



# ARTICLE COLLECTION

# Encounters



by Jeff Grubb  
The scenario

Panic in the New York Subway! The Scorpion™ has taken over an IRT subway car which now rests on an abandoned sidetrack beneath 7th Avenue. The car's passengers have been chased off and are fleeing down the tunnel to the safety of a nearby platform. One passenger remains as a hostage — Publisher J. Jonah Jameson™. Scorpion has delivered an ultimatum: Spider-Man™ must show up within the hour or Jameson will die!

The ultimatum, carried by the fleeing passengers, is quickly relayed to the offices of the Daily Bugle. Freelance photographer Peter Parker™ heads for the subway to get pictures of the story. Peter's true interest in the crisis is revealed as the young photographer dashes into a closet to change into the Amazing Spider-Man, and swings off for his rendezvous with the Scorpion.

## The characters

### Spider-Man

Real name: Peter Parker, photographer  
Fighting: Remarkable  
Agility: Amazing  
Strength: Incredible  
Endurance: Incredible  
Reason: Excellent  
Intuition: Amazing  
Psyche: Incredible  
Health: 160  
Karma: 110  
Popularity: 40  
Resources: Poor 4/20

### Powers

**Wall-crawling:** Spidey sticks to normal wall surfaces, but must make an Agility FEAT for wet or slippery surfaces.  
**Spider sense:** Whenever Spider-Man is placed in immediate danger, he must make an Intuition FEAT. If he makes the FEAT, he is warned in time to react.  
**Web-shooters:** These shoot webs of Monstrous strength up to 2 areas away. The webs do not conduct electricity.  
**Spider-tracers:** Spider-Man owns several miniature homing devices (range: one mile) each tuned to his spider-sense.

### Scorpion

Real name: MacDonald "Mac" Gargan™  
Fighting: Remarkable  
Agility: Incredible  
Strength: Incredible  
Endurance: Incredible  
Reason: Typical  
Intuition: Typical  
Psyche: Good  
Health: 150  
Karma: 22

### Powers

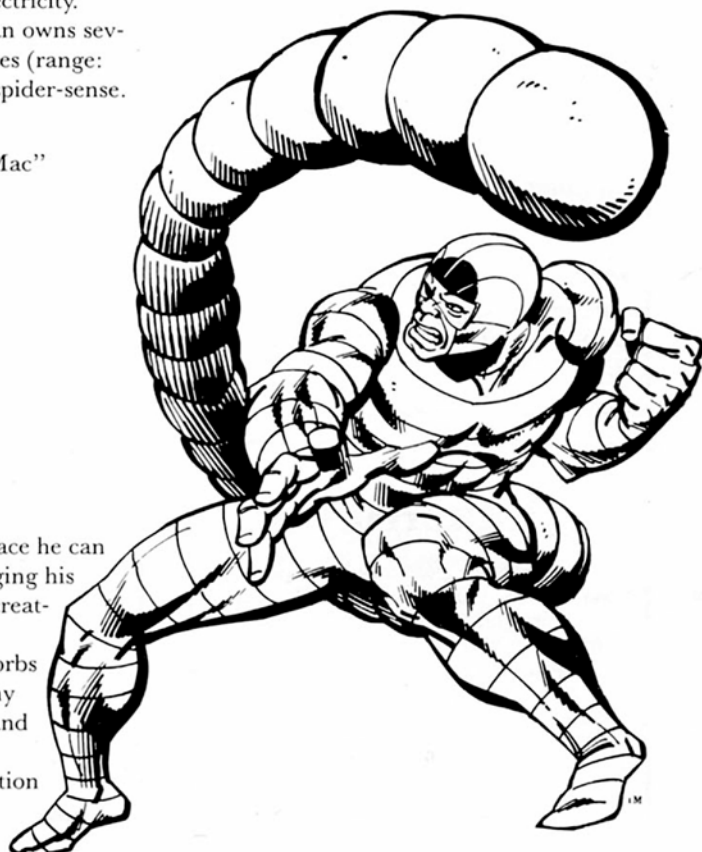
Scorpion can climb any surface he can get a grip on, either by wedging his fingers into small cracks or creating handholds in concrete.  
**Scorpion's costume:** Absorbs 20 points of damage from any attack due to its steel mesh and rubber construction, and provides Remarkable protection from electrical damage.

**Scorpion's tail:** is made of Incredible material. When it hits, it does Amazing (50 points) damage. The tail also contains a Plasma projector that does Remarkable damage at a range of 2 areas.

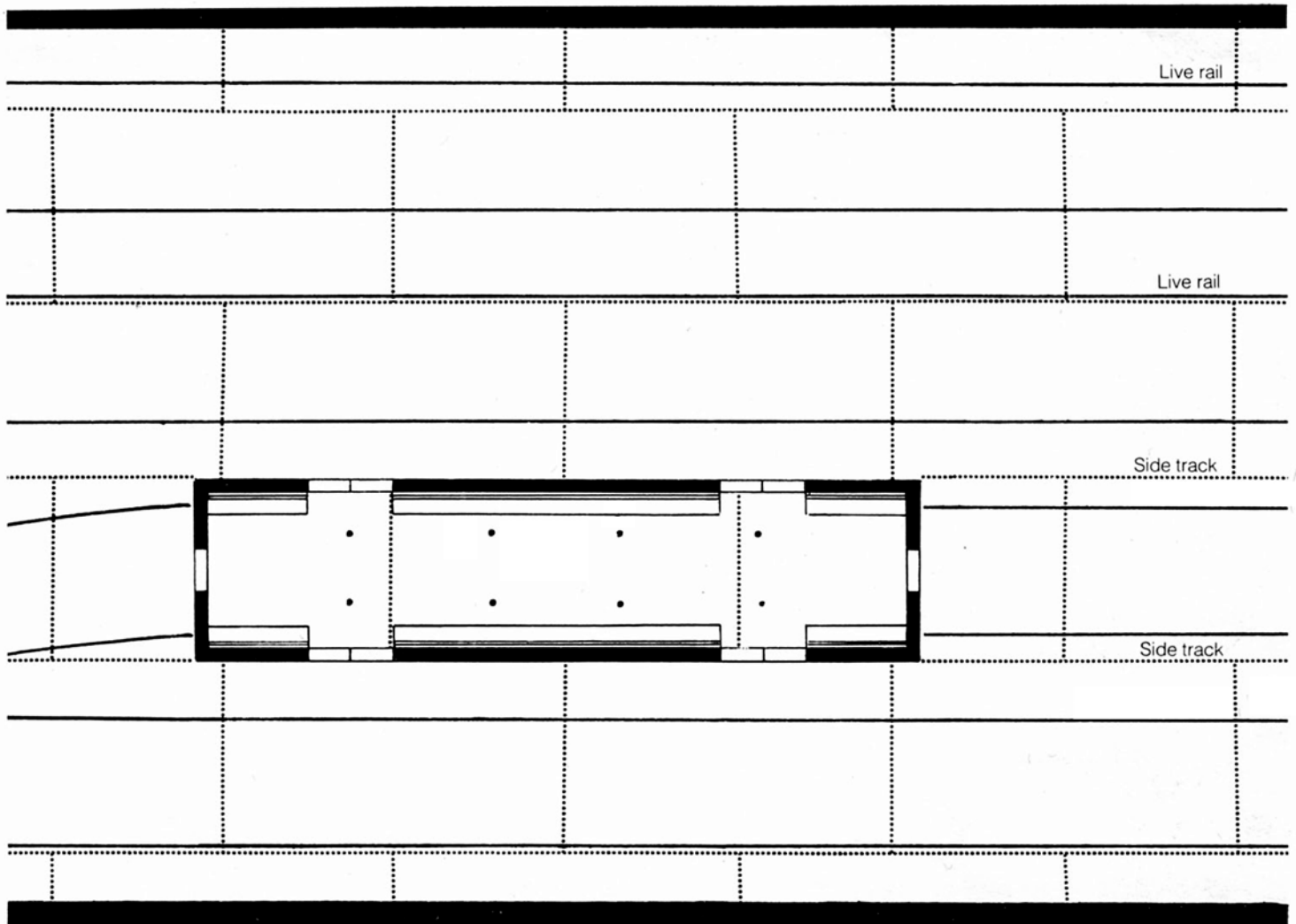
### J. Jonah Jameson

Fighting: Poor  
Agility: Typical  
Strength: Typical  
Endurance: Typical  
Reason: Typical  
Intuition: Typical  
Psyche: Typical  
Health: 22  
Karma: 18  
Resources: Excellent (20 r/ 500r)  
Popularity: 38 (Remarkable)

J. Jonah Jameson is a hard-news journalist who has raised himself up from being a beat reporter to his present position as publisher of the Daily Bugle. As publisher, he has always had a prejudice against super-powered heroes, and partic-







ularly against Spider-Man (though Jonah pays Spidey's alter ego, Peter Parker, for photos of Spider-Man's exploits). A self-centered egotist who subjects his employees to long harangues and his reading public to overblown accounts of his own exploits, Jonah still feels he has his finger on the pulse of a great city.

### The battle

Use the map provided, showing a section of the subway. The nearest entrance is 5 areas away, and comes up outside the Keash Mall on side one of the boxed game map. Scorpion and Jameson are in the center of the stopped car.

Scorpion has spent the past 45 minutes threatening Jameson and reminding the publisher of his guilt in the Scorpion's creation. Early in Spider-Man's career, Jonah paid for super-powered agents to be created. Mac Gargan was one such agent, intent on defeating Spider-Man. The transformation gave Gargan the proportional abilities of a Scorpion, and he was fitted with a wicked tail as a weapon. The transformation, however, drove Scorpion mad. Scorpion hates both

Jameson, who funded the experiment, and Spider-Man, his original target.

When Spider-Man gets close enough, he can see Scorpion and Jameson in the car. If Spider-Man does not make himself known to Scorpion (who is lost in his own memories and hatred), Scorpion will decide by the third round that Spidey is not coming and will start thrashing Jameson. Scorpion will not use his full strength against Jameson, but will cause 10 points of damage per round. Jameson will try to dodge Scorpion's thrashing tail.

Once Spider-Man makes it known that he is on the scene (either by attacking Scorpion, calling out, or creating a disturbance in the tunnel), Scorpion will ignore Jameson and concentrate on smashing the wall-crawler. Jameson has no love for Spider-Man, and will try to flee the area. He will return seven rounds later, backed up by a 10-man SWAT team carrying sub-machine guns and grenades. The SWAT team has been briefed on how dangerous the two combatants are, and will open fire on both Scorpion and Spider-Man if the two are locked in combat.

Finally, Scorpion has shorted out the

power in the two side tracks. The northern two tracks are carrying a live charge. Any character who is slammed into one of these areas must make an Agility FEAT or land on the third rail, taking 80 points of damage and will be unconscious for 5 rounds. Should this happen to Spider-Man, Scorpion will leave him for dead, and the web-slinger will be rescued by the SWAT team.

### Aftermath

If Spider-Man defeats Scorpion, he gains 40 Karma points. If Spider-Man turns Scorpion over to the police, he gets an additional 30 points. If Jameson is injured, Spider-Man loses 30 points (and gets a blistering editorial in the Bugle). If Jameson is killed, Spider-Man loses *all* of his Karma points. If Spider-Man fights the SWAT team, he loses 20 Karma points. If Spider-Man must be rescued by the SWAT team, he loses 30 Karma points for a public defeat. If Spider-Man gets any pictures of the fight, he gets 10 Karma points.

TM: Marvel Comics Group.



# REMARKABLE, INCREDIBLE, AMAZING



by Steve Winter

Face Front, Marvelites! It's here! You've heard about it! You've read about it! You've waited for it! Now you can play it!

The rumors have been running around for months, and now we can lay them to rest. The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Role-Playing Game is finished. By the time you read this, you could be marching down to the local hobby shop or book store and buying the ever-lovin' thing for your very own.

What? You haven't snagged one yet? You want to know what's in it for you? Perk up your ears, fans. Your hard-earned money buys you a colossus cornucopia of comic book culture:

- a 16-page Battle Book with basic rules for fighting and moving
- a 48-page Campaign Book with extensive rules for super-hero campaigns
- 25 full-color, two sided, die-cut counters
- a 21½ x 33 inch full-color, double-sided map
- a 16-page adventure, "Day of the Octopus," and two 10-sided dice

So what, you say? We've seen it all before, you say? Nay, I say! You haven't seen anything like MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game before, not from TSR or from "those other guys." But talk is cheap, and so is type. You want proof, so here it is: a guided tour through the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game box.

Let's find out what goes into a Marvel Super Hero™ character. We're not talking about Albedo-Man and Captain Competence. These are the big boys: Spider-Man™, Captain America™,

the Fantastic Four™. You don't start the game by rolling dice and generating statistics, you take a hero that you already know and love and start learning to play the game.

The first thing to learn is, what is this hero guy? Heroes have seven abilities: Fighting, Agility, Strength, Endurance, Reason, Intuition, and Psyche. Or FASERIP, as we like to call it. Fighting measures how well the hero can fight. Captain America, for example, is a fighting fury, whereas Dazzler™ is about as pugilistic as your average, beautiful nightclub singer. Agility and Strength are just what they sound like: physical coordination and physical strength. Endurance measures how well the hero stands up under strain, how quickly he recovers from wounds, and how resistant his system is to poisons and nasty environments. Reason measures smarts, but it also measures familiarity with technical equipment and the ability to think logically. Intuition is a sort of sixth sense, as well as wits and common sense (some heroes are just more in tune with the cosmos than others). And finally, Psyche is like willpower, but it also measures the hero's capacity to deal with magic, either by resisting its effects or wielding it himself.

Instead of assigning a number to each of these abilities, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game uses ranks. Each ability is ranked Feeble, Poor, Typical, Good, Excellent, Remarkable, Incredible, Amazing, Monstrous, or Unearthly. No more boring "I'm going to pick him up with my Strength, which is 53." Ho hum. Now you can look the Judge in the eye and announce, "I'm picking him up with my Amazing Strength and tossing the reprobate through the wall!"

Each rank has a number, too. Rank numbers help determine how much damage a hero can dish out and how much he can

take, among other things.

The seven basic abilities don't change during the game, unless something awful happens. Besides them, a hero has four other variable abilities: Health, Karma, Resources, and Popularity. A hero's Health equals the sum of his Fighting, Agility, Strength, and Endurance rank numbers. His Karma (which I'll explain in a minute; cool your jets) starts out equal to the sum of his Reason, Intuition, and Psyche rank numbers. Resources represent money, credit, possessions, and other material wealth. Popularity is just what it sounds like. The public's opinion of a hero tends to go up and down, and has an important impact on how effective a hero can be.

But wait, you say? Isn't this "MARVEL SUPER HEROES™" role-playing game? What about the "Super" part?

Each hero has several super powers, explained in detail on his character information card, highlighted by a full-color illustration of the hero. Like abilities, each super power has a rank, from Feeble to Unearthly.

OK, you've got your hero, you know everything there is to know about him, and you're itching to start playing. How does this thing work? A fair question!

When heroes do the things that make them heroes, they are performing FEATs: Functions of Exceptional Ability or Talent. When Spider-Man shoots a web and snags a grenade out of the air, that's a FEAT! When the Thing™ rips up a concrete abutment, that's a FEAT! When Reed Richards pours a glass of milk, that's not a FEAT (unless he's pouring with his eyes closed).

So Spider-Man shoots his web at the grenade that's looping its way toward the mayor's car — what happens next? The player rolls percentile dice and consults (fanfare of trumpets) the Universal Table!

The Universal Table is an exquisite little invention that does everything, with no moving parts. The 10 ability ranks are listed across the top, plus three extras: Shift 0, Shift X, and Class 1000. Dice roll ranges are listed down the left side. The player cross-indexes his dice roll with the character's ability rank, and the table gives him a color: white, green, yellow, or red. The color tells the player what happens: nothing, something, something real good, or something tremendous.

If players want, it can be as simple as that. On the other hand, if players want, it can be a lot more detailed. The Battle Effects Table gives specific effects for specific actions, depending on what color came up on the Universal Table. For example, when Captain America throws his mighty shield, he could miss his target entirely, hit it, hit it exactly the way he wanted to (Bull's-eye!), or hit it so hard he almost kills it. When Cap punches a bad guy, he might just fan the air, or hit the villain in the jaw, or knock him down, or knock him into the next county. It's fast, it's flashy, and best of all, it's fun! Everything players and judges need to play wall-smashing, head-bashing, villain-thrashing Marvel® battles is on one handy table.

And for those who complain that dice play too big a part in role-playing games, we proudly introduce Karma. Karma is like cosmic brownie points; when the universe likes you, you can't be stopped. But when the universe has other matters to think about, watch out! Players can use their characters' Karma to raise or lower their FEAT dice rolls. Once Karma is used, it's gone. Jack. Characters get it back by doing what they're supposed to, in the cosmic order of things: heroes by being heroic, and villains by being villainous. But beware the day when the Karma dries up; even super powers won't help when Lady Luck turns her back.

But wait! There's more! That's just the first book! Sixteen pages! There's still a 48-page Campaign Book full of advanced rules, optional rules, campaign rules, vehicle rules, and lots of

other nifty stuff.

The Campaign Book starts out with more information on heroes: what they can do, and how various heroes compare to each other. Then it launches into details about money, finances, jobs, and public opinion. Let's face it, part of what makes Marvel® Comics great is that Marvel® heroes live in the real world, with real cares. They face problems in their personal lives that are as compelling and time-consuming as their public lives: problems with money, jobs, friends, relatives, loved ones. Add to that the average citizen of Manhattan, who owes a huge debt of gratitude to his super-powered protectors, but can be pretty stingy when it comes to acknowledging that debt. Hence, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game goes into areas that have been ignored in the past, because there's more to a super hero than meets the eye.

What else is in store? Well, there's magic, courtesy of Earth's Sorcerer Supreme, Doctor Strange™; vehicles magnificent and mundane; inventions and electro-mechanical devices to amaze the most jaded technophile; background information on other dimensions, animals, NPCs, the law, and trials; a look at the world from the bad guys' perspective; and some tips for the game Judge on how to manage his players and his campaign that'll just knock your socks off!

Last, but not least, is "The Origin Of . . ." Sure, this is the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, and Marvel's® heroes are as exciting as they come, but some people like to branch out, to move into uncharted territory. The last ten pages of the book explain how new, original heroes are created, and how any of the heroes from Marvel® Comics, past or present, can be brought into the game. And since everyone will ask if I don't just blurt it out, here it is: there are 60, count 'em, 60 powers, in 10 categories. But that isn't really accurate, because a lot of those are general powers that could manifest themselves in lots of ways. After all, a hero doesn't wake up one morning with super powers that he understands fully and controls perfectly. Heroes discover their capabilities and limits on the job, and so do Marvel Super Heroes™ characters. The game describes pretty specifically what is possible, but only experience (and some negotiation between Judge and player) reveals the true extent of a super power.

And, of course, we wouldn't give you this titanic treasury without including a mind-boggling tale of action and suspense, in the Mighty Marvel Manner! We proudly present "Day of the Octopus," a 16-page adventure starring everybody's favorite nemesis, Doc Ock! This time, the ever-nasty doctor is unleashing his 30-foot menace, the Octodroid, on the unsuspecting inhabitants of the Big Apple. Players can take the parts of Spider-Man, Captain America, the Fantastic Four, Captain Marvel™, or Wolverine™ to save the city that never sleeps from a nightmare of destruction!

And there's plenty more where that came from! The second and third adventure modules — "Breeder Bombs" starring the Uncanny X-Men™, and "Time Trap" starring the Mighty Avengers™ — are available as you read this, or will be shortly. The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Judge's Screen and Heroes' Guide to New York is another goodie to ask for at your friendly, neighborhood hobby shop. In the works or on the drawing board are adventure modules featuring Daredevil, the Fantastic Four, Alpha Flight™, the Hulk™, and the whole cast and crew of Marvel's® SECRET WARS™ epic. Keep your eyes open, true believers, because you won't want to miss one spine-tingling, pulse-pounding moment!



MARVEL SUPER HEROES, SECRET WARS, and all Marvel characters are trademarks of the Marvel Comics Group.



**MHQ:** Can you make up a DC character for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game?

**MHA:** No. Under our agreement with Marvel Comics Group we have permission to use the many minions of the Marvel Universe™. Those that belong to other companies such as DC or First are *their* property and outside both our legal rights and the scope of the game. (Of course, if you want to create heroes from other areas for your own personal use, that's OK. Just don't tell us.)

**MHQ:** Can you create your own characters for the game?

**MHA:** Check Chapter 4, "The Origin of..." in the campaign book for guidelines.

**MHQ:** Do you regain Health all at once, or just a little at a time?

**MHA:** The amount of Health you regain is dependent on your Endurance. In general, you regain your Endurance rank number in Health every day, unless otherwise specified in the adventure. This usually taken all at once, while the character is resting.

**MHQ:** Are character sheets available for the game?

**MHA:** Not at this time. You have permission to photocopy the character sheet provided in the Campaign book (page 47) for your use in the game. Character sheets may become available later.

