a construct of pure thought, travels incredible distances at great speed.

The astral body has 0 Strength and cannot affect objects in the real world. The hero in astral form may observe actions in the "normal" world, and won't be detected by means short of Astral Detection and Telepathy. An astral hero is not affected by nontelepathic objects or forms of attack, but may be affected by Willpower powers. The astral hero may phase through solid objects without damaging either hero or object, but will be stopped by Force Fields.

While astral, your hero can travel distances within a few miles without fear of getting lost. Going anywhere else on Earth requires a random draw from the deck; if the value of the card is higher than the hero's power intensity, the hero gets lost in the astral plane. Getting home can require a *daunting Astral Projection* action, although most Narrators are more inventive than that. Heroes with 10+ intensity in Astral Projection don't have to worry about getting lost, and those with 15+ intensity can even project their astral form into space, crossing the universe.

While the astral form is separate, the body remains in a trance. The traveler will be aware of damage to the body, and it is possible for the body to perish while the astral form is away. Astral heroes whose bodies die are trapped in astral form. If the astral body is killed (such as through psychic battle), the player must succeed in a *daunting Strength* action or the hero's body will die.

Astral heroes may travel to another dimension by making a *challenging Willpower* action. While traveling this way, the hero makes an *average Strength* action each exchange. If this action isn't successful, the hero loses a card due to exhaustion.

**Limit—Dreaming:** Your hero can trigger this power only while asleep. If your hero's body is awakened normally, the astral body returns to the physical body.

**Stunt—Astral Detection:** Your hero can see the forms of creatures operating in the astral plane, including ectoplasm of those adepts who can astrally project. This is an automatic ability; the individual can always recognize that an astral form is nearby. An *average Astral Projection* action determines if your hero can recognize an astral individual that he or she knows.

**Stunt—Dimensional Travel:** While projecting astrally, your hero's astral form can cross dimensional barriers as if the hero had *Dimensional Travel*.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can transport up to his or her power's intensity in persons into the astral plane. If the hero gets lost or dies, the passengers get lost as well.

## BLENDING

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Nightcrawler, Skrulls

**Related Powers:** Imitation, Invisibility

Blending allows your hero to alter the pigmentation and color of his or her skin (and clothing, if made of unstable molecules) to match the surroundings, much like a chameleon. This power acts like *Invisibility* if the hero remains motionless; against special senses and electronic detection, the hero makes an *average Blending (Willpower)* action to keep his or her body and outline hidden.

Blending affects only sight, so *Enhanced Senses* will detect a blending hero with little difficulty. While compensating for background color shifts, the hero cannot change distances. If the hero stops concentrating on the Blending, it ends immediately.

**Limit—Darkness Only:** The power works only in darkness. At long distances and in low light, no one can see the hero. This limit can instead apply to other backdrops, such as forests or water.

**Stunt—Camouflage Clothes:** Your hero's clothes and carried objects blend as well, regardless of whether they're made of unstable molecules.

**Stunt—Camouflage Others:** Anyone your hero touches can also blend into the background. This requires the hero's complete concentration.

## BLINDING

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Quasar, Photon, Dazzler

**Related Power:** Light Control

This attack can blind unprotected targets by forcing chemicals or energy into a victim's visual organs. Your hero needs to make a *successful easy Blinding (Agility)* attack to blind a foe. The attack may be dodged, but if not, the victim is blinded for an aura duration. Blind individuals have 0 Agility in fights and cannot surprise or avoid surprise attacks.

**Stunt—Blinding Blast:** Your hero's Blinding can affect everyone within firing distance. If the hero pushes this power, he or she cannot see or use Blinding again until restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Remove Blindness:** With a touch, your hero can eliminate blindness he or she caused.

**Stunt—Resistance to Light:** Your hero gains *Resistance to Light*, including blindness.

## BODY ARMOR

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Thing, Iron Man, Doctor Doom

**Related Powers:** Density Control, Force Field

Every hero has an armorlike defense equal to Strength score. Armor defense bonuses subtract damage from an undodged physical attack and many energy attacks. If the defense is greater than the amount of damage, no damage is suffered. Armor always protects against physical attacks and blast attacks unless noted in the power description or the Narrator says otherwise.

During hero creation, you may spend points for Body Armor beyond that of Strength score. Unpowered armor can be natural or artificial. Such extra armor is usually written as "plus-a-number," such as +4. The human body cannot handle defense bonuses above +10, and very few exist above +7.

Powered armor usually replaces the user's defense bonus with its intensity.

**Stunt—Self-Repair:** The armor repairs itself after being hit. If it is broken, after one exchange it returns to its full value.

**Stunt—Unbreakable:** The armor itself cannot be broken. This doesn't change its defense value, so damage can still get through. But the armor itself is invulnerable.

## BODY TRANSFORMATION

**Trump Suit:** Agility

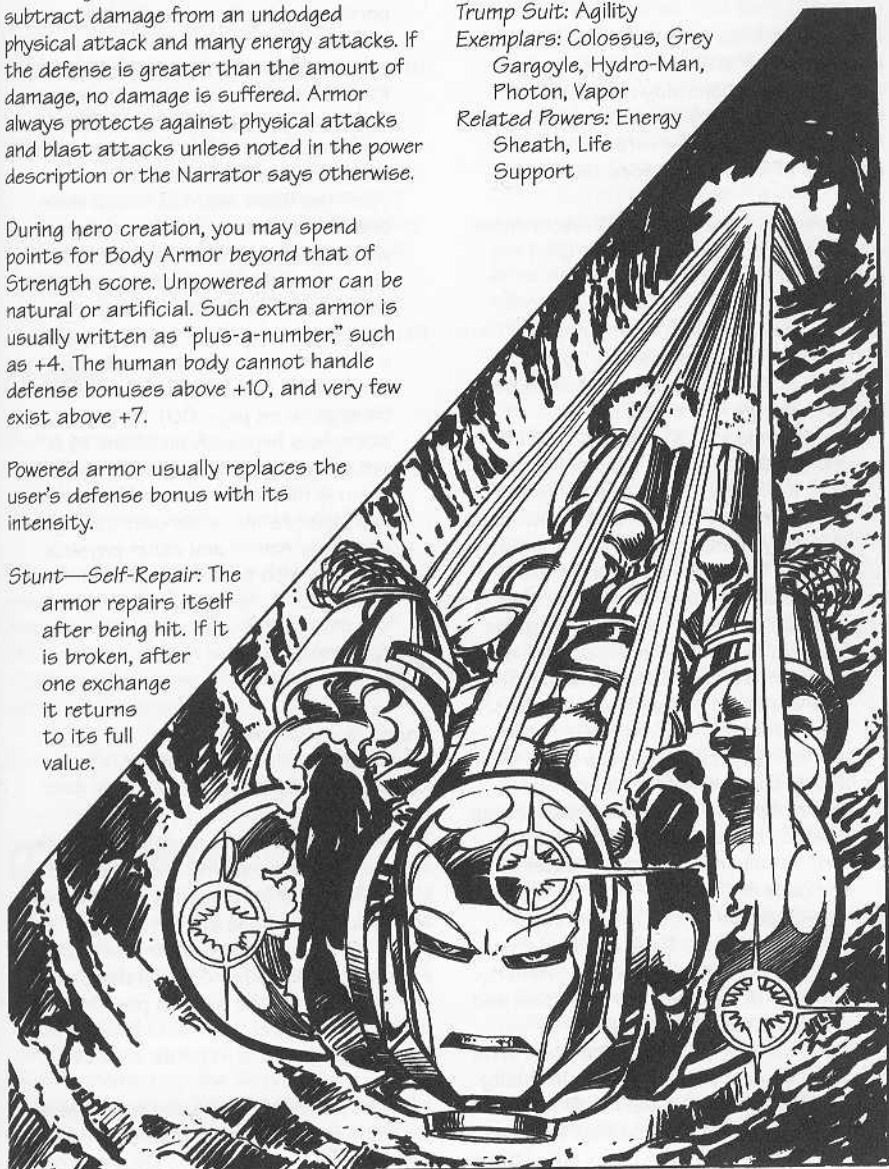
**Exemplars:** Colossus, Grey

Gargoyle, Hydro-Man,  
Photon, Vapor

**Related Powers:** Energy

Sheath, Life

Support



Your hero may convert his or her own living tissues to other materials for an aura duration. A hero in the transformed state automatically gains Strength and defense equal to the material strength of the material transformed or the intensity of the power, whichever is lower. Your hero gains any special functions and innate abilities of the transformation material.

A hero hurt while transformed suffers normal damage. If the transformed body is destroyed, the hero may reintegrate himself or herself if any cards remain in his or her hand. However, the hero must reintegrate all of his or her pieces to reform.

This power is useless without one or more of the stunts below. Each form is considered a stunt.

**Limit—One Form Only:** Your hero can transform only into a very specific type of form, such as steel or photons.

**Stunt—Energy Form:** Your hero transforms into a coherent field of energy (which can be shaped like the hero if desired). He or she gains that form of energy Control and Flight. While in energy form, the hero can voluntarily go to 0 Strength in exchange for Invulnerability to Kinetics and other physical attacks. The hero also gains Energy Blast and can explode to affect all targets within firing distance if he or she suffers the damage as well (the hero's defenses and Invulnerabilities are ignored). Energy heroes suffer double their power's intensity in damage points from attacks based on Intellect or substances to which the form is vulnerable (such as water in the case of fire).

**Stunt—Gaseous Form:** Gas and vapor forms have Flight 1 and can be carried through the air at the wind's intensity. The hero is Invulnerable to Kinetics and physical attacks but reduced to Strength 0. Air Control and other wind attacks work at double their intensity against the hero. If the hero's gas is opaque or toxic in some way, the hero may obscure sight or knock out victims.

**Stunt—Liquid Form:** A liquid form allows the hero to move as a liquid through tight spaces. While in this form, the hero has the power's intensity in Resistance to Kinetics and physical attacks, but suffers double damage from Heat. The hero can draw his or her liquid back into the body, but if the hero is separated into multiple portions of liquid, he or she cannot reform.

**Stunt—Semisolid Form:** Your hero gains Plasticity and may mold and shape his or her body in any way that the semisolid form allows. Thus, he or she can elongate, flow through tiny openings, blast enemies with a wave, and reshape his or her form into virtually any object imaginable. The hero also gains Strength and defense equal to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Solid Form:** Your hero can assume a solid form of up to the material strength in intensity (see **Material Strengths** on page 60). So for example, a hero with an intensity 6 solid form can have a body of lead, which is material strength 6. He or she replaces his or her own Strength and Body Armor and other physical qualities with those of the form assumed.

## CHI

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Iron Fist, Shang-Chi

**Related Power:** Ability Boost

The power of Chi is the control over one's exhaustion when pushing oneself to the limit. When your hero pushes (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) an ability or power an amount equal to or less than the intensity of his or her Chi, you don't send the card lost to the discard pile. Unlike normally, you place that card face up in front of you and then redraw that card.

At the beginning of the next exchange, discard the face-up card and lose cards from your hand of value equal to the value of



the discarded card. If this reduces you to no cards, the hero falls unconscious immediately and cannot act until conscious.

Your hero's Chi cannot be higher than his or her Willpower. This power cannot raise an ability score or power intensity over 20. You can't declare a second push until your first push is fully resolved.

**Limit—One Ability Only:** The Chi can be used to focus only one ability score or power's intensity, or through one specific type of action.

**Stunt—Last Kick:** After you discard from a Chi-influenced push, you can declare an action in the next exchange even if this reduced you to no cards. Your hero then drops unconscious at the end of the exchange. You may not declare a push during this last kick.

## CLAWS

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Wolverine, Black Cat, Sabretooth, Lady Deathstrike

**Related Powers:** Teeth, Horn(s), Quills

Claws are sharp pointed items that inflict great amounts of damage. The power's intensity refers to the damage bonus of the claws, which can never be more than +10. Very few heroes have natural weapons above +7, however.

**Stunt—Retractable:** The claws can go back into your hero's hands or arms.

## COLD CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Iceman, Blizzard

**Related Power:** Weather Control

Heroes with Cold Control can shift temperature downward in a nearby area. Your hero can drop the temperature roughly 10 degrees Fahrenheit per point of intensity; a hero with a 20 intensity can thus make a 50° room into a -150° room

in one exchange. If the temperature drops below -50°, everyone in the room suffers the power's intensity in damage points after subtracting defense. This power can be targeted at one individual if the hero desires. If the hero stops concentrating on controlling the temperature, it rises to normal at the end of the exchange.

**Limit—Non-Generative:** Your hero cannot generate ice, and the temperature must be below 32° Fahrenheit for the power to work. Only if ice of the desired intensity exists can he or she use ice stunts of Cold Control.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Cold). He or she can absorb cold (1 point of cold intensity per point of power intensity) and can effectively melt any ice or protect others from cold attacks.

**Stunt—Body Armor:** The power's intensity can be used instead of Strength for defense. If the hero is hit by heat or fire, the hero has no defense and loses the Body Armor for an exchange.

**Stunt—Cold Fire:** Your hero can project a cold flame from his or her body. This can be used as a firing distance attack causing damage equal to the power's intensity. This power is similar to Fire Control, but provides none of the stunts (for that, take Fire Control with the Light Only limit).

**Stunt—Cold Waves:** Your hero can project pure cold energy waves. Non-Cold Resistant individuals within striking distance have the difficulty ratings of their actions raised by one level. This stunt can be used to counteract heat damage (e.g., projecting cold around firefighters).

**Stunt—Ensnarement:** With an average Cold Control (Agility) action, your hero can freeze a foe so that he or she cannot move. The target may use an action to make an average Strength (Cold Control) action to break free; otherwise, he or she will have to wait till the ice melts away.

**Stunt—Flash Freeze:** Your hero can push (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) the Cold Control to the max, hitting all

within firing distance with a cold burst equal to the power's intensity. Not only does this harm the hero, but the hero cannot use the power until you're restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Ice Missiles:** Your hero freezes water droplets to create iceballs and snowballs that he or she can shoot up to firing distance. These missiles cause damage equal to the power's intensity, while snowball missiles inflict half that.

**Stunt—Ice Patch:** Your hero can create slick patches of ice. Those walking over the area must make *average Agility (Cold Control)* actions to avoid falling and losing an action.

**Stunt—Ice Ramps:** Your hero skates on ramps of ice that allow Flight 1 while in firing distance of the ground. The hero cannot make quick turns or stops, but with supports, can cause the ramp to rise. Ice ramps aren't permanent and their melting may cause property damage.

**Stunt—Ice Sculpture:** Your hero can create statues of ice, including mirror images. Heroes with the skill of Art can lower the difficulty by one level if trying to impress others with the sculpture.

**Stunt—Ice Shield:** Your hero creates a shield that can block multiple attacks with a material strength equal to the power's intensity. Attacks that get through shatter the shield but don't damage the hero. The hero must concentrate to use this shield.

**Stunt—Ice Walls:** Your hero can create columns, walls, and other large geometric shapes with material strength equal to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Resistance to Cold:** Your hero gains Resistance to Cold.

## COMPUTER LINK

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Machinesmith, Ultron, Techno

**Related Power:** Telepathy

Your hero may communicate with and retrieve information from computer systems. The hero must be able to access

the computer in some way, usually by means of an implant relayed to a predetermined computer. If trying to break into a new computer, compare this intensity to the Intellect score of the computer or mechanical being. This power also allows the reprogramming of simple robots, but sentient machines require a *challenging Computer Link (Willpower)* action.

**Stunt—Haywire:** The hero can make large numbers of electronic objects do crazy things for an aura duration, but can't control the objects' actions when doing so.

**Stunt—Machine Animation:** Once linked, the hero can cause a computer-controlled machine to move and perform actions at his or her behest. If the machine cannot move on its own, the hero can give it limited ground movement.

**Stunt—Mechanical Link:** The power may be used on any machine with a motor, regardless of whether it has a computer.

**Stunt—Multiple Machines:** Your hero may extend this power to any number of machines.

## CORROSION

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Man-Thing, Styx

**Related Powers:** Digging, Poison

Your hero has a corrosive, acidic, or rotting attack that causes decay and destruction. If Corrosion gets through defense, cards lost aren't put into the discard pile. Instead, they are placed face up in front of the player of the damaged hero. At the beginning of each exchange, one card is removed, and that card's value in damage is dealt again to the target. When the face-up cards are all gone, the corrosion is finished. If the corrosive is removed before the end of this process, so is the threat of further damage.

Corrosion also can damage objects by eating away at their material strengths.

The corrosion inflicts its intensity in damage to the object, and if any damage gets through the material strength, the additional damage reduces the material strength by that amount. If this exceeds the material strength of the object, it is destroyed. So if a 14 intensity acid strikes steel (material strength 10), it reduces the steel's material strength to 6 (the equivalent of bone).

**Limit—Emotion-Sensitive:** Damage is delivered only to those living creatures who harbor a particular emotion, such as fear.

**Limit—Material-Sensitive:** Damage is delivered only to a particular type of material, such as wood or flesh.

**Stunt—Corrosive Missile:** Your hero can launch the corrosive attack at firing distance. If it misses, it will still hit something (generally resolved through a random dramatic event).

**Stunt—Resistance to Corrosion:** Your hero gains Resistance to Corrosion.

## COSMIC AWARENESS

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Captain Mar-Vell, Ego the Living Planet

**Related Powers:** Detection, Danger Sense

Your hero is in tune with the universe and can perceive powerful entities and glean information from the cosmos. Any cosmic-powered being in the same league as the Silver Surfer can be detected within 100 miles of the hero with an average Cosmic Awareness action. So can any large cosmic disturbance within the same universe with a challenging Cosmic Awareness action.

If the hero's Cosmic Awareness is 10+, once per game session you may ask the Narrator a yes-or-no question that he or she must answer truthfully. This power is not Precognition, however, and does not give the hero foreknowledge of events. Narrators can use this tool to give a player awareness of an event critical to the game, even if the hero is nowhere near it.

**Limit—Location-Specific:** Your hero knows about the events in only one limited area, though he or she can be anywhere within the same universe and know this information.

**Stunt—Weakness Detection:** Your hero can look at any being, and by performing an average Cosmic Awareness action can learn any of the being's limits or hindrances, including diseases and curses. The hero can even use this power on himself or herself.

## COSMIC ENERGY CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Galactus, Havok, Silver Surfer

**Related Powers:** Kinetic Control, Light Control

The power cosmic is the most potent force in the universe. Manipulation of this omnipresent energy is difficult, but with mastery comes great power. The basic use of this power is to fire an energy blast at the power's intensity.

Heroes toy with the power cosmic at their peril. Every time this power or any of its stunts are used, the hero's player draws a card. If the value of this card is higher than the power's intensity, the hero suffers that amount of damage (ignoring all defenses) and cannot use this power again for the next exchange. Heroes with 10+ Cosmic Energy Control don't have to draw.

**Limit—Plasma Only:** Your hero can control only the most volatile form of cosmic energy, plasma. This limits the stunts available to Absorption.

**Stunt—Ability Boost:** Your hero gains Ability Boost, with a maximum ability score total of 30.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Cosmic Energy).

**Stunt—Alchemy:** Your hero gains Alchemy and can transmute elements but not reshape them.

**Stunt—Energy Detection:** Your hero can detect waves of energy. The hero can

identify the general type of energy (X-rays, light, nuclear exhaust, and so on) and can track the energy trail of that specific type. Faint trails or confusing patterns of energy may require challenging or even daunting success.

**Stunt—Energy Gift:** Supreme control of this energy allows your hero to change the very nature of persons and objects. The hero may imbue anyone with energy powers that he or she possesses, but only if the subject makes a *daunting Willpower* (Cosmic Energy Control) action. If this action fails, the subject suffers the power's intensity in damage.

**Stunt—Healing:** Using cosmic energy, damage can be repaired, either for the hero or another person. The hero can repair up to the power's intensity in Health for a character. A hero draws cards until either at full Hand Size or the value of the cards drawn equals or exceeds the intensity.

**Stunt—Resistance to Radiation:** Your hero gains Resistance to Radiation, including Cosmic Energy.

**Stunt—Starburst:** Your hero can push (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) the Cosmic Energy Control to the max, hitting everyone within firing distance with an energy burst equal to the power's intensity. Not only does this harm the hero, but the hero cannot use his or her power until you are restored to full Hand Size.

## ANGER SENSE

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Spider-Man, Taskmaster

**Related Powers:** Cosmic Awareness, Enhanced Senses, Radar Sense

This inherent warning of danger is also called Combat Sense—or, in the case of its most famous possessor, Spider-Sense. This power's intensity can be used in place of Agility for the purpose of dodging attacks.

A hero with a Danger Sense of intensity 5 or more cannot be surprised—that is, you

get to declare an action in any exchange where anyone declares a surprise attack on your hero. This doesn't reveal the type of the attack, just that one is coming. A Narrator might tell you that there's something bad behind the door before your hero goes in, but not exactly what it is.

**Stunt—Danger Sense Tracking:** Your hero can use a tracer of some sort that keys into Danger Sense. This imbues a skill in Tracking an individual who bears such a tracer.

## DARKFORCE CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Darkstar, Cloak, Shroud, Blackout

**Related Powers:** Shadow Control, Light Control

Your hero may summon the extra-dimensional energy field called the Darkforce. The frigid Darkforce inflicts damage equal to the power's intensity when it hits. Victims who don't dodge have defense equal to Willpower, not Strength.

**Limit—Darkforce Hostility:** The Darkforce is sentient, and it doesn't like the hero. Thus, every time the hero uses this power, he or she must discard a card, which is not redrawn.

**Stunt—Create Darkness:** By bringing the Darkforce to Earth, the hero can black out everything within firing distance. Normal vision is obscured, and those with Infravision or light powers must make challenging actions opposed by the intensity of the darkness to use those powers.

**Stunt—Darkforce Aura:** An energy shield wraps around your hero's body, acting as a personal Force Field equal to the intensity. It covers the body in blackness but allows the hero to see outside.

**Stunt—Darkforce Missile:** Your hero may form Darkforce arrows, daggers, stones, and so forth, inflicting normal Darkforce attacks at firing distance.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Force Shapes:** Your hero can create Darkforce cages, large globes, hands, hammers, and other shapes of a material strength equal to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Force Shields:** Your hero can generate Darkforce auras that can surround a number of people equal to the power's intensity. These people must be within striking distance.

**Stunt—Resistance to Darkness:** Your hero gains Resistance to Darkness.

**Stunt—Resistance to Light:** Your hero gains Resistance to Light.

**Stunt—Teleportation:** Your hero gains Teleportation, usable by moving through the Darkforce.

**Stunt—Window:** By superimposing Darkforce around his or her body, your hero can make things pass into the Darkforce Dimension and out behind. If used as a defense against an attack, the hero must make an average Agility action opposed by the attacker's ability score or power intensity.

## DENSITY CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Vision, Will o' the Wisp

**Related Power:** Phasing

Your hero can alter his or her density at will. As density rises, a hero automatically gains 1 point of Strength (and thus defense) per point of density changed. However, a high density will slow down the hero, lowering his or her Agility in the same proportion.

If your hero reduces density to less than normal, he or she gains Agility but loses Strength and defense. At 0 Strength, he or she is insubstantial. At 0 density, the hero cannot pass through solid items, but is immune to physical attacks (though not energy or force attacks).

No ability score can drop below 0, however. Neither ability score can be raised above 20 with this power, but reaching 20 in one

ability doesn't stop the other ability score from going lower.

As an example, a hero with Strength 6 and Agility 10 has Density Control 10. If he drops his Strength to 0, he can raise his Agility to 20. If he reduces his Agility to 0, he can only attain a Strength of 16.

**Limit—Higher Density Only:** Your hero cannot lower Strength below his or her base Strength, nor raise Agility above his or her base Agility.

**Limit—Lower Density Only:** Your hero cannot lower Agility below his or her base Agility, nor raise Strength above his or her base Strength.

**Stunt—Floating:** Your hero gains Flight 1 if at density 0.

**Stunt—Phasing:** Your hero gains Phasing at the power's intensity if at density 0.

**Stunt—Remote Density Control:** Your hero can use his or her power on another individual by making an average Density Control (Willpower) action. The target of the power can choose not to oppose this action.

## DETECTION

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Cerebro, Doctor Strange, Quasar, Sentinels

**Related Powers:** Danger Sense, Enhanced Senses, Telepathy

Your hero can detect certain kinds of energies. The hero must have at least one stunt to use this power. This power is limited to line of sight, unless the hero also has ESP. Typically, you must trigger the Detection to learn if something is present; the Narrator isn't required to tell you if something shows up unless you ask.

**Stunt—Astral Detection:** Your hero can see the forms of creatures operating in the astral plane, including ectoplasm of those adepts who can astrally project. This is an automatic ability; the individual can always recognize that an astral form is



nearby. An average *Detection* action determines whether your hero can recognize an astral individual that the hero knows.

**Stunt—Chronometric Detection:** Your hero can know the peculiar energy signature of each time period, with an average *Detection* action. The hero knows what day it is at any moment.

**Stunt—Dimensional Detection:** Your hero can detect the energy signature of each dimension, and with an average *Detection* action will know when he or she is on an unfamiliar plane.

**Stunt—Energy Detection:** Your hero can detect waves of energy. The hero can identify the general type of energy (X-rays, light, nuclear exhaust, and so on), and can track the energy trail of that specific type. Faint trails or confusing patterns of energy may require challenging or even daunting success.

**Stunt—Evil Detection:** Your hero can detect evil in persons and objects. If the target's calling is villainous (Demolisher, Greed, Vengeance, World Domination), the hero will know. Evil is a complex concept, so sometimes a person with such a calling won't be evil, while sometimes a person with another calling will. The Narrator gets final say over whether a person manifests as evil.

**Stunt—Lie Detection:** Your hero can detect lies by making an average *Detection* (Willpower) action. If this power is used against a hero, the player may be reluctant to tell another player or the Narrator if he or she is lying. If the Narrator thinks the player isn't telling the truth, he or she may impose a negative response bonus.

**Stunt—Life Detection:** Your hero can tell when living creatures are nearby with an average *Detection* action. You can declare an action in any exchange where a surprise attack is launched.

**Stunt—Illusion Detection:** Your hero can ignore illusions with an average *Detection* action.

**Stunt—Invisibility Detection:** Your hero can see anything invisible.

**Stunt—Magic Detection:** Your hero can detect magic. When magic is in force around your hero, he or she makes a *Detection* action. An average result indicates the hero knows that there is magic in the immediate area. A challenging result means that the hero knows who is using the magic. A daunting or higher result gives the player the type of spell or magic involved.

**Stunt—Mutant Detection:** Your hero is attuned to the specific mental radiation given out by mutants. A challenging *Detection* action can find a particular mutant.

**Stunt—Psychic Detection:** Your hero is attuned to exceptional mental radiation in general, and as such can make an average *Detection* action to detect the use of nonmagical paranormal abilities including mind-reading, thought-casting, mental control, and psychic attacks.

**Stunt—Telelocation:** Your hero can locate one or more known individuals wherever they are, simply by making an average *Detection* action. Any Mind Control or Telepathy powers can affect the individual at the extended distance.

## DIGGING

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Armadillo, Vindicator, The Moloids

**Related Powers:** Claws, Corrosion

Your hero can move below the ground by digging a tunnel. He or she moves through earth as if on the surface, slower if digging a tunnel well-supported enough to allow others to follow (otherwise the tunnel collapses behind the hero). The hero may dig through materials of a lower material strength than the power's intensity, but not those of higher material strength.

**Stunt—Direction Sense:** Your hero cannot lose his or her sense of direction underground.

**Stunt—Earth Consumption:** Your hero actually consumes and disintegrates the earth as he or she goes along.

**Stunt—Lightning Speed:** Your hero gains Lightning Speed when digging through the earth.

## ***DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL***

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Doctor Strange, Quasar

**Related Powers:** Darkforce Control,  
Teleportation

Your hero can travel to other dimensions. The hero can pop into a random dimension with an *easy* Dimensional Travel action, but must make an *average* Dimensional Travel action under pressing conditions. A *challenging* Dimensional Travel action is always required if the hero is trying to go to a particular alternate plane, especially when the hero is trying to go home. If the hero possesses Dimensional Geography, he or she can use the skill to reduce the difficulty of finding the way home.

Even when the hero knows where he or she is going, dimensional travel is fraught with danger. When the hero leaps dimensions, the Narrator draws a random card. If the value of this card is greater than the hero's intensity in Dimensional Travel, the hero will believe he or she is in the right place, but in fact is in an alternate reality. The subtle differences of the new reality will make themselves apparent soon enough. Heroes with 10+ intensity ignore this draw (including those with the Dimensional Detection stunt).

**Limit—One Plane Only:** Your hero knows how to get to just one dimension and back.

**Stunt—Dimensional Detection:** Your hero can detect the energy signature of each dimension, and with an *average* Dimensional Travel action will know when he or she is on an unfamiliar plane.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can take up to the power's intensity in persons into the new dimension.

## ***DISINTEGRATION***

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Mandarin, Molecule Man, Sersi

**Related Power:** Transmutation

Your hero can convert inorganic matter into pure energy. This is treated like a normal attack, except it only works if the total damage is greater than the material strength of the target. In such cases, the object is destroyed. This destruction occurs at the end of the exchange.

Against sentient but inorganic matter, Disintegration must not only overcome the target's defense, but must inflict enough damage to reduce the target to 0 Health (or 0 cards, if a hero). In this case, the target vanishes at the end of the exchange. Otherwise, it has no effect.

**Limit—Disruption Only:** Your hero cannot reduce inorganic matter to pure energy, but can reduce it to very small fragments.

**Limit—Temporary Disintegration:** Anything the hero disintegrates will reintegrate after an aura duration.

**Stunt—Disintegration Ray:** Your hero can shoot a beam of disintegration to firing distance.

**Stunt—Pinpoint Disintegration:** Your hero can destroy atoms of a target instead of the entire target. If a sentient inorganic creature is targeted, it suffers damage equal to the percentage of the target that is destroyed, rounded down.

**Stunt—Reintegration:** Your hero can reintegrate anything he or she has disintegrated.

## ***DUPLICATION***

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Multiple Man, Flashback

**Related Powers:** Gestalt, Illusion

Your hero can replicate himself or herself into exact duplicates for an aura duration.

Each dupe is an exact copy of the hero, with all the hero's skills and powers. However, each duplicate has an Edge of 0 and a Health of 10. You don't draw cards for duplicates, but instead mark off Health when they take damage, as if they were Narrator-controlled characters.

It requires an action to activate this power, which creates one duplicate as a contingent action. Dupes last until the hero is knocked unconscious or takes an action to reabsorb them. The duplicates are capable of independent action and thought but they have a subliminal link with their creator; if a duplicate is hurt or under attack, the others know of this.

Intensity	Maximum Duplicates
0-4	0
5-9	1
10-14	2
15-19	5
20-24	10
25-29	100
30	Infinite

Duplicates disappear when they wander beyond firing distance. Your hero can absorb duplicates, gaining the duplicate's memory while it was separate. If a hero absorbs more than one dupe in an exchange or if a duplicate is killed, the original hero must make a *challenging Willpower* action or black out for an aura duration. This power cannot be pushed.

**Limit—Future Duplicates:** Your hero pulls duplicates out of his or her own future. If a duplicate dies, the hero must make a *successful desperate Willpower* action or be paralyzed with fear. This continues until the hero succeeds at such an action.

**Limit—Living Duplicates:** The duplicates are alive and have their own personalities. If a duplicate dies, the hero's intensity in Duplication drops by 1.

**Stunt—Reabsorption Healing:** Your hero can attempt an action to reabsorb duplicates as a means of healing. Every healthy dupe reabsorbed returns one card to the hero's hand.

## EARTH CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Crystal, Avalanche

*Related Powers:* Digging, Earthquake, Element Control

Your hero can manipulate earth and rock of a material strength up to the power's intensity. This ability is limited to naturally occurring material such as stone and dirt, and consistent semi-natural material such as asphalt and glass. Radically altered items such as steel alloys, artificially constructed mechanisms (including computers, guns, and vehicles), and living or once-living things (such as rubber, wood, and flesh) are beyond the scope of this power.

**Limit—Grounded:** Your hero's intensity is halved if the hero isn't in contact with ground. If the hero is further than firing distance from the ground, the intensity is reduced to 0.

**Stunt—Digging:** Your hero gains Digging.

**Stunt—Dustcloud:** Your hero can kick up dust to reduce visibility to striking distance. This limit affects everyone within firing distance.

**Stunt—Earthflight:** Your hero gains Flight 1 by building pillars of earth under his or her feet. These pillars have a material strength of the power's intensity. If the pillars topple, the hero will fall.

**Stunt—Earthquake:** Your hero gains Earthquake.

**Stunt—Earth Armor:** Your hero can pile on Body Armor by causing earth to build up around his or her body (and, if you want, those he or she is touching). While doing this, the hero can't move or attack. Each exchange, you may add the value of one random card as a defense bonus; this card remains face up in front of you until the hero moves out of the protection. These cards are cumulative, but once the face-up cards surpass the intensity, no further cards may be added.

**Stunt—Earth Elementals:** Your hero creates beings of earth, stone, or rock, with Strength and Agility scores equal to the power's intensity. It requires a full exchange to create each elemental; while your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control these beings; if the hero falls unconscious, they collapse into rubble at the end of the exchange. These creatures suffer double intensity damage from air attacks.

**Stunt—Entrapment:** Your hero opens the earth beneath an opponent's feet or wraps stone around them. This is a normal attack, except that if the attack isn't dodged, the target loses the ability to move and gains Earth Armor (as above). The target may use an action on the following exchange or later to try to break out; this is a challenging Strength (Earth Control) action, and causes the power's intensity in damage points to the victim whether or not it's successful.

**Stunt—Groundwave:** Your hero summons a wave of earth that flows along the ground. The hero can ride the wave to gain Lightning Speed, or use the wave to attack a foe (firing distance or closer) with an opposed Earth Control action.

**Stunt—Lava Blast:** Your hero fires a lava Energy Blast from the ground or his or her hands.

**Stunt—Lava Shaping:** Your hero can turn any stone in firing distance to molten rock, then reshape it as desired. The molten rock will cool in one exchange, unless the hero concentrates on keeping it molten. If the hero attacks a sentient stone creature (such as a gargoyle) with this power, it is an average Earth Control (Strength) attack. If a sentient creature is reshaped, the Narrator decides whether any powers or other characteristics are lost or gained.

## EARTHQUAKE

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Magma, Rictor

**Related Powers:** Digging, Earth Control

By disrupting the ground, the hero wreaks major damage on persons and property. Quakes are random in their destruction, ruining entire buildings in some places and leaving others untouched.

When the hero activates a quake, it goes off as a contingent action later in the exchange. Every hero within firing distance (including your hero) has the opportunity to play a card. If positive, the hero sustains no damage. Otherwise, the hero suffers damage equal to the quake's intensity.

Every character also has a chance to avoid damage, done by a random draw. Characters who don't draw positive cards suffer damage equal to the quake's intensity. The Narrator also draws for each major structure within firing distance; if the result is not positive, the structure is assigned damage equal to the quake's intensity. If this exceeds the material strength, the structure collapses.

**Limit—Runaway Quake:** Once the hero starts the quake, the natural forces of plate tectonics take over. The Narrator draws and consults the aura of a card; if it's negative, the quake extends to far beyond visual distance and is multiplied in intensity by the value of the card. The hero can trigger this effect voluntarily if desired, though it still requires a random draw to see if it works. This limit can devastate a city or maybe even more than that.

**Stunt—Instant Seismology:** Your hero knows if an area is seismically active and will be alerted the moment a quake is triggered. The hero, and everyone he or she alerts, knows that the quake will happen as a contingent action.

*Stunt—Resistance to Quakes:* Your hero gains Resistance to Quakes, including quake damage.

*Stunt—Tremors:* Your hero can send multiple tremors through the ground. These don't cause quakes, but require everyone in firing distance to make an average Agility (Earthquake) action to avoid falling over and losing an action.

## ELECTRICAL CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Electro, Zzzax

*Related Power:* Weather Control

Your hero can fire bolts of electrical energy of up to the power's intensity. However, if the target can touch the hero, or touch water or metal in contact with the hero, this power inflicts the damage on the hero as well.

Your hero may generate this power internally or draw it from another source, such as exposed overhead power lines. In this case, the maximum intensity is equal to that of the power source. For purposes of this power, a household socket would be intensity 4, a small turbine might be intensity 10, and a large generator might be intensity 20. A power plant can generate intensity 30. However, if the power source's intensity is greater than the hero's intensity in Electrical Control, each exchange the hero must make an easy Willpower action opposed by the source's intensity. If this action fails, the hero shorts out and falls unconscious.

The hero also may recharge electrical devices and conduct voltage through water and some metals. Copper, iron, and steel are especially conductive, while gold and silver are less so. While the hero touches the conductive surface, everyone else touching it is vulnerable to the attack.

*Limit—Constant:* Your hero always emits electricity, and anyone who touches the hero suffers damage equal to the power's intensity.

*Limit—Non-Conductive:* Your hero cannot act as a conductor for electricity from a power source. He or she can only generate power internally.

*Limit—Non-Generative:* Your hero cannot create electricity or harness small amounts from the environment. He or she can only manipulate electricity if connected to a power source.

*Stunt—Ability Boost:* Your hero gains Ability Boost, but can modify only Strength.

*Stunt—Absorption:* Your hero gains Absorption (Electrical). He or she can absorb electricity of up to the power's intensity to prevent it from harming others, or store this energy for a touch attack or another power stunt within an aura duration.

*Stunt—Arc Riding:* Your hero rides arcs of electricity that allow Flight while in firing distance of the ground. The hero cannot make quick turns or stops. If the hero shorts out, he or she will fall.

*Stunt—Blowout:* Your hero can push (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) the electricity to the max, hitting everyone in firing distance with an electrical burst equal to the power's intensity. Not only does this harm the hero, but the hero cannot use his or her power until you are restored to full Hand Size.

*Stunt—Brownout:* Your hero can blow out all electricity in firing distance for an aura duration. This stops robots, powered armor, and computers from functioning unless they have backup power.

*Stunt—Lightning Bolts:* Your hero can call lightning from the sky with an Electrical Control action. This stunt works only during thunderstorms.

*Stunt—Lightning Speed:* Your hero gains Lightning Speed by riding lines of electrical potential such as power lines or wiring. If the hero has Size Alteration, the hero can manipulate the size of his or her body down to an electron and cannot lose direction while in this form.

*Stunt—Machine Animation:* Your hero can cause a machine to move and attack at his or her behest. If the machine



can't move on its own, the hero can give it limited ground movement.

**Stunt—Power Storage:** Your hero can store any intensity of electricity for any length of time. It can be meted out all at once or in pieces, dropping the intensity by the amount discharged. This storage takes a full exchange to complete.

**Stunt—Resistance to Electricity:** Your hero gains Resistance to Electricity. (This is a highly recommended stunt, given the drawback inherent in the power.)

**Stunt—Shock Field:** Your hero can temporarily charge his or her body or conductive metal with an electrical energy charge equal to the power's intensity. The charge lasts for only an aura duration and releases its charge on touch; if the hero is charging his or her body, it lasts as long as the hero concentrates. Thus, this is good for electrically charging metal doors, floors, chairs, guns, and so forth.

## ELONGATION

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Mister Fantastic, Machine Man, Doctor Octopus

**Related Power:** Plasticity

Elongation allows your hero to extend his or her body and limbs over a large area. The hero can sense around corners from a good distance away and pick up objects from across the room. Also, the hero can make a striking distance attack at firing distance. Targets attacked by Elongation can only the elongated part of the hero.

Coordination is difficult when stretched out. When using Elongation, any of the hero's ability scores that exceed the power's intensity are reduced to that intensity.

**Limit—Slow Retraction:** Your hero takes a full exchange to return any extended parts to his or her normal shape.

**Stunt—Seven League Strides:** Your hero can cross firing distance in one exchange and still take an action.

**Stunt—Telescopic Attack:** Your hero can attempt a surprise physical attack at firing distance. This can only work if the hero isn't in a fight at the time he or she triggers this stunt.

## EMOTION CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Enchantress, Hate Monger, Psycho-Man

**Related Powers:** Empathy, Mind Control, Pheromones

Your hero can control the emotions of another by making an *easy Emotion Control (Willpower)* action. If this action succeeds, the hero can implant emotions causing the victim to gibber in fear, be overcome with love, or feel anything else your hero wants. Robots and nonhuman aliens are immune to Emotion Control, but animals of at least 1 Intellect can be affected.

Only one type of emotion may be instilled in a target at a time. Options include fear, hatred, love, respect, doubt, pleasure, and the like. The hero must reinforce the control with another *easy Emotion Control (Willpower)* action if the victim is asked to act against his or her nature.

**Limit—One Emotion Only:** Your hero can implant only one emotion, such as love or hate.

**Limit—Reflective Emotion:** Your hero can implant only the emotion he or she feels then.

**Stunt—Broadcastable:** Your hero doesn't need to be within firing distance of his or her target, instead needing only a television or radio broadcast to affect the target. This is especially effective combined with Multiple Targets.

**Stunt—Empathy:** Your hero gains Empathy.

**Stunt—Multiple Targets:** Your hero can affect any number of persons within

the sound of his or her voice. A single action score is generated for all targets, even though the opposition Willpower may vary the difficulty.

**Stunt—Prolonged Emotions:** Emotions the hero implants can last for far longer than an aura duration. Though intense feelings will fade, the base emotion will remain. For example, this can cause a victim to remain in love with the hero or suffer serious doubt about being a super-villain.

**Stunt—Resistance to Mental Control:** Your hero gains Resistance to Mental Control, including all powers which have a Willpower trump suit.

## EMPATHY

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Empath, Topaz

**Related Powers:** Emotion Control, Telepathy

Empathy is similar to Telepathy, but registers emotions instead of thoughts. An average success (opposed by the target's Willpower if trying to hide his or her emotions) lets the hero know the target's emotional state, but not the cause of it. Detecting emotions of aliens or robots is at a minimum difficulty of *challenging* (12). This power can be blocked by a target also having the Empathy power, or one under the effects of Emotion Control.

The Empathic hero can also detect lies by making an *easy* Empathy (Willpower) action. If this power is used against a hero, the player may be reluctant to tell another player or the Narrator whether he or she is lying. If the Narrator thinks the player isn't telling the truth, he or she certainly is entitled to impose a negative response bonus.

**Stunt—Empathic Broadcast:** Your hero can broadcast his or her own emotional state to anyone within firing distance. The hero may make a

*challenging* Empathy action to broadcast to anywhere in the world.

**Stunt—Resistance to Mental Control:**

Your hero gains Resistance to Mental Control, including all powers which have a Willpower trump suit.

## ENERGY BLAST

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Black Widow, Wasp, Ultron

**Related Powers:** Most Control powers

This power consists of a simple energy blast of a nonspecified type. The hero can inflict an attack with a standard Energy Blast action. In general, the hero can fire bolts of energy of a particular type at striking distance or firing distance as a physical or energy attack. Skills like Ricochet will modify the difficulty downward. Note that this power's trump suit is Agility only if Energy Blast is selected as a power by itself, not as a stunt of another power.



**Limit—Touch Only:** This parameter limits the attack to striking distance, but also allows the hero's touch attack to carry through conductive materials to affect multiple targets. For example, a hero can affect three assassins with electricity if all are standing on a metal girder.

**Stunt—Blast Reflection:** Your hero gains Energy Reflection for blasts of the hero's chosen type of energy.

**Stunt—Explosion:** Your hero's blast explodes on contact. All individuals within firing distance of the target suffer the power's intensity in damage, assuming they do not dodge the blast.

**Stunt—Momentum:** Your hero can add momentum to objects and make them move as if pushed by someone of the power's intensity in Strength.

**Stunt—Resistance:** Your hero gains Resistance to the type of energy he or she uses with this power.

**Stunt—Ricochet:** Your hero gains the Ricochet skill, with regard to this power only.

**Stunt—Wide-Angle Beam:** Your hero can project a blast of energy so wide that it affects everyone within firing distance.

## ENERGY CONVERSION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplar:** Dazzler

**Related Powers:** Absorption, Energy Reflection

Your hero can change one form of energy into another form. The hero may do this either at the intensity of Energy Conversion or of an Intellect power that utilizes either of the energy forms in question. The forms of energy must be chosen at the outset. The converted energy can be pulled from the background (assuming it's available) or from an attack directed at the hero.

**Stunt—Conversion Control:** Your hero gains one Control power linked to the convertible forms of energy. This con-

trol is possible only when the source of energy is available and converted.

## ENERGY REFLECTION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplar:** Bishop

**Related Powers:** Absorption, Energy Conversion

This power provides the hero with a special form of Resistance to energy attacks. As long as the hero takes no other action, any attack of this energy of up to the power's intensity inflicts no damage on the hero. The next exchange, the hero can reflect the energy back at the attacker at full strength. If the hero is attacked with more energy than he or she can reflect, the hero reflects damage equal to this power's intensity and suffers the rest.

Though this is impressive, the bad news is that the hero must release the energy that exchange as a contingent action. If not, the energy erupts the next exchange, causing everyone within firing distance to suffer the full effect of the energy attack. The hero isn't harmed if this occurs.

**Limit—One Energy Only:** Your hero can reflect only one form of energy, like light or sonics.

**Limit—Random Target:** Your hero cannot control who the reflection will hit. The Narrator performs a random draw and consults the aura. If positive, the hero hits the desired target. If negative, the Narrator chooses the target. If neutral, a random target is chosen by assigning everyone within firing distance a number and drawing till one of those numbers comes up.

**Stunt—Power Storage:** Your hero can store any intensity of energy while concentrating. It can be meted out all at once or in pieces, dropping the intensity by the amount discharged. Storage takes an exchange to complete. While the hero holds energy, he or she can't absorb energy.

## ENERGY SHEATH

*Trump Suit:* Agility

*Exemplar:* Human Torch

*Related Power:* Body Transformation

This power allows the hero to surround his or her body with energy. The energy of the sheath can be of any type. This is not Body Transformation, since the basic integrity of the body cannot be destroyed simply by canceling the power.

The Energy Sheath is a specialized defense that works in place of the hero's natural Strength-related defense. This defense applies only when the sheath is active. If an attack exceeds the power's intensity, the hero suffers damage and must make an average Willpower action to maintain the Energy Sheath (failure indicates full power shutdown for an aura duration).

*Limit—Constant:* Your hero is always surrounded in the Energy Sheath. The hero cannot return to human form at all.

*Stunt—Energy Blast:* Your hero gains Energy Blast while sheathed in energy.

*Stunt—Flight:* Your hero gains Flight while sheathed in energy.

*Stunt—Life Support:* Your hero gains Life Support while sheathed in energy.

*Stunt—Lightning Speed:* Your hero gains Lightning Speed while sheathed in energy.

*Stunt—Resistance:* Your hero gains Resistance to the energy type while sheathed in energy.

## ENHANCED SENSES

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Wolverine, Daredevil, Hawkeye, Red Wolf

*Related Powers:* Danger Sense, Detection, Radar Sense

At least one of the hero's normal senses of vision, hearing, smell, touch, or taste is amazingly acute. Enhanced Hearing allows the hero to detect very faint sounds on

many frequencies. Enhanced Smell gleans subtle clues by smell. Enhanced Taste allows the hero to detect poisons and even disassemble recipes just by touching food to the tongue. Enhanced Touch allows the hero to read and discern fine details by running his or her hands along an object. And Enhanced Vision lets the hero see things no normal person could see.

Enhanced Senses can be used in place of Intellect to avoid surprise. The hero will know anyone he or she has met by applying the sense, and can make an easy Enhanced Senses action (opposed by the other's relevant power) to recognize Imitation and Shapeshifting. If the hero is tracking or examining an object, he or she can use the power's intensity instead of Willpower or Intellect to gain clues.

These extraordinary senses suffer attacks against them at a penalty of one level of difficulty. Thus, sonics, tear gas, and poisons (among other things) can all hurt the hero more than if he or she did not have the Enhanced Senses.

*Limit—Reduced Sense:* In compensation for greater sensation in one sense, another is reduced dramatically. The hero is lowered by one difficulty level on any action involving the reduced sense.

*Stunt—Astral Detection:* Your hero can sense the forms of creatures operating in the astral plane, including ectoplasm of those adepts who can astrally project. This is an automatic ability; the individual can always recognize that an astral form is nearby. An average Enhanced Senses action determines if your hero can recognize an astral individual that the hero knows.

*Stunt—Circular Vision:* Your hero can see 360° around his or her body regardless of the direction of gaze.

*Stunt—Empathy:* Your hero gains Empathy.

*Stunt—Energy Detection:* Your hero can detect waves of energy. The hero can identify the general type of energy (X-rays, light, nuclear exhaust, and so on) with an Enhanced Senses action,

and can track the energy trail of that specific type. Faint trails or confusing patterns of energy may require challenging or even daunting success.

**Stunt—Infravision:** The individual with this ability can see in the dark, which limits visibility to striking distance. Normal darkness is 1 intensity; powerful darknesses such as the Darkforce require average Enhanced Senses actions, opposed by the intensity of the darkness, to defeat.

**Stunt—Lie Detection:** Your hero can detect lies by making an average Enhanced Senses (Willpower) action. If this power is used against a hero, the player may be reluctant to tell another player or the Narrator whether he or she is lying. If the Narrator believes the player isn't telling the truth when asked, he or she certainly is entitled to impose a negative response bonus.

**Stunt—Microscopic Vision:** Your hero's eyes can detect objects normally too small for normal vision to perceive. Your hero can read microfilm without a mechanical reader or peer into the microscopic world of cells and molecules, and even subatomic worlds.

**Stunt—Penetration Vision:** This power allows the hero to see through solid materials like an X-ray. The intensity of the power indicates the depth in feet to which the power can penetrate, as well as the material strength of the objects that can be penetrated.