**MHQ:** How do you determine how many points of damage you do with body transformation into energy forms, or ice, fire, etc.?

**MHA:** In general, your character can do up to the ability rank of the body transformation power. An energy-creature of Unearthly ability could do up to Unearthly damage to someone he is fighting directly. (Body transformation does NOT give you missile attacks.) Specific heroes of the Marvel Universe, such as Iceman™, are exceptions to the rule. The effects of their abilities are listed.

**MHQ:** How do you get the issues of Marvel Comics pertaining to the origins of all the comic book heroes and villains ever created?

**MHA:** That's a tall order. In the past year, Marvel has put out the Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe™, a 15-part comic book devoted to nothing BUT the heroes and villains of the Marvel Universe. OHOTMU, as it is called, is the basis for many of our own judgements of how strong/fast/powerful the heroes are. These comics may be available through your local direct-sale comic merchant, but if not, know that the folk at Mighty Marvel are currently at work on an expanded second series of the book, to be released this spring.

**MHQ:** On Table 27 in your Campaign Book, you show the minimum number of powers to be two (three for altered humans). However, your character cards for the Thing™ and Captain America™ show them as having one power each, where they should have three for being altered humans. Do they combine their three power rolls into one, big power? Or is there another reason?

**MHA:** The reason is that Ben, Cap and all the rest are not created by any random-roll system. They are real members of the Marvel Universe, and rather than make their abilities jive with the system, we tailor the system to fit their specific abilities. Ben Grimm has several neat abilities, but only one "Power" (his body armor) because in his book he has just that. The same applies to Cap and his shield.

**MHQ:** As a judge, can I make up new powers? I am trying to design the Hell-fire Club™ but I can't find any power resembling Sebastian Shaw's™.

**MHA:** As judge you may create any power you see fit for use in the game, as long as it does not imbalance the system or make it less enjoyable for the players. Many Marvel characters, like Sebastian Shaw, have unique abilities that are beyond the bonds of randomly created heroes.

Shaw, by the way, has the ability to convert kinetic energy into physical strength and Health. Whenever he is physically attacked (slugfest, charging, concussive rays), that damage is immediately added to his Health. His Health can reach 400 in this manner. He may redirect energy into an attack, inflicting up to Unearthly damage in one round. The energy dissipates in 10 rounds, but all damage is taken off the excess amount first, then his own Health. Shaw can be hurt by energy attacks and by wrestling. (Nightcrawler™ once gave him a run for his money).

(Note: The above was taken from the first draft of "Project: Wideawake", a roster of Marvel's Merry Mutants, available in stores near you!)

**MHQ:** In your Campaign Book, you say that Nightcrawler has both a Typical strength and an Excellent strength. The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe, on the other hand, says he can lift 250 lbs., which is a little above what you call Typical.

**MHA:** This is what you call a "Gremlin" or "Typo". Nightcrawler's Strength is only Typical, even though it is listed in two places in those booklets. The OHOTMU lists his ability as 250 lbs, so we rounded down in this case, as letting him lift 400 lbs was out of line.

**MHQ:** Wolverine's™ claws are described as doing Excellent damage, but I have seen him cut through Amazing materials in the X-MEN™. This would mean that he would have had to make a RED feat to accomplish these tasks (a bit harder than I had imagined).

**MHA:** That's a problem I recently addressed in one of the "Marvel-Philes", a series of articles in Dragon® Magazine devoted to the Game. Wolverine does Excellent damage with his claws, but the Claws are made of Unearthly material. If it's a question of his claws against a material such as steel plate, use the Unearthly value for cutting through. If it's against a target with Health, use the Excellent damage. Note that Logan™ could shred the armor of a Sentinel™ or villain in a battle-suit one round, then go after the man the second. Okay?

**MHQ:** Would unique weapons shift two columns for damage, or just for hitting?

**MHA:** Unique weapons generally give a two-column shift to hit ONLY. Damage is dictated by the weapon, or by the user's Strength.



# RAMPAGE

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by Roger E. Moore

*A number of members have written to complain about the lack of articles on the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game in the Newszine, and some of their letters were published in the last issue. Never one to let a challenge go unanswered, Roger Moore wrote another MSH encounter, which was approved by Marvel Comics Group for publication. HQ shamelessly stole the scenario and used it for tournaments at Glathri-con and at Origins, where it was well-received, and now we present "Rampage" for your enjoyment. (Now how about a few articles from the rest of the MSH fans? We can't let Roger have all the glory. . . .)*

It seems to me that the most difficult thing about the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Game is designing a scenario that will challenge the most powerful heroes, such as Thor™, the Hulk™, or Hercules™. After all, to send someone like Thor against ordinary criminals (or even most extraordinary ones) would be nothing more than an exercise in overkill. Characters like Thor tend to unbalance most scenarios, which is probably why the rules and modules frequently suggest that such powerful characters be used only as NPCs.

On the other hand, it should be possible to give the players who are fond of brawny characters a run for their money. DRAGON® Magazine (Issue #88) gave Thor some bad-guy competition in the form of the evil Loki™ and Ulik™. Certainly something can be cooked up for poor little Hulk and Hercules, too. . . .

## Rampaging characters

This scenario is designed for four players. Two will play villains, one will play a hero, and one will play a "sometimes hero" (the Hulk, of course). The referee can control other minor characters, such as crowds, police, and National Guardsmen. The referee may also wish to add other minor Marvel Super Heroes™ or Marvel Super Villains™ to the conflict.

Complete character sheets for all four characters have been printed on the back mailer cover, which may be detached for convenience.

## Referee's Information

Things would have worked out very differently if Mary MacPherran (Titania™), hiding out in her Denver apartment and feeling particularly depressed and upset over a number of personal problems, had

not flipped on her television set. The first show she saw was a live interview from New York with Hercules. The mighty Avenger™ was discussing his role as a hero and was happily elaborating on some of his past exploits.

Hercules was his usual charming, muscle-flexing, storytelling self. He easily stole the show from the commentator, along with the hearts of many women in the TV audience. Of course, the show had the opposite effect on Titania, who became progressively angrier and more embittered as Hercules bragged on his conquests and displayed his awesome musculature. Focusing her rage on Hercules, Titania pounded her TV set into atoms, dug her costume out of her closet, and picked up a one-way bus ticket to New York City.

Unbeknownst to anyone, the Abomination™ had managed to break free from his imprisonment by the U.S. government at about this same time. A careless technician with a loud mouth had ribbed him once too often about his many losses to the Hulk, and the Abomination's anger gave him the strength and motivation to escape (and to send the technician to an emergency room). Knowing that he is publicly regarded as a loser and a coward, the Abomination now wants to make one last bid to regain his status as one of the mighty — if he can overcome his terror and cowardice.

Hearing that the Hulk has arrived in New York City, the Abomination has made his own way there and issued public challenges for the Hulk to come and meet his match. The scenario starts as the Hulk closes in on his old enemy — as Titania, unaware of the brewing storm, hunts the streets of the city for Hercules. Hercules is the only major hero in the area at the moment who can intercept the Hulk and Abomination to prevent their battle, using either words or force.

## Starting Play

Take the players aside one by one and briefly acquaint them with the events which lead up to each character's appearance on the scene.

Using the map of New York City provided with the basic MARVEL SUPER HEROES Game boxed set, the referee may place civilians, police, National Guard units, and assorted vehicles in the streets before the scenario starts. The player of the Abomination should place him near the center of the map. The Hulk begins the scenario at any spot within a three-area

radius of the Abomination. Hercules starts the scenario at any area on the border of the map, heading for the scene of the fight. Titania will arrive anywhere on the edge of the map at a run, two rounds after the start of the scenario, ready to pound the Greek warrior into submission.



## Notes on Conducting Play

Certain circumstances may cause the Hulk to experience an immediate adrenaline surge, or even to attack targets other than the Abomination. For example, anyone who defeats Abomination before the Hulk can do so will immediately be attacked by the Hulk, who will be at Shift X Strength and Amazing Fighting (effective at once — regardless of previous scores — unless Strength is already at Class 1000).

If attacked by more than one hero or villain at a time, the Hulk will grow angrier. His Strength will rise to Shift X, and his Fighting will become Incredible. If attacked by three (or more) heroes or villains, the Hulk's Fighting ability will rise to Amazing. If the Hulk is already at Shift X Strength and Amazing Fighting and is then reduced to half of his original Health points, there is a 25% chance every round thereafter that his Strength will jump to Class 1000, at which point he will attempt to bash everyone in sight.

If the Abomination's Health is reduced to one-quarter of the initial score, he must make a Psyche FEAT roll or succumb to his fear of the Hulk's wrath. If he cannot then talk the Hulk out of attacking him (by directing his attention to either Hercules or

Titania™), then he will flee by the fastest means possible, using any means he can to help cover his escape.

Hercules™ must make a Reason FEAT roll to recognize Titania. If successful, he will recall tales told of her by other Avengers™ who have returned from the Secret Wars™.

Rampage Goals and Karma Awards

In addition to the usual Karma awards as described in the Campaign Book, the characters have the opportunity to earn additional Karma points for achieving the specific goals set forth for each below.

The Abomination™

The Abomination has suffered much under the fists of the Hulk™, and this fight may be his last chance ever to recover any of his ruined self-esteem. He will make extensive use of thrown objects in an attempt to wear the Hulk down before joining battle. The Abomination is torn between his terrible desire for vengeance and his awful fear of the Hulk's powers. He has no such fear of the others, though he dislikes Hercules greatly and cares nothing for Titania unless she challenges him.

Karma awards

For defeating the Hulk within 10 rounds by himself	+ 100
For defeating the Hulk otherwise	+ 50
For defeating Hercules or Titania	+ 50
For running away from the Hulk	-30

Hercules

Initially, Hercules wishes only to prevent the Hulk and the Abomination from completely destroying part of New York City. He may use any means desired to accomplish this task, though he would probably try to reason things out with the two green-skinned fighters at first. He knows he cannot get further help for the time being, and he would prefer not to let the two wear each other down before interfering, since this would ensure the destruction of a couple of city blocks in the process.

Hercules might find Titania quite attractive, and in any case, he will probably try to flatter her in the hopes of assuaging her anger. Regardless of the outcome of the battle, Hercules should continue to act in a chivalrous and gentlemanly fashion — perhaps even apologizing if he has to punch out Titania.

Karma Awards

For stopping the Hulk/Abomination fight within 10 rounds	+ 100
For capturing each of the other three characters	+ 100
	per character
For letting Hulk and Abomination fight for 3 rounds or longer without interfering, at any time	-20
	per time



The Hulk

The Hulk, from the moment he lays eyes on the Abomination, will want to attack his old enemy at once. He cares nothing for any other hero or villain, unless such a character tries to interfere in his fight with Abomination in any way.

If he manages to conquer the Abomination and is otherwise left alone, the Hulk will then leave the area by making Unearthly leaps, cutting a highway of destruction through the rest of New York City in the direction of open country, where (hopefully) no one will bother him.

Karma Awards

For defeating the Abomination within 10 rounds by himself	+ 100
For defeating the Abomination with help from others	+ 50
For defeating Hercules or Titania	+ 50

Titania

Titania wants nothing more than to beat the stuffings out of Hercules and make her victory as widely known as possible. Shaming the Greek hero in battle would go a long way toward improving her battered self-image. If Hercules belittles her fighting ability and strength, it will only make her more determined to beat him. But if he praises her fighting skills and power, she may be less inclined to be vicious, although she still desperately wants to beat him in a fight. If she loses the fight, she will become even more depressed and dispirited than she was before. She has no immediate quarrel with either the Hulk or the Abomination, but if she defeats Hercules, she may be tempted to add to her conquests by trying to defeat one of the two green titans — or both of them, if possible.

Karma Awards

For defeating Hercules within 10 rounds by herself	+ 100
For defeating Hercules otherwise	+ 50
For defeating either the Hulk or Abomination	+ 50



# SHE-RAMPAGE!

by Susan Lawson  
and Tom Robertson  
with thanks to Dave Collins





The "Rampage!" MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ module in POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #25 was an excellent answer to those True Believers who wonder what in the world could possibly challenge the most powerful heroes in the Marvel Universe™. Ah, but what about the world's most powerful heroines? They should have powerful foes, too — and here they are!

## She-Rampage Characters

This scenario is devised for six characters, all of whom will fight NPCs controlled by the judge. Optionally, certain NPCs may be controlled by an assistant judge or another player. All player characters are Marvel Super Heroes™ and should cooperate on the adventure in order to succeed.

**Note:** Previously published statistics for some characters have been altered for this adventure. The Strength rating for She-Hulk™ has been increased to Monstrous to reflect the success of her recent body-building efforts (Fantastic Four™ comics). She can now lift up to 75 tons. New material has been added to the information on She-Hulk, Spider-Woman™, Valkyrie™, and Tigra™. Thundra™ appears here for the first time, and a brand new Marvel Super Hero has been introduced for this adventure: Lucky Penny™.

Complete character sheets for all six player characters are given on the center pages, which may be detached and cut apart for use in this adventure and other MARVEL SUPER HEROES games. Each character sheet includes an update of the character's recent activities leading up to the opening of this scenario.

## Referee's Background Information History

On an alternate-future Earth, there is a country called Machus, in which the men have enslaved all women. At one time, the Machians began a war with a country known as Amazonia on another alternate Earth, where the women had enslaved all the men. The intervention of the Fantastic Four™ ended the war, though it didn't end the hard feelings between individuals of the two worlds. Intense espionage activity has gone on for a number of years now between Machus and Amazonia, though the two worlds have successfully avoided another war so far.

The military high command of Machus was very disturbed to learn of the existence of super-women like Thundra on Amazonia. Thundra had previously succeeded in taking on and destroying single-handedly several battalions of Machian soldiers, and she is still much feared as a fighter. The Machian military was further disturbed to learn that there was yet a third alternate Earth on which even greater numbers of super-women existed — the regular Marvel Universe™ — and these super-women were allied with super-males as well!

There's no accounting for tastes, the military decided. However, the existence of any super-women was a danger to Machus. Spies were already keeping watch over the super-women of Amazonia, but the threat from this new universe could not be ignored. Previously, the Fantastic Four had managed to bring about the death of the most powerful leader the Machians had ever known: Mahkizmo™. Their world would bear close attention, indeed.

Still smarting from their encounters with the U.S.R. (Amazonia), the Machians decided to use subtler tactics this time. Early scouts gave them much information on the new Earth. Noting the current anti-mutant sentiment, the Machian military has decided that the reasoning power of the general populace must be weak, and that public opinion (obviously the most powerful weapon in the new world) is easily swayed by the media. So, the Machians have decided to weaken this world's defenses by sending a small unit with a special mission: to discredit Earth's major heroines in the eyes of their own people. If the general populace turns on them as it has the mutants, the super-females will no longer be a threat when invasion forces arrive to take control.

A special team consisting of 6 commanders and 36 Machian soldiers, each with certain additional talents, has been sent to this alternate Earth under the command of Dominus™, a promising



Machian military leader. Their mission is to use the free press to convince the people of this Earth to turn against their own super-heroines. Meanwhile, they are to maintain a close surveillance on all known super-powered or politically prominent females, and are to transmit new data to Machus regularly to aid in invasion plans. To this end, the Machians established a small base in an industrial park where they began to publish a girlie magazine known as *Pander*. Their agents roamed the country freely, using their press passes to gain access to restricted areas and newsworthy events. They photographed super-heroines, then used pieces of the pictures to create composite photographs which were published in their magazine along with fabricated stories of the super-powered ladies' private lives. The combination is carefully designed to make it appear that all super-women are morally corrupt. Things have been working well, so far.

Corrupt lawyers have been retained to deal with legal retaliation by stalling matters in court until the Machians have accomplished their mission. Wisely anticipating forcible retaliation from the frustrated heroines, Dominus supplied his base with military equipment (most of it illegal) and posted guards on all three shifts.

## Base Personnel

The *Pander* Magazine building houses both a legitimate business and a secret military base. A large force of Machian soldiers, heavily armed and equipped, lives and works in the building at all times. Statistics for all important base personnel are given on page 19.

### Machians

The Machian force includes 36 regular soldiers, 6 powerful unit commanders, and one base commander. The Machians handle all operations directly related to the mission, including computer programming, magazine production, art, reporting, photography, and guard duty.

The base commander is Dominus, a tall, dark, well-built man about 36 years of age. He speaks with a deep bass voice and has a commanding presence and a military walk. He believes women are for breeding and menial chores, and therefore refuses to hold a meaningful conversation with one. Despite his air of confidence, Dominus is vain, petty, and cowardly if things do not appear to be going his way. He believes that others are out to take what is rightfully his, and he watches his men closely for signs of weakness or betrayal. Dominus believes that this assignment was the work of a rival back on Machus, who wished to prevent him from taking a more prestigious assignment back home.

### Other Personnel

All other duties critical to base operations (i.e., sales, subscriptions, assembly, running the presses, shipping, cafeteria help, janitorial, etc.) are performed by normal men hired through normal means. Of these, only Arnold, Samuels, Kevin, and Mrs. Fleener™ will participate in combat; most will flee at the earliest opportunity.

Arnold works in subscriptions on shift A. He is a classic wimp — small, weak, and prone to faint under stress. Arnold has figured out where the Machians came from, and wants to return with them and become macho himself.

## VALKYRIE™

Brunnhilda of the Valkyrior

**Fighting:** MONSTROUS (75)  
**Agility:** REMARKABLE (30)  
**Strength:** AMAZING (50)  
**Endurance:** AMAZING (50)  
**Reason:** TYPICAL (6)  
**Intuition:** EXCELLENT (20)  
**Psyche:** GOOD (10)

**Health:** 205  
**Karma:** 36  
**Resources:** TYPICAL  
**Popularity:** 5

### Powers:

**BODY ARMOR.** Like all Asgardians, Valkyrie has dense flesh, which gives her Good protection from physical attacks.

**SPECIAL SENSES.** As an Asgardian and former Chooser of the Slain, Valkyrie can instantly sense whether she has entered any part of Asgard, or even its neighboring regions. She can also identify undead opponents and the presence of death within a one-area radius.

### Equipment/Possessions:

**DRAGONFANG™.** Carved from the tooth of an extra-dimensional dragon by an Oriental wizard, Valkyrie's sword Dragonfang was given to her by Doctor Strange™. The blade is made of Unearthly strength material, and Valkyrie attacks on the Unearthly column when wielding it. She may inflict Monstrous damage on the Hack-&-Slash table by using the sword normally, or up to Amazing damage on the Slugfest column by using the flat of the blade. (She will use the latter attack to avoid slaying her opponents.) Dragonfang glows if any Rock Trolls™ are within a three-area radius around it.



## LUCKY PENNY™

Penni Pettikord  
 Editor and adventurer

**Fighting:** POOR (4)  
**Agility:** POOR (4)  
**Strength:** TYPICAL (24)  
**Endurance:** GOOD (10)  
**Reason:** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**Intuition:** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**Psyche:** AMAZING (50)

**Health:** 22  
**Karma:** 130  
**Resources:** TYPICAL  
**Popularity:** 5

### Powers:

**POWER SCANNING.** Lucky Penny can detect the existence and nature of any superhuman powers, talents, or abilities possessed by any being or device if she makes a successful green Psyche FEAT roll. Only one person or object per round may be scanned; if the scan fails, she must wait until the next day to try scanning that person or item again.

**POWER EDITING.** Lucky Penny can selectively augment or suppress the quality of any character's abilities, powers, or talents, and can even affect the quality of body armor or devices on an opponent's person. To use this power, she must first have successfully scanned her target, but she can affect up to four separate quality scores of up to four items or beings in the same round. A yellow Psyche FEAT roll will change a quality score by one level, up or down as she desires, for any score up to Monstrous level. A red Psyche FEAT roll enables her to alter a score by two levels, if desired. For example, with 4 Yellow FEAT rolls she could change a friend's Amazing Strength and Good



**HURLED WEAPONS.** Valkyrie also wields an iron spear which she can either use hand-to-hand to inflict Amazing Hack-&-Slash damage or throw up to 10 areas for Incredible damage. Her dagger inflicts Excellent damage when used normally, or it can be thrown up to 4 areas for Good damage.

**ARAGORN™.** This snow-white pegasus was given to Valkyrie by his former master (the Black Knight™), and is now completely faithful to his new mistress. Aragorn can run at 5 areas per round and fly at 10 areas per round.

F	A	S	E	Health
GOOD	EXCE	REMA	INCR	100

**Talents:** Valkyrie is skilled with martial arts, sharp weapons, and thrown weapons.

**Background:** The Asgardian Brunnhilda was chosen by Odin™ to lead the Valkyrior, a group of nine goddesses who brought the souls of the honored dead from the battlefield to Valhalla. She performed well until Odin ceased all dealings with Earth approximately A.D. 1000. The Valkyrior was disbanded, and Brunnhilda roamed Asgard looking for adventure.