**Stunt—Protected Senses:** Your hero gains Protected Senses.

**Stunt—Radar Sense:** Your hero gains Radar Sense.

**Stunt—Sonar:** Your hero gains Sonar.

**Stunt—Telescopic Vision:** Your hero can see extremely distant objects that lie beyond the normal range of human sight, viewing anything within sight as if it were very close.

**Stunt—True Sight:** Your hero sees the true image of any object or person, bypassing disguises or concealment. The power penetrates any means of hiding something's true nature, whether physical, psychic, illusionary, or magical. This power may be used only on one target

at a time, but it's great for finding that secret door to the villain's lair, or spotting the Skrull in the crowd.

## ENSNAREMENT

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Spider-Man, Hawkeye, Black Widow

**Related Power:** Web-Slinging

Your hero can bind a victim. The hero must make an easy Agility (Agility) action; if undodged, the attack entangles the opponent as a contingent action. On the next exchange and any thereafter, the victim may make an average Strength (Ensnarement) action to break the hold. Ensnared victims cannot move or take other actions until freed.

**Stunt—Adhesion:** The ensnaring substance is so sticky that it can adhere whatever it touches to any object. On the next exchange and any thereafter, the victim may make an average Strength (Ensnarement) action to break out of the adhesive.

**Stunt—Instant Freedom:** Your hero can choose to free someone from his or her ensnarement just by thinking about it.

**Stunt—Multiple Targets:** Your hero can hit any number of targets within firing distance. One action score is generated for all targets, even though the Agility of the victims may vary the individual difficulties.

**Stunt—Resistance to Ensnarement:** Your hero gains Resistance to Ensnarement at the power's intensity and can wriggle free of most bonds.

## ESP

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Doctor Strange, Morgan Le Fay  
**Related Powers:** Danger Sense, Enhanced Senses, Radar Sense

Your hero can see and hear far away sights and sounds despite intervening dis-



tance or barriers. The hero requires a full exchange to mentally locate the area desired. Since this is a mental power and not dependent on the hero actually receiving visual input or sound waves, it isn't hindered by distance, distortion, or other factors that might impair sensation. If the area is shielded from senses, the hero must make an *easy ESP* action, opposed by the intensity of the shielding.

**Limit—Clairaudience Only:** Your hero can only hear far places, not see them.

**Limit—Clairvoyance Only:** Your hero can only see far places, not hear them.

**Stunt—Bestow ESP:** Your hero can let anyone see or hear anything that he or she can sense.

## **FIRE CONTROL**

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Human Torch, Firelord, Pyro, Sunfire

**Related Powers:** Cold Control, Light Control

Your hero can generate and control flame from his own body. He or she can project a fiery Energy Blast to firing distance at an opponent. The fire destroys objects of material strength 2 or less on contact and can damage other objects.

Your hero can also manipulate fire sources, raising them to the power's intensity or lowering them down to intensity 0. The hero may control a fire by concentrating, but once the concentration ceases, the fire rages on its own. After some exchanges of uncontrolled raging, fire creates smoke which reduces visibility to striking distance and inflicts the power's intensity in damage even if a target isn't on fire.

**Limit—Blast Only:** Your hero cannot control fire other than using an Energy Blast.

**Limit—Collateral Damage:** Any time the hero damages someone or something, everyone within striking distance also sustains the damage.

**Limit—Heat Only:** Your hero cannot actually manifest or control fire, but can control its heat. Damage is unchanged.

**Limit—Light Only:** Your hero cannot generate or control the heat of fire, but can control the light it gives off.

**Limit—Max Only:** Your hero can blast only at full intensity and cannot vary the intensity for fine control.

**Limit—Non-Generative:** Your hero cannot generate fire. Only if a fire of the desired intensity exists can he or she use Fire Control.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Fire). He or she can absorb up to the power's intensity of flame and heat, reducing damage to people and objects by the intensity. The hero can absorb flame only at striking distance unless the intensity is 10 or greater; heroes with higher intensities can absorb flames from up to firing distance.

**Stunt—Blinding:** Your hero gains Blinding.

**Stunt—Fireball:** Your hero can turn into a ball of fire. This technique projects the damage out to everyone within striking distance. At the beginning of each exchange this stunt is in use, the player must discard one card and not redraw.

**Stunt—Fire Elementals:** Your hero creates beings of fire, with Strength and Agility scores equal to the power's intensity. It requires a full exchange to create each elemental; while your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control these beings; if the hero falls unconscious, they wisp away into the air at the end of the exchange. These creatures suffer double intensity damage from water attacks.

**Stunt—Fire Missiles:** Your hero can launch existing flames as weapons in attacks at firing distance. The maximum intensity for these missiles is that of the existing flame.

**Stunt—Fire Restraints:** Your hero can shape flames into domes, cages, low-intensity flame blankets, and handcuffs. The hero must succeed in an average *Fire Control* (Agility) attack to trap an opponent. If the attack isn't dodged, the opponent suffers no damage but is immobilized by heat and flame. The victim can always break free, but will sustain the fire's intensity in damage to do so.

**Stunt—Fire Shield:** Your hero can manipulate flame to form a fiery shield that will inflict the power's intensity in damage on those that cross it. The shield can be of any shape out to firing distance. If hotter than intensity 6, it will melt lead bullets before they can hit the hero.

**Stunt—Flame Shapes:** Your hero creates fiery images and writes words in the sky in flame. They have an aura duration after the hero stops concentrating. Heroes with the Art skill may lower by one level the difficulty of persuading people of the images' artistic merit.

**Stunt—Flight:** By projecting fire behind, your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Heat Control:** Your hero can alter the heat level within firing distance by roughly 10° Fahrenheit per point of intensity. A hero with a 20 intensity can thus make a 50° room into a 200° room in one exchange. If the temperature goes above 120°, everyone in the room suffers the power's intensity in damage after subtracting defense. This power can be targeted at one individual.

**Stunt—Heat Sphere:** Your hero forms a globe of heat that inflicts the power's intensity in damage to anyone or anything that comes through. At 6+ intensity, the sphere melts lead bullets before they can hit.

**Stunt—Illusion:** Your hero can form insubstantial images of heat as if he or she had Illusion. These images play upon the blurring of vision in hot areas.

**Stunt—Nova Flame:** Your hero can push (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) the fire to the max, hitting

everyone in firing distance with a fire burst equal to the power's intensity. Not only does this harm the hero, but it means the hero cannot use his or her power until you are restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Smokescreen:** Your hero can blanket an area with blinding, choking smoke. The visibility of everyone within firing distance is reduced to striking distance. The hero can make an average *Fire Control* (Strength) action to rob everyone in the smoke of an action; one action score is generated for everyone, though differing Strengths will cause the difficulty numbers to vary from target to target.

**Stunt—Updraft:** Your hero can control the ambient heat to form a hot air updraft. It will buoy or slow the descent of falling objects as if the hero hoisted them with a Strength score equal to the power's intensity.

## FLIGHT

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Archangel, Gladiator, Iron Man

**Related Powers:** Space Flight, Wings

Your hero has the long-sought ability to fly. Any number of sources—Wings, Gravity Control, Telekinesis, powered armor, and so on—can bestow this gift. The hero can travel up, down or across the atmosphere at up to the speeds below, and can carry what he or she could normally carry (including one or maybe even two passengers). Assuming an intensity of 4+, the hero can cross to anywhere within line of sight in one exchange. The hero also can get high enough that anyone on the ground cannot reach him or her, even with a firing distance attack.

The exact speed of flight is usually unimportant, unless two heroes are racing each other. Intensity 10 is roughly Mach One, the speed of sound. If the hero goes above intensity 9 speed, he or she will create sonic booms. This causes the hero

and anyone flying with him or her damage equal to the Flight intensity. Because of this reason, very few heroes exceed Mach One.

**Intensity 20 Flight** allows the hero to cross massive distances in less than an hour. **Intensity 30 Flight** allows the hero span the world in a minute or two. This power won't let the hero travel through space; for that, see **Space Flight**.

**Limit—Burst Only:** Your hero can only blast off in one direction, and only for an aura duration.

**Limit—Gliding:** Your hero can only fly downward by catching the winds.

**Limit—Levitation:** Your hero can only float up in the air. He or she can choose to be carried the direction and speed of the winds.

**Stunt—Ability Boost:** Your hero gains Ability Boost, but only for Agility and only when flying.

**Stunt—Life Support:** Your hero gains Life Support.

**Stunt—Mach Control:** Your hero does not generate sonic booms.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can take as many passengers as he or she has points of Flight intensity. If the hero loses concentration, everyone falls.

**Stunt—Power Dive:** Your hero drops into a freefall to swoop down on prey. The hero doubles his or her speed, but failure to pull out means he or she will suffer double the normal wounds from falling.

**Stunt—Resistance to Pressure:** Your hero gains Resistance to Pressure. This protects against vertigo and other such forms of disorientation.

**Stunt—Whirlwind:** By flying in circles very fast, the hero can attempt an average Flight action to generate a small tornado. This can carry objects aloft and inflict the power's intensity in damage to those caught in the wake, if the hero desires. Those in the eye of the storm suffer no damage.

## FORCE FIELD

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Invisible Woman, Kang, Doctor Doom

**Related Powers:** Body Armor, Kinetic Control

Your hero can create Force Fields to ward off damage. In its basic form, the power allows the hero to surround his or her body with a rudimentary energy shield. This requires an action to set up, but the field will protect against attacks in the exchange that it is created. The personal Force Field adds its intensity to defense, subtracting damage from all physical attacks. Personal Force Fields require concentration, though many heroes use equipment that keeps the fields running without concentration. Any stunt of Force Fields also requires an action.

When the field suffers more damage in an attack than its intensity, it collapses. The excess damage from the attack goes through to the hero, though natural defense still subtracts from that damage. The field takes a full exchange to recharge.

**Limit—Visible Fields:** Your hero's fields are visible to all viewers and cannot be easily used for surprise attacks. On the plus side, such fields protect the hero from Blinding.

**Stunt—Energy Bottle:** If the hero successfully defends against an energy attack (see **Shield From Energy**, page 153), he or she can hold the energy in a force bottle. The hero can then dispense it on the next exchange (or later, if the hero concentrates) in the direction it was going before.

**Stunt—Entrapment:** This stunt allows the hero to surround others in a field by making an average Force Field (Agility) attack. Once entrapped, the victim gains the field's protection, but cannot break free unless he or she can break the field through damage. The hero can also use this power to grab objects at firing distance, making an average

*Force Field (Agility)* action to take something out of an opponent's hand.

*Stunt—Expanded Field:* Your hero can project the Force Field out to firing distance. Anyone within the field also gains the added effect of the field, but neither the hero nor those protected can dodge attacks from outside it. The failure of a projected Force Field results in the field coming down, but those inside are unharmed by that attack. When it goes down, the wielder of the Force Field must make a *challenging Willpower* action or drop to 0 cards (or Health).

*Stunt—Forceflight:* Your hero gains Flight 1 by forming a column of force and allowing it to topple and elongate.

*Stunt—Force Bolt:* Your hero can create kinetic force missiles of the power's intensity, shooting them to firing distance.

*Stunt—Force Bubble:* If the hero takes an action to aim (see **Aiming** on page 33), he or she can create a bubble of force inside a small opening and expand it to inflict up to the power's intensity in damage. This attack can ignore mechanical Body Armor, if the suit has an opening for the attack to exploit. This stunt cannot be used to harm the bodies of living targets.

*Stunt—Force Cushion:* Your hero can form force shapes to prop others aloft, and cushions of force resilient enough to absorb up to the power's intensity in damage from a fall or crash for all involved.

*Stunt—Remote Field:* Your hero can project the Force Field out around anyone or anything within firing distance, even if the hero isn't inside the field. Anyone within the field also gains its added effect, but neither the hero nor those protected can dodge attacks from outside the field. The failure of a projected Force Field results in the field coming down, but those inside are unharmed by that attack. When it goes down, the wielder of the Force Field must make a *challenging Willpower* action or drop to 0 cards (or Health).

*Stunt—Shield From Energy:* Your hero's field provides defense against almost all energy attacks, not just physical attacks. Exceptions include Sonic Energy and Blinding, though solid or semisolid manifestations of these powers can't penetrate the field unless they originate inside (i.e., a laser beam bounces off, but a sonic hammer created inside the field can pound the hero).

*Stunt—Shield From Magic:* Your hero's field provides defense against all magical attacks and magical control, even those powers that attack Willpower.

*Stunt—Shield From Psionics:* Your hero's field gives defense against psychically derived powers.

*Stunt—Suffocation:* Your hero can suffocate a foe by cutting off air. This requires aiming (see **Aiming**). If the average Force Field (Agility) attack isn't dodged, the victim loses a card (or 5 Health) per exchange. The field can be broken normally, but not by the victim.

## GESTALT

*Trump Suit:* Agility

*Exemplars:* Collective Man, Thunderiders

*Related Power:* Duplication

Gestalt is the merging of two or more heroes' bodies to form another hero. The heroes generally have different personalities and attributes and combine to make a greater whole. The powers of the united hero may be derived from the separate bodies, or manifest themselves only in the united form. All of the component heroes must come together to generate the united form.

Statistics should be created for the individuals (a number of heroes up to the power's intensity) and the united form. It is up to the players and Narrator to decide whether the united form has one persona or many, and whether the united personality derives from the individuals.

Generally, each ability and power is at the highest of any of the individuals plus the Gestalt intensity, to a maximum of 20.

Damage to the separate forms doesn't transfer into the united form, but damage from the united form will transfer into the individuals. If the unified form is wounded at the time of separation, the players of the separate heroes can have a maximum Hand Size equal to that of the unified form at the time of separation. Narrator-run characters each suffer damage points equal to the number suffered by the unified force at the time of separation.

*Stunt—Disguised Gestalt:* The united hero can change its appearance to that of any one of the individuals while maintaining the statistics of the united form.

*Stunt—Gestalt Telepathy:* The gestalt gains Telepathy. Telepathic communication between component minds of the gestalt can occur regardless of distance. If the united form has an independent mind, its components can now communicate with it.

*Stunt—Mind Shift:* Control of the united form can shift from one individual's mind to another. If the controlling hero doesn't want to relinquish control, another can try to take over by succeeding in an average Willpower (Willpower) action.

*Stunt—Remote Merging:* Your heroes can unite regardless of the distance between the individuals, assuming they are all in the same dimension.

*Stunt—Resistance to Mental Control:* Due to the multiple minds, your hero gains Resistance to Mental Control (including all powers with Willpower trump suits) while in united form.

## GRAVITY CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Graviton, Vector

*Related Powers:* Density Control, Kinetic Control

This power alters the attractive forces of gravity up or down. If the hero reduces the forces of gravity to 0, all affected individuals gain Leaping. Earth gravity is 10 intensity, so if the hero can overcome that, everyone in firing distance gains Flight 1. (Many planets have gravities of a different intensity.)

If the hero increases the forces of gravity, either one person or all within firing distance have all Strength and Agility actions penalized by the intensity of the Gravity Control; powers that depend on gravity suffer the same penalty. This can drive ability scores and opposition scores below zero, often eliminating the possibility of fights in the area.

*Stunt—Flight:* Your hero gains Flight.

*Stunt—Gravity Field:* By causing objects to drop to the ground, the hero effectively gains a personal Force Field.

*Stunt—Stun Blast:* Your hero gains Stun Blast.

*Stunt—Telekinesis:* Your hero gains Telekinesis.

## HORN(S)

*Trump Suit:* Strength

*Exemplar:* Rhino

*Related Powers:* Teeth, Claws, Quills

Horns extend off the head and usually end in sharp points. To qualify as a power, they have to be a bit more threatening than Daredevil's horns. The power's intensity refers to the damage bonus of the horn or horns, which can never be more than +10. Very few heroes have natural weapons above +7, however.

*Stunt—Impalement:* If your hero crosses from firing distance to striking distance in one exchange, he or she can double the material strength of the horns for damage purposes only. However, if the attack is dodged, the hero strikes what's behind the target as a contingent action. If the hero strikes something that is stronger



than the horns' material strength in an Impalement, the horn will break unless the hero succeeds in a *daunting* Horns action.

## HYPERLINGUISTICS

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplar:* Cipher

*Related Power:* Animal Control

Your hero may rapidly learn any language from sufficient exposure through reading, listening, or contact. Once the hero masters a language, he or she is fluent in it. This only works on true languages: Earth animals, with the possible exception of whales and dolphins, do not have such languages. The difficulty of new languages appears on the chart below (lowered by one level if the hero has the Linguistics skill):

Source	Difficulty
Current human language	Easy
Archaic human language	Average
Alien humanoid language	Challenging
Intelligent animal language	Daunting
Nonhuman alien language	Desperate

*Stunt—Animal Communication:* Your hero gains Animal Control, but can only communicate with the animals, not control them.

*Stunt—Interlanguage:* Your hero can take an exchange to create a hybrid language between his or her own and the subject's languages, so that both groups can understand it.

*Stunt—Language Transfer:* Your hero can transfer the ability to understand a language to anyone. This assumes the hero has already mastered the language.

## HYPNOSIS

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Mesmero, Ringmaster, Lorelei of the Savage Land Mutates

*Related Power:* Mind Control

Your hero can dominate minds. He or she makes a hypnotic statement, either by voice or telepathy, then makes an *easy Hypnosis (Willpower)* action. If successful, the subject must attempt a contingent action of the hypnotist's choice. This action may be delayed for any number of exchanges, or may be contingent on another event occurring (say, the person's sister arrives). Unlike the skill Mesmerism, this ability can implant a suggestion that the victim would otherwise not be willing to undertake. The victim goes into a trance and is not aware of his or her actions while being hypnotized or while enacting the instructions of the hypnotist.

This power is not the same as Mind Control. The latter power allows continued control, but Hypnosis only allows implanted commands, not long-term influence.

If your hero is dependent on an item for this power and the item is removed, the Hypnosis ends.

*Stunt—Broadcastable:* Your hero doesn't need to be within firing distance of his or her target, instead needing only a television or radio broadcast to affect the target. This is especially effective combined with Multiple Targets.

*Stunt—Empathy:* Your hero gains Empathy.

*Stunt—Multiple Targets:* Your hero can affect any number of persons within the sound of his or her voice. A single action score is generated for each target, even though the opposition Willpower may cause the difficulty to vary from target to target.

*Stunt—Vertigo:* Your hero can perform an average Hypnosis (Willpower) attack at firing distance, which causes an affected victim to fall to the ground, losing an action. If the hero makes a second successful attack against the victim in the next exchange, the victim falls unconscious.

# ILLUSION

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Mastermind, Mysterio

*Related Power:* Image Summoning

Your hero can create vivid mental images of sight, sound, and other senses. These images don't register on film or in the minds of robots, but can perplex most humans. The hero may cast illusions to firing distance, but must always be able to see these illusions.

The caster makes an *easy illusion* (Willpower) action to fool all observers into believing the illusion is real; one action score is generated for all observers, even though differing Willpowers will alter the difficulty. The difficulty can be modified by the Art skill. However, the disbelief won't occur until observers have a reason to believe the image is false. (If they think that yes, that's a brontosaurus walking up Park Avenue, then as far as they are concerned, that is a brontosaurus walking up Park Avenue.)

Illusions last as long as the hero concentrates on them. Illusions inflict no real damage, but if a hero considers the illusion real, he or she will believe the damage as well. Illusions cannot cause damage beyond unconsciousness. Illusions may fool heroes, but they don't fool nature; an image of a bridge over a chasm won't suspend a believer in the air.

Since the believability of an image depends on the viewer not knowing it's only an image, a smart illusion-caster will keep his or her powers secret, perhaps even claiming them to be something else entirely. Once the hero's identity and power are known, it's certain that villains who meet that hero will immediately try to disbelieve any suspected illusions.

*Limit—One Sense Only:* The illusions can fool only one sense, such as sight or hearing. This limit makes disbelief actions one level easier than normal if some other sensory input is expected.

*Stunt—Broadcastable:* Your hero doesn't need to be within firing distance of the targets, instead needing only a television or radio broadcast to affect them.

*Stunt—Dreamwarping:* Your hero can implant images into the mind of a sleeping individual as well as an awake one.

*Stunt—Prolonged Images:* Images the hero creates can last for a long time after concentration lapses. The image will continue to behave as it was when the hero ceased concentration. If the image is attacked, it vanishes.

## IMAGE SUMMONING

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplar:* Moonstar

*Related Powers:* Illusion, Animation

Your hero may animate two-dimensional illustrations, causing them to become fully operational, three-dimensional objects. A hero may animate any drawing, even one of his or her own creation. The animated illustrations have size, abilities, and powers according to what is seen in the picture, but no power or ability can exceed the intensity number of the hero's power. No additional powers can be given to the animation, unless the illustration shows those powers in operation. In other words, animating a picture of the Invisible Woman wouldn't provide Force Fields or invisibility, unless those powers appeared in the picture. (And how can you show invisibility in a picture?)

In the hands of a hero with the Art skill, Image Summoning is a devastating weapon. Drawing and animating a picture of Ultron firing a power blast, for example, might be a very effective use of this power. This power can animate heroes on a TV screen, opening up the possibility of animating monsters from movies, cartoon heroes, and anything else the hero can think of.

Animated figures last for an aura duration. They then dissipate, returning to

their original location, and may not be animated again for 24 hours. The figures also dissipate if they are destroyed.

For roleplaying purposes, you can bring the source of the images to the game table. Of course, if you start getting ridiculous with this power, your Narrator might require this.

**Limit—One Source Only:** Your hero can animate drawings from only one limited source, such as a zoology book or a deck of cards.

**Stunt—Dream Summoning:** Your hero can produce solid images of a person's greatest fear or desire. Unless the hero uses this stunt on his or her own mind, the result is unpredictable. If the hero pulls an image from the mind of another player's hero, the Narrator gets a veto on whatever the player says is the hero's greatest fear or desire.

**Stunt—Prolonged Images:** Images the hero creates can last for a long time after concentration lapses. The image will continue to behave as it was when the hero ceased concentration. If the image is attacked, it vanishes.

**Stunt—Text Animation:** Your hero can animate images from descriptive text as if from pictures.

## IMITATION

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Mystique, Chameleon

**Related Powers:** Illusion, Shapeshifting

Imitation lets your hero take on the appearance of other humanoids without drastically altering his or her form. The hero can duplicate appearances, mannerisms, and voices of specific individuals (provided he or she has observed the individual for more than a few minutes), but cannot duplicate powers or talents of the imitated individual. The hero makes an *easy Imitation (Willpower)* action to fool all observers, but disbelief doesn't occur until the observer has some reason

to suspect the hero isn't who he or she pretends to be.

**Stunt—Imitate DNA:** Your hero's DNA morphs to look like that of the imitated person.

**Stunt—Imitate Fingerprints:** Your hero takes on the fingerprints of the imitated person.

**Stunt—Imitate Retinal Patterns:** Your hero can fool scanners of eye patterns.

**Stunt—Imitate Scents:** Your hero takes on the scent of the imitated person. When trying to fool someone with *Enhanced Senses (Smell)*, this requires an *average Imitation (Enhanced Senses)* action.

## IMMORTALITY

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Hercules, Black Queen

**Related Powers:** Invulnerability, Resistance

Your hero doesn't age or die in a normal fashion. The hero can still suffer card losses from wounds, but instead of dying when killed (not just reduced to unconsciousness), the hero hovers at zero cards indefinitely. The hero cannot move or act or speak until he or she heals back to one card, so trapping Immortals underwater or inside volcanoes can keep them out of the way for quite a while. Immortal heroes can slowly regenerate lost body parts; unless the hero's atoms are spread over a wide area of space, the Immortal hero eventually will return.

At "death," an Immortal hero reverts to the scores he or she had upon arriving on Earth. Immortality is applicable in regards to Earth's dimension; when extradimensional Immortal heroes are in their home dimensions, they still don't age, but can be killed normally in that dimension.

This power costs 10 points in hero creation. Its intensity is always 10.

*Stunt—Invulnerability to Disease:* Your hero gains Invulnerability to Disease.

*Stunt—Raising the Dead:* Your hero may bring dead mortals back to life. This power may not be taken as a stunt without first taking Immortality.

*Stunt—Suspended Animation:* Your hero can go into a trance so deep that no one can tell if he or she is alive. The hero cannot sense anything or take any actions while in the trance.

## INVISIBILITY

*Trump Suit:* Intellect  
*Exemplars:* Invisible Woman, Super-Skrull  
*Related Powers:* Light Control, Telepathy

Your hero may make his or her body invisible. This ability doesn't negate location by other senses, nor does it negate location by heat or ultraviolet sources. The hero will still have mass and substance (coating with dust or paint will reveal his or her form temporarily, as will fog or rain). The hero's garments or objects don't vanish unless made of unstable molecules.

Your hero never has to check whether someone with normal eyesight can see him or her. The power's intensity is used when something has a beyond-ordinary chance to detect the hero. The hero must make an easy Invisibility action, opposed by the observer's relevant power, to defeat all sensory powers and psychic or electronic scanning. Invisible heroes always show up on film viewed after the heroes have passed.

Your hero's surprise attacks can never be spotted, unless the target has Danger Sense or some other power that limits surprise. All attacks against an invisible hero are at +4 difficulty.

*Limit—Fools Only Creatures:* No electronic device can be fooled by the invisibility.

*Stunt—Inaromatic:* Your hero is undetectable by the senses of smell or taste.

*Stunt—Inaudibility:* Your hero is undetectable by the sense of hearing.

*Stunt—Intangibility:* Your hero is undetectable by touch. This is not Phasing (see **Phasing**).

*Stunt—Invisibility Detection:* Your hero can see anything invisible.

*Stunt—Invisibility Field:* Anything within striking distance of the hero may be made invisible.

*Stunt—Invisibility to Machines:* Your hero cannot be seen by machines or show up on film. This includes sentient robots and computers.

*Stunt—Remote Invisibility:* Your hero can make one other person or object invisible from up to firing distance. Heroes with Invisibility Field can use this stunt on multiple targets within striking distance of one selected target.

*Stunt—Remove Invisibility:* Your hero can cancel Invisibility within firing distance. This usually requires an average Invisibility (Invisibility) action.

## INVULNERABILITY

*Trump Suit:* Strength  
*Exemplars:* Sersi, Gladiator  
*Related Power:* Resistance

This power is similar to Resistance, but the hero is totally unaffected by the source of damage no matter who's behind it. Unlike Resistance, which uses stunts to allow accumulation of resistances, each type of Invulnerability is its own power.

This power costs 10 points in hero creation, and its intensity is always 10. Each selection of Invulnerability allows your hero to choose to be invulnerable to one of the following sources:

- Aging (including diseases which destroy cells)
- Cold (including ice)
- Corrosion (including all acids and bases)
- Darkness (including Shadow Control and Darkforce Control)
- Disease

- Electricity
- Emotion Control
- Ensnarement (including Wrestling attacks)
- Fire (including Heat)
- Force Fields
- Gases (including Pheromones)
- Heat (including lava)
- Kinetics (including physical attacks)
- Light (including blindness)
- Magic (including all magical spells)
- Magnetism
- Mental Control (including all Mental Control powers)
- Metal (including all metal weapons)
- Noise (including sonics and deafness)
- Paralysis
- Poison (including drugs and alcohol)
- Power Duplication (including Power Theft and Reflection)
- Pressure (including vertigo and dizziness)
- Quakes
- Radiation (including Cosmic Energy Control)
- Scanning (including all electronic scans)
- Stunning (including only Stunning attacks)
- Weather (including lightning)

Other Invulnerabilities may be approved by the Narrator.

## KINETIC CONTROL

Trump Suit: Intellect

Exemplars: Cannonball, Iron Man

Related Powers: Absorption, Force Field, Stun Blast

Your hero can generate a blast of kinetic force, the power behind motion. This is an easy Kinetic Control (Agility) attack, which inflicts damage like a Stun Blast. This is treated as if the blast was a normal blunt weapon attack, as though the hero had struck the target with a fist. (For the purposes of defenses, kinetics aren't "energy" attacks like fire and radiation are.)

If the hero varies the attack's intensity, he or she can have fine control over the force of the kinetic damage. For example, if the hero matches the intensity of a cruise missile, the missile may stop in mid-flight. If the intensity is slightly greater than the missile's intensity, it may be knocked off course. And if it's much greater than the missile's intensity, the missile may explode in midair.

**Limit—Max Only:** Your hero can blast only at full intensity and has no fine control.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Kinetic). The hero can absorb kinetics on contact; he or she can reduce damage from physical attacks by the amount of the absorption.

**Stunt—Energy Reflection:** Your hero gains Energy Reflection (Kinetic). With an average Agility action, the hero can reflect the power of a physical attack back upon the attacker.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Force Field:** Your hero gains a personal Force Field.

**Stunt—Immovability:** Your hero cannot be moved from where he or she stands while concentrating on staying put. If he or she breaks concentration, the immovability ends.

**Stunt—Momentum:** Your hero can add momentum to objects and make them move as if pushed by someone of the power's intensity in Strength.

**Stunt—Repulse Field:** Your hero can push out a Force Field of the power's intensity to firing distance, affecting all within the area of effect.

**Stunt—Ricochet:** Your hero gains the Ricochet skill, with regard to this power only.

**Stunt—Wide-Angle Beam:** Your hero can project a blast of kinetics so wide it affects everyone within firing distance.



## LEAPING

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Beast, Hulk, Toad

**Related Power:** Flight

Your hero can leap up, down, and far away. The exact distance isn't important, only the general effect. Heroes with up to 10 Leaping can jump maybe a few stories, but those with 10+ Leaping can often hurtle buildings and lakes. Those with 20+ Leaping can leap several miles at a time.

If the hero doesn't attack in an exchange, he or she can leap anywhere in sight in one exchange. In this case, he or she may use the Leaping intensity instead of the Agility score for dodging only.

**Limit—Up Only:** Your hero cannot cross distances using Leaping.

**Stunt—Power Slam:** Your hero can use Leaping instead of Strength when attacking. If the attack is dodged, however, the hero continues past the target and probably slams into something on the other side, inflicting the power's intensity in damage to his or her own body.

**Stunt—Ricochet:** Your hero gains the Ricochet skill, with regard to this power only. This allows the hero to divide a physical attack among two targets, the second attack being contingent. The hero divides Strength and all pre-cardplay modifiers between the two attacks, rounding down.

## LIFE DRAIN

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Dracula, Grim Reaper

**Related Power:** Absorption

This is a vampiric touch attack that allows the hero to drain off life energy, either through an energy attack or draining blood. The hero makes an *easy* Life Drain (Willpower) attack, with Willpower acting as defense.

**Limit—Multiple Drains:** Your hero must bring the victim from full Health to 0 Health (or cards) two or more times before the victim dies.

**Stunt—Braindrain:** Instead of draining Health, the attack drains Intellect. Assuming the attack succeeds, the victim subtracts his or her Willpower from the damage. The remaining damage is assessed against the victim's Intellect. The victim regains 1 point of Intellect every time the Narrator draws a card with a positive aura at the start of an exchange.

**Stunt—Draining Bolt:** The attack may be attempted at firing distance.

**Stunt—Psychic Vampirism:** Instead of draining Health, the attack drains Willpower. Assuming the attack succeeds, the victim subtracts his or her Willpower from the damage. The remaining damage is assessed against the victim's Willpower. The victim regains 1 point of Willpower every time the Narrator draws a card with a positive aura at the start of an exchange.

**Stunt—Slow Recovery:** The draining cannot be healed in the normal manner. Only after a week or more of rest will cards or Health return.

**Stunt—Telepathic Control:** Till the victim returns to full Hand Size or Health, the hero can speak telepathically to him or her and control his or her actions on an *easy* Willpower (Willpower) action.

**Stunt—Torpor:** Instead of draining Health, the attack drains Agility. Assuming the attack succeeds, the victim subtracts his or her Willpower from the damage. The remaining damage is assessed against the victim's Agility. The victim regains 1 point of Agility every time the Narrator draws a card with a positive aura at the start of an exchange.

**Stunt—Vampiric Rebirth:** If the hero brings the victim to death, the victim may come back from the dead. If a hero becomes a vampire, he or she becomes a Narrator-controlled character.

**Stunt—Weakness:** Instead of draining Health, the attack drains Strength. Assuming the attack succeeds, the victim subtracts his or her Willpower from the damage. The remaining damage is assessed against the victim's Strength. The victim regains 1 point of Strength every time the Narrator draws a card with a positive aura at the start of an exchange.

## LIFE SUPPORT

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Gladiator, Thor, Sersi, Quasar, Silver Surfer

**Related Power:** Adaptation

The individual can survive indefinitely without basic requirements, using the power's intensity as a guide. The advantages are cumulative.

Intensity	The Hero Can Do Without:
0-4	Food
5-9	Water
10-14	Sleep
15+	Air

**Limit—Transformation-Linked:** Your hero cannot use this power in his or her normal form.

**Stunt—Adaptation:** Your hero gains Adaptation.

**Stunt—Reformation:** Your hero can survive being hacked into many pieces. If the pieces are brought together, the hero can reassemble and regain full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Suspended Animation:** Your hero can go into a trance so deep that no one can tell if he or she is alive. The hero cannot sense anything or take any actions while in the trance.

## LIGHT CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Dazzler, Dagger, Jubilee

**Related Powers:** Darkforce Control, Shadow Control, Sonic Control

Your hero may generate and manipulate light energy. This power at its basic form allows the hero to send out waves of bright light, causing Blinding.

Your hero also can use this power to defeat darkness. The hero can dispel darkness in an enclosed space and provide light to firing distance in an open space. Shadow Control and Darkforce Control's intensities are halved against the light-controlling hero.

The ambient light in a building is usually intensity 1, while a street searchlight would be intensity 5. A laser beam might be intensity 10, and a huge spacecraft's light ray might be intensity 15.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Light).

**Stunt—Blinding Blast:** Your hero can attack everyone within firing distance. If the hero pushes this power (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23), he or she cannot see or use Light Control again until restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Fireworks:** Your hero can create globules of light which explode, causing damage at the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Force Field:** Your hero can create personal Force Fields of light.

**Stunt—Hypnosis:** Your hero gains Hypnosis.

**Stunt—Illusion:** Your hero can create visual-only holograms as if he or she had Illusion.

**Stunt—Invisibility:** By bending light around his or her body, your hero gains Invisibility.

**Stunt—Laser:** Your hero can focus light energy into a concentrated laser pulse or beam that inflicts the power's intensity in damage to one target within line of sight.

**Stunt—Lightshow:** Your hero can vary the colors and brightness of light to create an artful display. Heroes with the Performance skill may use it to reduce the difficulty of actions for any artistic performance.

**Stunt—Light Body:** Your hero becomes a creature of pure light. While in light form, the hero can go to 0 Strength in exchange for Invulnerability to Kinetics and other physical attacks. The hero also gains Energy Blast, and can explode to affect all seeing targets within firing distance if he or she sustains the damage as well (ignoring all defenses). Light bodies suffer damage equal to double the power's intensity from attacks based on light control or other such powers.

**Stunt—Light Knives:** Your hero fires knives of light out to firing distance with a Light Control action.

**Stunt—Light Shapes:** Your hero can create semisolid objects with material strength equal to the power's intensity and mobile light creatures with Strength and Agility scores equal to the power's intensity. The hero can create one object or creature per point of intensity.

**Stunt—Light Sword:** Your hero can create a sword of light from his or her hands to attack someone within striking distance with a Light Control action.

**Stunt—Purification:** Your hero can eliminate poisons and short-term diseases by bathing the victim in light (or using any other light-based stunt). This has no effect on long-term diseases like mutations and radiation poisoning, but can eliminate the effects of drugs and colds.

**Stunt—Resistance to Darkness:** Your hero gains Resistance to Darkness (including Shadow Control and Darkforce).

**Stunt—Resistance to Light:** Your hero gains Resistance to Light and blindness.

**Stunt—Darkness:** Your hero can black out an area in darkness, reducing visibility to 0. This is done by modulating the light in the area downward.

**Stunt—Strobe:** Your hero can make an average Light Control (Willpower) attack to cause a rapid-fire modulation of existing light and generated light. This causes viewers who succumb to the attack to fall

unconscious (no cards or O Health) due to overload.

## **LIGHTNING SPEED**

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Quicksilver, Northstar and

Aurora, Sub-Mariner

**Related Power:** Flight

Your hero can move at an amazing rate of speed. Lightning Speed is assumed to apply to ground movement, but if the hero has another movement power (such as Digging, Flight, Swimming, or Wall-Crawling), Lightning Speed can apply to it instead. Heroes with Lightning Speed can use its intensity instead of Agility for purposes of dodging attacks or for any action involving moving fast.

Heroes with Lightning Speed may divide their attack into a normal attack and one or more contingent attacks. The hero's normal ability score and all pre-cardplay modifiers are divided among the number of attacks, rounded down.

While running, the hero can carry what he or she could normally carry (including one or maybe even two passengers). The hero may accelerate to full speed and decelerate to a full stop in a single exchange. He or she can turn at maximum speed without the need for an Agility action. Assuming an intensity of 4+, the hero can cross to anywhere within sight in an exchange.

The exact speed is usually unimportant, unless two heroes are racing each other. Intensity 10 is roughly Mach One, the speed of sound. If the hero goes above intensity 9 speed, he or she will create sonic booms. This causes the hero and anyone moving with him or her damage equal to the Lightning Speed intensity. Because of this reason, very few heroes exceed Mach One.

Intensity 20 Lightning Speed allows the hero to cross countries in less than an

hour. Intensity 30 Lightning Speed allows the hero span the world in a minute or two. This power won't let the hero fly or travel through space; for that, see Flight and Space Flight.

**Limit—Burst Only:** Your hero can only blast off in one direction, and only for an aura duration.

**Limit—Inaccurate:** Heroes using Lightning Speed always miss in combat or when trying to catch or throw something.

**Stunt—Invisibility:** By vibrating at high speeds, your hero gains Invisibility while concentrating.

**Stunt—Mach Control:** Your hero does not generate sonic booms.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can take as many passengers as he or she has points of Lightning Speed intensity. If the hero loses concentration, everyone careers out of control.

**Stunt—Phasing:** Your hero gains Phasing.

**Stunt—Power Slam:** Your hero can use the Lightning Speed intensity instead of the Strength score when attacking. If the attack is dodged, however, the hero continues past the target and probably slams into something on the other side, inflicting damage to his or her own body equal to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Resistance to Pressure:** Your hero gains Resistance to Pressure. This stunt isn't necessary to avoid damage from running fast.

**Stunt—Run Up Walls:** Your hero may run up vertical surfaces, even upside down.

**Stunt—Spinning Drill:** By spinning fast, the hero drills into walls of material strength up to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Waterwalking:** Your hero can cross the surface of water as if it were land.

**Stunt—Whirlwind:** By running in circles very fast, the hero can attempt an average Lightning Speed action to generate a small tornado. This can carry objects aloft and inflict up to the power's intensity in damage to those caught in the wake, if the hero desires. Those in the eye of the storm suffer no damage.

## LUCK CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Longshot, Domino, Roulette

**Related Power:** Reality Warping

Your hero can alter chances of success, either good or bad. This power can be taken only at a minimum intensity of 15.

Good luck doesn't require an action if your hero has this power. Any time you play cards, you may flip over the top card of the deck. If you like the suit and/or value of the card better, you may use that card instead. Trump triggers off the new card as if it had been played normally. If this power is used to affect another being within striking distance, you must declare this as the hero's action for the exchange.

Alternatively, you may declare an action to cause bad luck to someone within striking distance. You cannot declare any other actions, though the hero can still try to dodge and resist attacks. If the victim's player or the Narrator plays or draws a card during the exchange, you draw another card and use that if the value or trump suit is more advantageous for your hero.

At intensity 20+, you can affect everyone in sight with Luck Control. The hero can use an action to affect the next exchange's Narrator draw, for purposes of value or suit only.

**Limit—Bad Luck Field:** All your hero's associates suffer bad luck whenever this power is declared. For the rest of the exchange, all allies within firing distance suffer bad luck, as above.

**Limit—Bad Luck Only:** Your hero can cause only bad luck, not good luck.

**Limit—Good Luck Only:** Your hero can cause only good luck, not bad luck.

**Stunt—Luck Missile:** Your hero can fire good luck or bad luck at a target within firing distance.

# MAGIC

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Doctor Strange, Black Queen,

Amanda Sefton, Spiral

*Related Powers:* Nearly all of them

Magic is the crafting of spells to invoke powerful forces. All magic in the Marvel Universe functions in roughly the same way, regardless of its source—innate power, drawn from extradimensional sources, or magical artifact. Magic automatically incurs the limit of Spell-Focused. That means that to make a magical effect occur, your hero must cast a spell as his or her action, attempting an easy Magic action to do so. The hero's spell then goes off as a contingent action, and this is where the more difficult actions will take place.

A mage cannot have a Magic intensity higher than his or her Willpower.

At intensities 1 to 9, the mage is a mere dabbler, capable of attempting stunts at the power's intensity, reading magical books, and employing magical items to gain power. Since magic is an imprecise "science" and the hero is a mere novice, whenever the hero attempts a spell, the Narrator draws a card from the deck. If the card is of a higher value than the mage's intensity, the spell fails, and if the aura of the card is negative, some disaster occurs of the Narrator's choosing. Obviously, mages of intensity 10+ have nothing to worry about.

At intensities 1 to 9, the hero has the following stunts available, each attained normally. All stunts provide the caster with the listed power, within the Spell-Focused limitation. None of these powers allow stunts themselves. The powers available include: Astral Projection, Detection (Magic), Dimensional Travel, Energy Blast, Ensnarement, ESP, Force Field, Illusion, Life Support, Telekinesis, Telepathy, Teleportation (self),

Teleportation (summoning). Other powers are available at the Narrator's behest.

At intensity 10+, the hero becomes a true mage, and this is where the power takes off. The hero knows enough about Magic to cast a vast array of spells. In general, the hero can affect the outside world in any number of ways, but not his or her own body. Magic 10+ allows a hero to duplicate any Intellect- or Willpower-linked power at the Magic's intensity. Also, no spell can give the hero skills or greater ability scores. This is why sorcerers tend to have lots of lackeys, in the manner that Doctor Strange had the Defenders.

*Limit—Creatures Only:* Your hero can affect only living creatures with his or her magic. This limit cannot be taken with the Personal Magic stunt.

*Limit—Material-Sensitive:* Your hero's Magic cannot function in the presence of a common substance, such as iron or mistletoe. Alternately, it won't work if something critical is absent, such as shadows or gold.

*Limit—Ritualistic:* Your hero's spells do not take mere exchanges to cast, but instead take hours of incantation and possibly even sacrifices.

*Limit—Written Magic:* Your hero can only cast spells by reading them from scrolls and books. Every spell requires at least a full exchange to cast, assuming the scroll or book is in hand and ready at the beginning of the exchange.

*Stunt—Personal Magic:* This hero can manipulate his or her own body, changing it and expanding personal abilities at will. The hero can cast spells to get powers with Agility and Strength trump suits, but no others. This type of magic overrides the main power types available with Magic. This stunt can be taken only by a true mage (see above).

*Stunt—Rangeless:* Your hero can ensorcell anyone he or she can find regardless of distance, often through Psychic Detection or ESP.



*Stunt—Resistance to Magic:* Your hero gains Resistance to Magic.

## MAGNETIC CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Magneto, Polaris

*Related Powers:* Gravity Control, Telekinesis

Your hero controls magnetic lines of force. The hero can move, shape, and control metal objects of up to the power's intensity in material strength. This acts as Telekinesis, but only for ferrous metal. Ferrous metals include iron, steel, and adamantium, but not precious metals like copper and gold. The hero can repel or attract these objects to each other by making an *easy Magnetic Control* action.

Heroes with Magnetic Control can project magnetic force bolts as an *easy Magnetic Control (Agility)* attack, but cannot do so at striking distance.

*Stunt—Animation:* Your hero gains Animation.

*Stunt—Direction Sense:* By tapping into the Earth's magnetic field, the hero can instantly gain a sense of where he or she is in relation to the magnetic poles.

*Stunt—Flight:* Your hero gains Flight.

*Stunt—Energy Detection:* By tracking fluctuations in the magnetic fields, the hero can detect energy. The hero can identify the general type of energy (X-rays, light, nuclear exhaust, and so on) with a *Magnetic Control* action, and can track the energy trail of that specific type. Faint trails or confusing patterns of energy may require *challenging* or even *daunting* success.

*Stunt—Entrapment:* Your hero can wrap metal around an opponent with an *average Magnetic Control (Agility)* action. If this effect succeeds, the hero may choose to have it cause no damage and merely immobilize the opponent, or to inflict damage while trying to crush the opponent.

*Stunt—Force Field:* Your hero gains Force Field.

*Stunt—Manipulate Nonferrous Metals:* Your hero's power affects nonferrous metals such as silver, aluminum, and vibranium.

*Stunt—Manipulate Nonmetallic Objects:* Your hero's power affects nonmetals through manipulation of the Earth's magnetic field.

*Stunt—Rapid Assembly:* Your hero can quickly and remotely assemble any device he or she could normally build. This stunt requires an *average Intellect* action to create the device in one exchange. The materials to make the device must all be present within firing distance.

*Stunt—Scrambling:* Your hero can scramble nonsentient machines. If attacking a sentient machine with this power, the hero needs to make an *average Magnetic Control (Willpower)* action to damage the machine. If the machine is reduced to no cards or 0 Health, it will need reprogramming or a new power source.

*Stunt—Stun Blast:* Your hero can use his or her power to stun living organic creatures by magnetically disrupting their hearts or nervous systems. This is equivalent to Stun Blast.

*Stunt—Telekinesis:* Your hero gains Telekinesis, affecting all objects, not just ferrous metals.

## MIND CONTROL

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Karma, Controller, Corruptor, Shadow King

*Related Powers:* Emotion Control, Hypnosis

This highly dangerous power allows the total overriding of the conscious mind. The victim's personality remains, but his or her actions are controlled by the hero. The hero makes an *easy Mind Control (Willpower)* action to dominate the victim. If this succeeds, on the next exchange your hero gains control of the victim for as long as he or she concentrates on the control.

The attacker and thrall must be within firing distance initially to effect *Mind Control*, though they may be separated by miles afterward. The victim will obey only the verbal or telepathic orders of the controller. Every time the hero orders the thrall to do something he or she would not normally do, the hero must make an *easy Mind Control (Willpower)* action to reinforce the control.

The controlling hero gains access to the victim's memories, but the thrall is unaware of his or her actions, knowing only that he or she has blanked out for a while. If a player hero is controlled, the player may run the hero normally, but all actions must be approved by the controller. Naturally, the controlled hero cannot pass on the information of his or her state to others.

**Stunt—Ability Boost:** Your hero gains Ability Boost for one ability. However, the maximum ability boost is equal to the corresponding ability of the thrall.

**Stunt—Mindwipe:** Your hero can erase the memory of another individual. This requires at least five minutes of concentration, followed by a *daunting Mind Control (Willpower)* action. If this action fails, the hero is reduced to one card and cannot take actions for the next exchange. If it succeeds, the subject's memory is erased; this doesn't alter ability scores, skills, or powers, but may change the subject's calling. If the subject is a hero, the player cannot act on memories the hero had prior to the Mindwipe. Whenever the memory is restored (either through this stunt or other psychic surgery), the subject regains all memories.

**Stunt—Possession:** This is a specific form of *Mind Control* in which all actions of the hero are assumed by the controller. The controller is "inside" the mind of the hero, and as such controls all actions without having to give commands. Possession is only possible against victims with no greater Willpower than the attacker's power

intensity. This is otherwise the same as *Mind Control*.

**Stunt—Transferral:** This is the complete transferral of a victim's consciousness into the body of the hero. This stunt requires a *successful daunting Mind Control (Willpower)* action to succeed. If the transfer fails, the attacker falls unconscious and may not try Transferral again for one day. If it succeeds, the hero and victim trade consciousnesses. Each retains his or her own Intellect, Willpower, Edge, mental powers, and skills. Agility, Strength, and physical powers are all swapped.

## NULLIFICATION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Leech, Forge's nullifier gun

**Related Power:** Power Amplification

Your hero reminds others that superpowers are just signs reading, "Nullify me." This power can negate the innate superhuman abilities of others. To nullify the power, your hero makes an *easy Nullification* action, opposed by the targeted power's intensity; otherwise, nothing happens. If the hero succeeds in the action, the victim's power goes away; it does so without regard to the effects, so a flying hero would fall and a sightless hero with radar would suddenly go blind.

If successful, power nullification works as a contingent action. This usually means the victim loses his or her powers at the end of the exchange, when wounds are assessed. This usually gives the victim one chance to respond before the power disappears. So if your hero hits a villain with a nullifying beam, the villain gets a chance to react with the power before the nullification takes effect. One chance only, of course, but that might be all the villain needs. However, if the villain then wants to flee the scene, he or she had better be able to do so without the power.

This delayed effect means that most heroes who rely on nullification get used to

the concept of surprise attacks. Also, nullification is temporary, lasting for an aura duration. If this period lapses or something else makes a lost power return, the power is restored at the start of the next exchange. This occurs before the Narrator's draw and action declarations. So if your hero nullified the Human Torch's Fire Control and the nullification wears off, Johnny can't flame on till the next exchange.

*Limit—One Power Type Only:* Your hero can only nullify one type of power, such as Mind Control or mutations or Magic.

*Stunt—Dampening Field:* Your hero can project the nullification to all within firing distance.

*Stunt—Extensive Nullification:* Your hero's nullification works for a long but still temporary period of time. This is the most anyone has been able to achieve with an innate nullification power, though some equipment can make this nullification permanent, such as in the case of anti-mutant inhibitor collars. If a hero loses a power permanently, it would not be unbecoming for the player to beg his or her Narrator to restore those powers. There's no card mechanic or lucky draw that will restore the power unless the Narrator wants it to happen. (Such permanent power nullification is best left in the hands of the Narrator, and used sparingly.)

*Stunt—Restoration:* Your hero can restore any power that has been nullified.