Brunnhilda finally encountered Amora the Enchantress™, but the life of adventure that Amora offered was dishonorable, and the leader of the Valkyrior rebelled. The Enchantress ensorcelled Brunnhilda, keeping her body in suspended animation while bestowing Brunnhilda's powers on herself or others. In this fashion, Amora led an all-female group of super-powered individuals against the Avengers™, but was eventually defeated.

While serving as a temporary ally of the early Defenders™, Amora granted Valkyrie's powers and consciousness to a mortal madwoman named Barbara Norriss. Valkyrie fought beside the Defenders for several years in her mortal body before regaining her immortal form. Valkyrie bears some hard feelings toward Odin for disbanding the Valkyrior and for ignoring her plight as a captive of the Enchantress; therefore she has decided to remain on Earth and work with the Defenders rather than returning to Asgard.

**Appearance:** Valkyrie is 6'3" tall and weighs 475 lbs. due to her great body density. She has blue eyes and pale blonde hair.

**Personality:** A warrior goddess, heart and soul, Valkyrie was born to win wars. She has extreme confidence in her combat skills and is fearless in battle, fighting relentlessly against all odds. She will never surrender except to save the lives of her closest friends or allies, and even then she will plot to overcome her opponents as soon as possible.

Valkyrie has very few true friends. She is reserved and formal, and is always ready for battle. She dislikes mortals who fail to show her respect, though she doesn't insist that they recognize her godhood or worship her. Though she is angry with Odin for a number of reasons, she always obeys him.

Valkyrie treats her enemies with contempt, and often indulges in name-calling and cursing in Odin's name in the heat of a fight. Scenes of death and destruction do not bother her — after all, she was a Chooser of the Slain.

Valkyrie's language has a strong Shakespearean flavor. She speaks little except concerning the matters at hand, usually a coming battle or other "heavy topic."

**Recent Events:** Valkyrie was recently chosen by Odin to watch and guard Moondragon™, a telepath with powerful mental abilities, in the hopes that Brunnhilda could teach her humility and guard humanity from the powers of Moondragon's darker side. This scenario takes place shortly after the attack on the New Mexico headquarters of the Defenders by an alien plant life form (Defenders® issue #141). Gargoyle™ and Moondragon™ managed to destroy it, and everyone has been involved in cleaning the slime from the base.

Moondragon has been acting much more pleasantly than usual of late, and the other Defenders believe that she has finally gained humanity and compassion. Valkyrie, however, doesn't trust Moondragon and continues to monitor her charge closely. If Moondragon unleashes her powers without the proper controls, the results could be devastating. These thoughts rest heavily on Brunnhilda's mind, and she is usually solemn.

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Body Armor to Monstrous and Excellent, respectively, while reducing the Incredible power of a foe's laser to Remarkable and his Poor Agility to Feeble. This power has a two-area range. She can affect her own scores as well, but cannot raise or lower any of her scores by more than one level. She can change the targets of her power editing from round to round, but cannot take any other action while editing, though her unconscious powers will continue to function.

**UNOBTRUSIVENESS.** Lucky Penny projects an unconscious and continuous aura that causes people near her to forget that she's there, so long as she makes no direct physical attack against anyone. This power functions constantly within a two-area radius, and can affect any number of people simultaneously. A successful red Psyche FEAT roll must be made to notice her within that range, but if she moves out of range and then approaches again, a new FEAT roll is permitted. Lucky Penny can purposefully cause this aura to disperse in order to talk with people, but once she finishes, the aura "turns on" again automatically.

**FORCE FIELD.** Lucky Penny unconsciously and continuously projects a personal force field of Excellent strength, effective against all physical, energy, sonic, chemical, and temperature-based attacks. The force field has a 1' radius.

**MIND GAMES.** Lucky Penny can cause any one character engaged in conversation with her to be stunned and inactive for 1-3 rounds unless a successful Red Reason FEAT roll is made. This power will not work against anyone with a Reason of Incredible or better, and the target must be in the same area with Lucky Penny.

**Talents:** Penni Pettikord is, of course, an editor; she also has an extensive knowledge of popular games.

**Background:** Penni Pettikord is one of many undiscovered mutants who would rather remain undiscovered, given current anti-mutant sentiments. She has established a comfortable existence as the editor of a role-playing game magazine, the *Dec-Twenty*, published by TyrannoSaurus Rex, Inc., a midwest games company, and she has no

interest at present in joining any group of heroes or villains. No one knows anything about her personal life; most people at her company have forgotten that she's still employed there, thanks to her Unobtrusiveness power. When Penni gets bored, she wanders off in her distinctive costume under the name Lucky Penny, looking for excitement.

**Appearance:** Penni Pettikord has long, blonde hair, dark brown eyes, fair skin, and a thin frame. She is 5'10" tall and weighs 130 lbs. She usually wears glasses.

**Personality:** Penni Pettikord is a quiet, mysterious individual. She enjoys gaming, knitting, playing practical jokes, and spying on various heroes for the fun of it. Most of the time she appears preoccupied and tends to stare at people or objects in a manner that suggests that she either isn't all there or is thinking about something very profound — no one is quite sure which.

Penni is exceptionally courageous; she reveals no fear of any being, and at worst will regard a hazardous situation with either resignation or curiosity. She is drawn to strange and unusual events, and tends to create them if sufficiently bored. She dislikes physical combat, and has never been known to carry any weapon more dangerous than a water pistol (Feeble range). She much prefers to use her various powers to protect herself while wreaking benign havoc. Penni has an odd sense of humor and is a bit of a prankster, though she will never allow innocent parties to be abused unfairly, especially in print.

**Recent Events:** At the time of this scenario, Lucky Penny is taking a walk to escape a game convention in Denver, which turned into a full-scale riot after a copy of the original B3 module turned up at the auction. Noticing the presence of She-Hulk™, Tigra™, Spider-Woman™ and Valkyrie™, and sensing an opportunity for adventure in the making, she has decided to follow them while the police sort out the confusion at the convention.

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## THUNDRA™

Thundra  
Soldier and adventurer

**Fighting:** AMAZING (50)  
**Agility:** EXCELLENT (20)  
**Strength:** AMAZING (50)  
**Endurance:** EXCELLENT (20)  
**Reason:** TYPICAL (6)  
**Intuition:** GOOD (10)  
**Psyche:** TYPICAL (6)

**Health:** 140  
**Karma:** 22  
**Resources:** EXCELLENT (supported by U.S.R.)  
**Popularity:** 8 (Marvel Universe™)/75 (U.S.R.)

### Powers:

**DENSE SKIN.** Thundra's tough skin provides her with Typical body armor with respect to physical attacks.

**LEAPING AND RUNNING.** Thundra may make Good leaps as high as 45' and across one area. Her powerful leg muscles allow her to run at Typical speeds.

**Talents:** Thundra is skilled at martial arts, with sharp and blunt weapons, and at wrestling. She has little skill with guns, however; treat her Agility as Poor when firing one. She has an extensive knowledge of military matters, and is on excellent terms with the military command of the U.S.R.

**Background:** Thundra is a genetically-engineered warrior born in the 23rd century of an alternate Earth. In her timeline, warfare in the 20th century rendered 95% of all women infertile. The fertile 5% seized political power and instituted a program of male oppression,



## SHE-HULK™

Jennifer Walters  
Lawyer and adventurer

**Fighting:** REMARKABLE (30)  
**Agility:** EXCELLENT (20)  
**Strength:** MONSTROUS (75)  
**Endurance:** AMAZING (50)  
**Reason:** TYPICAL (6)  
**Intuition:** GOOD (10)  
**Psyche:** EXCELLENT (20)

**Health:** 175  
**Karma:** 36  
**Resources:** EXCELLENT  
**Popularity:** 30

### Powers:

**DENSE SKIN.** She-Hulk's skin provides her with Incredible body armor with respect to physical, temperature, and energy attacks.

**LEAPING.** She-Hulk can make Remarkable leaps of up to 3 areas distance or 600' altitude by using her powerful leg muscles.

**DISEASE IMMUNITY.** She-Hulk's physiology gives her immunity to all diseases.

**ALTER EGO.** Like the Hulk™, She-Hulk has an alter ego. Her normal form is as Jennifer Walters (see the personality notes below for details), and she can shift between the two forms at will. Exposure to gamma radiation will force her to change from one form to another



seeing men as responsible for the near-destruction of the human race. By Thundra's time, all births were performed in government-run laboratories, and men were used only as entertainers, breeding stock, and servants.

Thundra led many assaults against roving gangs of free men and invasions from foreign countries while serving her own nation, the United Sisterhood Republic. When the U.S.R. was invaded by a male-dominated nation known as Machus (from another alternate Earth), Thundra stole their dimension-crossing device and journeyed to present-day Earth, hoping to prevent the creation of Machus. Her plan failed, and she joined the Fantastic Four™ as an ally. When she was kidnapped by the leader of the Machians and taken back to her own timeline to stand trial for her theft of the dimension device, Thundra was aided by the Fantastic Four in breaking the hold of the Machians over her people. She returned to the modern world in the belief that her own world was ruined by the presence of extradimensional men.

Later, Thundra became involved in a transdimensional scheme manipulated by the Roxxon Oil Company's Nth Command. She foiled the plot and escaped to her own timeline. Since then, she has lived in the U.S.R. and has defended it from all aggressors.

**Appearance:** Thundra is a well-proportioned woman with long, orange-red hair and green eyes. She stands 7'2" tall and weighs 450 lbs.

**Personality:** Thundra may best be described as a "macho woman," and she is an ardent female chauvinist. She is aggressive and has little respect for men, regarding them as the inferior sex (though this attitude has mellowed somewhat in recent years). The only men that she has ever come to like or respect are those who are at least as strong and capable as she is (such as the Thing™). Though Thundra is a brilliant military tactician and a highly trained warrior, she is sometimes given to rash impulses and may tend to act without thinking her plans completely through. In any event, Thundra champions the causes of women and bears a great hatred for male chauvinists, particularly those from the alternate-world state known as Machus.

**Recent Events:** After a number of adventures in the Marvel Universe™, Thundra went off to an alternate Earth controlled by women. However, she has recently discovered that Machian soldiers were plotting to infiltrate her universe. Upon learning that the Machians had also established a base in the Marvel Universe, she managed to obtain a special planar-travel device with which she has now arrived in the local area. She chose *Pander Magazine* as the place to start her investigation, since only Machians would harass heroines in this manner. She has decided to attack the building to break up (in a literal sense) the Machian operation.

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unless she makes a successful Endurance FEAT roll. Jennifer's statistics are below.

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Ty	Ty	Pr	Gd	Gd	Gd	Ty
<b>Health:</b>	26					
<b>Karma:</b>	26					
<b>Resources:</b>	EXCELLENT					
<b>Popularity:</b>	10					

**Talents:** Jennifer is the lawyer for the Fantastic Four™, and her Reason is Excellent in matters of the law. She is licensed to practice in California and New York. She-Hulk rarely, if ever, uses this knowledge.

**Background:** Jennifer Walters had established a successful legal practice in California when she was visited by her cousin, Dr. Bruce Banner, who told her that he was actually the Hulk™. While driving Bruce to her home in Los Angeles, Jennifer was shot by a gangster. Bruce arranged a transfusion of his blood to her, then left to prevent himself from turning into the Hulk again. Jennifer first turned into the She-Hulk when attacked by other gangsters in her hospital room.

Discovering that she liked crimefighting better as a green giantess, Jennifer accepted an invitation to join the Avengers™ and moved to New York. Following the Secret Wars™, she accepted another offer to join the Fantastic Four™ to replace the Thing™. She has worked with the latter group since then.

**Appearance:** She-Hulk is 6'7" tall and weighs 650 lbs. Her skin is green, and her hair and eyes are darker green. Her alter-ego is only 5'6" tall and weighs 110 lbs. Jennifer Walters has brown hair and brown eyes.

**Personality:** She-Hulk likes being a green-skinned giantess better than she likes being petite Jennifer Walters, and she rarely reverts back to her old form unless necessary. Jennifer Walters is prim, professional, and polite, though hard-nosed and aggressive as the lawyer for the Fantastic Four. Ms. Walters (Jen to her friends) has great familiarity with the law and with legal jargon.

Jennifer Walters undergoes a considerable personality change when she turns into She-Hulk. She-Hulk sees the world in a very uncomplicated fashion. There are bad guys and good guys, and the bad guys get pounded flat. She-Hulk thrives on action, danger, and adventure; she's a gung-ho fighter who believes that her strength and fists can overcome almost any opponent. Her language is simpler and more earthy than Jennifer's, and she doesn't mind bantering with criminals in a good-natured fashion while stomping them. However, her temper is very short-fused, and anyone who seriously injures or kills a close friend of hers may be savagely attacked.

She-Hulk wants very much to be taken seriously as a major heroine. Joining the Fantastic Four was the high point of her career, and she has been working out daily to improve her strength and fighting abilities. She-Hulk is very sensitive to criticism of her performance as a heroine and will do her best in any situation.

She-Hulk knows Tigra™ from the New York Avengers and the time when both fought A.I.M.™ to save a young girl with super powers. She is also acquainted with Spider-Woman™ from the Secret Wars™.

**Recent Events:** This scenario takes place shortly after the events in Fantastic Four® issue #275, when She-Hulk made an unwanted appearance in a girlie magazine as its centerfold. She-Hulk is still smarting from the incident with *The Naked Truth Magazine*, in which a photographer in a helicopter caught her sunbathing on the roof of the Baxter Building. Things worked out well; the pictures of her were inadvertently "color-corrected" so that her green skin and hair were changed to pink and brown, making the pictures look like a hoax, but She-Hulk is eager for some action to take her mind off the entire episode. Pounding a criminal flat would do her lots of good.

Recently, she got hold (literally) of another photographer, this time from *Pander Magazine*, which had been running "exposés" on super-females — including She-Hulk. After she took apart his car and camera, he was happy to tell her the magazine's Denver address, and that his employers were from "Macho-somewhere."

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## SPIDER-WOMAN™

Real name unrevealed

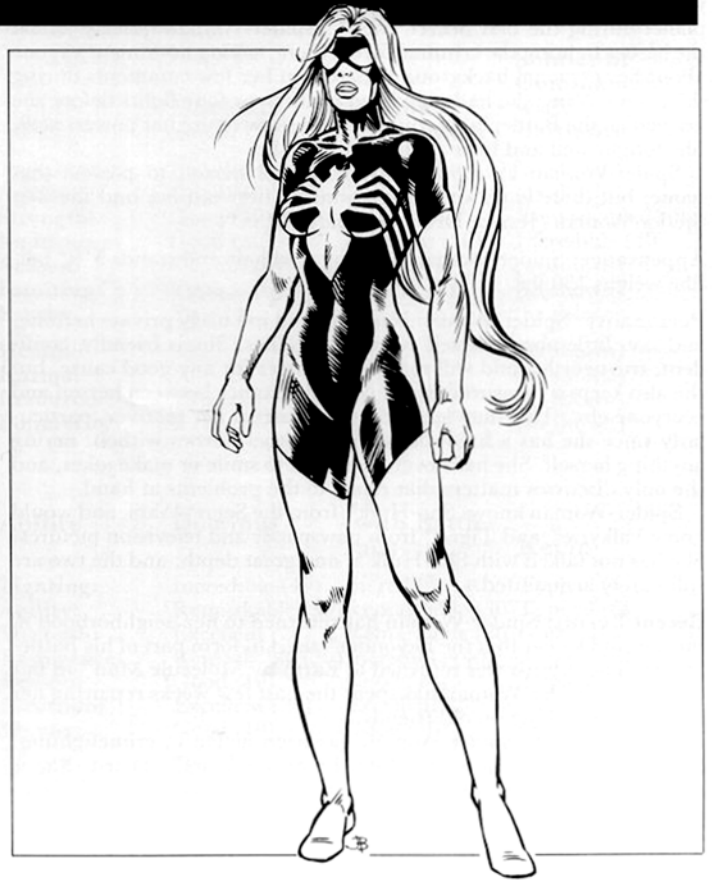
**Fighting:** GOOD (10)  
**Agility:** AMAZING (50)  
**Strength:** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**Endurance:** REMARKABLE (30)  
**Reason:** GOOD (10)  
**Intuition:** TYPICAL (6)  
**Psyche:** REMARKABLE (30)

**Health:** 130  
**Karma:** 46  
**Resources:** GOOD  
**Popularity:** 7

### Powers:

**WALL-CRAWLING.** Spider-Woman sticks to all surfaces automatically as she desires, and may walk up walls at her normal movement rate, hang from ceilings or other surfaces, etc. She must make a successful Agility FEAT roll to adhere to a wet or slippery surface.

**PSYCHIC WEB.** Through intense concentration, Spider-Woman can create a psychic web, which radiates from her in all directions. It adheres to walls and other objects, and imprisons anyone within its range, friend or foe. Within the area Spider-Woman occupies, the web is Monstrous material; in immediately adjacent areas it is Remarkable material; and two areas away the web is Typical material. The web is a physical manifestation that can be ripped or shredded, and it will disappear if Spider-Woman is knocked unconscious. Spider-Woman can move when projecting this web only if she makes a successful Red Psyche FEAT roll; the web disappears if she fails.



## TIGRA™

Greer Grant Nelson  
 Aspiring detective, altered human

**Fighting:** EXCELLENT (20)  
**Agility:** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**Strength:** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**Endurance:** REMARKABLE (30)  
**Reason:** TYPICAL (6)  
**Intuition:** REMARKABLE (30)  
**Psyche:** EXCELLENT (20)

**Health:** 130  
**Karma:** 56  
**Resources:** TYPICAL  
**Popularity:** 50

### Powers:

**EXTRAORDINARY SENSES.** Tigra has Monstrous senses of vision, hearing, and smell. She can detect any tiny noises or minute visual details within a one-area radius, as if she were within 1' of the sound source or object. Her olfactory sense allows her to track an unseen person through a heavy crowd. Her high Intuition comes from her detective training and her extremely wide angle of vision.

**INFRAVISION.** Tigra's catlike eyes give her the power to see infrared light, including body heat, within a two-area radius around her. This power, plus her extreme visual acuity, allow her to see clearly in extreme darkness as long as some minor light source is nearby.

**EMPATHY SENSE.** Tigra can sense and experience the emotions of anyone standing in the same area with her. If the emotions are strong, she detects them automatically. A Psyche FEAT roll is required for her to detect weaker emotions, or to search for the presence of a specific emotion.



**Background:** Spider-Woman is a native of Denver, Colorado. A Denver suburb was taken by the Beyonder™ to form part of the Battleplanet during the first Secret Wars™. Spider-Woman quickly joined the heroes fighting the criminal forces there, saying nothing to anyone about her personal background. Based on her few comments during the Secret Wars, she had only been in three or four fights before she arrived on the Battleplanet, but she knew how to use her powers well. She fought well and later returned to Earth.

Spider-Woman knows she is the second person to possess that name, but there is no known relationship between her and the first Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew) or Spider-Man™.

**Appearance:** Spider-Woman has long, red hair and stands 5'9" tall. She weighs 130 lbs.

**Personality:** Spider-Woman is a quiet and intensely private heroine, and says little about herself even to her allies. She is friendly, confident, trustworthy, and will readily volunteer for any good cause, but she also keeps a measured psychological distance between herself and everyone else. This may lead others to distrust her motives, particularly since she has a habit of staring at other heroes without saying anything herself. She has never been seen to smile or make jokes, and she only discusses matters that relate to the problems at hand.

Spider-Woman knows She-Hulk™ from the Secret Wars, and would know Valkyrie™ and Tigra™ from newspaper and television pictures. She has not talked with She-Hulk at any great depth, and the two are still barely acquainted.

**Recent Events:** Spider-Woman has returned to her neighborhood in the part of Denver that the Beyonder™ used to form part of his Battleplanet. The suburb was returned to Earth by Molecule Man™ in fair condition. Spider-Woman has spent the past few weeks repairing her home and checking on old friends.

Now and then, Spider-Woman has been active in crimefighting, more so now than she was before the Secret Wars™ started. She is starting to develop a reputation for herself, and the crime level in Denver has dropped as a result of her actions. Spider-Woman has thought

about seeing some of the super heroes she fought beside in the Secret Wars, but has so far done nothing about it — until now.

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**RUNNING SPEED.** Tigra can run at the rate of 4 areas/round (50 mph) for up to 3 rounds before tiring and slowing to normal speed. She can use this power once per hour.

**CLAWS.** Tigra's claws inflict Good damage on the Hack-&-Slash chart.

#### **Equipment/Possessions:**

**TALISMAN.** Tigra wears a silvery cat's-head amulet on the upper half of her bikini, which allows her to change back into human form (as an illusion) if she wills it. Tigra prefers her catlike form and will only rarely change back.