## OBJECT DUPLICATION

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplar:* Absorbing Man

*Related Powers:* Absorption, Body Transformation, Power Duplication

Your hero can duplicate physical properties of material objects or concentrated energy, taking on the material strength and defense bonus of the object touched for an aura duration. The duplicated item's material strength or

energy's intensity cannot exceed the hero's power intensity.

If a duplicated object contains energy (such as a furnace or enchanted weapon), the energy properties may be absorbed as well. Absorbed energy manifests from the hero's body but cannot be actively manipulated; if the hero touches a furnace, he or she becomes red-hot and glows with the furnace's heat, but cannot create heat blasts or otherwise use those energies.

Duplicating nonsolid materials (such as water) has a similar effect to Body Transformation, and the hero can manipulate his or her transformed body in the same way. This power doesn't allow control of matter or energy, nor does it protect the hero from damage (see Absorption).

*Limit—One Form Only:* Your hero can duplicate only a very specific type of form, such as wood or electricity.

*Stunt—Duplicative Shaping:* Your hero can adopt the form of the object touched into his or her body, such that touching a sword gives the hero a bladelikey arm.

*Stunt—Sympathetic Object:* Your hero can imbue an object (usually a specific one) with the duplicative power, causing it to transform when the hero does.

## PARALYSIS

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Black Crow, Doctor Bong, Mayhem

*Related Powers:* Ensnarement, Hypnosis

Your hero can inflict the inability to move. The hero makes an *easy* Paralysis (Willpower) attack, and if not avoided, the victim is assessed the action score in card loss. However, the cards are placed face up in front of the victim's player. When the hero is reduced to no cards, he or she cannot move or take actions that involve any body part other than the mind. If the victim is a character, this occurs only if

the paralysis reduces the character to O Health.

When the Narrator's card aura directs that the hero suffering partial or full paralysis redraw a card lost from wounds, one of the face-up cards is turned over. Only when all the cards are face-down do they go back into the hand of the player. (Note that this is not the effect of the Hindrance called Physically Disabled—Paralyzed. For that, see **Hindrances**.)

Paralyzed beings don't stop aging, but poisons, diseases, and other such factors are arrested for the time of paralysis. Thus, a poisoned hero actually benefits from being paralyzed.

**Stunt—Remove Paralysis:** Your hero can restore the movement and cards to his or her paralysis victims.

**Stunt—Resistance to Paralysis:** Your hero gains Resistance to Paralysis.

## PHASING

*Trump Suit:* Agility

*Exemplars:* Shadowcat, Vision

*Related Power:* Density Control

Your hero can shift the molecules of his or her body out of phase with those of the surrounding area, allowing the hero to phase through solid items. While phased, the hero is at O Strength and has Invulnerability to physical and most energy attacks. The hero remains subject to the effects of mental attacks and magic. To phase through an object, the hero must make an *easy Phasing* action. Phasing through Force Fields is resisted by the intensity of the field.

The danger with phasing is that the hero is out of phase with the oxygen he or she needs to breathe. Therefore, the duration of any given phase may not exceed the hero's ability to hold his or her breath. While the hero could phase into a wall, that hero would have to leave the wall before having to breathe again. Thus, the hero must make an

*easy Strength* action to stay in phase. This action goes up by one level of difficulty every exchange.

**Stunt—Airwalking:** Your hero can walk on air with normal speed while phased.

**Stunt—Astral Detection:** Your hero can see the forms of creatures operating in the astral plane, including ectoplasm of those adepts who can astrally project. This is an automatic ability; the individual can always recognize that an astral form is nearby. An *average Phasing* action determines if your hero can recognize an astral individual he or she knows.

**Stunt—Partial Phasing:** Your hero can solidify part of the body while the rest remains phased.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can phase other beings or objects while in touch with them, to a maximum number of phasers equal to the power's intensity. The hero and his or her passengers must each make an *average Willpower* action or suffer 10 damage points from this action.

**Stunt—Phase Cutting:** Your hero can attempt a Phasing action to attack by taking an object out of phase and then bringing it into phase inside someone as a contingent action.

**Stunt—Phase Inversion:** Your hero can phase entire sections of matter so things pass through while the affected sections remain solid. The hero can affect only nonliving matter, and only what he or she is touching. For example, the hero could phase out some of the floor within his or her area, allowing an opponent to partially fall through the floor before solidifying it again.

**Stunt—Phase Shift:** Your hero can phase in, strike, and shift out of phase in one exchange. This allows the hero to use the Phasing intensity instead of the Agility score when dodging.

**Stunt—Scrambling:** Your hero's phasing has detrimental effects on electrical currents and electronic devices. Phasing through such devices causes them to malfunction. The hero must make an

average Phasing (Willpower) action to avoid damaging the machine. Sentient machines must make challenging Willpower actions or go to no cards.

## PHEROMONES

Trump Suit: Willpower

Exemplars: Mandrill, Purple Girl

Related Powers: Emotion Control, Empathy

Pheromones are scents secreted by the hero to stimulate the pleasure centers or the fear/flight responses of the brain. When in use, this power causes those within firing distance to either be attracted to or repelled by the hero for an aura duration. Either effect requires an *easy Pheromones (Willpower)* action; one action score is generated, though differing Willpowers will modify the difficulty for each target. Attraction causes the target to treat the hero as a friend or love, while repulsion means that the target can only flee or cower. In either case, the victim will respond to the hero as if his or her word was law. Resistance to Gases protects against this power, while heroes with Enhanced Senses (Smell) find this effect one level more difficult to resist than normal.

**Limit—One Emotion Only:** Your hero can cause either pleasure or fear, not both.

**Stunt—Hormonal Addictions:** If the hero reinforces the pheromones for a week, a victim must make an *average Willpower (Pheromones)* action or gain the Hindrance of Addicted to Pheromones (see **Hindrances**). While addicted, the victim cannot break the hold. Such an addiction can usually be cured with an electrical shock to the brain.

**Stunt—Malodorous:** Your hero emits a choking smell. This serves as an *average Pheromones (Strength)* attack to everyone within striking distance.

**Stunt—Pheromonal Markings:** Your hero's thralls suffer some form of appearance change, such as glassy eyes or colored pigment.

**Stunt—Prolonged Emotions:** Emotions your hero implants can last for far longer than an aura duration. Intense feelings will fade, but the base emotion remains, especially in regard to the hero.

**Stunt—Resistance to Gases:** Your hero gains Resistance to Gases.

## PLANT CONTROL

Trump Suit: Willpower

Exemplar: Plantman

Related Powers: Animal Control, Earth Control

Your hero can command the actions of chlorophyllous plants, granting them temporary powers of their own, including movement, growth, and even a rudimentary intelligence. These abilities exist only as long as the hero concentrates. The hero cannot control plants with a higher material strength than his or her power's intensity. The hero must make an *easy Plant Control (Willpower)* action to control a sentient plant creature; the control lasts only while the hero concentrates.

At intensities over 20, the hero is in touch with the greenery of the world. This gives amazing powers, such as the ability to overwhelm a city in jungle. But at this intensity, the hero might just learn that the plants resent being controlled.

**Limit—One Plant Type Only:** Your hero can affect only one general plant type, like trees or flowers.

**Stunt—Basal Cell Control:** Your hero can control cells of any creature descended from a plant. By making an *average Plant Control (Willpower)* action, the hero can cut off the victim's ability to extract carbon dioxide or move, at a loss of one card (or 5 Health) per exchange. If the hero fails to make this action on any exchange, the victim instantly recovers unless unconscious.

**Stunt—Ensnarement:** Your hero can animate vines with up to the power's



intensity in Agility and Strength. These vines have Ensnarement at the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Fungus Control:** Your hero can command the actions of molds and fungi, even though they are not proper plants. The hero thus extends his or her reach to all members of the vegetable kingdom.

**Stunt—Memory Dredge:** Your hero can make a controlled plant relate the experiences it "witnessed" of anyone that has touched or come close to it.

**Stunt—Plant Elementals:** Your hero can command up to the power's intensity of trees or giant plants, making them move and attack as creatures of Health, Strength, and defense equal to the power's intensity. It requires a full exchange to animate each elemental; while your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control them; if the hero falls unconscious, the plants go inert at the end of the exchange.

**Stunt—Plant Growth:** Your hero can accelerate the growth of plants, creating giant specimens. If the hero has even a seed, a full-grown plant can spring to life in one exchange.

**Stunt—Plant Simulacra:** Your hero can create plant-images that duplicate living humans. The controller makes an average Plant Control (Willpower) action to fool all observers into believing the simulacra are human; one action score is generated for all observers, even though differing Willpowers will alter the difficulty from observer to observer. However, the disbelief won't occur until the observer has a reason to believe that a simulacrum isn't a real human.

**Stunt—Plant Teleportation:** Your hero can teleport through plants as if he or she had Teleportation. There must be plants at both the embarkation point and the destination.

## PLASTICITY

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Mister Fantastic, Sandman

**Related Powers:** Elongation, Imitation

Your hero's body is elastic and malleable, allowing it to bend and stretch. The hero can use the power's intensity instead of Strength for defense against physical attacks; using this power also grants the hero the Wrestling skill. The hero can mold his or her body into shapes other than human form, such as turning hands into huge hammers.

**Limit—Slow Retraction:** Your hero takes a full exchange to return any modified parts to their normal shape.

**Stunt—Bouncing:** Your hero's elastic form gives Leaping 1 by "bouncing" along; this also allows the hero to ignore up to the power's intensity in falling damage.

**Stunt—Disguise:** Your hero can manipulate his or her features to take on a disguise. If the hero dons the guise of a specific person, the player will need to make an average Plasticity (Willpower) action to fool someone who knows the person.

**Stunt—Hardening:** Your hero can harden his or her skin to raise his or her Strength to the power's intensity for purposes of striking targets.

**Stunt—Kite Flight:** By turning into a kite, your hero gains Flight, with the limit of Gliding.

**Stunt—Liquidity:** Your hero can force his or her malleable body through cracks in solid substances and can fully relax the malleable form and become true liquid while concentrating.

**Stunt—Net:** Your hero can use the power's intensity rather than Agility for catching falling items or people. The hero suffers no damage from falling objects of human size or less landing on him or her.

# POISON

*Trump Suit:* Strength

*Exemplars:* Cobra, Death Adder

*Related Powers:* Teeth, Claws, Quills

Your hero has the ability, natural or artificial, to secrete a poison that affects the nervous systems of victims with effectiveness equal to the power's intensity, causing one of a variety of effects. The hero is immune to his or her own poison.

If an action is required to deliver a poison (through claws, say, or touching contact poison), the poison itself takes effect as a contingent attack. The poisoner makes an *easy Poison (Strength)* action, and if successful, the target suffers the intensity of the poison in damage. Such a poison can be either damaging, paralytic, soporific, or intoxicating, at the hero's choice.

*Limit—Toxic:* Your hero gives off poison at all times. This effect can cause the power's intensity in damage to all within striking distance, or it can have one of the above effects. If the hero is in a containment suit, this limit is controlled.

*Stunt—Poison Gas:* Your hero can generate a cloud of poisonous gas, causing damage equal to the power's intensity to all within firing distance.

*Stunt—Poison Spray:* Your hero can spray poison at one target within firing distance.

*Stunt—Resistance to Poison:* Your hero gains Resistance to Poison. Note that all heroes are immune to their own poison.

*Stunt—Slow-Acting:* The poison works slowly and won't manifest until a predetermined time.

# POSTCOGNITION

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Longshot, Nate Grey, Snowbird

*Related Power:* Precognition

This is the reverse of Precognition but easier to handle, in that the past is fairly immutable. Postcognition works only on items the hero touches. The hero makes an action to use this power, the difficulty of which depends on the length of time that has passed since the event in question. This difficulty may be lowered if the psychic energy around an object is strong, such as when a person dies holding it.

## Time Passed

Within one hour

Within one day

Within one week

Within one month

Within one year

Further back

## Difficulty

Easy

Average

Challenging

Daunting

Desperate

Superhuman

The Narrator may be somewhat cryptic regarding postcognitive impressions. Quite often important details are left out in the jumble of past emotions. For example, a hero holding a shovel from the 15th century may get an image of a person burying a treasure in a churchyard, but not necessarily the image of the zombies advancing on the excavator.

If the Narrator doesn't have anything worked out in advance, he or she may draw a card and make up a past based on the event on the card. Postcognitions are excellent opportunities for Flashback hooks (see **Nonlinear Story Hooks** on page 93).

*Limit—One Subject Only:* Your hero's Postcognitive power is limited to one object or place, or many objects related to one person.

*Stunt—Memory Dredge:* Your hero can make a person remember anything he or she has seen or otherwise sensed.

*Stunt—Time Tracking:* Your hero can use impressions of the past to guide him

or her to important places in the object's history.

## POWER AMPLIFICATION

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Cerebro, Loki, Fabian Cortez

*Related Powers:* Power Theft, Power Duplication

Your hero can concentrate to raise the intensity of other beings' superpowers. By touching a superbeing, he or she transfers a little of his or her power to the subject. The affected being gains a chosen amount of intensity to one power, and the amping hero loses that amount of intensity in Power Amplification. When the hero ceases concentration, the amped intensity shifts back.

Powers cannot be raised to more than 30 through Power Amplification, and the amper cannot reduce Power Amplification to less than 0. If the amount of intensity transferred is more than the target's Willpower, draw a card; if the card's aura is negative, the subject suffers a random negative effect chosen by the Narrator. Examples include randomly blasting everyone in the area, teleporting uncontrollably, or passing out whenever the power is used.

*Limit—One Power Type Only:* Your hero can amp only one type of power, like ESP or Fire Control.

*Stunt—Extensive Amping:* Your hero's amping lasts for as long as you want it to. The amped power doesn't return to normal until the amping hero wills it, or the time allowed for the amping ends.

## POWER DUPLICATION

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Super-Adaptoid, Synch, Mimic

*Related Power:* Power Theft

Where Imitation allows a hero to duplicate another's appearance, this power lets the hero copy another's basic abilities and

powers. This is limited to innate characteristics, not artificial ones such as those provided by technology. The hero makes an *easy* Power Duplication action, opposed by the target's highest ability score or power intensity. If the hero fails, or if a power or ability exceeds Power Duplication's intensity (10 intensity Power Duplication against a 16 Strength, for example), the next declared action of the hero using Power Duplication must be a *challenging* Willpower action to avoid being knocked unconscious by the energy backlash. Even if this action succeeds, the maximum duplicated score is equal to your hero's intensity in Power Duplication.

If the power succeeds, your hero gains all the abilities of the opponent, though retains any abilities higher than that of the opponent (i.e., if the hero has 16 Strength and duplicates the powers of someone with 10 Strength, the hero retains the 16 Strength.) The hero cannot use any of these new characteristics until the next exchange. While the hero wields a power copied from an opponent, that opponent can still use the power.

Duplicated powers last for an aura duration. Heroes with Power Duplication usually take on some physical traits of the target. This power can never duplicate Edge or Hand Size.

*Limit—Abilities Only:* Your hero can duplicate only basic abilities, not skills or powers. This limit may be further limited by reducing the power's influence to only one ability.

*Limit—Override:* Your hero's own abilities, powers, and skills are overridden by those stolen from the target, including Power Duplication. None of those characteristics can be used until the duplicated ones fade.

*Limit—Powers Only:* Your hero can duplicate only superpowers, not skills or abilities. This limit may be further restricted by reducing the number of powers that can be copied.

*Limit—Skills Only:* Your hero can duplicate only skills, not abilities or powers. This

limit may be further restricted by reducing the number of skills that can be duplicated.

**Stunt—Imitation:** Your hero gains Imitation. This can only be used with Power Duplication.

**Stunt—Mechanical Duplication:** Your hero can gain artificial traits in addition to innate ones. This can duplicate the powers of robots, computers, and powered armor, among other items.

## POWER THEFT

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplar:** Rogue

**Related Power:** Power Duplication

This risky power allows your hero to steal superhuman powers and abilities. Only innate powers and abilities can be assimilated, as artificial abilities are beyond the scope of the power.

When the hero touches the target to steal his or her powers, the hero makes an easy *Power Theft* (Willpower) attack. If the attack succeeds, the opponent suffers the action score in damage, minus Willpower. The cards so lost aren't discarded, but are instead placed face up in front of the absorbing hero's player. (If the hero drains a character's powers, draw from the deck until the total value is equal to the action score minus Willpower.) At the beginning of each exchange, one card is turned face down. When all cards are face down, the powers return to the victim, as do all the cards or full Health at the time of the draining.

If the power succeeds, your hero gains all the abilities, skills, and powers of the opponent, while retaining any ability scores higher than those of the opponent (i.e., if the hero has 16 Strength and steals the powers of someone with 10 Strength, the hero retains the 16 Strength.) The hero cannot use any of these new characteristics until the next exchange.

Unlike with Power Duplication, the victim is seriously hurt by the attack. Not only do

cards or Health disappear, but the victim's powers and ability scores are reduced by the intensity of the Power Theft. If this reduces any ability score to 0, the victim falls unconscious and cannot awaken until the cards or Health return. Regardless, all powers and abilities function at the reduced intensities and scores, and all skills are lost until the power ends.

Though effective, this is a highly dangerous power for a hero to use. When the hero steals powers, he or she must make a contingent *daunting Willpower* action to avoid having the mind of the victim override his or her own. This is not Mind Control, so the victim doesn't get to control the hero's actions, but the hero will certainly be under the control of the Narrator. If the hero was in contact with the victim for more than one exchange, the hero must make a *desperate Willpower* action to avoid permanently draining the victim's mind.

If this occurs, anything goes. Such a permanent transfer reduces the hero's Edge to 0, at least temporarily. *Desperate Willpower* actions must be made when the hero is under stress to keep the stolen persona from taking control of the hero. This can be dealt with over time, but there will always be mental scars.

Heroes with this power usually take on some physical characteristics of the target of the theft. This power can never steal Edge or Hand Size.

**Limit—Abilities Only:** Your hero can steal only basic abilities, not skills or powers. This limit may be further restricted by reducing the power's influence to only one ability.

**Limit—Override:** Your hero's abilities, skills, and powers (including Power Theft) are replaced by those stolen from the target. None of those traits can be used until the stolen traits fade.

**Limit—Powers Only:** Your hero can steal only superpowers, not skills or abilities. This limit may be further restricted by reducing the number or type of powers that can be stolen.

**Limit—Skills Only:** Your hero can steal only skills, not abilities or powers. This limit may be further restricted by reducing the number or type of skills that can be stolen.

**Stunt—Imitation:** Your hero gains Imitation, which can be used only with Power Theft.

**Stunt—Mechanical Absorption:** Your hero can gain artificial traits in addition to innate ones. This stunt can affect robots, computers, and powered armor, among other items.

## PRECOGNITION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Delphi, Destiny, Madame Web

**Related Powers:** Danger Sense,  
Postcognition

Precognitive individuals—"precogs," to the tabloids—can divine certainty from the future of an uncertain universe. With all the Marvel Universe's alternate dimensions and reality warping, a precog can never know if what he or she sees will come true, but most bet on it. Precognition can be a curse as much as a boon—after all, who wants to foresee their own death?

When a hero uses Precognition, the hero makes an action based on how far he or she wants to see in the future. The difficulty is:

Distance into the Future	Difficulty
One exchange	Automatic
One minute	Easy
One hour	Average
One day	Challenging
One week	Daunting
One month	Desperate
One year	Superhuman
More than one year	Unfathomable

If successful, the Narrator draws a random card and reads the event. (The Narrator may always draw a new card if he or she doesn't like the event.) The Narrator then takes whatever time he or she needs to spin a set of

circumstances around that event to satisfy the precognitive attempt, and tells the player whatever he or she wants about the future event. The Narrator should make sure that it's something he or she can pull off given the situation, though in the Marvel Universe, nothing's ever impossible.

Of course, if the event seen is terrifying, the hero might not go through with an action that leads to it. This is rarely a sure bet. Remember, the hero sees the future, not the chain of events that leads to the future.

As an example, a precog wants to know what'll happen if she opens the door in a spaceship. The Narrator draws and gets the event *Emergency*. He then spins an image of the power shutting down and all the airlocks opening. Fearful, the player doesn't open the door—and doesn't see the saboteur on the other side as he whacks away at the system controls with a sledgehammer. Boom! The lights go out and the airlocks open. Guess you just can't trust those hunches.

One final note: Time in the Marvel Universe is quite flexible. Just because something doesn't happen quite on your hero's schedule doesn't mean it won't happen. Fair warning.

**Limit—Contingent on Truth:** Once the power is used, it cannot be used again until the image seen comes true.

**Limit—Dreaming:** The power manifests itself only in dreams.

**Limit—Hyperrealistic:** The images are so realistic that the hero has to make a *daunting Willpower* action to stay sane when glimpsing the future. The Narrator controls his or her actions until the hero regains sanity. You can draw one card at the start of each exchange; if you get a positive aura, the hero regains his or her sanity.

**Limit—Intermittent:** The Narrator chooses when the images appear and what they say, whether or not you want this to occur.



**Limit—Object Specific:** The power works only on objects, and the hero must be touching the object to read its future.

**Limit—People-Specific:** The power works only for divining the futures of other people, who must be in physical contact with the precog.

**Stunt—Danger Sense:** If the hero gets a glimpse of the future that allows deduction of fight actions, the Narrator should award the hero with a Danger Sense at the power's intensity for the exchange. This bonus also applies to anyone the hero can tell about the danger in time.

**Stunt—Precognitive Travel:** Your hero can teleport to the site of danger, but always at the time of the image seen.

## PREHENSILE HAIR

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplar:** Medusa

**Related Powers:** Additional Limb, Elongation

This power allows the hero manipulate his or her long hairlike tentacles. The hair can feel with the hero's sense of touch, and damage to the hero's hair is treated the same as damage to the hero's body. The hero can elongate his or her hair to firing distance and lash out with an intensity-based whiplike attack.

**Stunt—Ensnarement:** Your hero can use Ensnarement with his or her hair.

**Stunt—Fine Control:** Your hero can use the hair for fine control actions, like typing, manipulation of controls, or picking locks, assuming he or she has these skills.

## PROTECTED SENSES

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Iron Man, Mole Man

**Related Power:** Resistance

One or more senses are protected from attack. The hero ignores potentially

damaging attacks of less than the power's intensity. Equipment providing this power must actually cover the sensor, such as polarized goggles that prevent sudden blinding, or earplugs that reduce sonic attacks.

**Stunt—Bestow Protection:** As long as your hero concentrates, the hero can protect anyone else's senses in the same way his or her senses are protected.

## PSI-SCREEN

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Professor X, Doctor Strange, Phoenix

**Related Power:** Resistance

This is an inborn resistance to all forms of mental scans and domination. A Psi-Screen adds its intensity as a defense bonus to Willpower for the purposes of resisting mental attack, scanning, or control. The Willpower is subtracted from any mental damage, such as a Psychic Blast.

**Stunt—Psi-Field:** This power may be extended over a number of targets no greater than the intensity of the power. All targets must be within firing distance. This Psi-Field lasts for as long as the hero concentrates on it.



## PSYCHIC BLAST

Trump Suit: Willpower

Exemplars: Professor X, White Queen,  
Phoenix

Related Power: Telepathy

This power gives the hero the ability to project psychic force blasts to visual distance. This is an *easy Psychic Blast* (Willpower) attack. The Willpower of a Psychic Blast victim acts as a defense against psychic damage, subtracting its value from the action score when damage is assessed. Psi-Screens and some Force Fields can also lower damage from Psychic Blasts.

**Stunt—Mind-Blowing:** Your hero can push (see **Pushing to the Limit** on page 23) the blast to the max, hitting everyone within firing distance with a psychic burst of the power's intensity. Not only does this harm the hero, but it means the hero cannot use the power again until you are restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Psi-Screen:** Your hero gains Psi-Screen.

**Stunt—Psychic Detection:** Your hero is attuned to exceptional mental radiation in general, and as such can make an *average Psychic Blast* action to detect the use of nonmagical paranormal abilities including mind-reading, thought-casting, mind control, and psychic attacks.

**Stunt—Rangeless:** Your hero can attack anyone he or she can find regardless of distance, often through Psychic Detection or ESP.

**Stunt—Resistance to Mental Control:** Your hero gains Resistance to Mental Control, including all nonsensory powers with a Willpower trump suit.

**Stunt—Sedation:** Your hero can make an *average Psychic Blast* (Willpower) attack to cause a person to black out. The person cannot wake up for at least 15 minutes.

## QUILLS

Trump Suit: Strength

Exemplars: Porcupine, Quill, Sabra

Related Powers: Body Armor, Teeth, Claws,  
Horn(s)

The hero's skin has quills or spines, similar to those of a porcupine. The quills have a material strength equal to the power's intensity and inflict damage equal to the power's intensity at striking distance.

The quills provide a special kind of Body Armor. They don't protect the hero from damage, but anyone striking the hero with fists or other natural weaponry suffers damage equal to the Quills' intensity (minus defense).

**Limit—Limited Quills:** After attacking with Quills, you draw a card. If the aura is negative, the hero is out of the spiny missiles and needs to wait 24 hours for them to fully regenerate.

**Stunt—Volley:** Your hero can fire volleys of Quills, attacking normally at up to firing distance. The hero can also fire Quills to anchor objects in place, such as a villain's cape.

## RADAR SENSE

Trump Suit: Willpower

Exemplars: Daredevil, Stick, Iron Man

Related Powers: Enhanced Senses, Sonic Control

Your hero can gain a three-dimensional picture of his or her environment through the use of electromagnetic waves. The hero both emits and senses these waves. He or she can use the power to locate and identify objects by their electromagnetic echoes. Because of sensitivity to electromagnetic waves, magnetic attacks negate the Radar Sense for an aura duration.

Radar can be used instead of Intellect to avoid surprise. The hero will know anyone he or she has met by applying the sense, and

can make an *easy Radar Sense* action (opposed by the target's power) to recognize imitation and Shapeshifting. If the hero is tracking or examining an object, he or she can use the intensity instead of the Willpower or Intellect scores to gain clues.

**Stunt—Back Attack:** Your hero can attack anything in back of him or her as well as the hero could if the target were in front.

## RADIATION CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Firestar, Radioactive Man, Red Guardian

**Related Powers:** Light Control, Sonic Control

Your hero can control radioactivity, such as microwaves and gamma radiation. The hero absorbs such radiation from the environment or generates it personally. Radiation is a dangerous force, causing mutations and disease. Sometimes, its effects don't show up for years.

The most basic application of this power to project a burst of harmful radiation out around the hero, inflicting the power's intensity in damage to all within striking distance. The hero can also project a bolt of radiation at one target, making an *easy Radiation Control (Agility)* action to cause damage.

**Limit—Collateral Damage:** Any time the hero damages someone or something with this power, everyone within striking distance also suffers the damage.

**Limit—Toxic:** Your hero gives off background radiation at all times. This can either inflict the power's intensity in damage to all within striking distance, or cause disease (see *Affliction*). If the hero is in a containment suit, this limit is controlled.

**Limit—Unstable:** If the hero is using his or her powers in a fight or other tense situation, the aura of the Narrator

card is read. If negative, the hero fires an uncontrollable burst of radiation at a randomly selected person or object.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains *Absorption (Radiation)*. This radiation can be absorbed before it can do damage to others, even if not directed at the hero.

**Stunt—Affliction:** Your hero gains *Affliction*, but cannot cure the diseases.

**Stunt—Blinding:** Your hero gains *Blinding*.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains *Flight*.

**Stunt—Force Field:** Your hero can create a personal Force Field. This shield protects against physical and radiation-based attacks.

**Stunt—Heat Control:** Your hero can alter the heat levels within firing distance by roughly 10° Fahrenheit per point of intensity. A hero with a 20 intensity can thus make a 50° room into a 200° room in one exchange. If the temperature goes above 120°, everyone in the room suffers the power's intensity in damage after subtracting defense. This power can be targeted at one individual.

**Stunt—Heat Sphere:** Your hero forms a globe of heat that inflicts the power's intensity in damage to anyone or anything that comes through. At 6+ intensity, this stunt melts lead bullets before they can hit.

**Stunt—Mutagenics:** Your hero can cause strange reactions in the bodies of mutants and those under the effects of radiation. The player draws a card when this occurs, and the mutation is positive or negative depending on the aura. If the aura is neutral, nothing happens.

## REALITY WARPING

**Trump Suit:** Willpower

**Exemplars:** Scarlet Witch, Franklin Richards

**Related Power:** Luck Control

This extremely potent power lets your hero alter the flow of reality by allowing

improbable—but not impossible—events to occur. At lower intensities this ability allows the hero to muck about with chancy probabilities, while at higher intensities the hero can confidently change reality nearly at will. Reality Warping cannot be taken at an intensity less than 15.

Once per exchange, you can propose a dramatic event to occur within firing distance. In the upper right corner of each fate card is an event like *Overload* or *Property Damage*. You can pull one of these cards from your hand, and present it as a dramatic event. You state how the event affects the current situation, using the event's name: "An overload occurs in Cyclops's visor, causing him to shoot Colossus," or "The wall suffers property damage and cracks apart."

The Narrator then decides if the event is logical under the circumstances, and if so, the event occurs. If not, the hero is at the mercy of fate. This happens when your explanation is weak, such as trying to make the event *Cautious Acceptance* into a meteor coming through the roof.

Of course, probability is, well, chancy. The Narrator draws a card when Reality Warping is used, and if it's from the Doom suit, some additional—and usually disastrous—effect occurs. For example, the overloading visor causes Cyclops to wide-angle beam everyone in the room including your hero, or the wall and its accompanying supports crack open and collapse the roof.

You cannot use this power to affect response bonuses.

In the hands of a Narrator-run character, this power allows the Narrator to play a dramatic event whenever he or she likes. In the presence of such a character, heroes should expect anything and everything to occur.

At intensity 21 and higher, this power allows the hero to truly warp reality. The hero can actually impose new realities on the current reality, causing earthquakes

and inventing cities full of people. The Narrator draw for additional effect is eliminated at this intensity. This is an unbelievably powerful ability, and is best left in the hands of Narrator-run characters.

**Limit—Destructive Events Only:** Your hero can never make anything good happen. This doesn't mean he or she can't benefit from the destruction caused by this power, but the hero couldn't create something with it.

**Limit—Nonliving Things Only:** Your hero can affect only nonliving things with this power.

**Stunt—Pocket Reality:** Your hero can create a pocket reality around someone. The individual is subject to the physical laws and constraints of the new mini-universe, but no one else is.

## REGENERATION

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Wolverine, Deadpool, Sabretooth

**Related Power:** Absorption

Your hero heals (gains cards back) faster than the normal human rate, provided he or she isn't injured anew during the Regeneration period. At the intensities below, your hero gains a card at the beginning of the exchange if the Narrator's draw is:

Intensity	Aura
0	Positive (normal people)
1–10	Positive, or neutral and less than Regeneration's intensity
11–15	Positive or neutral
16–20	Positive, negative, or neutral (any card)
21+	All cards regained at the beginning of every exchange

If the hero has suffered any serious wounds, he or she may give up actions in favor of healing. If the hero suffers damage during an exchange in which he or she is using this power, Regeneration doesn't function on the next exchange.

**Limit—Darkness Only:** This power functions only when the hero is in darkness. In daylight or while lights are on, the hero's Regeneration doesn't work.

**Limit—Others Only:** The power works only on others, not the hero. See **Healing**, below.

**Limit—Solar:** This power functions only when the hero is in the sunshine. Inside windowless buildings, in darkness, and other similar situations, the hero's Regeneration doesn't work.

**Stunt—Aging Reversal:** Your hero can decelerate a target's aging process. This stunt can subtract a number of years equal to the power's intensity, or divide the subject's aging rate by the intensity (i.e., the subject ages one year per [intensity] years). The hero cannot kill the subject with this power, but can drop him or her back to the moment of birth.

**Stunt—Damage Transfer:** Your hero can transfer cards from one living person to another, draining one person's Hand of Fate to heal another person. If either subject is a character, 5 Health equals one card. The hero may be either subject, or may use this power to transfer damage between two other individuals. If either subject is unwilling, the hero must make an *average Regeneration (Willpower)* action for this to work. If either subject successfully opposes it, the hero suffers the intended damage without any other effect.

**Stunt—Disease Remission:** Your hero can arrest any disease by making an *average Regeneration* action opposed by the Affliction power or the disease's intensity.

**Stunt—Healing:** Your hero can repair other people's wounds. While the hero concentrates, the Regeneration power transfers to the subject. Your hero retains Regeneration while this occurs.

**Stunt—Raising the Dead:** Your hero may bring dead mortals back to life. This power may not be taken as a stunt without first taking Regeneration at 20+ intensity.

## RESISTANCE

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Hulk, Thor, Wolverine

**Related Power:** Invulnerability

Resistance powers allow the hero to ignore certain damage. All damage of the specified type up to the power's intensity is negated. This is treated like Strength is for defense against physical attacks. Like Body Armor, this defense bonus is expressed as "plus-a-number," such as +4—meaning that Resistance negates 4 more damage points over and above the hero's Strength score.

This power is useless without one or more of the following stunts. For each stunt selected, your hero gains Resistance to one of the following:

Aging (including diseases which destroy cells)

Cold (including ice)

Corrosion (including all acids and bases)

Darkness (including Shadow Control and Darkforce Control)

Disease

Electricity

Emotion Control

Ensnarement (including Wrestling attacks)

Fire (including Heat)

Force Fields

Gases (including Pheromones)

Heat (including lava)

Kinetics (including physical attacks)

Light (including blindness)

Magic (including all magical spells)

Magnetism

Mental Control (including all mental control powers)

Metal (including all metal weapons)

Noise (including sonics and deafness)

Paralysis

Poison (including drugs and alcohol)

Power Duplication (including Power Theft and Reflection)

Pressure (including vertigo and dizziness)

Quakes

Radiation (including Cosmic Energy)



*Scanning* (including all electronic scans)

*Stunning* (including only Stunning attacks)

*Weather* (including lightning)

Other Resistances may be approved by the Narrator.

## SHADOW CONTROL

*Trump Suit*: Intellect

*Exemplar*: Nightside of the Imperial Guard

*Related Power*: Darkforce Control

Your hero can generate and manipulate darkness. This is not the same as the Darkforce, a powerful dark energy. Instead, the hero dampens light and plays with shadows.

The hero can black out the area within firing distance. The effects last with concentration, with light returning to normal on the next exchange once concentration lapses. The hero can also use this power to target a specific individual with darkness; this requires an *easy Shadow Control* (Agility) action to succeed.

*Stunt—Absorption*: Your hero gains Absorption (Light), using shadows to assimilate light.

*Stunt—Infravision*: The individual with this ability can see in the dark, which limits visibility to striking distance. Normal darkness is 1 intensity; powerful darknesses such as the Darkforce require average *Shadow Control* actions, opposed by the intensity of the darkness, to defeat.

*Stunt—Resistance to Darkness*: Your hero gains Resistance to Darkness.

*Stunt—Resistance to Light*: Your hero gains Resistance to Light.

*Stunt—Shades*: Your hero can reflexively draw low-level shadows over his or her eyes to protect them from blinding lights or other light-based attacks. This defense allows Resistance to Light.

*Stunt—Shadowboxing*: Your hero can make someone's shadow reach up and hit

the person, just as if the hero had used an intensity-based physical attack.

*Stunt—Shadowplay*: Your hero can change the shape and size of extant shadows and generate three-dimensional objects and creatures. These shadow images have no Strength and are immune to all forms of attack save Light Control and other light generating effects.

*Stunt—Shadow Spots*: Your hero can fire bursts of darkness into foes' eyes, causing Blinding.

## SHAPESHIFTING

*Trump Suit*: Agility

*Exemplars*: Skrulls, Hobgoblin of the Imperial Guard

*Related Power*: Imitation

This power lets your hero drastically alter his or her shape to resemble other objects or beings. To fool others into believing the change is real, the hero must make an *easy Shapeshifting* (Willpower) action. This action only occurs when the person would have some reason to suspect the hero isn't what he or she appears to be.

Your hero gains obvious physical powers of the form chosen such as claws and wings, but not other powers (see *Power Duplication*).

*Limit—Unconscious Shift*: Your hero shapeshifts uncontrollably, perhaps when his or her emotions change.

*Limit—Signature Flaw*: Your hero cannot lose a certain characteristic of his or her base form, such as skin color or facial appearance.

*Stunt—Elongation*: Your hero gains Elongation, but only when Shapeshifting.

*Stunt—Plasticity*: Your hero gains Plasticity, but only when Shapeshifting.

*Stunt—Size Alteration*: Your hero gains Size Alteration, but only when Shapeshifting.

## SIZE ALTERATION

*Trump Suit:* Agility

*Exemplars:* Wasp, Giant-Man, Atlas (Goliath)

*Related Power:* Density Control

Your hero may become larger or smaller at will. Clothes and objects won't change unless made of unstable molecules. The hero may apply any amount of intensity up to his or her maximum when using this power.

If the hero grows, he or she automatically gains 1 point of Strength (and thus defense) per intensity point of growth. But this large size slows down the hero, lowering Agility in the same proportion. Your hero gains 2 feet in height per intensity point used. At 5 intensity or greater, the hero can cross to firing distance in one exchange.

If a hero shrinks, your hero gains Agility at 1 point per point of intensity, but loses Strength and defense. If a hero drops to 0 Strength, he or she is too small to be seen or targeted by anyone of full size. On the down side, the hero cannot cross distances at 0 Strength. The hero drops 6 inches in height per point of intensity used, all the way down to a millimeter or two in height. Of course, trivialities such as spiders and light breezes become major challenges at this height; the Narrator is encouraged to play this up for all it's worth.

No ability score can drop below 0, however. Once the hero is at 0 Agility, he or she can still gain Strength to the maximum of his or her intensity. Once at 0 Strength, the hero can still gain Agility to the maximum intensity. On earth, no hero can grow more than intensity 20, and growth-assisted Strength and Agility max out at 20 as well.

As an example, a hero with an Agility of 6 and a Strength of 10 takes Size Alteration 10. If she reduces her Strength to 0, she gets an Agility of 16, her maximum. If she reduces her Agility to 0,

she gets a Strength of at least 16, and can go to 20.

*Limit—Growth Only:* Your hero can not become smaller than his or her normal size, nor raise Agility through this power.

*Limit—Shrinking Only:* Your hero can not become larger than his or her normal size, nor raise Strength through this power.

*Limit—Others Only:* Your hero can affect only other people or objects, not his or her own body. See Imbue Size Alteration, below.

*Limit—Permanent:* Your hero is stuck at either overgrown or diminutive size and cannot regain normal size. Obviously, 12-foot and 6-inch heroes don't fool many people with secret identities.

*Stunt—Crossing the Pym Barrier:* Heroes with intensity 12+ Size Alteration can cross the "Pym barrier" and enter the Microverse, a subatomic universe entered by shrinking. Further reductions aren't possible once in the Microverse.

*Stunt—Imbue Size Alteration:* Your hero may change the sizes of other living beings. If the target is unwilling, the hero must make an average Size Alteration (Willpower) attack to succeed in changing the victim's size.

*Stunt—Power Growth:* Once shrunk, the hero can suddenly grow to perform a surprise attack at +8 intensity. This only works if the hero successfully surprises the victim.

## SONAR

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplar:* Banshee

*Related Powers:* Enhanced Senses, Sonic Control

Your hero gains a 3-D picture of the environment through emitting and sensing sonic waves. He or she can locate and identify objects by their sonic echoes. Because of sensitivity to sonic waves, sonic attacks negate the Sonar for an aura duration.

Sonar's intensity can be used in place of Intellect for avoiding surprise. The hero will know anyone he or she has met by applying the power, and can make an *easy* Sonar action, opposed by the relevant power, to recognize Imitation and Shapeshifting. If the hero is tracking or examining an object, he or she can use Sonar instead of Willpower or Intellect to gain clues.

**Stunt—Back Attack:** Your hero can attack anything in back of him or her as if the target were in front.

## SONIC CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Banshee, Siryn, Klaw, Songbird

**Related Powers:** Light Control, Sonar

Your hero can amplify, deaden, and focus existing sound. If the hero raises the sound so that it's overwhelming or cuts out all the sound in a room, players cannot talk to each other unless they have some form of Telepathy or other communication. Players can talk to the Narrator, but only if they don't communicate their intentions to other players.

The ambient sound in a normal office or park is considered intensity 0, while a stadium rock concert would be intensity 5.

A sonic boom caused by fast Flight is intensity 10, and a huge explosion might generate sound at intensity 15.

**Limit—Harmful Frequencies:** Your hero can be attacked by certain frequencies of sound. When he or she hears these frequencies, they act as 20 intensity attacks. Sound-dampening vibranium also inflicts double the normal intensity in damage against the hero.

**Limit—Loudness Only:** Your hero cannot lower the volume in an area, just raise it.

**Limit—Silence Only:** Your hero cannot raise the volume in an area, just lower it.

**Stunt—Absorption:** Your hero gains Absorption (Sound).

**Stunt—Echo:** Your hero can duplicate any sounds, allowing him or her to mimic voices or other noises.

**Stunt—Force Field:** Your hero can erect sonic personal Force Fields.

**Stunt—Hypnosis:** Your hero gains Hypnosis.

**Stunt—Resistance to Noise:** Your hero gains Resistance to Noise, including sonics and other attacks that cause deafness.

**Stunt—Sonar:** Your hero gains Sonar.

**Stunt—Sonic Body:** Your hero becomes a creature of pure sound. While in sonic form, the hero can go to 0 Strength in exchange for Invulnerability to Kinetics and other physical attacks. The hero



also gains Energy Blast, and can explode to affect all hearing targets within firing distance if he or she suffers the damage as well (ignoring all defenses). Sound bodies suffer double the power's intensity in damage from attacks based on sonics.

**Stunt—Sonic Flight:** Your hero gains Flight 4.

**Stunt—Sonic Scream:** Your hero can attack everyone within firing distance. If the hero pushes this power, he or she cannot use Sonic Control again until restored to full Hand Size.

**Stunt—Sonic Shapes:** Your hero can create semisolid objects of material strength equal to the power's intensity and mobile sonic creatures of Strength and Agility scores equal to the power's intensity. The hero can create one object or creature per point of intensity. Though sound is normally invisible, these creations are visible.

**Stunt—Sonic Vibration:** Your hero gains Disintegration, with the Disruption Only limit.

## SPACE FLIGHT

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Silver Surfer, Quasar

**Related Power:** Flight

Your hero can move through blackest space. The hero is assumed to have the ability to navigate in space, either instinctively or through stargates. This power does not automatically confer the ability to survive in space. Also, Space Flight cannot be used in a planet's atmosphere, except to enter the atmosphere and leave it at high speed.

Your hero can cross space at sublight speed at intensity 1, and light speed at intensity 10. Faster-than-light travel happens at greater intensities, but at that point there's little reason to track speed. The hero doesn't usually have to worry about how long it takes to get somewhere, since prominent warp nexus points exist throughout the stars.

**Limit—Unguided:** Your hero has no idea where he or she is when traveling in space. The hero is assumed to be lost at all times.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Life Support:** Your hero gains Life Support.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can take along a number of passengers equal to the power's intensity, conferring upon them whatever speed and life support he or she has.

## STUN BLAST

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Paladin, Hawkeye

**Related Power:** Kinetic Control

Your hero possesses a weapon, energy bolt, or touch power that inflicts a stunning attack. Stunning is little different than any other form of damage, except that it is resisted by Willpower as a defense. Stunning attacks cannot affect those who are unconscious.

**Stunt—Resistance to Stunning:** Your hero gains Resistance to Stunning.

**Stunt—Stun Bolt:** Your hero can shoot the stun blast to firing distance.

**Stunt—Stun Wave:** Your hero can affect everyone within firing distance by making an average Stun Blast (Willpower) action. One action score is generated for all victims, though differences in Willpower may alter difficulties from target to target.

## TEETH

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Sabretooth, Cottonmouth

**Related Powers:** Claws, Horn(s), Quills

Your hero has an enhanced tooth and jaw structure, or mandibles that extend from the mouth. The intensity refers to the damage bonus of the Teeth, which can never be more than +10. Very few heroes have natural weapons above +7, however.

*Stunt—Matter Consumption:* If the hero manages to destroy an object by biting it, he or she can swallow and disintegrate it with no ill effect.

## TELEKINESIS

*Trump Suit:* Intellect

*Exemplars:* Phoenix, Justice, Nate Grey

*Related Powers:* Force Field, Animation

This power allows your hero to lift and throw objects—without touching them—as if he or she had a Strength score of the power's intensity. The hero can also throw objects with this material strength as well. If the hero ceases concentration on the Telekinesis, the objects fall to the ground. This power can be used to lift someone, if the hero makes an *easy Telekinesis (Strength)* action against the target.

*Stunt—Forceflight:* By moving the air under the hero, he or she gains Flight.

*Stunt—Force Bolt:* Your hero can create telekinetic force missiles of the power's intensity, shooting them to firing distance.

*Stunt—Force Field:* By stiffening the air, your hero gains a personal Force Field of effectiveness equal to the power's intensity against physical and energy attacks.

*Stunt—Object Swarm:* Your hero animates many small objects, pummeling all chosen targets as if the items were thrown. The hero makes one *challenging Telekinesis (Agility)* action for all affected, or an *average Telekinesis (Agility)* action if focusing all the objects on one target.

*Stunt—Passengers:* Your hero can lift a number of passengers up to the power's intensity at Flight 1.

## TELEPATHY

*Trump Suit:* Willpower

*Exemplars:* Professor X, Phoenix, Psylocke

*Related Powers:* Psychic Blast, Psi-Screen

Your hero may establish mind-to-mind communication with any other individuals. The telepath may read only surface thoughts, but does so without any visible or audible signs. The telepath can sense through the eyes and ears of the person contacted. He or she may also speak directly into the mind of the person or persons contacted. Language is never an issue.

When trying to make telepathic contact, your hero must make an *easy Telepathy* action. This action is unopposed if the target is willing. Against an unwilling target, the action is opposed by the target's Willpower. If the target is also a telepath, and has a greater power intensity than the user, contact is impossible unless the target is willing.

*Stunt—Life Detection:* Your hero can tell when living creatures are nearby with an *average Telepathy* action. You can declare an action in any exchange where a surprise attack is launched.

*Stunt—Mental Probe:* A Mental Probe is a search for a specific image in a person's mind. You must state what your hero is looking for before beginning the scan. The hero must make an *average Telepathy* action opposed by the Willpower of the target, if the target is resisting. In any case, the strain of being probed reduces the target's Intellect and Willpower by 1 for the next 24 hours, and the target may not be probed again for that time. A successful Mental Probe will reveal the information known by the individual being probed, strictly limited to that person's knowledge. In addition, your hero can glean the target's calling and personality notes.

*Stunt—Psi-Screen:* Your hero gains Psi-Screen.

*Stunt—Psychic Detection:* Your hero is attuned to exceptional mental radiation in general, and as such can make an *average Telepathy* action to detect the use of nonmagical paranormal abilities including mind-



reading, thought-casting, mind control, and psychic attacks.

**Stunt—Psychic Invisibility:** Your hero gains Invisibility, with the Fools Only Creatures limit.

**Stunt—Psychic Surgery:** Your hero can enter the mind of a willing person and repair psychic damage. By making an average Telepathy action opposed by the number of damage points, your hero can restore one card (or 5 Health) from damage caused by mental attacks. This surgery can also repair long-term damage, though the difficulty may rise if the scar is buried deep.

**Stunt—Psychic Weapon:** By focusing mental powers, your hero creates a weapon of psychic energy. This weapon activates with a Telepathy action, resisted by Willpower as a defense instead of Strength. Use of psychic weaponry drains your hero's telepathic abilities for an aura duration.

**Stunt—Rangeless:** Your hero can communicate with anyone he or she can find regardless of distance, perhaps through Psychic Detection or other powers.

**Stunt—Sedation:** Your hero can make an average Telepathy (Willpower) attack to cause a person to black out. The person cannot wake up for at least 15 minutes.

**Stunt—Team Link:** Your hero can link the minds of a number of allies up to the power's intensity, so that all team members are aware of each other's actions. The hero can maintain this contact regardless of the subjects' physical proximity to each other. If anyone blacks out, the hero must make a challenging Telepathy action to maintain the link with all other teammates.

**Stunt—Telelocation:** Your hero can locate one or more known individuals wherever they are, simply by making an average Telepathy action. Any Mind Control or Telepathy powers can affect the individual at the extended distance.

## TELEPORTATION

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Nightcrawler, Fatale, Vanisher, Zero

**Related Powers:** Astral Projection, ESP

Your hero can move instantly from point to point without physically crossing the distance between. The hero enters another dimension, moves through that dimension, and returns to the original dimension at another location.

Teleportation—the pros call it 'porting—is disorienting. Each time the hero 'ports, he or she must make an easy Teleportation action. Failure indicates the hero arrives at the location, but is disoriented by the experience and may take no action in the following exchange. The teleporting hero may carry something or someone the hero is touching, up to normal Strength limits. Those carried by the hero must make a challenging Strength action or be disoriented for an exchange.

If the exact layout of the location is not known by the teleporter (even if it has been changed for a few minutes), the hero risks teleporting into a solid object. The player draws a card, and if the value is higher than the hero's intensity, he or she suffers damage equal to the material strength of the object. If not, the hero arrives safe and sound. This risk is ignored by 'porters with intensity of 10+, but low-intensity heroes usually won't try to teleport into an unfamiliar place.

The exact distance of teleportation is unimportant. Those with intensities below 5 are usually limited to a few miles or line of sight, while those with 20+ can teleport anywhere in the universe.

**Limit—Location-Specific:** Your hero can teleport to one place only.

**Stunt—Displacement:** Your hero can teleport into a solid object or person, causing the target to be displaced to where the hero started. This is an

average Teleportation (Agility) attack which, if undodged, inflicts no damage but causes the displacement to occur as a contingent action.

**Stunt—Fusillade:** Your hero teleports quickly from place to place, feinting to cause damage to one or more targets. The hero may divide his or her ability and pre-cardplay modifiers among as many attacks as desired, all of which are performed as contingent actions after the teleport occurs. However, you don't redraw cards played in these attacks until all attacks are finished.