**Background:** Greer Nelson was a research assistant who agreed to have her physical and mental powers amplified by a battery of experiments. The head of the laboratory was a member of an alien race known as the Cat People. When it appeared that the lab director had been killed by the man funding the project, Greer used her powers to send him to jail. The lab director survived, but was later attacked by agents of HYDRA™. Greer Nelson was irradiated in a fight with HYDRA, and was transformed into one of the Cat People by the lab director and others of her kind in an effort to save Greer's life. Now renamed Tigra, Greer successfully defeated HYDRA's plans. She joined the Avengers™ for a short period, but left them and moved to Los Angeles to work as a detective. She worked briefly with Jessica (Spider-Woman™ I) Drew and was on the verge of forming a partnership when she was invited to join the West Coast Avengers™. Though she did so reluctantly, she has come to enjoy working with the group. She has become close friends with Wonder Man™, as they both have doubts about their abilities and calling as heroes.

**Appearance:** Tigra is 5'10" tall and weighs 180 lbs. She is covered with short, orange fur, and has dark stripes across her legs, arms, and back. Her long hair is a darker orange color, and she has green eyes.

**Personality:** Tigra is very sensuous in a casual sort of way. An excellent detective, she enjoys the thrill of the hunt and the lure of excite-

ment and danger. She fights hard in battle but prefers to catch her prey by ambush or surprise.

Tigra is insecure about her role as a heroine. She left the New York Avengers because she felt she was out of her league compared to the older and more powerful members of that team. Though she hesitated at first about joining the West Coast Avengers, she has few regrets about it now. She works well with the California team and takes pride in her performance.

Tigra rarely uses her old name of Greer Grant Nelson. When traveling in public, Tigra wears long pants, an overcoat, and a wide-brimmed hat to cover her distinctive features. In the company of super-powered heroes, she is comfortable wearing her blue bikini with amulet (see above).

Tigra knows She-Hulk™ fairly well and has spoken to her a number of times using communications lines between the West Coast Avengers building and the Baxter Building. Both were members of the New York Avengers team and both recently fought A.I.M.™ to save a young girl with super powers (see Marvel Graphic Novel #16, *The Aladdin Effect*). Tigra has never met Spider-Woman™, but has heard of her from She-Hulk and others who were involved in the Secret Wars™. Tigra knows Valkyrie™, but not personally; the Asgardian goddess may be very intimidating to her.

**Recent Events:** This scenario takes places shortly after Tigra joined the West Coast Avengers™ and helped in the capture of Graviton™, the California group's first major accomplishment. Tigra is gaining confidence in herself and her relationship with the new group, and is as eager as anyone else to prove that she's a good Avenger.

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## Weapon Statistics

### Standard (Fenris™) Battlesuit

A Fenris Battlesuit is constructed of a high-strength steel alloy which provides the wearer with Incredible protection from physical attacks and Remarkable protection from energy attacks, including heat, cold, and radiation. A battlesuit raises the wearer's Strength by 3 ranks (maximum of Remarkable) and Endurance by 4 ranks (maximum of Incredible). If the wearer's Strength and/or Endurance are greater than the maxima provided by the suit, those abilities are lowered to the suit maxima.

High-speed turbine-thrusters in the boots enable the wearer to fly at 7 areas per round, and they inflict Good damage if used as weapons against a target in the same area.

Each battlesuit has a built-in weapon system. Type II (worn by the Machian soldiers) features an external hand-carried concussion rifle with six-area range, which produces an Incredible intensity slugfest attack. Type III (worn by Dominus and the commanders) features the "Thunder Puncher" combat enhancer, which allows the wearer to strike with Monstrous Strength in combat.

### Target Pistol

A target pistol is a handgun constructed of Excellent strength material. It has a five-area range and fires one shot per round for 6 points damage per hit. If both hands are used to fire, a one-rank Agility bonus applies.

### Variable Pistol

A variable pistol is similar to a target pistol, but has a range of three areas, and carries enough ammunition for 6, 8, or 9 shots. Rate of fire is 1 shot per round, and damage is 6 points. A variable pistol may be set in the field to a particular ammunition type without ill effect.

### Assault Rifle

An assault rifle is a heavy weapon made of Good strength material. It has a seven-area range and can fire 2 shots/round. Damage is 10 points per round of ammunition and each clip carries 20 rounds. It must be fired with two hands, and though it can fire at an increased rate, the range is reduced accordingly.

### Laser Rifle

A laser rifle is constructed of Typical strength materials and has a range of 4 areas. It fires 1 shot per round; each hit does 20 points of damage. Each power pack carries enough power for 20 shots. Two hands must be used to fire a laser rifle.

### Machine Gun

A machine gun is a heavy weapon constructed of Good strength material which must be fired from a stationary position. It has a range of 10 areas and fires 1 burst per round. Damage is 30 points per burst, and each clip carries enough ammunition for 20 bursts. Each burst attacks all targets in a single area; roll for each target.

### Flamethrower

A flamethrower is composed of a firing nozzle (Typical strength material) and a backpack (Good strength material) which carries sufficient fuel for 5 uses. It has a range of 2 areas and may be fired once per round. Initial damage is 30 points of fire damage to all in the target area; the victims are then on fire and continue to burn for 10 points/round until the fire is put out. Damage to the backpack may result (Judge's option) in an Amazing explosion affecting all in the same area.

### Stun Cannon

A stun cannon is a large weapon built of Remarkable strength material, which requires two men to fire normally. (One man may fire it at a penalty of one shift.) A stun cannon fires a stunning beam of Incredible intensity once per round. A power pack contains sufficient power for 10 shots.

## Ability Scores of Base Personnel

Ability	Machian Soldier	Machian Commander	Soldier or Commander with Battlesuit
<b>Fighting:</b>	Excellent (20)	Remarkable (30)	(as shown)
<b>Agility:</b>	Good (10)	Good (10)	(as shown)
<b>Strength:</b>	Good (10)	Good (10)	Remarkable (30)
<b>Endurance:</b>	Good (10)	Excellent (20)	Incredible (40)
<b>Reason:</b>	Typical (6)	Typical (6)	(as shown)
<b>Intuition:</b>	Typical (6)	Typical (6)	(as shown)
<b>Psyche:</b>	Poor (4)	Typical (6)	(as shown)
<b>Health:</b>	50	70	(as shown)
<b>Karma:</b>	16	18	(as shown)
<b>Resources:</b>	Typical	Good	(as shown)
<b>Popularity:</b>	0	0	(as shown)

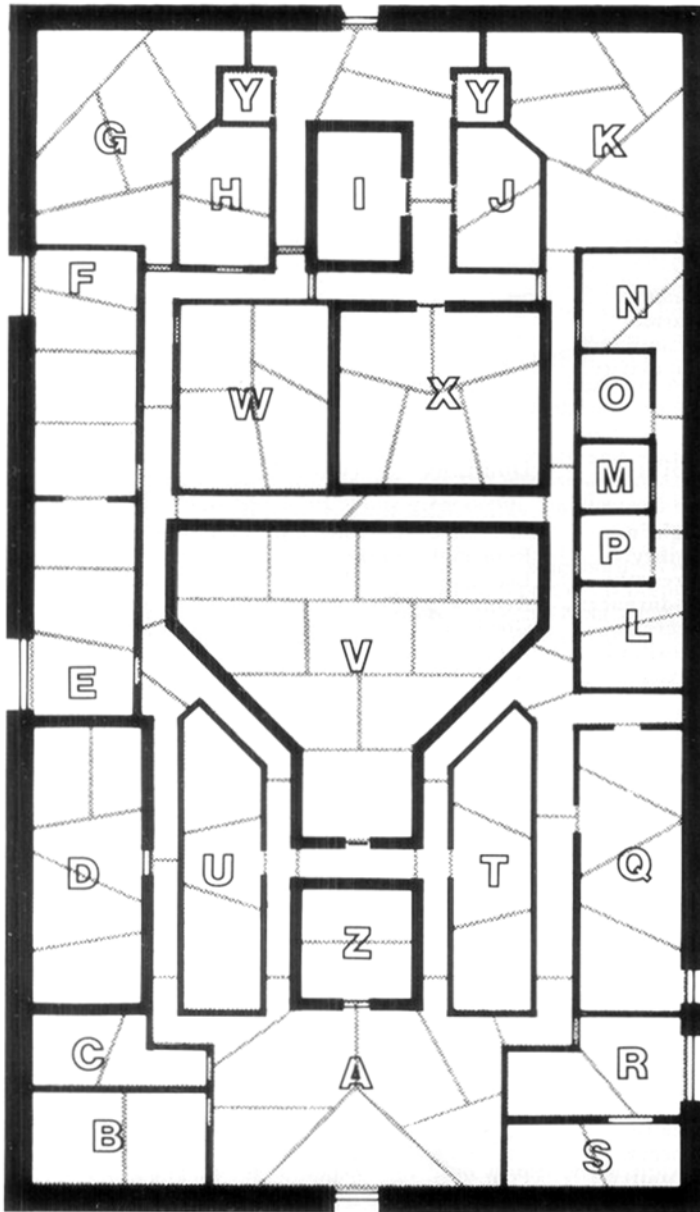
Ability	Dominus	(with Battlesuit)	Kevin
<b>Fighting:</b>	Incredible (40)	Incredible (40)	Typical (6)
<b>Agility:</b>	Remarkable (30)	Remarkable (30)	Typical (6)
<b>Strength:</b>	Excellent (20)	Remarkable (30)	Good (10)
<b>Endurance:</b>	Remarkable (30)	Incredible (40)	Typical (6)
<b>Reason:</b>	Good (10)	Good (10)	Typical (6)
<b>Intuition:</b>	Excellent (20)	Excellent (20)	Typical (6)
<b>Psyche:</b>	Good (10)	Good (10)	Poor (4)
<b>Health:</b>	120	120	28
<b>Karma:</b>	40	40	16
<b>Resources:</b>	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
<b>Popularity:</b>	0	0	0

Ability	Mrs. Fleener	Arnold	Samuels
<b>Fighting:</b>	Poor (4)	Poor (4)	Good (10)
<b>Agility:</b>	Poor (4)	Typical (6)	Good (10)
<b>Strength:</b>	Poor (4)	Poor (4)	Typical (6)
<b>Endurance:</b>	Typical (6)	Poor (4)	Good (10)
<b>Reason:</b>	Typical (6)	Good (10)	Typical (6)
<b>Intuition:</b>	Typical (6)	Typical (6)	Typical (6)
<b>Psyche:</b>	Feeble (2)	Poor (4)	Poor (4)
<b>Health:</b>	18	18	36
<b>Karma:</b>	14	20	16
<b>Resources:</b>	Poor	Poor	Good
<b>Popularity:</b>	0	0	0

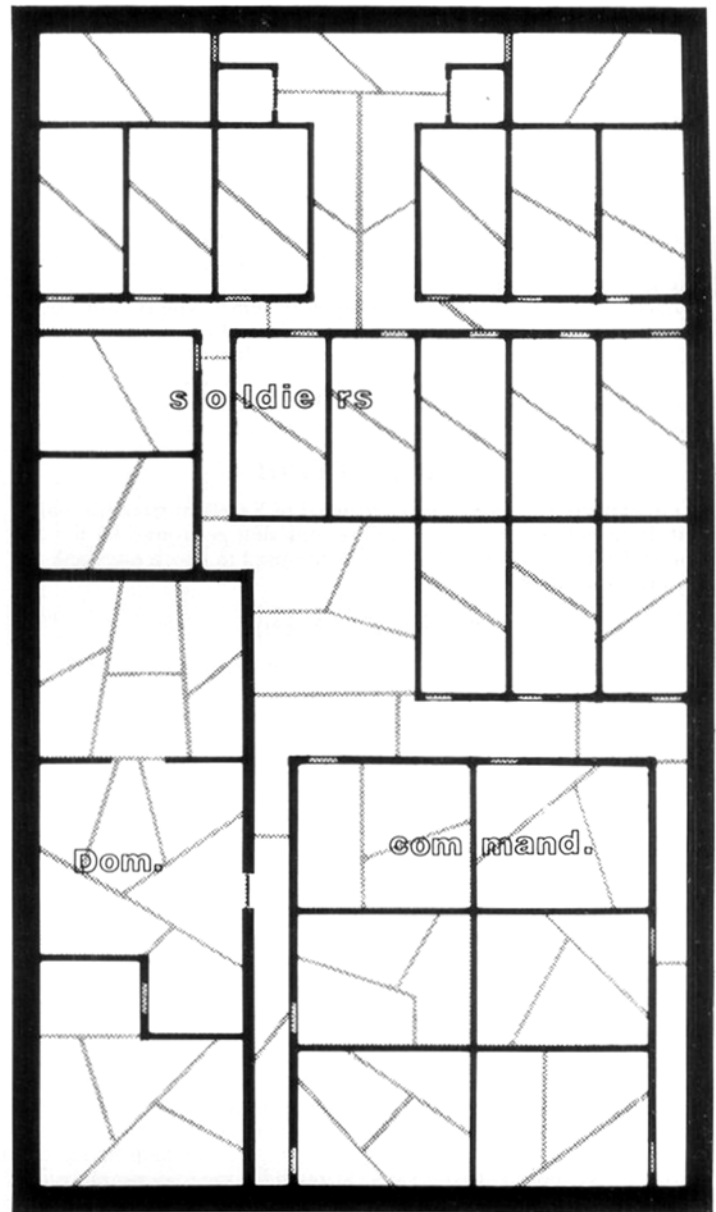
### Knock-out Gas Grenades

A knock-out gas grenade fills the area into which it is thrown with knock-out gas of Excellent potency. Victims with an Endurance of Good or below must make a Red FEAT roll, those with an Endurance of Excellent must make a Yellow FEAT roll, and those with an Endurance of Remarkable or better must make a Green FEAT roll. Failure indicates that the character falls unconscious. (If Lucky Penny raises the Endurance of an already unconscious character, the character may make a new FEAT roll vs. the gas.)

# Pander Publications Building Layout



GROUND LEVEL



SECOND STORY

## Personnel Location Table

Hour	Activity					
	Breakfast	Duty	Dinner	R&R	Drill	Sleep
8		A	C			B
9		A		C		B
10		A		C		B
11		A		C		B
12 (noon)		A		C		B
1		A			C	B
2		A			C	B
3	B	A				C
4		B	A			C
5		B		A		C
6		B		A		C
7		B		A		C

Hour	Activity					
	Breakfast	Duty	Dinner	R&R	Drill	Sleep
8		B		A		C
9		B			A	C
10		B			A	C
11		C				A
12 (midnight)		C	B			A
1		C		B		A
2		C		B		A
3		C		B		A
4		C		B		A
5		C			B	A
6		C			B	A
7	A	C				B

Kevin is a small-time thug out on parole. He works in the assembly area on shift B. Although he doesn't know what's going on, he has seen the battlesuits, knows where they are kept, and is waiting for an opportunity to steal one.

Samuels is an undercover cop assigned to infiltrate *Pander Magazine* and investigate reports of espionage and stockpiling of illegal weapons. To that end, he has obtained a job in keylining (shift A) and has reported the presence of battlesuits and other illegal weaponry within the building to his superiors. So far, he has been unable to discover any information about the sources of the weapons or the magazine's purpose for accumulating them.

The only woman in the establishment is Mrs. Fleener, a feeble-looking old receptionist who will tell any visitors that Mr. Dominus is not available, and that they must make an appointment for next Thursday. Mrs. Fleener was hired to do the menial chores that men should not have to, and was chosen because she was the least threatening woman available amongst the applicants. (All the others refused to get coffee for the boss.) She is used as an errand girl and a scapegoat. Although she is desperately unhappy and extremely angry about the treatment she has received at the hands of her employers, she is easily cowed and will not fight back unless she sees other women getting the best of her employers. Mrs. Fleener knows the location of the commander's office and private quarters, the armory (security), and the transporter (the mail slot).

All the normal humans except Mrs. Fleener know that their employers have some criminal connections and activities, but do not know their exact nature. Only Arnold knows who and what the Machians are; the others do not suspect that their employers are from an entirely different world, though they do know that personnel appear and disappear without using the doors from time to time, and this fact has made them nervous.

It is not necessarily recommended that a particular villain be present at the complex, but the judge can add one or two villains if desired. The Machians will certainly look out for misogynic characters to hire for defense of their building.

All the Machians normally wear body armor (flak jackets that serve as Typical protection from physical attacks only), and each carries a smoke grenade, brass knuckles, and a target pistol concealed on his person. Guards on duty wear Fenris Battlesuits. The normal men are unarmed and unarmored, except for Samuels, who carries a knock-out gas grenade concealed on his person.

### Personnel Placement

The Machian force is divided into three shifts (A, B, and C) to keep the operations running around the clock. Each shift is composed of 12 soldiers and 2 commanders, plus sufficient normal men to handle the routine labor. Shift A also includes Dominus, Mrs. Fleener, Samuels, and Arnold. Shift B includes Kevin. The 14 Machians on each work shift divide the critical duties as follows: 1 commander and 6 soldiers on guard (entrances and computer area), 1 computer operator (commander) and 1 technician (computer room), 1 editor, 1 artist, 1 researcher (library/monitor room), plus 1 reporter and 1 photographer (out on assignment). Dominus may be placed as desired by the judge; Mrs. Fleener will always be at the reception desk when on duty.

### Pander Magazine

The *Pander Magazine* building is two stories tall, with monitor pickups on the roof, next to all four doors, and in the reception area. (To avoid picking up street noise, the pickups are video only, with no audio receiver, so conversations will not be heard.) Activity by costumed characters or fighting in any of these areas will be visible in monitor room H, and the technician on duty will sound the general alert. (See **General Alert**.)

There are four entrances into the complex (indicated by black arrows on the map itself). The walls of the complex have been strengthened to Incredible levels by the Machians, save for walls noted as being "hi-strength," which are of Amazing material. Doors are of Remarkable material. There are no windows, as the building is a converted warehouse. Railings are of Typical material, and ceilings and floors are of Incredible material.

### Area Key

**A.** Reception area. Mrs. Fleener's desk is in the center of the lobby. She greets all visitors, but refuses to allow them to see any of the staff without an appointment.

**B.** Sales and subscriptions. All magazine orders are processed here on computer terminals. In the filing cabinets are sales records and documentation of orders shipped via "transporter" and charged to "home base." These are the copies distributed to Machus itself. Records of illegal arms purchases and bribes to government officials are also kept here in locked drawers.

**C.** Personnel center. Records on all base personnel (including Machian soldiers) and their assignments are stored here.

**D.** Library. Reference materials and data on powerful women of this world are stored in this soundproofed area.

**E.** Assembly. Finished magazines are brought here from the press room and assembled, then packed into boxes for shipping.

**F.** Shipping. Orders are picked up from this loading dock by trucks for delivery all over the country.

**G.** Auditorium. This room is used for base meetings and for entertainment.

**H.** Surveillance Center. This room is lined with wall monitors. Each monitor is tuned to a concealed camera and tape recorder set carried by a field agent, or to a similar set planted in a super-heroine's home. Monitor tapes are stored in the computer room. One bank of monitors is tuned to the video pickups in and around the *Pander Magazine* building, and is watched continuously for intruders.

**I.** Main Trans-Universal Transport Chamber. Personnel and supplies are routinely sent back and forth between Machus and the base via this chamber. It is also used for sending back routine reports, data tapes, and magazine shipments.

**J.** Surveillance Center. See Room H.

**K.** Recreation Hall. This room contains pool tables, gambling areas, a swimming pool, ping pong tables, and all forms of amusement that one could imagine.

**L.** Layout design. Typeset copy is laid down and fitted to available space in preparation for printing.

**M.** Camera Room. Final print quality copy is run here, and artwork and photographs are composed for publication. Currently, the photos of She-Hulk taken by *The Naked Truth Magazine* are spread out on the work tables and are being recorrected for green skin and hair color.

**N.** Keylining. Final production copy and corrections are assembled for printing here.

**O.** Art Room. Staff artists draw cartoons and portraits, and compose photographs for the magazine.

**P.** Typesetting. Copy is electronically transferred to computers here for typesetting and copyfitting.

**Q.** Cafeteria. The cafeteria is open 24 hours a day, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner at all hours. The food is military in style and bland in flavor, and the employees are surly.

**R.** Receiving. Supplies are received here at the loading dock and stored until requested by personnel in another department.

**S.** Press Room. Printing presses run continuously to produce *Pander Magazine*. Finished copies are taken to the Assembly area.

**W.** Training Room. The soldiers from each shift drill here for two hours a day to keep in condition.

**U.** Editing. Editors prepare the copy for publication at the computer terminals here and in Room T. The rooms are soundproofed to aid concentration.

**T.** Editing. See Room U.

**V.** Computer Center. The base's main computer is housed here, and is manned at all times by 1 commander (programmer) and 1 soldier (technician). All programming is done here, and banks of data storage and monitor tapes line all the walls. The computer carries the business records and production requirements (such as editorial and typesetting files), as well as stored data on prominent super-heroines and other powerful females of this alternate Earth. When not otherwise occupied, the computer runs invasion simulations with varying conditions to determine the most efficient method of attack.

**X.** Main Armory. Stored here are 37 Fenris Battlesuits (32 concussion rifle style for the soldiers and 5 "Thunder Puncher" style for the commanders), plus 10 variable pistols, 30 assault rifles, 36 laser rifles, 12 knock-out gas grenades (Excellent potency), 10 machine guns, 3 flamethrowers, 1 stun cannon, standard ammunition for all weapons, explosives (several varieties), and assorted other grenades.

**Y. Elevator.** The elevators go to the second floor and on to the roof.

**Z. Dominus's Office.** Dominus carries out the regular duties of base commander from here and reviews all data prior to transport. The office is furnished in a spartan manner and contains a computer terminal and a Fenris Battlesuit ("Thunder Puncher" style). In a locked drawer are copies of the reports Dominus has made to Machus, along with his recommendations for invasion.

**Second Floor.** The second floor is composed of living quarters for the Machians. Dominus occupies the large suite on the southwest end of the building, and his commanders each have a private chamber in the southeastern area. The soldiers share rooms (2 each) with members of the same shift.

## Starting Play

Before the start of the adventure, allow the players to choose their characters and pass out the character cards provided. When everyone is ready, read the following to the players.

Over the last few weeks, She-Hulk™, Tigra™, Spider-Woman™, and Valkyrie™ have each been the target of an exposé in a trashy girlie magazine known as *Pander*. Racy photos (obviously composites — certainly none of you have ever posed for them) have accompanied completely fictional articles about your private lives. She-Hulk and Tigra have already filed lawsuits for libel, but the cases are being stalled in court. Meanwhile, more trash has continued to appear each month — always about a well-known super-heroine. *Pander's* mailing address is in Denver, Colorado, according to a photographer who was caught taking pictures of She-Hulk.

What does this magazine have against you? Is *Pander* a front for an anti-heroine group? What is going on here, anyway? The time has come to find out the truth and put a stop to all this!

She-Hulk, Tigra, and Valkyrie have met Spider-Woman in Denver. Spider-Woman has located the *Pander* Magazine building in an industrial park. On your way to scout it out, you encountered an unexpected visitor: Thundra™, a super-powered female from an alternate universe. Thundra is also heading for the *Pander* Magazine building, eager for a fight.

The heroines may discuss their plans and strategy before the scenario starts, sharing information and preparing for the battle to come. Lucky Penny™ is also in the area and may participate in this discussion as well, if she lowers her "shield" so she may be noticed.

Start the scenario by asking the six players which of the entrances their characters will use and when the attack will take place. Use the Personnel Location Table on page 20 to determine the locations of the building personnel at the chosen time. Do not reveal the location of any Machians unless they would be seen by the attacking heroines. The heroines may enter the doors in any combination they choose: all may go in one door, they may go in separate doors, or some may wait outside. The doors leading to the outside are of Remarkable strength material, but are unlocked during business hours.

## Conducting Play General Alert

When the general alert is sounded, all off-duty shifts are awakened (if necessary) and proceed immediately to the armory to put on Fenris Battlesuits and grab extra weapons, then report to the nearest commander for orders. (Putting on a battlesuit takes 5 rounds.) Guards on duty remain at their posts until directed elsewhere by a commander. The commander in the computer room remains there, monitoring all points of entry and directing guard units via communicators carried by each of the other commanders.

The central commander directs two off-duty soldiers out of the building immediately, to pick up a hostage. They return five rounds later with Stella, a normal human from the Denver gaming convention. (Stella was looking for someone to ask about the results of the Snowcrystal event, and was directed out of the building after Penni

Pettikord.) Stella is moved to the nearest room with hi-strength walls and held there until such time as the Machians wish to use her as a bargaining chip to delay the heroines.

Dominus puts on his "Thunder Puncher" Fenris Battlesuit and proceeds to the armory to move the stun cannon into position for the fight. If the cannon fails to turn the tide of battle, he retreats to the transporter room, gathering as many of the tapes and documents on super-women as he can *en route*. Unless prevented, Dominus uses the transporter to return to Machus, then immediately shuts it down from that side to prevent any heroines from following him. The remaining Machian commanders try their best to repel the attack, but if that seems hopeless, they will use explosives to destroy the computer room, personnel records, and any other possibly incriminating evidence.

Arnold cowers while the heroines fight the Machians, but after they have passed, he suddenly becomes heroic, taking any offensive action which seems appropriate to help the Machians. For example, he might revive or release a captured Machian soldier, loot a laser rifle or a stun grenade and attack the heroines from the rear, or jump on one of the less powerful-looking heroines from behind.

When the alarm is sounded, Kevin proceeds immediately to the armory, slips in, and makes off with a battlesuit in the moments before the off-duty troops arrive. He spends six rounds putting it on in the men's room, then attempts to flee. Because he has never worn a suit before, he can only fly 3 areas per round instead of 7.

Since law enforcement is his job, Samuels stays to fight alongside the heroines when the shooting begins. Though he is a relatively competent police officer, he is out of his league against battlesuits. Initially, Samuels hides near the conflict and waits for an opportunity to throw his own knock-out gas grenade (Remarkable potency) into a large group of the opposition, then runs forward to drag any unconscious heroines out of danger and revive them. Once noticed, however, he is quickly captured by the Machians.

## Karma

Normal Karma awards apply to this adventure. Award 10 Karma points for the capture of normal Machian soldiers, with increasing awards for more powerful and important Machians, up to a maximum award of 40 or 50 points for Dominus himself, or other very powerful villains. Karma losses may be taken (20 points each) if a player character is knocked out and/or captured.

Additionally, each piece of solid evidence relating to transdimensional espionage (aside from confessions) that the heroines turn over to the government is worth an additional +30 Karma. If the heroines cannot prove that the building's inhabitants were involved in some kind of criminal activity, each suffers a loss of 40 Karma for interfering with constitutionally guaranteed rights — such as freedom of the press.





# With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

by William Tracy

Hello there, I'm William Tracy, and this is the first installment of a regular column on the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game.

## The Origin of the Column

I recently suggested to Jean Rabe that the Newszine have a MARVEL SUPER HEROES game column. She agreed such a column would be a good idea and promptly found someone to write it — me. The POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, it seems, is what the network's membership makes it.

## The First Topic

Since the network needs tournaments, I'd like to discuss how to write MARVEL SUPER HEROES scenarios for RPGA™ tournament use. Now that I have written this particular column I know why some writers at conventions always roll their eyes when someone asks how they come up with their ideas. No two people's creative processes are alike, and it's often hard to tell where any given idea came from. I offer a few tips based on what works best for me, and the basic method I use to create a MARVEL SUPER HEROES tournament. I don't guarantee that following them to the letter will allow you to write Class 1000 material, but I think they will be useful.

## Equipment

Before starting to write the tournament, you should have a few items. You should have either the Basic or the Advanced MARVEL SUPER HEROES Game — You can write a tournament using either set of rules. Get as many of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game adventures and resource books as you can afford. The resource books might have statistics on some of the characters you wish to use in your tournament, as might some of the adventures. If you study the adventures, you can make sure you don't use a plot similar to one that already has been published; you also get a good look at how an adventure is put together.

You definitely need to have the *Official Handbook Of The Marvel Universe* comic book series. This alphabetical listing of important characters, places and objects in the Marvel Universe is an invaluable aid.

Now that you have everything together, it is time to start thinking about the actual plot and structure of the tournament.

## A Different Angle

Instead of working out the plot first, I pick

out the heroes and villains I want to put in the tournament. By picking out the characters first, the basic plot of the adventure almost builds itself. This happens because the complete background and the M.O. of the characters are already there. Thus, I know the methods the villain probably will use. The characters of the Marvel Universe all have established backgrounds and personalities, they won't act out of character unless there is a special reason.

There are several different ways you can choose the heroes. You could pick an established team of heroes, such as the X-Men or the Avengers. But don't limit yourself to current teams. Older teams that are no longer in existence, such as the Defenders or the Champions also would make an interesting tournament group.

Another method, which is used frequently, is for a number of independent heroes to accidentally find themselves involved in the same case. A good example of this is TSR's *Lone Wolves* adventure. The best place for this sort of adventure, of course, is New York City, which has the highest super hero population density in the United States. This allows the designer to arrange for heroes who have never met to work together. Try to pick heroes that can work together, groups of heroes that have similar abilities and temperaments makes for a dull game. A group with a variety of skills and contrasting personalities will work better.

This is not to say that the characters cannot share some common traits. Try bringing together a group of heroes who have some sort of common theme. For example, a number of the world's magic-using heroes could be called together to defeat some powerful mystic menace. I used this method for a tournament scenario titled *The Challenge*, which used the Marvel Universe's various martial arts characters. *She Rampage*, which was published in POLYHEDRON newszine #27 also used this principle.

The final method is to simply to create new super heroes and provide adequate information on their backgrounds and personalities. The problem with this is that the designer must be sure to provide enough information for each hero to be properly role-played.

## The Plot

There are three basic plot lines. The plot of any Marvel tournament will be built on a foundation consisting of one or more of these basic plot lines.

The first basic plot line is the simple revenge motive. This is employed by a

villain or villains wishing to hurt a hero who has beaten the villain or villains in the past. This can involve publicly humiliating the hero or framing the hero for some crime he didn't commit. This plot sometimes even includes trying to kill the hero or someone the hero cares for.

The next basic plot hinges on greed. The villain is out to make as much money as possible, and usually through illegal means. This could include robbery, kidnapping, blackmail, and even assassination. This plot line usually will be the simplest, with the heroes trying to stop the criminals before they complete their crime.

The final basic plot involves lust for power. These are the type of plots concocted by such megalomaniacs as Dr. Doom. The villain might be interested in gaining some money through his actions, but he is mostly out for power. These are the plots of would-be world conquerors. This plot often involves some sort of new weapon or machine with which the villain will threaten the world, or that gives him control over others.

A tournament module will usually contain at least one of these basic plots. Often it will contain two or three of the basic plots. As I said before, the nature of the plot will depend a lot on who the heroes and villains of the tournament are. It is very important to really know the characters that you plan to use in your tournament.

## The Plot Structure

The information in this section has to be credited to Michael Dobson, who passed along the following ideas at this year's Glathricon. He told me that there are three different plot structures that can be used in an adventure.

The first plot structure is the closed line. In this kind of adventure, the characters usually have little or no control over the actual movement of the plot line. They are basically lead around by their noses, having no real choices. There are good and bad points to this kind of plot structure. First, the players will usually not like that kind of plot. But anyone who reads comics knows that heroes are sometimes put in situations like that, with no real control over their destiny. But in the end, the hero always finds some way to thwart the villain's scheme. As long as the designer makes sure that at least in the end the players have a way to break free of the villain's calculated plans, it is okay. This type of plot structure is best suited for one round tournaments. It is the easiest type of plot structure to write, but it is also the least suited for adventures.

Be warned, this type of adventure can be occasionally accepted for tournaments, but it probably will not be chosen for professional publication.

The next structure uses a flow chart system. In other words, at certain points in the plot the heroes can make decisions that branch off from the main plot. But eventually this branching off will lead back to the main plot line. This kind of plot is probably best suited for tournament play, letting the characters have some choice and at the same time keeping them attached to a central plot. This kind of plot will usually be accepted for publication, but it has to be real good.

The final plot structure is the rubber band structure. It is similar to the flow chart system, with the characters able to branch off from the main plot line. The difference is that they can branch out even farther, as long as there is always a slight push back toward the main plot line. In other words, the characters can drift farther and farther away from the main plot line, but sooner or later they will be compelled (snapped) back into the main plot line. This is the hardest kind of adventure to write, since you have to plan ahead for a lot more potential player actions. This type of plot structure is best used in multi-round events.

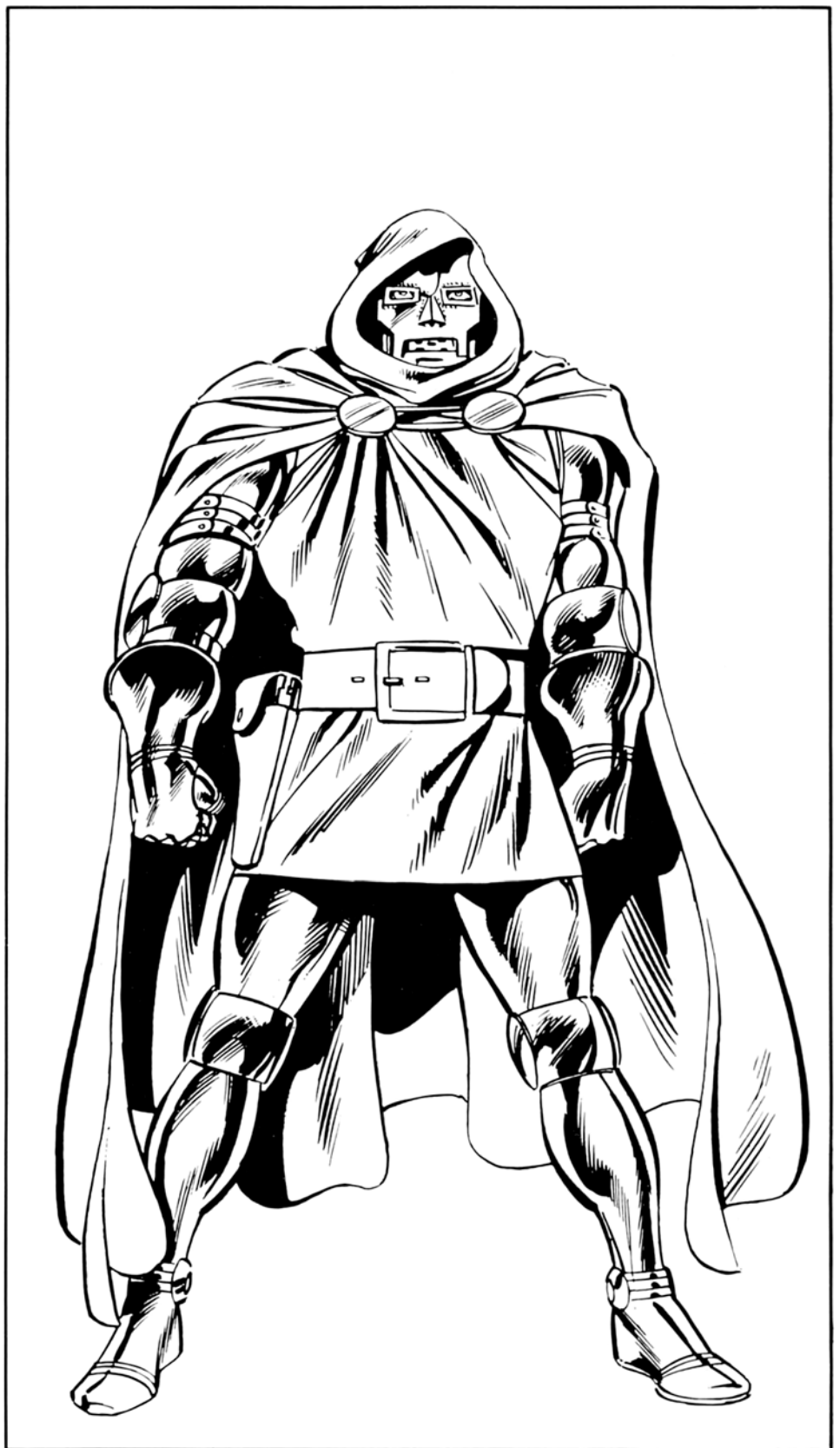
Finally, be sure to match the right type of plot with the right villain. Dr. Doom is going to use complicated plots to gain power or to get revenge against his enemies. On the other hand, crooks like the Vulture are out for money, with revenge sometimes thrown in.

### Some Added Spice

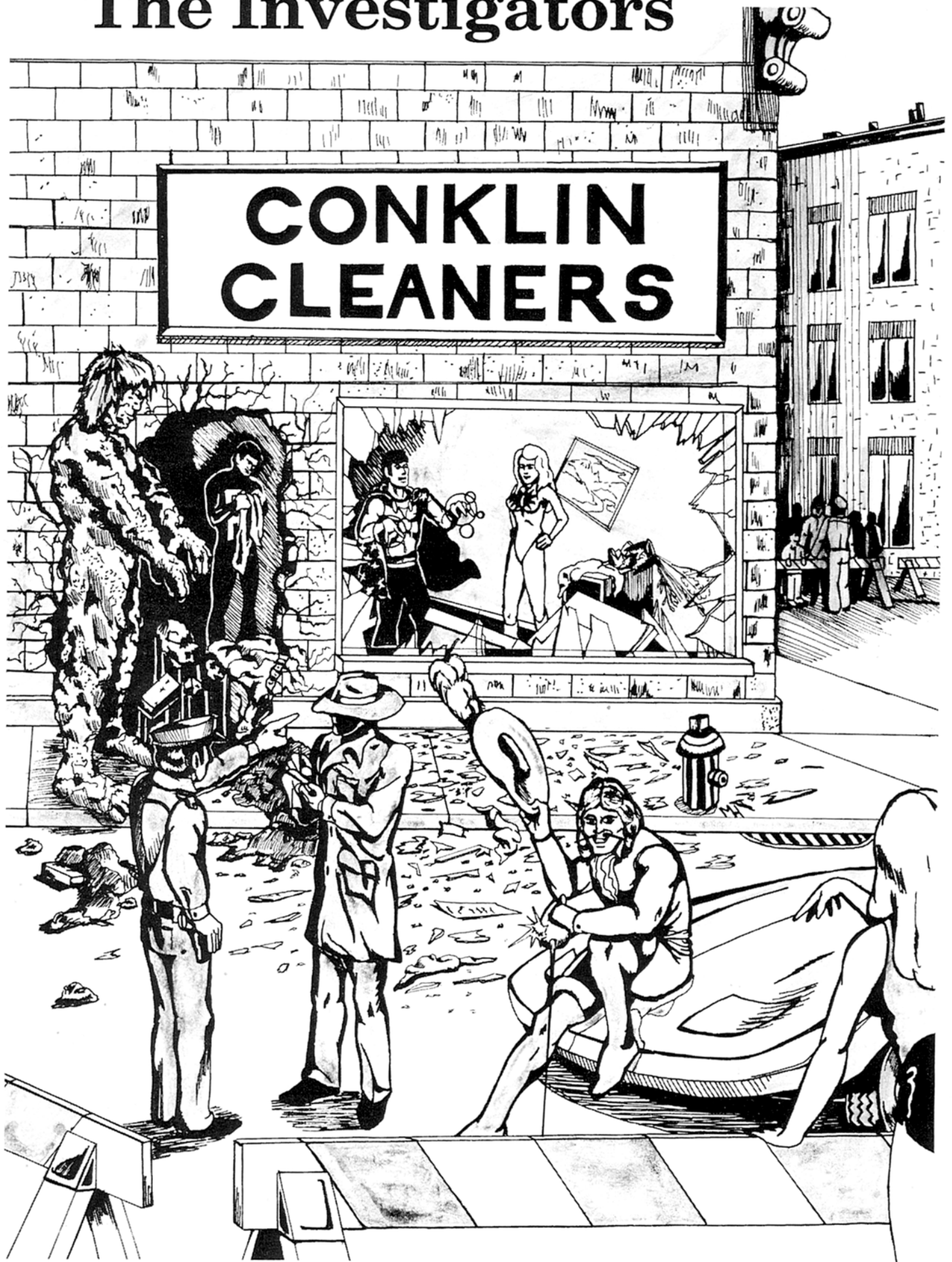
After you decide who the characters are going to be and what the basic plot and plot structure is, it is time to actually write the adventure. While writing you might want to add a few of the extras often added to comic book plots. Throw in a few inept thugs as a warm up encounter. You might want to add some new piece of technology; a weapon or some sort of machine. One of my favorite items is the power enhancer, this increases the villain's regular powers or gives him new ones. A good Marvel tournament should usually contain one encounter where the heroes must rescue some innocent bystanders while the villains make their getaway.

Of course, be sure to type it neatly and as correctly as possible, try to avoid grammatical errors as well as typing errors. Be sure the whole tournament is consistent and logical. Make sure you haven't left anything important out. It is a good idea to give the scenario to a friend and let him run some players through it. Sit through the session and make note of any problems that arise and any comments the GM and players might make. Having someone else run the playtest is important. Anyone who runs an adventure he wrote tends to compensate for blank areas with knowledge that nobody else has. If you do this neither you nor your players will notice that something is missing.

Til next time, have a blast.



# The Investigators





# The Investigators

by Jeff Martin

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## Players' Introduction

This adventure revolves around the Maggia. This class 1000 criminal organization controls the majority of criminal wealth and power in the United States. The organization is vast, and controls numerous gangs and branch offices.

One of these gangs is the Black Vampires. Based in the Chicago area, its officials are as wealthy as they are vile. The Black Vampires have taken many victims over the years, and few stand to oppose them.

Robert Malone is one of those few people. He was a middle-level official in the Black Vampires when his brother was murdered. He was killed by Black Vampire thugs when he refused to pay protection money for his business. Robert vowed that he would get revenge for his brother, even if it might cost him his life. He went to the Attorney General and revealed extensive and damaging information about the Black Vampires.