**Stunt—Gateway:** Your hero opens a rift in the universe and allows people to step through. Each exchange after the first, the hero needs an average Teleportation action to hold the rift open.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can teleport with a number of passengers up to the power's intensity.

**Stunt—Quick Turnaround:** Your hero can teleport back to where he or she started as a contingent action to the first teleport.

**Stunt—Summoning:** Your hero can teleport other persons or objects from remote locations to his or her side. If used with ESP and Mind Control, this stunt allows the summoning of powerful beings from other dimensions. Not that they usually like being summoned, mind you.

## TIME CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Timeshadow, Tempo

**Related Powers:** Postcognition,  
Precognition, Time Travel

Time Control allows your hero to alter the flow of time in a very limited manner. The hero can go back and forth within a few seconds of time, jumping around to avoid being hurt and seizing the moment. The hero cannot adjust time outside the boundaries of an exchange, however.

Heroes with Time Control can change their declared action after anyone else declares

an action. If two heroes with Time Control declare at the same time, their powers cancel out.

By slowing down the timestream, the hero uses the Time Control intensity instead of Agility for the purposes of dodging one (and only one) attack made against the hero from within firing distance. The hero must declare which attack he or she is using this power against.

Heroes with Time Control may divide their attack into a normal attack and one or more contingent attacks. The hero's normal ability score and all pre-cardplay modifiers are divided among the number of attacks, rounded down.

Time Control can only be selected at a minimum of 10 intensity.

**Stunt—Paralysis:** With a touch, the hero can slow or halt the flow of time around a target, gaining Paralysis. This can be used positively, to protect injured, poisoned, or dying heroes; for this and to slow time around objects, the effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the power's intensity. The hero can also use this power in combat to paralyze an opponent; see the Paralysis power.

**Stunt—Speed Burst:** Your hero can jump forward in time to cross distances as if he or she had Lightning Speed—from an observer's perspective, that is. Your hero gains none of the other powers of Lightning Speed, however.

**Stunt—Timetwisting:** Your hero can cause hiccups in time for allies, as long as the hero concentrates on Timetwisting. Only willing individuals who are fully aware of the effect have their actions affected by Timetwisting. They gain the ability to divide their attacks as above. Every exchange, anyone under the effects of Timetwisting must make a *challenging Willpower* action or suffer 10 damage points which ignore all defenses.

## TIME TRAVEL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Kang, Doctor Doom, Rama-Tut

**Related Power:** Time Control

Your hero can travel into the past or future. Needless to say, this is an immensely potent ability, and the Narrator who opens this Pandora's box should realize that it'll be awfully hard to close. That said, time traveling makes for wildly exciting and unpredictable adventures.

Time is amazingly resilient in the Marvel Universe. Villains often believe that they can go back in time to alter some critical event that will change everything. As far as we know, they're wrong. Then again, how would we know if they weren't? This question has baffled chronologists for ages.

Without resolving this question, the Time Travel power gets the hero to a place that sure looks like the past or the future. You draw four cards, and if the combined value exceeds the hero's intensity in Time Travel, the hero appears in a universe that's somehow different than expected. Regardless of the destination, the time travel method cannot be used again for at least an hour.

**A warning to players:** Your heroes enter the timestream at their peril. Narrators know that time travel is just an excuse to play with reality. You've been warned.

**Limit—Future Only:** Your hero cannot travel farther back in time than his or her starting point.

**Limit—Past Only:** Your hero cannot travel farther forward in time than his or her starting point.

**Stunt—Chronometric Detection:** Your hero can know the peculiar energy signature of each time period, with an average Time Travel action. The hero knows what day it is at any moment.

**Stunt—Passengers:** Your hero can take one passenger per point of the power's intensity. If a passenger wants to stay

in the current time, the hero has to make an average Time Travel (Willpower) action to force the passenger through time.

**Stunt—Time Tracking:** Your hero has a fix on one object or person, and knows when that target is at all times.

## TRANSMUTATION

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Grey Gargoyle, Molecule Man,

Sersi

**Related Powers:** Alchemy, Body Transformation

Your hero may convert objects or creatures into other forms by touching them. The hero makes an easy Transmutation action, opposed by the object's material strength or the creature's Willpower. While transformed, a creature cannot recall what has occurred and has the material strength or other abilities of that object or creature (see **Material Strengths** on page 60 and **Critters** in the Roster Book). To transform a creature, its flesh or similar substance must be touched.

These alterations typically last for days or months or years, as determined by the Narrator. The hero can use this power to revert the changed target to its normal form. In any event, the target regains his or her normal form following the transformation, even if pieces are broken off or dispersed. At its highest levels of power, Transmutation can allow the hero to create whole castles and cities.

**Limit—Creatures Only:** Your hero cannot transform nonliving objects.

**Limit—Form Only:** The target retains its basic abilities and powers, unless those powers depend on senses or limbs that are no longer present. For example, a villain who transforms the Human Torch into a frog will suddenly be facing a flaming frog that flies and shoots fireballs. The hero must be able to transform living creatures to take this limit.

**Limit—Objects Only:** Your hero cannot transform living creatures.

**Limit—One Change Only:** Your hero can only make one type of change, like turning flesh into stone or men into pigs.

**Stunt—Rapid Shift:** Every exchange, a transformed creature or object makes a random change decided upon by the Narrator.

## WALL-CRAWLING

**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Spider-Man, Spider-Woman, Venom

**Related Powers:** Claws, Web-Slinging

Your hero can move along walls and ceilings as if walking on floors. The intensity indicates how strong the adhesion is (the mechanism—suction cups, atomic field suppressors, whatever—is left to the player). The hero will use the intensity to determine the ability to stick, according to the slipperiness of the surface. If the surface is sloped so that it is easier to climb, reduce the difficulty by one level; if sloped so that it is harder to climb, increase the difficulty by one level. A hero with the Climbing skill can subtract a level from these difficulties:

Surface	Difficulty
Rock with handholds	Automatic
Concrete or brickwork	Easy
Glass and/or steel	Average
Surface coated with oil	Challenging
Nonstick surfaces	Daunting
Frictionless surfaces	Desperate

**Limit—One Surface Only:** Your hero can only climb one type of surface.

**Stunt—Claws:** Your hero gains Claws. This means that anywhere he or she climbs, the surface is likely to be damaged by the claws.

**Stunt—Imbue Wall-Crawling:** Your hero can permit others (a number of persons up to the power's intensity) to Wall-Crawl as he or she does.

## WATERBREATHING

**Trump Suit:** Strength

**Exemplars:** Sub-Mariner, Kymaera, any Atlantean

**Related Powers:** Life Support, Lightning Speed, Water Control

This power lets the hero breathe water, either through air tanks, gills, or somesuch. It allows the hero to withstand the pressure in great depths of water and to see underwater as if on land (acting as Telescopic Vision underwater—see Enhanced Senses).

The hero may use the Waterbreathing intensity to resist Pressure attacks, including vertigo.

**Limit—Air Toxicity:** Your hero cannot breathe surface air and gains the Hindrance of Fatally Vulnerable to Air.

**Stunt—Resistance to Gases:** Because of an increased ability to hold his or her breath, your hero gains Resistance to Gases.

**Stunt—Waterwalking:** Your hero can cross the surface of water as if it were land.

## WATER CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Crystal, Water Wizard

**Related Powers:** Cold Control, Waterbreathing

Water Control allows the hero to control liquids. The water may be used as a missile weapon, inflicting damage equal to the power's intensity at firing distance. The water also may be used as a shield against energy, reducing energy attacks by the intensity of the power.

Your hero can also calm or roil waters at will. The distance of this aspect of the power is whatever your hero can see, though it is always difficult to control large bodies of water.

**Limit—Submersive:** Your hero must be submerged in the water he or she wishes to control to use this power.

**Stunt—Air Bubbles:** Your hero can create air bubbles so that a number of people up to the power's intensity can survive underwater.

**Stunt—Dehydration:** Your hero can destroy water. The hero can lower water or use this stunt as an average *Water Control (Strength)* attack against humans and others mainly composed of water.

**Stunt—Drowning:** Your hero can choke a victim with water using an average *Water Control (Strength)* attack. Each exchange this attack affects a victim, damage increases by one level.

**Stunt—Fog:** Your hero can create Fog as if he or she had that aspect of *Weather Control*.

**Stunt—Melting:** Your hero can melt solid ice.

**Stunt—Propulsion:** Your hero can use water to speed water vehicles, as with *Lightning Speed*.

**Stunt—Tsunami:** Your hero makes an average *Water Control* action to form existing water into a wave, then as a contingent action can bring it crashing down on all within firing distance. The hero makes an average *Water Control (Agility)* action to damage targets within firing distance.

**Stunt—Waterbreathing:** Your hero gains *Waterbreathing*.

**Stunt—Waterwalking:** Your hero can cross the surface of water as if it were land.

**Stunt—Water Creation:** Your hero can create any amount of water.

**Stunt—Water Elementals:** Your hero creates beings of water or other liquid, with *Strength* and *Agility* scores equal to the power's intensity. It requires a full exchange to create each elemental; while your hero is creating an elemental, none of the hero's other elementals can do anything. A maximum of one being may be created per point of intensity. The hero must concentrate to control these beings; if the hero falls unconscious, they trickle away at the

end of the exchange. These creatures suffer double intensity damage from fire attacks.

## WEATHER CONTROL

**Trump Suit:** Intellect

**Exemplars:** Storm, Thor

**Related Power:** Air Control

Your hero can manipulate the weather, including winds, temperature, precipitation, and even lightning. In its basic form, the power allows the hero to reduce or increase weather effects by his or her power's intensity. He or she can quell a rainstorm, thicken fog, or cause lightning to strike randomly. Your hero can predict the weather with 100 percent accuracy.

Weather's intensity can dwarf the power of anything on earth—but usually doesn't. Weather should be treated like any other attack or power: Rainstorms don't usually hurt, and even really hot days aren't all that dangerous. But when a *Weather Controlling* hero alters these effects, they become monstrous: localized hurricane winds, bone-chilling snow, drenching waves of rain, heatstroke aplenty. Thus, the hero can generally inflict the power's intensity in damage to all within firing distance. When the hero ceases concentration, the weather returns to normal.

**Limit—Runaway Weather:** If the hero starts using *Weather Control*, the effects will turn disastrous and uncontrollable on a negative card draw.

**Stunt—Arc Riding:** Your hero rides arcs of electricity that allow *Flight* while in firing distance of the ground. The hero cannot make quick turns or stops. If the hero shorts out, he or she will fall (see *Electrical Control*).

**Stunt—Cold Control:** Your hero gains *Cold Control*.

**Stunt—Downdraft:** Your hero can flatten targets with a blast of air. The hero makes an average *Weather Control (Strength)* attack on each individual



below, and if successful against an individual, he or she loses an action. One action score is generated for the attack, though individual Strengths will vary the difficulty from target to target.

**Stunt—Flight:** Your hero gains Flight.

**Stunt—Fog Cloud:** Your hero can obscure vision to all within firing distance, reducing vision to striking distance. The effects of maximum coverage last with the hero's concentration, and disperses during the next exchange. The hero can also use this power to target a specific individual with fog; this requires an average Weather Control (Agility) action to succeed. The hero can also use this stunt with snow if he or she desires.

**Stunt—Heat Control:** Your hero can alter the heat levels within firing distance by roughly 10° Fahrenheit per point of intensity. A hero with a 20 intensity can thus make a 50° room into a 200° room in one exchange. If the

temperature goes above 120°, everyone in the room suffers the intensity in damage after subtracting defense. This power can be targeted at one individual.

**Stunt—Lightning Bolts:** Assuming a storm is present, the hero can strike any individual within firing distance

with a bolt of lightning. This is an average Weather Control (Agility) electrical attack.

**Stunt—Resistance to**

**Weather:** Your hero gains Resistance to Weather. The hero isn't resistant to attacks that come from sources other than the weather, so the hero would be Resistant to lightning bolts but not electricity from a transformer station.

## WEB-SLINGING

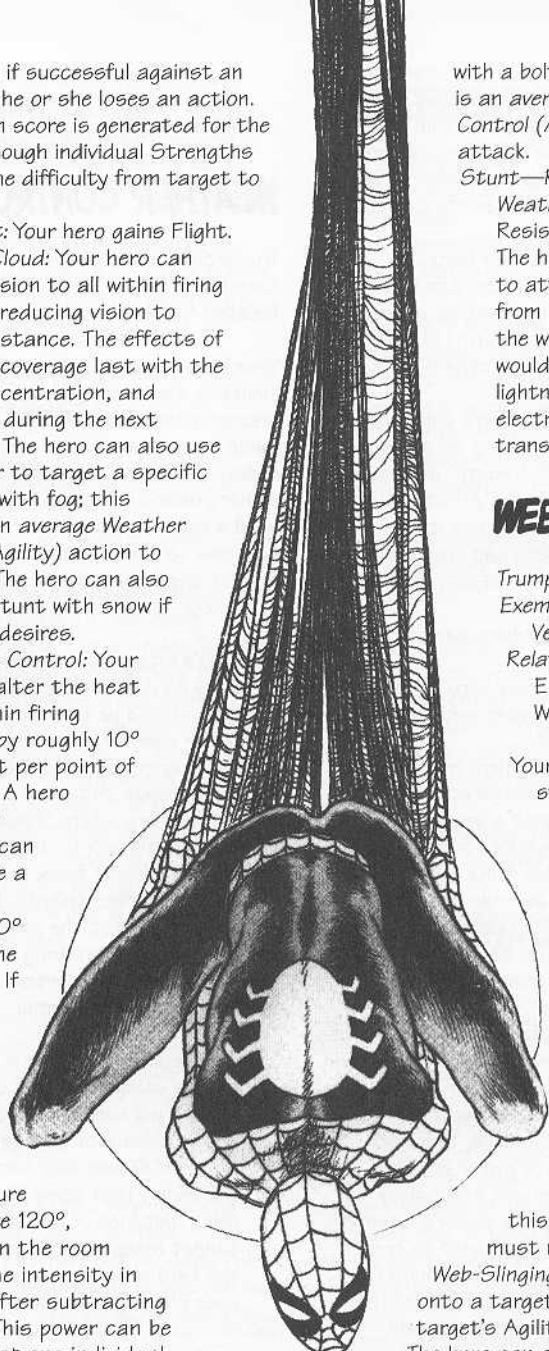
**Trump Suit:** Agility

**Exemplars:** Spider-Man, Venom

**Related Powers:**  
Ensnarement,  
Wall-Crawling

Your hero can project sticky webbing, which can be used to swing from rooftops and bind up foes. Each exchange while using

this power, the hero must make an easy Web-Slinging action to catch onto a target, opposed by the target's Agility if it's moving. The hero can swing from building to building, catch flagpoles and television antennas, and latch onto moving vehicles.



This power offers Ensnarement effects at the intensity of Web-Slinging. Your hero can ensnare a person by making an *easy Agility (Agility)* action; if undodged, the attack entangles the opponent as a contingent action. On the next exchange and any thereafter, the victim may make an *average Strength (Web-Slinging)* action to break out of the snare. Ensnared victims cannot move or take other actions until freed.

Webbing is an unstable substance. All effects of a cast web wears off after an hour at most.

**Stunt—Adhesion:** The substance is so sticky that it can adhere whatever it touches to any object. On the next exchange and any thereafter, the victim may make an *average Strength (Web-Slinging)* action to break out of the adhesive.

**Stunt—Instant Freedom:** Your hero can choose to let someone free from his or her ensnarement just by thinking about it.

**Stunt—Multiple Targets:** Your hero can hit any number of targets within firing distance. One action score is generated for all targets, even though the Agility of the victims may vary the individual difficulties from target to target.

**Stunt—Net:** Your hero can use the power's intensity rather than Agility for catching falling items or people. The hero suffers no damage from falling objects of human size or less landing on him or her.

**Stunt—Resistance to Ensnarement:** Your hero gains Resistance to Ensnarement at the power's intensity and can wriggle free of most bonds.

**Stunt—Web Shield:** Your hero can make a shield out of webs, gaining defense equal to the power's intensity against physical attacks.

## WINGS

Trump Suit: Agility

Exemplars: Archangel, Deathbird, Vulture, Wasp

Related Power: Flight

Your hero has wings which give him or her the ability of Flight. The hero's wings are vulnerable, and an undodged aimed shot (see **Aiming** on page 34) at the wings will cripple the wings if the intensity of the attack is greater than that of the Wings. In this case, the hero suffers no damage, but loses the ability to fly. The hero can intentionally bring about this fate by wrapping the wings around his or her body, causing the attack to be aimed at the wings.

**Limit—Glider Wings:** Your hero can fly only downward and at the whims of the winds.

**Stunt—Downdraft:** Your hero can flap the wings to project a blast of air. The hero makes an *average Wings (Strength)* attack on each individual below, and if successful against an individual, he or she loses an action. One action score is generated for the attack, though individual Strengths will vary the difficulty from target to target.

**Stunt—Feather Blast:** Your hero can detach and project his or her feathers as an attack at the Wing's intensity within firing distance.

**Stunt—Protected Wings:** Your hero's wings have a material strength of the power's intensity and cannot be affected by the aimed shot described above.

**Stunt—Wing Slash:** Your hero can use his or her wings to slash a foe. The hero must cross at least one distance in the exchange, and can slash only if the hero is within striking distance at the time of the attack. The attack is a normal *average Strength (Agility)* attack.

# A

## PPENDIX THREE: CREATING YOUR OWN HERO

Sometimes playing established heroes won't slake your thirst. You'll want to make your own hero, ready and willing to fly into danger. Well, far be it from us to stop you,

True Believer. The MARVEL

hero creation system gives you the tools to create any hero you want and lets Narrators quickly create original characters for their adventures or campaigns.

To create a new MARVEL super hero, you'll need the Fate Deck, a photocopy of the blank hero sheet (on the back of this book), and a pencil. Plus, an idea of what kind of hero you want to create wouldn't hurt either.

Throughout hero creation, you'll assign fate cards to spaces on the hero sheet, using it something like an assembly line. You'll use multiple elements of the fate cards for different purposes:

### BUILDING A SUPERTEAM

What makes a superteam great? More specifically, what makes the Fantastic Four so stable? And what makes the X-Men so fractious? When you're putting together a team of new super heroes, take some lessons from the past and build the kind of team you want, stable or otherwise. On a stable team:

Everyone is good at something special. The Fantastic Four are the best in the world because each of them succeeds at something different. This shows up in their ability scores: Reed is the smartest, Ben is the strongest, Johnny's the fastest, and Sue's the steadiest. There's never any question on this team as to who's going to handle any given problem.

Motivations are in synch. With the Fantastic Four, everyone is behind the goals of exploring and protecting the universe. But the X-Men have suffered because they are centered around an ideal that not all of them share. Professor Xavier is dedicated to the belief that humans and mutants can co-exist peacefully, but not all the X-Men are willing to take constant xenophobia without lashing back.

Leadership is strong. The Fantastic Four are led by Reed Richards, pure and simple. But the founder of the X-Men isn't always around. Xavier routinely leaves the mutants in the hands of less idealistic teachers like Cable and the White Queen. Even Cyclops, Xavier's nominal second in command, can't take care of a half-dozen superteams. So the message gets muted, and tensions brew.

Villains are omnipresent. The thing that keeps a superteam functioning best is constant prompting to action. The Fantastic Four's public presence guarantees that assaults on their headquarters will break up the routine. Nothing builds solidarity from within like attacks from without.

- The values of the cards are used to determine scores in abilities and superpowers. You can add the values of cards together to get these totals, but not split the value of a single card among multiple places on the hero sheet.
- The suits of the cards are used to define aptitude in the use of abilities and powers. The closer those cards are aligned in suit with the chosen abilities and powers, the more versatile your hero will be with those characteristics.
- The auras of the cards are used to determine whether your hero gets a special bonus in certain areas. Generally, you don't want negative results.
- The callings on the cards can be used to define your hero's calling.
- The characters are used only as visual references.

It's important to understand that even when you're done making a new hero, the hero will advance during the course of play. Over time, your hero's ratings will improve right along with his or her crime-fighting experience.

## HERO CREATION SEQUENCE

Throughout this sequence, keep an open mind. Sometimes new ideas to round out your hero will occur to you as you play with the cards.

Even though you should follow the steps in the hero creation sequence in order, you can always revisit a step and move cards around if you change your mind. But when you're done, each card can have been used for one purpose only.

**Origin.** Give your hero a hero name, given name, gender, costume, and a rough idea of strengths and weaknesses (but don't write the latter down yet). If you need inspiration, flip through the characters in the Fate Deck to see the many options of hero types available. Detail the hero's history and personality.

Make sure your hero matches the tone of the adventures your Narrator has in mind. You and your Narrator should agree on the type of heroes to put into play: either *inexperienced* (such as Generation X), *experienced* (like Daredevil), or *powerhouse* (like Thor).

**Tips:** At this point, you only want a vague idea of your hero, because your cards might suggest a few changes to your initial conception. But you should know who your hero is and where he or she comes from. Telling your Narrator is a smart idea, because he or she can catch potential problems before you go through the entire sequence.



**Draw.** Draw ten cards. If you're making an inexperienced hero, redraw all 8s, 9s, and 10s. If you're creating a powerhouse hero, redraw all 1s, 2s, and 3s.

**Tips:** It's random, but you're looking for high values and a wide variety of suits. You're going to be using these cards to define all aspects of your hero, so don't spend 'em all in one place. You must have enough cards to assign at least one for each major step in the process.

**Ability Scores.** Assign up to three cards to each ability (Strength, Agility, Intellect, and Willpower). The total value of the cards played for each ability gives a score for that ability. Put the cards you've assigned around the corners of the ability starburst on the hero sheet, placing Strength in the upper left and so on.

A player-created hero must have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 20 in all ability scores. If you're creating inexperienced heroes, only one ability score can exceed 10. If you're creating experienced heroes, only one ability score can exceed 12. If you're creating powerhouse heroes, you can have up to 20 in all ability scores. For reference, the ability score charts appear on pages 97–98.

*Tips:* You can either specialize in one ability to the detriment of others, or spread out your scores somewhat evenly. Keep in mind that no matter what type of hero you create, you will face challenges in all the abilities. Also, you will want to leave some cards unassigned to apply for other aspects of your hero in later steps.

**Ability Codes.** Look at the cards you've assigned to each ability. If you have played any Doom cards for an ability, assign that ability an X code. If you have played no Doom cards and also no cards of the ability's suit for that ability, assign it a D code. If you have one card of the ability's suit assigned to the ability, give it a C code. If you have two such cards, assign the ability a B. If you have three such cards, assign the ability an A.

*Tips:* The codes tell you how many skills your hero will have. You'll benefit if the highest code matches the highest score.

**Skills.** Give your hero skills based on the codes you've assigned. If your hero has an A code in an ability, assign the hero four skills from the ability's skill list. If the hero has a B code, assign three. If a C, assign two. If a D, assign one. If an X, your hero has no skills in that ability. The skill list is

on page 101, and the descriptions follow on pages 112–119.

You can make one of your hero's skills a world-class skill by taking a non-Doom card with a value of 7 or more that has not already been played and turning it face-down next to the cards for the appropriate ability. No hero can start with more than one world-class skill.

*Tips:* Choose skills that work well with the powers and equipment you want your hero to have. If you want your hero to wield a particular weapon, for example, it's usually a good idea to have a skill in that weapon.

**Edge and Hand Size.** Your hero starts out with an Edge of 1 and a Hand Size of 3. To get +1 to both Hand Size and Edge, you must place a non-Doom card of value 7 or more in the center of the ability starburst. If you want to play two such cards there, your hero can have +2 Edge and Hand Size. A player-created hero cannot have a Hand Size of higher than 5 at the start. Edge and Hand Size are explained in detail on page 99.

*Tips:* High Edge and Hand Size improve your cardplay options and resilience to damage. But it will require some of your highest cards, which you instead could use for powers and abilities. Your call.

**Powers and Equipment.** Your hero can choose up to five powers from the Powers Appendix (the list is on page 103, and the descriptions are on pages 126–191). You must assign one or more cards to each power you select. You can place these cards in the middle of the hero sheet.

Total the values of each power's cards to get its intensity. To help with this step, check the intensity chart on page 102. Your hero gains damage and defense bonuses the same way as power intensities. Heroes cannot start with intensities higher than 20.

Heroes gain equipment at this time the same way as described for powers above.



**Tips:** Using many cards for one power makes your hero a one-trick pony—but it'll be a good trick. Giving the hero multiple powers makes him or her more versatile than those with just one power.

**Stunts.** Each power's description lists a specific trump suit. Look at the cards you've assigned to each power. If you have any Doom cards assigned to a power, your hero gets no stunts in that power. For each card of the appropriate trump suit you've attached to that power, choose one stunt from the power's stunt list. If your Narrator approves, you can make up your own stunts.

**Tips:** You can learn stunts during play, so don't feel you have to get all your hero's stunts now. But this is the only time you don't have to attempt an action to gain a stunt.