The next day, the leaders of the Black Vampires were arrested and charged with many heinous crimes. A grand jury quickly indicted them and the stage was set for a historic trial.

The Maggia was not going to let its reputation be tainted, however. It purchased the services of several villains to find and kidnap Robert Malone. On the night before Robert Malone was to appear in court and give essential prosecution testimony, villains broke into a supposedly secret safe house and kidnapped him. From the vast destruction inflicted on the safe house, it is apparent that these villains were not ordinary. It is believed that Robert Malone is probably still alive. The Maggia probably will not kill him until they learn exactly what he has told the authorities.

This is where your group, The Investigators, enters the drama. After a direct appeal from the Attorney General, Shade (the group's leader) called the membership together.

It is now 10 p.m. and the trial is over at noon tomorrow (it resumes at 8 A.M.). Unless Robert Malone is located and rescued before noon, the Black Vampires will win a victory in court. Your mission is to rescue Malone and deliver him to the courthouse, intact, so that he can give his testimony. It's a sure bet that the Maggia will employ super villains in an attempt to stop you.

Robert Malone was last seen at the safe house. After a quick look at his police file, the

Investigators leave for the safe house -- "Conklin Cleaners."

## Referee's Information

The super villains who located and kidnapped Robert Malone were the Absorbing Man, Blizzard, Mauler, Sabertooth, and Whirlwind -- the Maggia was not taking any chances. The adventure starts in downtown Chicago.

## Chapter One: Taken to the Cleaners

The small shop is completely in shambles. The police are trying to contain a gathering crowd. A hole the size of a man has been blown through one of the building's walls. Papers and other light objects have been blown about the place. It looks as though a tornado has come through here. Strangely, patches of melting ice also can be seen here and there.

Only one police officer survived the onslaught. He is in critical condition, with deep claw wounds on his body. He is barely conscious and cannot give the characters any information.

The disaster happened about one hour ago. The super villain, Sabertooth, used his super sense of smell to track down Mr. Malone. It was the Mauler who blew open the wall. The ice and the high winds were courtesy of Blizzard and Whirlwind.

The kidnappers left few clues to the whereabouts of Mr. Malone. The heroes cannot proceed any further with the adventure until they try to find eye witnesses.

When the heroes try to find eye witnesses they will meet with some success. They will encounter Joe Bernard and Kelly James. Joe Bernard is a 16 year-old runaway who survives on charity, a part time job, and the occasional theft. He is streetwise and he will not be intimidated by The Investigators. Joe saw the entire event and he will tell heroes the whole story for a price (\$50). Joe saw Mr. Malone captured and loaded into a van. On the side of the van were the words "Globe Press." Shade is the only one carrying any money (tell this to the player), but he should be hesitant to pay the boy. This is a situation where a lot of group interaction could take place.

Kelly James is a young nurse who was driving by the store when the villains hit it. She saw only the Mauler, Sabertooth, and Blizzard. Read the following when the heroes question Kelly:

This young woman seems to be a bit breathless, either because of your presence or because of what she saw here. "I was driving home from the hospital when I heard a crash," she explains. "I slowed down to look and saw a man in a cat outfit standing next the hole in the wall, I think he was the villain Sabertooth. Anyway, he saw the car and shouted to somebody inside. Two men wearing armor looked out through the hole, one of

them looked like he was covered with frost or something, and the other shot a beam of light at me; from his arm, so I punched the gas and drove away. I came back here because I thought what I saw might be important."

Kelly didn't have time to see anything else. If Graylord questions her, however, she will try very hard to remember other details; she will eventually be able to furnish fairly complete descriptions of all three villains.

The Referee should feel free to invent any new NPCs he feels are appropriate, but characters should have even less information than Joe and Kelly have.

## Chapter Two: "Pressing Business"

Globe Press is located about five miles from Conklin Cleaners. The heroes can get there in a police car or in Shade's Shadowstreak. The exterior of the Globe Press building is shown on the city map provided with the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. The building's interior is shown on the map's reverse side.

The building is made of brick and is rather new. Its walls and doors are made of Good material. Remote control video cameras are located in many spots outside the structure. If the heroes are careful they can get within one area of the building without being seen from inside. Shade may move freely about and remain unseen as long as he does not stand directly under a street light. The cameras are connected to monitors in the office section (the light area in the building's lower left hand corner).

When the heroes arrive they will see the van parked in the parking area. No one saw the van arrive.

Office:

This large, but spartan room houses many video monitors. The exterior of the building is being shown on them. From out of the shadows step three costumed men. You recognize them as the Mauler, Blizzard, and Sabertooth.

This room is where Mr Malone was taken. He is not here now, however, as he was taken below through a trap door in the middle of the room. The heroes will not notice it until the fight is over (see Aftermath). When the villains arrived, the Absorbing Man and Whirlwind proceeded through the trap door with Mr. Malone, telling their three associates to wait here for their payment and to watch for pursuit.

By using the monitors and his super senses, Sabertooth knew when The Investigators entered the building. He, the Mauler, and Blizzard are ready for a fight.

Roll initiative. The villains will fight to zero Health points. Their battle tactics are up to the referee, but they will do their best to defeat the heroes. If captured they will not discuss their mission, or reveal anything about

Mr. Malone. Even these super villains respect the Maggia.

**Aftermath:** The heroes will find the trap door if they search the office. A ladder leads downward to a tunnel. Opening the trap door and descending the ladder takes the heroes directly to chapter three.

### Chapter Three: Which Way Did He Go?

The ladder leads down to a narrow tunnel. The tunnel heads west for about 1000 feet and ends in a locked steel door (Remarkable material).

The tunnel abruptly ends in a gray, steel door, featureless except for a gleaming brass rectangle bolted to its right edge, about chest high. The plate's cold surface gleams ruddily in the dim red light cast by a single dirty bulb set in the ceiling.

This is a normal steel door, the heroes can open it simply by pushing on it. The referee should do nothing to allay any fears or anxieties the players might have about the door.

When opened, the door reveals an ordinary parking garage. Hundreds of cars litter the place.

The heroes can visit the exit gate and inquire about any strange events. A worker there, Orville Johnson, will remember the limousine that carried Mr. Malone out of here. The man who paid the ticket was a very large, bald, evil-looking man (the Absorbing Man). The car's license plate number is written on a ticket stub.

The heroes will have problems obtaining information from Orville, however. Mr. Johnson is pushing his 70's and he is losing some of his hearing. Although he likes to pretend to be dim-witted, he is very sharp. He will try to get the heroes to agree to attend his grandchild's birthday party next week. If they agree, he will tell them all he knows.

When the heroes approach Orville, he will be mumbling angrily about something (Sutcliffe's pitching no doubt). Orville holds the ticket stub while talking to the heroes, if he does not show it to them, Oracle can read the license number with his Gramarye spell.

The license plate number can be easily traced with a simple phone call. The limousine belongs to Theodore Tyler a regional official of the Maggia. He lives in a small country estate just outside the city. By using Shadowstreak, or a police helicopter, The Investigators can be there in 20 minutes.

### Chapter Four: A Stroll in the Country

You stand at the country home of Theodore Tyler. It is a small, one-story home, yet its style is grand and luxurious. Its more prominent features include a large front door and an eight-foot-tall iron fence. The house is very

very beautiful and the yard is immaculate. There are no lights visible.

If the heroes wait a few moments, they will see a guard with two guard dogs patrolling the yard. He will pass near the heroes every five minutes. He has a shotgun and he will use it if he sees the heroes. The shots will alert everyone in the house. The shotgun does Excellent damage.

Guard:

F A S E R I P  
EX EX GD GD TY TY TY  
Health: 60 Karma: 18

The two guard dogs will attack the heroes immediately after they are released. They will avoid Shade and Mole.

Dogs:

F A S E  
GD TY TY GD  
Health: 32 Damage: Good (Hack & Slash)

Eventually, the heroes will find their way into the home by stealth or by force. When they do, it is time for Chapter Five. The house's floorplan is located on page 31.

### Chapter Five: Into the Lion's Den

If the guard did not give warning, the characters in the house will be in the following rooms when the heroes reach the house:

Character	Room
Absorbing Man	Conference Room
Whirlwind	ConferenceRoom
Theodore Tyler	Conference Room
Mrs. Tyler (harmless)	Bedroom #3
3 Thugs (identical to guard)	Patio
Mr. Malone	Conference Room

If the guard was able to warn the villains, the referee must decide where the villains are located. They will set up an ambush if they have time to do so.

The house's exterior walls and doors are made of Excellent material (steel siding over hardwood, and fiberglass insulation). The interior walls and doors are made of Good material (hardwood paneling over light steel panels). The walls and door of the conference room are constructed of Incredible material (steel door, solid stone walls).

Read the following if the Investigators have successfully breached the conference room without warning the villains:

This large room is no doubt a conference room. A large wooden table with many chairs takes up most of the space. You can see the Absorbing Man, Whirlwind, Theodore Tyler, and a healthy, defiant Mr. Malone sitting at the far end of the table.

Roll initiative. Again, the villains actions are left to the referee's discretion. When formulating a plan, however, remember that the Absorbing Man will be looking for a strong material (the stone walls, for example) to absorb. If threatened, Mr. Tyler will use his pistol to hold Mr. Malone as a hostage and bargaining chip. In any case, when it appears that the heroes are certain to win, Mr. Tyler will attempt to kill Mr. Malone. There are several ways for the heroes to prevent this.

Theodore Tyler:

F A S E R I P  
GD TY GD GD EX TY TY  
Health: 36 Karma: 32  
Weapon: Pistol

Robert Malone:

F A S E R I P  
TY TY GD TY EX GD GD  
Health: 28 Karma: 40

Note to the referee: If the absorbing man absorbs the properties of stone or earth, Mole's earth controlling powers will work on him. Mole will need a red FEAT roll to succeed, and the Absorbing man will be able to break this control by absorbing the properties of something else (a steel beam for example) or by making a yellow Psyche FEAT roll. **Aftermath:** If the heroes recover Mr. Malone then they will have accomplished their first goal. However, it is still another five hours until the trial resumes. A lot can happen in five hours. Furthermore, Mr. Malone has some news for the heroes:

The object of your quest clears his throat nervously, coughs into his fist, then speaks. "I hate to appear ungrateful or demanding," he murmurs, "But we, er, I have a problem that you should know about. When I was brought here, I was forced to swallow a small metallic object. Mr. Tyler boasted afterwards that, now that I'd swallowed the transmitter, I couldn't hide anywhere even if I did manage to escape. I think the Maggia will know it if I leave this house as anything but a corpse! I think I'd better call the Attorney General."

Mr. Malone has been both truthful and accurate. Maggia agents are monitoring the transmitter and will know to the minute if Mr. Malone leaves the house.

If the heroes won't allow Mr. Malone to call the Attorney General, he will insist that somebody call the Attorney General. When the Attorney General is called, he will want to speak to Mr. Malone first, Malone will tell the Attorney General everything he told the heroes. When the Attorney General learns about the transmitter, he will want to talk to Shade:

"Look Shade, this explains a lot of things. The whole countryside is crawling with super villains! The Maggia must have put a price on Mr. Malone's head just in case he escaped. It's

3 A.M. now, and the trial resumes at eight. It's about one hour from where you are to the courthouse. So you'll have to move Mr. Malone by seven. I suggest you stay put, maybe the Maggia will figure that Malone never swallowed that transmitter. I'll send an unmarked police van to get Malone at seven."

Neither the Attorney General nor any of the other authorities will agree to take custody of Mr. Malone any sooner than 8 A.M., the risk of super villain interference is too great they are already hard-pressed to make the courtroom secure, and they simply can't handle Mr. Malone's early arrival. In the same vein, the authorities will not send reinforcements to the house that could attract too much attention. If the heroes insist on moving Mr. Malone before 7 A.M., the authorities will appeal to the governor of Illinois, who will order them to hold Mr. Malone at the house until seven.

If the heroes leave the house anyway, they will encounter the Wrecking Crew (Chapter Six) immediately. After defeating the Wrecking Crew, they encounter Jeff Sanders (Chapter Seven) stopped at the side of a road, reading a map. Next, Volcana (Chapter Nine) ambushes them. Finally, Scorpion, Beetle, and the Radioactive Man (Chapter Eight) attack them just as they reach the courthouse.

## Chapter Six: Send in the Clowns

Most of the more intelligent super villains have been fooled by The Investigators' tactic. However, the dim-witted Wrecking Crew is just dumb enough to search the Tyler home. They are now outside the house. It is up to the referee to decide the exact battle tactics and strategies the Wrecking Crew will use. Keep in mind that these villains prefer frontal assaults, and that their intelligence does not match their raw power. When the heroes first encounter the Wrecking Crew read the following:

Four very large men stand before you. From the looks of their costumes you recognize them as the Wrecking Crew. They don't look like they came to pay a friendly visit.

It is time to roll initiative. The Wrecking Crew members will fight until they are reduced to 20 Health points. At that time, they will flee outside and try to make their get-away in their car.

**Aftermath:** If captured, the Wrecking Crew will tell The Investigators about the bounty on Mr. Malone's head. They also will tell them that electronic sensors detected the heroes when they stormed the house. The Maggia knows about their rescue, and that is the reason behind the bounty. All of this is true. After the Wrecking Crew has been missing for a while, the Maggia will know something is up.

## Chapter Seven: The Canadian Surprise

This chapter occurs immediately after the fight with the Wrecking Crew.

Jeff Sanders, a pizza delivery boy, will ring the doorbell. His delivery ticket shows that this address ordered a large, Canadian pizza from Bob's Pizza-rama (The ticket is wrong. Someone down the road ordered it.) Jeff is a skinny 17 year old who has an abundance of wild, red hair. He is a little angry about the delivery complications with the pizza. Read the following when the heroes answer the door:

You open the door and find yourself face-to-face with a slim, red-haired, red-faced, young man wearing an annoyed expression. He carries a flat, rectangular, grease-stained box. "One Canadian, delivered... Yours, right?" he says sharply, making the question sound more like a statement. A battered pickup truck waits in the darkness of the yard, obviously the boy's vehicle. A large, metallic object sits in the back of the truck, near the tailgate. You can't make out any details in the dark. "Look," the boy mutters, "is it yours or not?"

The object in the truck is an old V8 engine Jeff uses to give him traction. If Shade looks at it with his infravision, he will notice a nobby projection jutting out of the top (this is the carburetor, the air cleaner is gone), and some thick wires hanging from one edge (the spark-plugs leads), but he won't recognize it as an engine at first glance.

If the heroes accept the pizza, they owe Jeff \$14.70. If they refuse the pizza, Jeff asks to use the phone so he can figure out where to deliver it.

Jeff Sanders:  
F A S E R I P  
TY PR PR TY GD TY TY  
Health: 20 Karma: 22

## Chapter Eight: Attack at Dawn

It is now 5 a.m. The sun is rising in a cloudless sky. Scorpion, Beetle, and the Radioactive Man are watching the heroes. They have been looking and planning for the past 30 minutes. The villains move now to strike.

The villains will attack The Investigators fiercely, there is a lot of money at stake. They will fight to zero Health points, and they will not say anything to the heroes after the fight. Again, the referee should decide what tactics the villains will use; keep in mind Beetle's flying ability and Radioactive Man's energy explosion attack. **Aftermath:** The heroes should now know that they are in store for a dangerous morning. If captured and questioned, the villains will tell the heroes to "go get pressed" (villain jargon).

## Chapter Nine: Come On Baby Light My Fire

The rest of the heroes' stay at the Tyler home is uneventful. At 7:00 A.M. sharp the police van arrives. It is a rusty, red vehicle with the words "Alroy Hare: Plumbing and Fixtures" painted in faded yellow letters on the sides.

The van has a finely tuned engine, a heavy duty suspension, and a reinforced body, but no special equipment. The driver is Federal Marshal Clinton Stoddard. Stoddard is a matter-of-fact, no-nonsense, man. He wants to load Mr. Malone and The Investigators into the van and hit the road as quickly as possible. He has an efficient and courteous manner and won't waste time making small talk with the characters.

Clinton Stoddard:  
F A S E R I P  
EX TY GD GD TY TY TY  
Health: 46 Karma: 18  
Weapon: Sub-Machine Gun

Police Van:  
Control Speed Body Protection  
TY GD EX EX

Trouble for the heroes, in the form of Volcana, lies in wait on the road. Use Reference Map on page 29.

Straight ahead of you on the road you see the super villain Volcana. She is under a railroad over-pass. A small, wooden water tower and a signal box are next to her. With a wave of her arm, a thermal bolt lashes out at your van. The front of the van is destroyed and the crippled van comes to a rest a short distance in front of Volcana.

Determine initiative. Volcana will try to fry the heroes and then capture Mr. Malone. She is a strong foe and the only hope The Investigators may have is to try to douse her with water from the water tower. If they are successful, then she will revert to human form (for two rounds). Stoddard will fire at Volcana with his sub-machine gun, but her body armor will protect her from the bullets (unless she is in human form).

**Aftermath:** By saving Mr. Malone once again, The Investigators are able to deliver him to the trial. His testimony is very damaging, and the cruel leadership of the Black Vampires are found guilty and sentenced to life.

The Investigators are given a special citation from the state of Illinois, their fame and popularity rises again. What's more, the side of truth and justice has won again.

Thus ends the adventure.



# Villians

## VOLCANA™

Marsha Rosenberg

Fighting: EXCELLENT  
Agility: INCREDIBLE  
Strength: EXCELLENT  
Endurance: REMARKABLE  
Reason: GOOD  
Intuition: GOOD  
Psyche: GOOD

Health: 110  
Karma: 30  
Resources: GOOD  
Popularity: 5

### Known Powers:

**FIERY BODY:** When Volcana is in her plasma-based form, she has Amazing protection against hand-held or missile weapons. Weapons made of less than Amazing material will melt on contact with her causing her no damage. Anyone who touches her plasma-body suffers Amazing damage. Volcana suffers normal damage from unarmed attacks.

**THERMAL ENERGY BLASTS:** Volcana can shoot thermal energy blasts with Incredible agility. The blasts cause Unearthly damage, and have a range of 10 areas.

**FIRE RESISTANCE:** Volcana has Unearthly resistance to heat and fire.

**ALTER EGO:** Volcana can transform herself from plasma-state to normal, and must do so to eat or sleep. In her normal state Marsha's abilities are as follows:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
TY	EX	TY	GD	GD	GD	GD
Health = 42		Karma = 30				

**RUNNING VOLCANA:** Marsha Rosenberg was one of inhabitants of Denver brought to the Secret Wars Battleplanet by the Beyonder, and was transformed by Doctor Doom into her present state. With the end of Secret Wars I Marsha returned with Owen to Denver, where the two have settled down. Volcana mothers Owen to a great degree, often too much for his own good.

## SABERTOOTH

(real name unrevealed)

Mutant villain

F	40	In	Health = 120
A	30	Rm	
S	20	Ex	Karma = 22
E	30	Rm	
R	6	Ty	Resource = Ty (6)
I	10	Gd	
P	6	Ty	Popularity = 0

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Altered Sight:** Sabertooth's eyesight is not normal, he has no color vision whatsoever, seeing the world only in black and white, but does have Remarkable infravision and can see in the dark.

**Heightened Senses:** Sabertooth's senses of hearing, smell, and taste have all been raised to the Amazing level. He can use these senses as an Amazing Tracking Ability power. Sabertooth can remember previous scents and tastes, can detect illusions by their lack of the same, and identify people or substances by their smell or taste. It is impossible to drug or poison Sabertooth by slipping anything into his food or drink as he automatically detects it. When concentrating on listening and smelling, his Intuition is raised to Remarkable (he can hear light breathing 200 feet away in a cave). He can use this last power stunt while walking.

**Claws and Bite:** Sabertooth has claws and teeth made of an unknown material of Incredible strength. He can use the claws as a Remarkable Edged Attack and, if he can Grapple for at least one full round, can bite as a Remarkable Edged Attack.

**TALENTS:** None known.

**CONTACTS:** Sabertooth has been underground for awhile, but rumors abound that he has joined a large mutant criminal organization.

**RUNNING SABERTOOTH:** Sabertooth's past has not yet been revealed. He has the predatory instincts of one of the great cats, but also has their natural distrust and dislike of weaker creatures. He can be a snarling, vicious fighter almost on the same level with Wolverine. He has killed in the past and will do so again if it helps him get what he wants.

## MAULER™ ARMOR

**Availability:** Unique

**Constructed by:** Cord Conglomerate

**Inventor:** Edwin Cord and Associates

**Worn by:** BRENDAN DOYLE™, Mercenary

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Rm	Gd	Gd	Ex	Gd	Ex	Gd

### ABILITY MODIFIERS

Raises Fighting by 1 rank  
(Maximum of AMAZING)  
Raises Agility by 1 rank  
(Maximum of EXCELLENT)  
Raises Strength by 3 ranks  
(Maximum of INCREDIBLE)  
Raises Endurance by 3 ranks  
(Maximum of INCREDIBLE)

## KNOWN POWERS

### BODY ARMOR

- Molecular-scale woven metal fabric.
- Provides Remarkable protection from physical attacks.
- Provides Incredible protection from energy attacks, including heat and cold.

### LASER CANNON

- Solid state 600 watt laser cannon mounted in the right arm assembly.
- Capable of inflicting up to Monstrous damage.
- Effective range of 15 areas.

### ELECTRON PARTICLE BEAM

- 400 watt electron particle gun also mounted in right arm assembly, using laser cannon in short-pulse mode as a guide.
- Inflicts Amazing damage. Damage cannot be reduced.
- Effective range of 10 areas.

### FLIGHT

- Electric, air-breathing turbines set into the calves.
- Armor can move up to Amazing (8 areas) speed.

### ELECTRIC SHOCK

- High-frequency, extremely short range electric shocker implanted in the left palm.
- May inflict up to Amazing electric damage if touching an opponent (Fighting FEAT in normal combat).

### LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- Internal life support systems can maintain the wearer for 3 1/2 days in a hostile environment.
- While the life support systems may allow survival in deep space or underwater, certain suit systems would be affected (such as the air-breathing turbines that allow flight).

### DESIGN NOTES

The MAULER armor (Mobile Armored Utility Laser-guided E-beam, Revised) was developed by the Cord Conglomerate under contract with the United States Government. The suit was stolen by a disgruntled employee of Cord's named AARON SOAMES™, and later by TURK BARRETT™, a small-time thug with a grudge against Daredevil (see STILT-MAN™). Because of such breaches in security, the Department of Defense cut the funding for the project. Cordco collapsed after an affair with the Raider armor (see Raider Armor), and the company was purchased by Stark International.

Cord, now in prison, contacted mercenary Brendan Doyle to steal the suit and destroy any plans in the computer systems, allowing Cord to hire Doyle and the suit out as a super-powered mercenary. Doyle stole the suit from the Stark International warehouse on Long Island, but was foiled by Jim Rhodes, who broadcast the plans to a wide variety of Stark

locations. Rather than slay Rhodes, who Doyle had served alongside in South East Asia, Doyle resigned his allegiance to Cord, and left with the suit. Present whereabouts of the suit are unknown. In addition, plans exist for the suit in numerous locations.

## BLIZZARD™ BATTLESUIT

**Availability:** Unique

**Constructed By:** GREGOR SHAPANKA™

**Inventor:** Gregor Shapanka

**Worn by:** Gregor Shapanka

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Ty	Gd	Gd	Ex	Rm	Gd	Pr

**ABILITY MODIFIERS:** None

## KNOWN POWERS

### BODY ARMOR

- Fully insulated battlesuit with additional padding.
- Provides Good protection from physical damage.
- Provides Amazing protection against cold.

### ICE-PROJECTORS

- Miniature cryogenic units set in the gloves and powered by circuitry in backpack.
- Backpack also contains water reserves and is made of Remarkable strength material.
- May generate snow, sleet, or ice at the Remarkable level.
- May provide the wearer with body armor of Remarkable strength.
- May encase others with Remarkable strength ice, and form ice walls of Remarkable strength.
- May create icy missiles with range of 3 areas and inflicting Remarkable damage.

## DESIGN NOTES

Gregor Shapanka was a research scientist for Stark International who was dismissed for selling company secrets. Using his own abilities, Shapanka created his cold-generating suit, and took to crime, first as JACK FROST™, and later as Blizzard. Blizzard was slain by a mysterious assailant, but his suit and plans survive him.



## ABSORBING MAN

Carl "Crusher" Creel

F	Ex	(20)	Health: 56
A	Ty	(6)	
S	Gd	(10)	Karma: 14
E	Ex	(20)	
R	Pr	(4)	Resources: Pr
I	Pr	(4)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: -20

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Material and Energy Duplication:** The Absorbing Man can take on the properties of any material he touches, giving him Strength, Endurance, and Body Armor of rank equal to the material strength of the object touched; his Health is increased if his abilities increase, but does not decline if he absorbs from an object with a material strength rank lower than his normal abilities. The upper limit for the transformation is Unearthly; if he touched Captain America's shield, his abilities would rise to Unearthly, not Class 3000. He can remain in a particular transformation as long as he wishes. If the object touched holds some form of energy (such as a battery or a blast furnace), he absorbs the energy properties as well. Creel is not hurt by this energy and can retain it for up to 10 rounds. He can also absorb shapes and sizes from objects; touching a hammer would give him hammer-like fists; by touching a building, he can enlarge himself to equal its height.

**Power Absorption:** Creel can absorb superhuman abilities and powers in the same way he absorbs from inanimate objects. However, he does not absorb the ability to control them, and so cannot perform most power stunts. For example, he could gain energy powers by touching Captain Marvel, but he could not change into different types of energy, as she can. Unlike Rogue, Creel only copies abilities; he does not steal them.

**Life Support:** If parts of his body are severed, the Absorbing Man can reattach them by holding them in place and transforming to human form.

**Weapon:** The Absorbing Man carries a prisoner's ball-and-chain that transforms as he does if he is holding it.

**TALENTS:** None.

**CONTACTS:** The Absorbing Man is a member of the fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Loki used Asgardian magic to give Creel the power to battle Thor.

## RADIOACTIVE MAN

Dr. Chen Lu

F	Gd	(10)	Health: 70
A	Gd	(10)	
S	Rm	(30)	Karma: 32
E	Ex	(20)	
R	Ex	(20)	Resources: Gd
I	Ty	(6)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: -10

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Nuclear Energy Manipulation:** Dr. Lu's body is a living nuclear reactor. He can utilize his body's energy for a number of effects:

- Radiation bolts (Energy attack) of Amazing power and range
- Heat bolts (Energy attack) of Amazing power and range
- Light-flash of Amazing intensity to temporarily blind opponents, range 1 area
- Controlled light-effect that acts as the Mesmerism and Hypnosis talent at Remarkable rank, range 1 area

**Invulnerability:** The Radioactive Man has Class 1000 resistance to nuclear radiation.

**Force-Field:** The field yields Monstrous protection against physical and energy attacks. If he makes a successful power FEAT roll, the Radioactive Man can capture projectiles hurled at him and redirect them to other targets. He has done this with Thor's hammer on numerous occasions.

**LIMITATION:** The Radioactive Man's body constantly emits Feeble amounts of radiation that affect those in his area. This radiation is absorbed by a special harness in his costume, making it safe to be in his presence.

**TALENTS:** Dr. Lu is a leading expert on Radiation and Nuclear Physics.

**CONTACTS:** The Radioactive Man was a member of the first three Masters of Evil. He has also worked with the Mandarin, and was a member of the Titanic Three, a now-defunct team of heroes fighting crime in Communist Asia (the other members were the Crimson Dynamo and the Titanium Man).

**BACKGROUND:** After Thor stopped a Chinese attack on India, Dr. Lu volunteered to become the Chinese Government's superhuman weapon against Thor. He has fought Thor and the Avengers several times. The Radioactive Man has left the service of the state, and his current activities are unknown.

## WHIRLWIND

David Cannon

F	Gd	(10)	Health: 90
A	In	(40)	
S	Gd	(10)	Karma: 18
E	Rm	(30)	
R	Ty	(6)	Resources: Ty
I	Ty	(6)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: 0

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Lightning Speed:** While spinning, Whirlwind can move in a straight line at Good speed (4 areas per round), accelerating to that speed in a single round.

**Spinning:** The Whirlwind can spin at speeds up to 400 rpm. This produces several effects:

- Invulnerability to dizziness and vertigo
- Remarkable body armor against physical attacks and missile weapons only
- Monstrous strength for purposes of escaping holds

**Air-Ram:** Whirlwind can use focused air currents to strike with Remarkable strength

**Wind-Screen:** Whirlwind can create a shield of fast-moving air. This functions like a force field of Remarkable rank, but it affects only physical attacks or missile weapons. The screen is limited to the area Whirlwind is in.

**Tornado:** Whirlwind can create a tornado that affects 1 area. This inflicts Remarkable damage and can lift objects with Remarkable strength.

**Flight:** By spinning his arms like helicopter rotors, Whirlwind can fly at Good speed (8 areas per round) for up to 3 minutes.

**TALENTS:** Whirlwind has Wrestling, Performing (ice skater, circus performer) and Driving (chauffeur) talents.

**CONTACTS:** Whirlwind is a member of the second, third, and fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Whirlwind is a mutant who originally used the alias The Human Top. By keeping a secret identity, he was able to hold several legitimate jobs, including that of Janet Van Dyne's chauffeur (from which he was fired for attempted fraud). After honing his skills, he called himself Whirlwind. His continuing romantic crush on the Wasp has led to frequent battles with the Avengers.

## The Wrecker

Dirk Garthwaite

F	In	(40)	Health: 130
A	Ex	(20)	
S	In	(40)	Karma: 22
E	Rm	(30)	
R	Ty	(6)	Resources: Ty
I	Ty	(6)	
P	Gd	(10)	Popularity: -20

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Body Armor:** The Wrecker's magically-toughened flesh provides Excellent protection from physical attacks and Typical protection against energy attacks.

**Resistances:** The Wrecker has Excellent resistance to heat, fire, cold, and corrosives. He has Amazing resistance to toxins and drugs.

**Weapon:** The Wrecker carries a 4-foot-long steel wrecking bar of Unearthly strength material. Aside from its toughness, it can apparently bestow superhuman power on others when struck by lightning.

**Previous Powers:** The Wrecker is not as powerful now as he was originally. His original statistics were:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
Am	Ex	Am	In	Ty	Ty	Gd

**TALENTS:** The Wrecker has Blunt Weapon, Thrown Weapon, and Leadership talents.

**CONTACTS:** The Wrecker is the leader of the Wrecking Crew. He and his associates are members of the fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Garthwaite was originally a crowbar-wielding petty criminal. While fleeing from the police, he overpowered Loki, who had been depowered and exiled to Earth by Odin. Karnilla the Norn Queen accidentally gave Garthwaite superhuman powers with a spell intended for Loki. The Wrecker battled Thor on several occasions, but Thor managed to remove the Wrecker's power. The spell was entrapped in the crowbar. When the Wrecker and his associates broke out of jail and recovered the crowbar, they all gained superhuman power when lightning struck the crowbar as they all held it. However, none of the four was as powerful as the Wrecker originally was.

## Bulldozer

Henry Camp

F	Ex	(20)	Health: 110
A	Gd	(10)	
S	In	(40)	Karma: 36
E	In	(40)	
R	Ex	(20)	Resources: Pr
I	Gd	(10)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: -5

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Body Armor:** Like the rest of the Wrecking Crew, Bulldozer has Excellent protection from physical attacks and Typical protection against energy attacks.

**Resistances:** Bulldozer has Remarkable resistance to heat, fire, cold, and corrosives.

**Helmet:** Bulldozer wears a custom-made steel helmet of Incredible strength material. His favorite tactic is a head-first charge. His Endurance allows him to move 3 areas per turn. When determining the chance to hit, apply a +1 CS to Endurance for each area Bulldozer moves through. Damage inflicted is 40 points plus an additional 2 points for each area through which Bulldozer moves.

**TALENTS:** Bulldozer has Military skill, from his days as a U.S. Army sergeant.

**CONTACTS:** Bulldozer is a member of both the Wrecking Crew and the fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Bulldozer's history is similar to that of the other subordinate members of the Wrecking Crew. He is a loyal follower of the Wrecker.

**BEETLE™**

Abner Jenkins  
Professional Criminal

Fighting: GOOD  
Agility: GOOD  
Strength: TYPICAL (EXCELLENT)  
Endurance: TYPICAL (EXCELLENT)  
Reason: EXCELLENT  
Intuition: REMARKABLE  
Psyche: TYPICAL

Health: 32 (60)  
Karma: 56  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: -10

**Powers:**

**BODY ARMOR:** Jenkins's Beetle costume raises his abilities to the levels in parentheses. The costume also provides Excellent protection from physical damage. All of Beetle's powers derive from the armor, which is powered by ambient microwaves. All microwave transmissions within three areas of Beetle are jammed, and a powerful source of microwaves may increase his Strength to Remarkable.

**WALL-CRAWLING:** The Beetle suit has suction cup gloves that give its wearer Excellent control on vertical surfaces.

**FLIGHT:** Beetle can fly at up to Excellent speed or hover in place by using cybernetically-controlled Mylar wings.

**ELECTRO-BITE:** Using both hands, Beetle can fire a bolt of electrical energy up to 10 areas away, inflicting Excellent damage.

**BATTLE COMPUTER:** The Beetle armor is equipped with a programable battle computer capable of guessing an opponent's moves and counteracting them. This raises Beetle's Fighting and Agility ranks to Remarkable and Intuition to Amazing against a single opponent. The opponent must have been studied in advance for the fighting style to be analyzed and programed. Jenkins often has other super-foes fight a hero while he records the battle. The battle computer has fighting programs to battle Spider-Man, Daredevil, IRON MAN™, and Captain America.

**Talents:** Jenkins has some mechanical ability. His Reason is Remarkable in dealing with motors and small devices.

**Background:** Abner Jenkins used his mechanical know-how to build a highly advanced suit of body armor and set out on a spree of crime. Working on his own and in the pay of others, Beetle has met and fought Daredevil, Iron Man, Spider-Man, and the collected AVENGERS™. Beetle recently completely remodeled and updated his armor, making him an even more deadly foe.

**SCORPION™**

MacDonald Gargan  
Professional criminal

Fighting: REMARKABLE  
Agility: INCREDIBLE  
Strength: INCREDIBLE  
Endurance: INCREDIBLE  
Reason: TYPICAL  
Intuition: TYPICAL  
Psyche: GOOD

Health: 150  
Karma: 22  
Resources: TYPICAL  
Popularity: -15

**Powers:**

**WALL CRAWLING:** Gargan has Excellent wall-crawling abilities on any surface he can grip, including concrete and masonry but excluding glass.

**BODY ARMOR:** Gargan's costume provides Excellent protection from physical attacks and Remarkable protection from electrical damage.

**SCORPION'S TAIL:** Scorpion's tail is made of Incredible-strength material and inflicts Amazing damage when it hits. It can react to mental commands from Gargan, who can make it coil like a spring to enable him to clear buildings three stories high in a single leap. The tail also contains a plasma projector capable of firing a bolt up to 10 areas away for Remarkable damage.

**Background:** MacDonald Gargan was a private investigator in the employ of J. Jonah Jameson. Jameson, while casting about for some way of defeating Spider-Man, discovered Dr. Farley Stillwell, a scientist who had made great leaps in mutagenics. Jameson offered Stillwell \$10,000 to change someone into a super-powered challenger for Spider-Man, and offered Gargan \$10,000 to be that subject. Gargan and Stillwell agreed, and Stillwell mutagenically altered Gargan to give him his superhuman powers. Stillwell also provided Gargan with a cybernetically controlled tail to use as a weapon. So armed, Scorpion went out to fight Spider-Man.

During the battle, Stillwell observed that the animals he used in previous experiments showed psychotic behavior. He realized that his modifications would soon destroy Gargan's sanity as well. Gargan went mad, blaming Jameson for his situation, and tried to kill the editor. Farley Stillwell perished in an attempt to administer an antidote, and Spider-Man defeated Scorpion. During the next few years Scorpion escaped incarceration several times to seek revenge on Jameson. Jameson, meanwhile, kept his role in Scorpion's past a secret while quietly paying for Gargan's psychiatric treatment. Finally, Jameson admitted his responsibility for the creation of Scorpion and, though no criminal charges were brought against him, resigned his position as editor of the *Daily Bugle*.

**Piledriver**

Brian Phillip Calusky

F	Rm	(30)	Health: 110
A	Gd	(10)	
S	In	(40)	Karma: 14
E	Rm	(30)	
R	Pr	(4)	Resources: Ty
I	Pr	(4)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: -10

**KNOWN POWERS:**

**Body Armor:** Piledriver's body armor provides Excellent protection from physical attacks and Typical protection against energy attacks.

**Resistances:** Piledriver has Excellent resistance to heat, fire, cold, and corrosives.

**TALENTS:** Piledriver uses Martial Arts B in combat.

**CONTACTS:** Piledriver is a member of both the Wrecking Crew and the fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Calusky is an ex-farmhand who met the Wrecker in prison. He is the most slow-witted of all the Wrecking Crew. After joining the Masters of Evil, Piledriver antagonized Mr. Hyde and is now somewhat worried about it.



# **Thunderball** Dr. Eliot Franklin

F	Rm	(30)	Health: 130
A	Rm	(30)	
S	In	(40)	Karma: 36
E	Rm	(30)	
R	Ex	(20)	Resources: Ty
I	Gd	(10)	
P	Ty	(6)	Popularity: -10

## **KNOWN POWERS:**

*Body Armor:* Thunderball's body armor provides Excellent protection from physical attacks and Typical protection against energy attacks.

*Resistances:* Thunderball has Excellent resistance to heat, fire, cold, and corrosives.

*Weapon:* Thunderball uses a steel wrecking ball on the end of a short chain. The ball and chain have Amazing strength material.

**TALENTS:** Thunderball's non-criminal talents include Nuclear Physics, Radiation, and Engineering. He uses Blunt Weapons taken in combat.

**CONTACTS:** Thunderball is a member of both the Wrecking Crew and the fourth Masters of Evil.

**BACKGROUND:** Dr. Franklin's most notable achievement before being sent to prison was the construction of a gamma bomb, the same weapon that transformed Bruce Banner into the Hulk. Franklin met the other member of the Wrecking Crew in prison and they escaped together. He gained superhuman powers from the Wrecker's crowbar. Though he is by far the most intelligent of the Wrecking Crew, Thunderball defers to the Wrecker's leadership. The Wrecking Crew was part of Baron Zemo's recent campaign against the Avengers.



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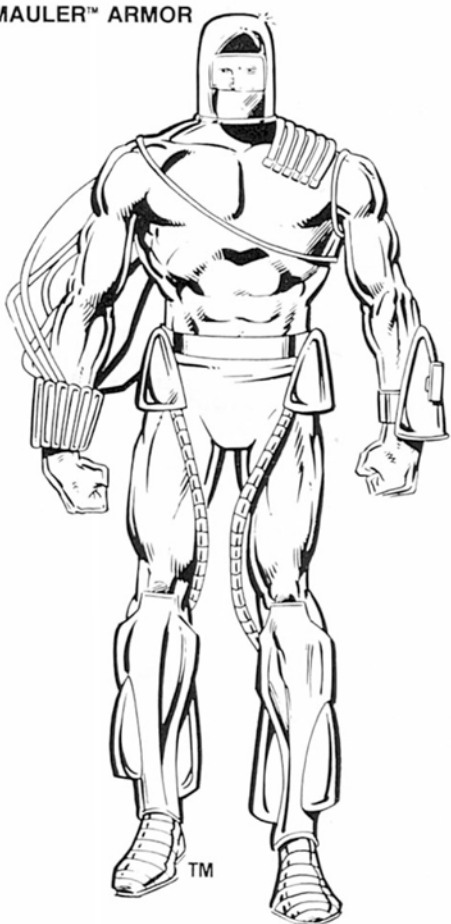


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## **MAULER™ ARMOR**



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## Group Origin

The origin of the Investigators is a very strange tale indeed. It happened on a rainy evening at a rural highway intersection in northern Illinois.

A chemical truck was north bound on the highway when its left front tire blew out. The truck swerved and overturned. At that moment the truck was struck by lightning, triggering a powerful and bizarre explosion. It affected the very fabric of space itself. This dimension briefly was torn open and exposed to countless other universes. The contact with these planes did not leave the area unchanged.

Although the truck driver was killed, six people in the immediate area survived -- alive but very different.

Two of these people were Steve and Jennifer McBride. They were south bound on the highway and nearly engulfed in the explosion. After a few moments of burning pain, Steve McBride (Mole) found he could transform himself into living earth. He also found that the very earth moved at his command. Jennifer McBride (Mimic), Steve's wife, discovered she could painlessly alter her body to the exact appearance of anyone nearby. Nick Shank, a private investigator, was staked out along the road watching for an illegal drug buy. After the explosion, this man, later to be known as Shade, found he was transformed into living Darkforce.

Robert Wind was following the chemical truck when it exploded. He was plucked out of the universe when our dimension split open. When he returned he had learned to wield great magic of an informational nature. Hence, he took the name Oracle. Kevin Thompson, a local farm boy, was walking home from an afternoon of fishing when the explosion occurred. A great fan of science-fiction movies, Kevin took the name F/X when he discovered he could produce artificial images, sounds and smells. Lastly, the force of the dimension-shattering explosion reached into another plane and freed Graylord. He is a dashing, human adventurer who was imprisoned by an evil wizard. A week after the accident, the six people gathered and discussed their new-found powers. They agreed to put their powers to good use and oppose any evil villains of Earth. However, most of them did not want to change their current lifestyles. It was agreed that only when a member of their group needed help, would the others be summoned. That member was usually Shade. He remained a private investigator, and he often called the group together to oppose super villains. Over the next four years the group defeated a variety of foes. They adopted the name "The Investigators" because of the way their adventures happened. Their cases involved wits, stealth, and subterfuge instead of punches, groans, and mass destruction. The Investigators are still learning and maturing. One thing is for certain, however, The Investigators are fast becoming a powerful force for the side of good in the Mighty Marvel Universe.