**Limits.** You can assign a power any limit that actually limits the power. Use examples from the common limits list on page 129, or any of those in the power descriptions. If you choose a limit, draw a card. If it's a positive card, you can add it to the card(s) you've played for that power. This will boost intensity and may also give your hero a new stunt if the suit matches. If the card isn't positive, put it on the bottom of the deck. Your hero retains the chosen limit no matter what color aura comes up on the draw.

You can have at most three limits per power.

**Tips:** Limits are risky, but they do pay off big if you draw a positive card.

**Hindrances.** You may (but don't have to) choose a hindrance from the list on pages 107–110. If you select a hindrance, draw a card. If you get a positive card, you may add that card to any one ability score or power intensity, or reserve it for the next step. If the card isn't positive, put it on the bottom of the deck. You may select and draw for up to two hindrances.

**Tips:** Like limits, hindrances can work wonders if they pay off. But regardless of any benefits, hindrances will affect your hero constantly. Handle with care.

**Calling.** Choose a calling from the list on pages 104–106. You must turn any one *unused* card face down when you choose your calling. If the calling matches the one on the card you turned over, draw a new card and add it to any ability or power. If you choose a villainous calling (Demolisher, Greed, Vengeance, or World Domination), you don't draw again even if the calling matches the one on the card.

**Tips:** This choice more than any other will define your hero throughout play. Don't be limited by cards here. Make the right call for your hero and your game.

**Reality Check.** When you're done arranging your cards, write down the results of this creation sequence. Be sure to flesh out your hero's history and personality and consider what his or her costume looks like. Finally, run the entire hero sheet by your Narrator for approval. If your Narrator tells you to make changes, make them. If not, you're good to go.

## MODELING A HERO

Let's take a look at an example of hero creation. All great characters start with a great idea. Start somewhere—on the moon, or in the sewers, or in a school in Westchester County. Invent a name—Candlemancer, perhaps, or Miss Mental. Find a strange power from fiction or sports or nature. That's where our man Stan's going to begin, as he creates a hero one step at a time.

**Origin.** Since his Narrator says they're playing a light-hearted game for experienced heroes, Stan's decided to create **the Hedgehog**, who has the power to curl up into an impenetrable ball of spines. (Okay, we admit that's hardly superheroic, but hey, not everyone can be Captain America.) Stan doodles Spike's appearance and gives

him a secret identity of Spike Dexter. He gives Spike an appropriately quirky origin involving a pet store and radiation, and details his timid personality.

**Draw.** Stan draws ten cards. They include: an 8 of Intellect; a 2 and 5 of Strength; a 1 and 2 of Willpower; a 3 and 4 of Agility; and a 3, 4, and 10 of Doom.

**Ability Scores.** Stan assigns the 5 of Strength to Strength. He assigns the 10 of Doom to Agility. He assigns the 4 of Doom to Intellect, and the 1 and 2 of Willpower to Willpower.

**Ability Codes.** Because Stan played one Strength card for Strength, the Hedgehog gets a 5C Strength. The Doom cards in Agility and Intellect mean X codes there. He has played two Willpower cards in Willpower, so Spike has a 3B in that ability.

**Skills.** Spike's codes call for two Strength skills and three Willpower skills. Since he's gonna have spines, Stan gives him Natural Weapons and Spears. Spike works in a pet store, so he needs Animal Handling. Hedgehogs have acute senses, so Stan gives him Tracking and Observation.

**Edge and Hand Size.** Stan doesn't want the Hedgehog to have a 1 Edge, so he amps his Edge to 2 by placing his 8 of Intellect in the ability starburst. Stan's Hand Size is now 4 (Edge +2).

**Powers.** Here's where Stan's going to blow the points (numerical, not spiny). Spike's a hedgehog, so Stan gives him Teeth +4 and Enhanced Senses 3, using the 4 of Agility and the 3 of Doom. Spike also gets Quills +2, because Stan plays the 2 of Strength. Stan wants the spines to work as defense beyond their normal powers, so he uses his last card, the 3 of Agility to get Body Armor +3.

**Stunts.** Of the four powers, only the Quills match in trump suit (because Stan used the 6 of Strength, which is Quills' trump suit). So he gets one stunt. The only stunt listed is Volley, and hedgehogs can't fire

their quills. So Stan proposes that Spike gain an irritating liquid on the edge of his spines, much like real hedgehogs have. The Narrator rules that this Irritant stunt gives anyone Spike stabs a -2 Agility for one exchange, a pretty minor stunt but it keeps Stan happy.

**Limits.** The Hedgehog's Body Armor +3 is too low for Stan's taste. He decides to make it Preventative of any actions while the armor is in effect. This limit makes sense, as hedgehogs can't do much of anything with their spines out. Stan draws and gets a positive 5 of Agility, so he adds that card to the Body Armor, making it +8.

**Hindrances.** Whoops! Stan didn't reserve one card for Spike's calling, which he'll need in a few instants. So he must either rearrange his cards, or try to get a new one by taking a hindrance. He goes for the latter option and selects the Monstrous hindrance. He draws and gets a neutral card, which he doesn't get to keep. So he tries again. He takes the apropos Panicky hindrance (which he'll certainly regret), and draws a positive 4 of Strength. At least he can use that for his calling.

**Calling.** Tough call. Outcast seems obvious, but hedgehogs are so cute that Stan picks Animal Nature. (Hedgehogs aren't known for their ferocity, so Spike's animal nature is going to lean toward the fearful.) The 4 in Stan's hand shows a different calling (Thrill-Seeker), but Stan sees that the 2 of Strength representing Quills bears the feral countenance of the Werewolf, whose calling is Animal Nature. Spike switches out the 4 for the 2 (making the Quills' bonus +4) and turns the 2 face down. Since this matches Spike's chosen calling, Stan gets to draw again, gaining for himself a 4 of Intellect. Stan decides to add this card to Spike's Quills power, raising its intensity to +8.

**Reality Check.** Stan's Narrator says everything's okay, so he's ready to play. It might be hard to find a superteam that'll accept poor Spike, but then again, hedgehogs are solitary creatures....

# HERO SHEET

5C Strength

Intellect 4X

2 Edge \* Hand Size 4(25)

10X Agility

Willpower 3B

## THE HEDGEHOG (SPIKE DEXTER)

**CALLING:** Animal Nature

**HINDRANCES:** Monstrous, Panicky

**PERSONALITY:** Prudent, cautiously  
investigative, solitary, loves high places  
and crannies, loves the taste of insects,  
dislikes bright light and loud noises

### HISTORY

Apprentice pet store employee Spike  
Dexter accepted a delivery of adorable  
hedgehogs rescued from scientific experi-  
mentation. Unaccustomed to dealing with  
these shy nocturnal critters, Dexter jos-  
tled a sleeping hedgehog and came away  
with a connect-the-dots of spine marks  
on his hand. He was soon horrified to  
learn that the insectivorous creatures  
came from the science hall at Midtown  
High, where one of the hedgehogs had  
eaten a dying spider that had acciden-  
tally absorbed a fantastic amount of  
radioactivity. Without warning, his body  
blossomed with spines and fur. Now,  
sleeping during the day, Dexter ventures  
cautiously into the night to fight evil  
as — the hapless Hedgehog!

### SKILLS

Natural Weapons, Spears

Animal Handling, Observation,

Tracking

### POWERS

Body Armor +8 (total defense 13)

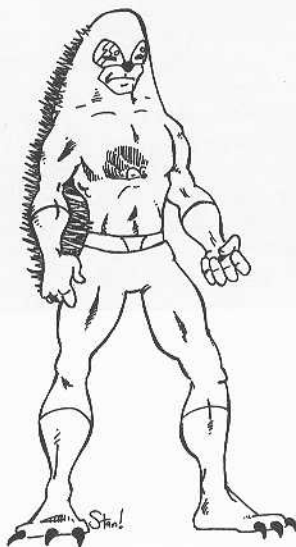
Limit: Preventative of any action

Enhanced Senses 3 (all but sight)

Quills +7

Irritant (a foe wounded by Quills  
has -2 Agility for one exchange)

Teeth +4



# HERO TEMPLATES

All of the foregoing assumes you've got about ten minutes to create a hero. When you've got ten *seconds* to create a hero, you need a faster and less cerebral method. That's when you need a hero template.

A template is a pre-created hero that you can select and adjust quickly. Stats are given for each type, and you can adjust easily. The four ability scores can be swapped out on a one-for-one basis, and you can add to the hero's ability scores by reducing Edge; add 9 if you reduce Edge from 3 to 2, and add 10 if you reduce it from 2 to 1. You can swap powers and skills one-for-one as well.

Find the hero's calling by drawing a random card and looking at the calling in the upper right. (If the character is a villain, reduce Edge by 1 with no bonus, or add a Hindrance.) Costume, name, and history you can make up on the fly. None of these templates have hindrances. If you want hindrances, add 5 to your ability and intensity total for your first hindrance, and 6 more if you take a second.

## RANDOM MONIKERS

After you've exhausted every other option (and we mean that), you can choose a random super hero or super-villain name using the values of just two card draws. Add the results together, with either one first. But don't say we didn't warn you.

And remember: When all else fails, alliterate.

### First Draw:

1. Choose an insect
2. Choose a military rank
3. Choose an atmospheric condition
4. Choose a color
5. Choose an element
6. Choose an emotional state
7. Choose a synonym for "great"
8. Choose a source of light or darkness
9. Choose Dr., Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mistress
10. Choose He, She, or The

### Second Draw:

1. Choose a weapon
2. Choose a disaster
3. Choose a geographical locale
4. Choose an animal
5. Choose Man, Woman, Boy, or Girl
6. Choose a mythical or sci-fi creature
7. Choose a four-letter word with at least one J, Q, Z, K, or X
8. Choose a playing card or chess piece
9. Choose a synonym for "unusual"
10. Choose A, O, X, or a Greek letter

Choose a template, or use the value of a random card to pick a template.

1. **Energy-User.** Wields and shapes mighty elemental forces.  
Think: Storm, Human Torch, Cyclops.
2. **Gizmo-User.** Relies on heavy-duty tools.  
Think: MACH-1 (Beetle), War Machine, Crimson Dynamo.
3. **Mage.** Casts eldritch spells of power.  
Think: Clea, Doctor Druid, Satana.
4. **Martial Artist.** Trained in the art of hand-to-hand combat.  
Think: Captain America, Iron Fist, Shang-Chi.
5. **Psionic.** Controls the power of the mind.  
Think: Professor X, Phoenix, Invisible Woman.
6. **Shapechanger.** Alters his or her form.  
Think: Tigra, Super-Skrull, Atlas (Goliath).
7. **Speedster.** Travels at unthinkable speeds.  
Think: Quicksilver, Northstar, Speed Demon.
8. **Strongman.** Rock-hard and ready to rumble.  
Think: The Thing, Sub-Mariner, Juggernaut.
9. **Super-Scientist.** Pure intellect harnessed for battle.  
Think: Reed Richards, Hank Pym, Doctor Doom.
10. **World-Spanner.** Capable of interstellar and cross-dimensional travel.  
Think: Nova (either), Quasar, Adam Warlock.

Template	Strength/Intellect/Agility/Willpower/Edge					Skills and Powers
Energy User	5	6	6	7	2	Energy Blast 14
Gizmo User	5	8	8	6	2	Ability Boost 9; intensity 10 gizmo
Mage	3	4	7	12	3	Magic 12
Martial Artist	8	12	5	8	2	Martial Arts; Leaping 3; Chi 4
Psionic	4	4	8	12	2	Psi-Screen 6; Telepathy 4; Psionic Bolt 8
Shapechanger	9	9	4	3	2	Shapeshifting 8; Size Alteration 5
Speedster	5	11	7	6	2	Lightning Speed 17
Strongman	15	7	3	5	2	Sonic Slam and Hyper-Breath skills
Super-Scientist	4	5	9	6	3	Scientific Genius; 13-point gizmo
World-Spanner	8	6	9	13	2	Flight 15; Space Flight 5; Energy Blast 13



## A

## PPENDIX FOUR: CONVERSIONS

The **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game** links up well with other TSR **MARVEL** games: the **MARVEL SUPER DICE™** game and the 1980's **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Role-Playing Game**. Rules for converting from one system to another are detailed below. Also, tips for using Toy Biz action figures in fights appear in this appendix.



## MARVEL SUPER DICE

If you're looking for slambang super hero action, the **MARVEL SUPER DICE** game is the place to be. You control a team of hero or villain dice as the heroes struggle to stop the villains from controlling the world. When you add in the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game**, you can mix roleplaying with high-octane dice action.

In a hybrid of the two games, one person acts as the Narrator. He or she storyboards a Marvel adventure as normal, but pays special attention to the locations in the story. Those locations should be from **MARVEL SUPER DICE** tiles. Then he or she picks a number of villains equal to the number of players, and selects dice for each. The Narrator then adds supporting characters as desired.

Each player assumes the role of a hero, and takes the appropriate dice. One die represents the hero's movement, and the others can be rolled in fights or for actions.

Tiles represent geographic areas as part of the story. The Narrator starts by laying out the heroes' headquarters (perhaps multiple headquarters) and nearby outlying areas. He or she then describes the scene and starts the game in motion. Either by describing an event that calls the heroes to action or by drawing an event from a random fate card, the heroes roleplay through the first scene. When a hero goes to the next locale, the Narrator lays it on the board, and continues doing so till the story is finished.

Characters can be introduced at any point. The Narrator places a die for each character, and rolls separate dice for counterattacks and counteractions.

Fighting and movement work normally as in the dice game. All heroes move and act first, then all characters. All actions in a roleplaying adventure fit into one of four categories: attack, defense, maneuver, and negotiate. To determine if an action is successful, the player first determines which type of action is being performed and then rolls his or her character die. If the indicated result or a wild result is rolled, then the character succeeds.

**Action Type**

Attacks/aggressive/Strength  
 Defenses/friendly/Willpower  
 Maneuvers/grabbing/Agility  
 Negotiation/intimidating/Intellect  
 Wild result/intensity

**Successes**

= Attack Faces  
 = Defense Faces  
 = Movement Faces  
 = Attacks/Defenses  
 = ID Faces

To add varying difficulty levels to actions, roll your character die six times. Add up all the points of successes you got (that is, if you get a Claw 3, you have three successes toward an attack). Then check the chart below.

**Difficulty Level**

Automatic =  
 Easy =  
 Average =  
 Challenging =  
 Daunting =  
 Desperate =  
 Superhuman =  
 Unfathomable =  
 Cosmic =  
 Godlike =  
 Impossible =

**Number of Successes Needed**

Automatic success  
 1 success in 2 rolls  
 1 success  
 2 successes  
 3 successes  
 4 successes  
 5 successes  
 6 successes  
 7 successes  
 8 successes  
 9 successes

Add a bonus based on the color of the die on which you rolled a success for specific actions:

**Die Type**

Green die =  
 Yellow die =  
 Red die =  
 Promotional die\* =

**Die Bonus**

+1 defense success  
 +1 negotiation success  
 +1 attack success  
 +2 maneuver success

\* For every promotional die you must roll one less character die.

If a player rolls an identity face on one of his or her other character dice involved in combat and declares an action that is appropriate for the hero's calling, the player is allowed to reroll one other die in an attempt to change its effect for that combat round. Only one attempt to play in character is permitted per combat situation per exchange. A character die may cause itself to be rerolled through the use of calling.

A hero or character that is knocked out can be brought back to the headquarters to recover only if another ally gives up his or her action to go back to the HQ. If this occurs, the allies can leave the headquarters on the next turn.

# MARVEL SUPER HEROES™

## THE ORIGINAL MARVEL SUPER HEROES RPG

In 1984, TSR, Inc. first published the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Role-Playing Game**, a progenitor of this one. If you've played the original game, you may wish to convert your Basic or Advanced characters to the new system. The method below will work for your own characters. Established heroes may not entirely match their statistics in this game, but they will be close enough for enjoyable play.

To update a character, translate Strength and Agility using the table below. Substitute Reason for Intellect, and Psyche for Willpower. Convert all powers by giving each an intensity; talents become skills using the intensity conversion below. Note that since the scores in the older game followed different scales, their scores translate differently from each other.

STRENGTH		AGILITY		INTELLECT		WILLPOWER		POWERS	
S	Score	A	Score	R	Score	P	Score	Rank	Intensity
FB	2	FB	1	FB	1	FB	1	FB	1
PR	4	PR	2	PR	2	PR	2	PR	2
TY	6	TY	3	TY	3	TY	3	TY	4
GD	8	GD	4	GD	4	GD	4	GD	6
EX	10	EX	6	EX	6	EX	6	EX	8
RM	12	RM	8	RM	8	RM	8	RM	10
IN	14	IN	10	IN	10	IN	9	IN	12
AM	16	AM	12	AM	12	AM	10	AM	14
MN	18	MN	15	MN	15	MN	12	MN	16
UN	20	UN	18	UN	18	UN	15	UN	18
ShiftX	22	ShiftX	20	ShiftX	20	ShiftX	18	ShiftX	19
ShiftY	24	ShiftY	22	ShiftY	22	ShiftY	20	ShiftY	20
ShiftZ	28	ShiftZ	24	ShiftZ	24	ShiftZ	22	ShiftZ	22
C1000	30	C1000	28	C1000	28	C1000	24	C1000	24
C3000	30	C3000	30	C3000	30	C3000	28	C3000	26
C5000	30	C5000	30	C5000	30	C5000	30	C5000	30
Beyond	∞	Beyond	∞	Beyond	∞	Beyond	∞	Beyond	∞

The "Beyond" category does not have a parallel in this game. Characters with Beyond stats always succeed in whatever they want to do in the Adventure Game.

To determine the character's Edge, add together Endurance, Karma and Popularity. If the total is less than 70, the character has a 1 Edge. If it is between 70 and 189, the character has a 2 Edge. If it is between 190 and 260, the character has a 3 Edge. And if it is greater than 260, the character has a 4 Edge.

Divide the character's Fighting by 10, rounding down. The character gains that many Agility- or Strength-linked skills like Martial Arts and Boxing, modifying ability codes appropriately.

Add Intuition and Reason together, and divide by 20, rounding down. The character gains that many Intellect- or Willpower-linked skills like Biochemistry and Intimidation, modifying ability codes appropriately.

Some power conversions may require guesswork on your part. For example, defense against physical attacks is derived from the character's Strength in the new system. Characters with Body Armor listed gain the damage bonus listed in the **Armor** sidebar. If the character's natural armor rating is higher than the character's Strength, the difference becomes the character's Body Armor.

FEATs convert into actions. Strength and Endurance FEATs become Strength actions, Agility and Fighting FEATs become Agility actions, Reason FEATs become Intellect actions, and Psyche and Intuition FEATs become Willpower actions.

A green FEAT is an *average* (8) difficulty rating, a yellow FEAT is a *daunting* (16) difficulty rating, and a red FEAT is a *desperate* (20) difficulty rating. Each -1 Column Shift (CS) adds 1 point to the difficulty rating, while each +1 Column Shift subtracts 1 point from the difficulty rating. So a hero needing to make a yellow FEAT with a -3CS must score a 19 (16+3) to do so.

Callings don't have a direct analogue in the old MARVEL RPG. Hindrances can usually be found under Limits and Background in MARVEL character sheets. The Contacts listing isn't used in the **MARVEL SUPER HEROES Adventure Game**.

## TOY BIZ ACTION FIGURES

Fighting is exciting enough with cards and imagination, but some people find it's even more fun with physical representations of the combatants. For MARVEL, the best representations are action figures.

Toy Biz's Marvel figures come in three main sizes: 3 3/4 inches, 5 1/2 inches, and 12 inches tall. You should try to use figures that are roughly the same size, though larger figures can represent combatants of larger-than-human size. To simulate a major slugfest involving many heroes and villains, you'll want to clear a floor, a big table or even a backyard.

Add terrain and other facets of the landscape to simulate the combat environment. Plastic trees and hills are available, or you can disassemble a Christmas wreath or curl up a blanket to make homemade terrain. Plastic building blocks such as Legos and MegaBlocks can turn into buildings and vehicles, as can shoeboxes and aquarium pieces. Use what you have around the house and yard to enrich your fights. (If you value your figures, however, we recommend against letting your pets play the rampaging monsters.)

Action figures have a tough time standing on uneven terrain, but they come with a built-in solution. Most action figures have holes in the bottoms of their feet, into which you can attach a wooden or plastic base. Some come with such a base, but you can make your own by sticking rubber pegs attached to a cardboard or wooden base and inserting them into the heroes' foot holes.

Many action figures come with their own weapons and equipment. Some figures have been outfitted with wings and firearms and other such toys. If you want, a hero can gain the powers of the item even if that hero doesn't have such an item in the hero roster. You'll need to generate statistics for those items, though. Guns and bows are assumed to have standard amounts of ammo (generally unlimited), but missiles can be limited to the number supplied with the figure.

Generally, fighting occurs just like it normally would without the figures. With figures, though, you can use realistic distances by adding to the game index cards or paper of the size matching the figures: 3x5 cards for 3 3/4-inch figures, 5x7 cards for 5 1/2-inch figures, and 8 1/2x11-inch sheets of paper for foot-tall figures.

Use the long edges of the cards or sheets to measure the distance between combatants, according to the following rule: within one card length is striking distance, within three is firing distance, and beyond that is visual distance. Artillery weapons have no effect at less than visual distance.

If two action figures can't "see" each other, they are beyond visual range; you can use string to measure a line to the target to see if it is hidden. Flying individuals should fly at the distance they desire above the heads of the landbound combatants.

In general, an individual can move one card length as a free action, and two if he or she is willing to use his or her action for movement. Players should move their figures the distance and direction desired, using the cards or sheets to show the maximum movement possible for each combatant. Special powers may permit faster movement or special movement. A character crawls or crosses dangerous ground at half speed.



You may create other modifiers to combat such as hero or target movement, concealment, partial armor or cover, injuries, darkness, and so forth. These modifiers should generally add or subtract one level of difficulty.

When a combatant dodges a fired attack, move the action figure to the left or right. The attack hits where the combatant was, and can follow through to anyone or anything behind where the target was standing. Use cards to determine the damage radius for an attack that causes damage to all within a certain distance. You can use the short edge of the card to measure a shorter distance than striking range (such as for a touch attack).



When a combatant falls unconscious, flip the action figure on its back. If comatose (and thus incapable of fighting), turn the figure on its front until he or she is dragged to safety.

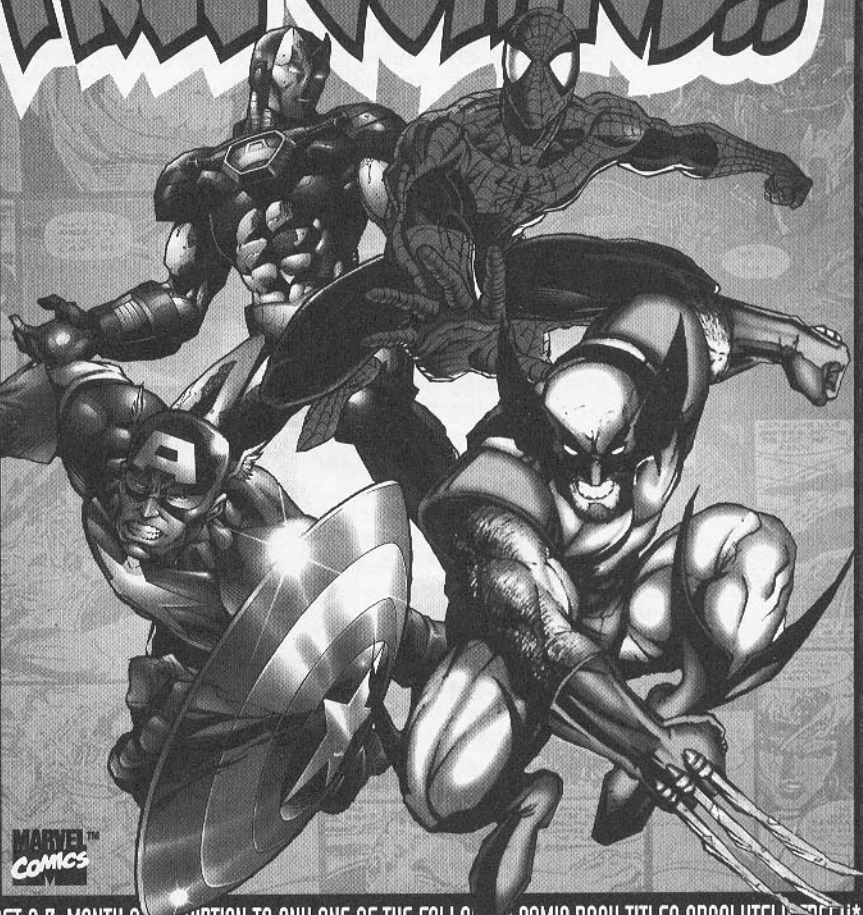
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# HERO SHEET

Strength

Intellect

Edge \* Hand Size

Agility

Willpower

**NAME:**

**CALLING:**

**SKILLS**

**HINDRANCES:**

**PERSONALITY:**

**POWERS**

**HISTORY**