### MIMIC

Jennifer McBride, alien hybrid

F	Excellent (20)	Health: 70**
A	Excellent (20)*	
S	Good (10)*	Karma: 30
E	Excellent (20)*	
R	Good	Resources: Typical (6)
I	Good (10)	
P	Good (10)	Popularity: 20

\*Up to MONSTROUS(75)

\*\*Up to 245

### POWERS:

**Mimicry:** Mimic has the power to assume the exact physical appearance and characteristics of another being. She gains the being's exact agility, strength, and endurance. She also gains any special abilities due to physical (not mental) characteristics. For example, she would gain the flying ability of Angel, the water breathing of the Sub-Mariner, and the flames of the Human Torch. She would not gain the powers of Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl, or the cosmic power control of the Silver Surfer (these powers are not physical manifestations). She also receives any physical weaknesses the target being has. The target creature need only be in the same area as

Mimic. If the target is not willing to be mimicked, Mimic must make a green FEAT roll. The target is not harmed in any way. Her power has a Monstrous rank. Mimic's power is limited to humanoid creatures who are less than eight feet tall. Her power also limits her newly attained agility, strength, and endurance to Monstrous. Any damage caused by new powers is limited to Monstrous. Thus, if Mimic were to copy Thor she would only gain a Monstrous strength and endurance.

Mimic gains Health points from raised Agility, Strength, and Endurance. Thus, she has a maximum of 245 Health points ( $20 + 75 + 75 + 75 = 245$ ). She keeps the same percentage of lost Health points when she attains a new form. For example, if she had 35 of 70 Health points left when she attained the form of Captain America, her new Health point total would be 55. (A: 40 S: 20 E: 30 and her F:  $20 = 110 \times 50\% = 55$ ). Mimic does not gain any equipment of a target except for the costume.

**BACKGROUND:** The Skrulls, an evil alien race who have long tried to conquer Earth, kidnapped Jennifer McBride's mother when she was 18 years old. In a secret base, the Skrulls performed bizarre genetic experiments on her. They intended to produce hybrid Skrulls which would have the physical characteristics of a Skrull and the creative problem solving abilities of a human. Jennifer was conceived during the experiments. Other than the successful birth of baby Jennifer, the experiments were a failure; Jennifer retained human form and had the brain of a human. Jennifer's mother died during the procedure. Jennifer was left behind when the Skrulls departed one week after her birth. The baby was found near death in the New Mexico desert. She was adopted by John and Candence Williams less than a year later. She was raised in Fort Meyers, Florida. She later left home for a job in Chicago.

Jennifer's powers did not manifest themselves until she and Steve McBride were exposed to a strange explosion while on their honeymoon (see group origin). The explosion triggered powers latent in her half-Skrull self. Jennifer now lives with her husband in Chicago. She is unaware of her true nature and thinks her powers came from the explosion.

**PERSONALITY:** Jennifer is very insecure about herself and the way other people view her. It is important for her to be well liked by others. She is always very polite and kind -- sometimes even to villains. Mimic is badly affected by unkind comments directed at her. It would do her great harm if she discovered that she is half Skrull. She would be horrified at what others might think about her.

**APPEARANCE:** Mimic has the body of a normal human female. Her costume is a bright yellow body suit with a black 10 point star on the chest.

Height: 5' 8"	Race: Human (White) /Skrull
Weight: 120	Sex: Female
Age: 27	Occupation: Homemaker
Hair: Blonde	Eyes: Blue



F/X

Kevin Thompson, altered human

F	Good (10)	Health: 56
A	Excellent (20)	
S	Typical (6)	Karma: 40
E	Excellent (20)	
R	Excellent (20)	Resources: Feeble (2)
I	Good (10)	
P	Good (10)	Popularity: 10

#### POWERS

**Image Generation:** F/X can create images of anything imaginable by making a power FEAT roll. These images look, sound, and smell entirely real. See Campaign Book for more information. F/X's ability with this power is Amazing. Its range is 5 areas.

**Sound Production:** F/X can produce any sound imaginable. This ability is different from Image Generation because only sound is produced. The sound can be as simple as a car horn or as complex as a symphony orchestra. Complex sounds require a FEAT roll. The sound may originate up to 5 areas away. F/X's ability with this power is Amazing.

**Scent Production:** This power is similar to those above except that the olfactory sense is involved. Smells which are intended to harm (strong ammonia, for example) require a FEAT roll. F/X's ability with this power is Amazing. Its range is 5 areas. F/X is immune to all his own sensory powers. However, he is affected by sensations from other sources.

**BACKGROUND:** Kevin Thompson was born and raised in rural northern Illinois. At the age of 15, Kevin was exposed to the strange effects of a chemical explosion (see group origin). Kevin now is a freshman at Northern Illinois University. He plans to study agriculture and return home to run the family farm.

**PERSONALITY:** Kevin is a happy-go-lucky guy who finds it difficult to take anything seriously especially dressing up in leotards and chasing criminals. He goes on adventures with his friends occasionally. He does this more to have a good time and to see his friends rather than to save the world from villains. F/X approaches "super heroing" from a silly angle. He feels everyone is too serious. He tries to lighten any situation (often to everyone's chagrin). For example, he may produce "boos" when a villain appears. F/X likes to produce stirring songs while he and his friends are charging into combat (one of his favorites is Flight of the Valkyries). F/X once encased the villain Boomerang in an illusory chicken suit. His humor is often bizarre and annoying.

**APPEARANCE:** F/X has an average build for a super hero (similar to Mr. Fantastic's). His costume is a dark green, full body suit with "F/X" in white letters on the chest.

Height: 5' 11"	Race:	Human (White)
Weight: 160	Sex:	Male
Age: 19	Occupation:	Student
Hair: Brown	Eyes:	Brown



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## GRAYLORD

### Graylord, adventurer

F	Monstrous (75)	Health: 185
A	Excellent (20)	
S	Remarkable (30)	Karma: 100
E	Remarkable (30)	
R	Remarkable (30)	Resources: Good (10)
I	Excellent (20)	
P	Amazing (50)	Popularity: 60

### POWERS

**Body Armor:** Graylord's flesh is denser than that of normal humans. He has Excellent body armor.

**Regeneration:** Graylord can only die when most his molecules are dispersed. In a normal battle, Graylord's Endurance will not go below Feeble when he is reduced to zero Health points.

**Extremely Long Life:** Graylord ages very slowly. He is over 3,000 years old, but he appears to be in his late twenties.

**Unique Weapon:** Graylord carries a finely crafted foil. He has carried it for over a century and a half. Using modern technology, Graylord has strengthened it and added an electric shock. The modified weapon does Incredible slugfest damage. It is made of Amazing material.

**TALENTS:** Graylord's long life has given him many talents. He is a master of martial arts, wrestling, and military science. He is a marksman and a Weapons Master. Also, he has knowledge of armor making, farming, first aid, gambling, hunting, mining, navigating, sailing, and, of course, history.

**BACKGROUND:** Graylord was born over 3,000 years ago into a small community in central Africa. He was exposed to strange radiation from a crashed alien space vessel. This radiation changed his body. For the past 30 centuries, Graylord has traveled the world in search of adventure. He has been in nearly every locale and he has fought in many wars, campaigns, and quests. In the early 1970s, Graylord ran afoul of the evil wizard Alatar. The magician placed Graylord in an extra-dimensional prison. Graylord was freed from his cell when a bizarre explosion ripped the fabric of space (see group origin). Now that he is free, Graylord once again roams the globe in a quest for adventure.

**PERSONALITY:** With his daring and swashbuckler manner, Graylord is quite an anachronism. He is very much a scoundrel and a ladies man. Graylord is quickly bored with any mundane situation. He is constantly on the move and he will avoid staying in one location for a long time. He shirks responsibility in any form and he will flee from it whenever possible. Graylord's disposition is quite cheerful and lively. He is seldom unhappy and he tries vigorously to keep his friends' spirits high.

**APPEARANCE:** Graylord wears the clothes of a swashbuckler from one of his favorite time periods. He has a large hat, an ornate overcoat, a silk shirt with ruffles in front, tight breeches, and high leather boots. He carries a foil at his side.

Height: 6'1"	Race:	Human (Black)
Weight: 455	Sex:	Male
Age: 3,170	Occupation:	Adventurer
Hair: Black	Eyes:	Brown





## SHADE

### Nick Shank, mutant

F	Remarkable(30)	Health: 145
A	Excellent(20)	
S	Excellent(20)	Karma: 125
E	Monstrous(75)	
R	Excellent(20)	Resources: Good(10)
I	Monstrous(75)	
P	Excellent(20)	Popularity: 10

## POWERS

**Darkforce Body:** Shade's pure black body is composed of specially solidified Darkforce. The transformation is permanent and it gives Shade Remarkable body armor. He is undetectable while he is in darkness and shadows, and he gives off no odors. His body temperature is a constant 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Anyone who makes contact with Shade's skin will be drained for Remarkable damage.

**Infravision:** Shade can see in the dark with Amazing power.

**Phasing:** Shade has Amazing ability to render his body intangible and pass through solid objects.

**Darkforce Distance Weapon:** Shade carries a Darkforce .38 pistol. It has an eight area range, and it can be fired once per round. Its ammunition supply is unlimited, and each Darkforce bullet does Remarkable slugfest damage. He carries the pistol in a shoulder holster. If the pistol is more than three feet from Shade, it will dissipate and will reappear in its holster.

**Unique Vehicle:** Any time Shade wills it, he can summon a Darkforce Fleetwood Cadillac. This pure black car operates much like a normal automobile, except maintenance and gasoline are unneeded. The only accessory equipment the car has are a radio scanner and a CB radio. Only Shade can open the car's doors or drive it. If the Shade allows it, the auto can carry up to five man-sized creatures. The car's solidified Darkforce does not drain health points from those who touch it; its temperature is an uncomfortable 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Shade has nicknamed the car "Shadowstreak." The vehicle has the power of Phasing at an Amazing rank. Everything inside Shadowstreak is phased while it is phasing. Shade mentally controls this power.

### Shadowstreak:

Body Control Speed Monstrous Incredible Incredible  
The car will come to a rest and vanish when its Body points are reduced to zero. If this happens, Shade will not be able to call it up again for at least a full hour, unless he makes a red Psyche FEAT roll. Shade must then make a yellow Endurance Feat roll or else pass out for 1 to 10 rounds whether or not he succeeded at calling up Shadowstreak.

**TALENTS:** Detective Knowledge. Shade is an experienced and streetwise detective. His Reason is Incredible in the areas of law enforcement, logic, and criminal behavior.

**BACKGROUND:** Shade was a latent mutant whose powers would have remained dormant if it had not been for a bizarre quirk of fate (see group origin). He was an expert detective and private investigator before the accident. Shade is married to Jean Shank and they have three children. After the accident that triggered his powers, Shade let it be presumed that he was killed in the crash. He feels it is better for his family to think he is dead, rather than have them see him in his current state. He hopes to return to them someday -- rid of the Darkforce, or at least in control of it. Shade maintains a lush office in downtown Chicago (Wilson Investigations). His services are very expensive and his clients are usually large institutions and corporations. He uses the alias 'Charles Wilson' as a front.

**PERSONALITY:** Shade is a brooding and angry man -- frustrated by his imprisonment within his Darkforce body. He cannot understand why he is being punished when there are so many vile people on the Earth. He sees people in a negative light, and is often harsh and uncaring when he speaks. However, in rare instances, Shade will amaze everyone with a display of warmth and sensitivity. This usually happens when Shade encounters someone who is separated from loved ones. Nick Shank prefers to maintain the malicious facade of the Shade. In that way, people will leave him alone to soak in his self-pity. A great sadness surrounds Shade. Shade does not respect the rights of criminals; he will not hesitate to rough up a thug to get needed information. He does not lose Karma points for doing this.

**APPEARANCE:** Shade's body is made up of solid Darkforce. He retains his human shape, but his features are much indistinct. He wears dark gray clothing: slacks, a shirt, an overcoat, and an over-sized hat. His shoes are black leather.

Height: 6'2"	Race:	Human (White)
Weight: 220	Sex:	Male
Age: 41	Occupation:	Detective
Hair: Bald	Eyes:	None visible



## MOLE

### Steven McBride, altered human

F	Good (10)/Remarkable (30)	Health: 209
A	Excellent (20)/Poor (4)	
S	Good (10)/Monstrous (75)	Karma: 40
E	Good (10)/Unearthly (100)	
R	Excellent (20)	Resources: Typical (6)
I	Good (10)	
P	Good (10)	Popularity: 20

## POWERS

**Body Armor:** Mole's tough skin gives him Remarkable body armor.

**Body Transformation:** Steve McBride can change his body into Elemental earth at will. This greatly increases his size, strength, and endurance. He does this with Amazing ability.

**Earth Control:** Mole can mentally control up to 75 tons of earth at once. He can cause rock, sand, clay, concrete, glass, and refined metals to move. The earth will do Monstrous damage when it attacks. This power has a Monstrous rank and a range of seven areas.

**Earth Phasing:** Mole can phase through material composed of earth or mostly composed of earth (see his earth control power). He does this with Amazing ability, and he can move at Incredible speeds. He cannot cause others to phase.

**Alter Ego:** Steve McBride is Mole's original human form. He is a geologist working for a company based in Chicago. Mole spends most of his time in his human form. He only occasionally assumes the form of Mole in order to go adventuring.

**TALENTS:** Geology. Steve McBride's Reason is Remarkable in geology.

**BACKGROUND:** Steve McBride grew up in Kewaunee, Illinois, and he attended the University of Illinois. After getting a graduate degree in geology, he went to work for a company based in Chicago. He then met and married Jennifer Williams. On their honeymoon trip, Steve and Jennifer were involved in a bizarre explosion (see group origin). This accident gave them their powers. They still live in Chicago, and they are trying to live normal lives.

**PERSONALITY:** Mole is a complex person with many quirks and foibles. He is egotistical and likes to be the center of attention. Mole shows off to other super heroes by using his powers in spectacular ways. Mole dislikes anyone who asserts himself as group leader. He feels he should be leader of any group he finds himself in, and will always try to gain control. He is prejudiced against others who do not have super powers, he feels they are inferior. Despite his many faults, Mole is fiercely loyal to his friends. He will never hesitate to risk his own life in defense of a friend.

**APPEARANCE:** Mole is a monstrous, bipedal humanoid creature with large feet, hands and head. His body is composed of dirt, gravel, sand, and clay, all held together by some unknown force. His skin is mostly brown with streaks of yellows, reds, and blacks throughout.

Height: 6'/12"	Race:	Human (White)
Weight: 175 lbs/5 Tons	Sex:	Male
Age: 29	Occupation:	Geologist
Hair: Brown	Eyes:	Gray



## ORACLE

### Richard Wind, magic wielder

F	Good (10)	Health: 60
A	Good (10)	
S	Excellent (20)	Karma:
E	Excellent (20)	
R	Excellent (20)	Resources: Good (10)
I	Incredible (40)	
P	Amazing (50)	Popularity: 20

## POWERS

**Disciple of a Special Realm:** Oracle can use personal and universal spells.

### Personal

**Empathy:** (Amazing)  
**Gramarye:** (Excellent)  
**Telepathy:** (Excellent)

### Universal

**Eldritch Beams/Bolts:** (Incredible)  
**Mental Probe:** (Incredible)

**TALENTS:** Before Oracle studied the mystic arts he was an instructor at a university in Iowa. His reason is Remarkable in the areas of administrative science and marketing.

**BACKGROUND:** Richard Wind was born in Paducah, Kentucky. He had a normal childhood, and upon leaving high school he went to college. Richard became very interested in business, and he left school with an advanced degree in business. Richard was returning home from a Chicago Cubs baseball game when he was caught in a strange chemical explosion (see group origin). The explosion ripped the fabric of space and catapulted Richard through many dimensions. This attracted the attention of an unknown being. This being, who Oracle calls "the Unknown One," gave Oracle magic ability. Little is known about the Unknown One except Oracle instinctively feels he is a good creature. The Unknown One speaks to Oracle in visions of gray smoke. The Unknown One's voice is of the male gender and quite thunderous. Oracle is constantly studying and meditating. He has traveled extensively, looking for books and tomes which he sees in his visions. He also gains instruction from the Unknown One himself -- but only rarely. He now lives in Chicago and runs a business consulting firm.

**PERSONALITY:** Oracle is aloof and usually quiet. He feels idle talk is a waste of time and energy. However, when important matters are being discussed he does not hesitate to make his feelings known. When he does talk with others it is usually done with force and with a hint of patronization. Oracle feels he is responsible for his friends' health. He sees them as charges to be guided and protected.

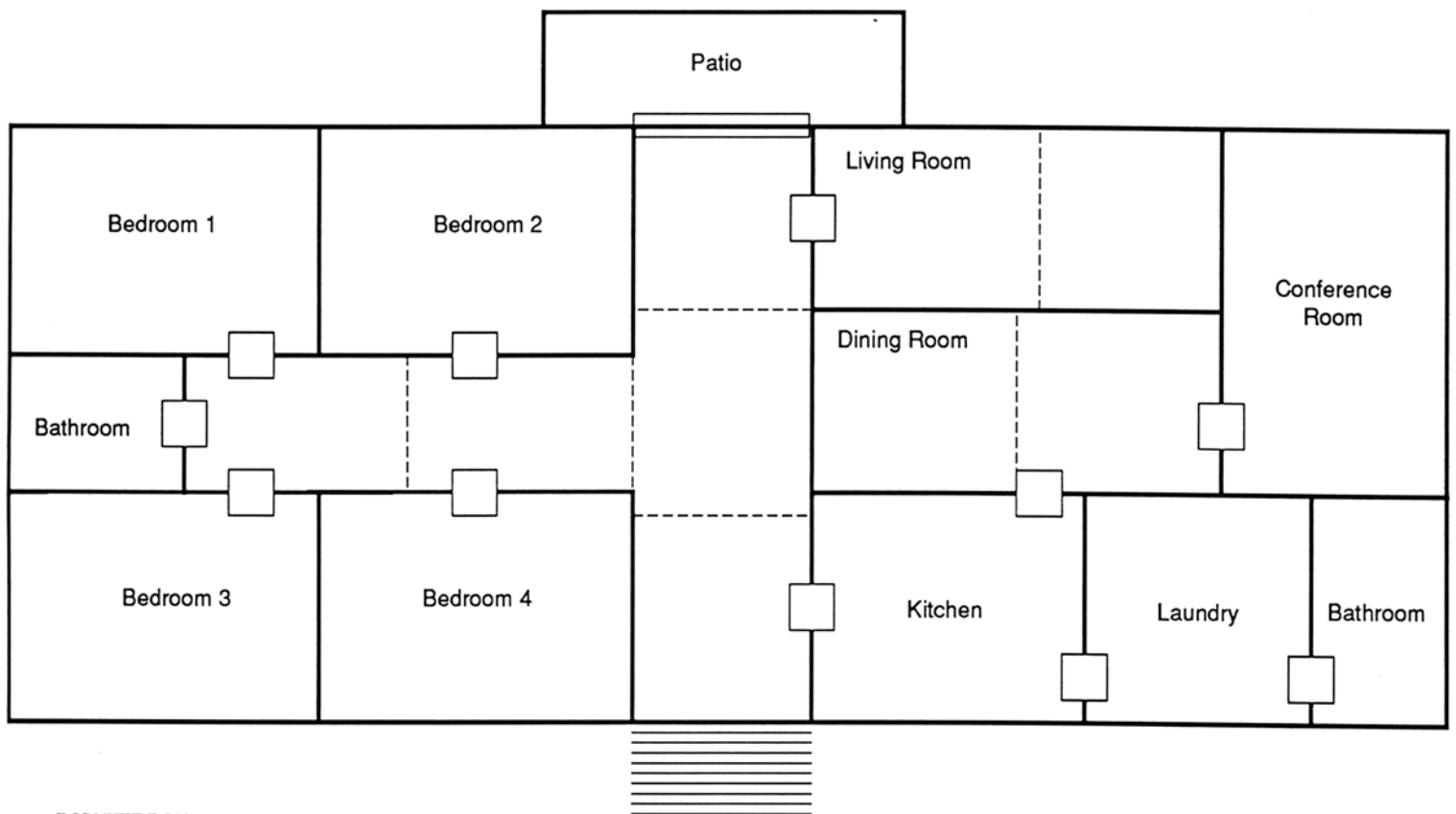
**APPEARANCE:** Oracle has a slight build, very similar to that of Doctor Strange. His costume consists of black shoes, black pants, a white shirt, and a short black cape. The cape has a field of stars on its outer surface.

Height: 6'	Race:	Human (White)
Weight: 170	Sex:	Male
Age: 35	Occupation:	Consultant
Hair: Black	Eyes:	Blue



MH

# The Investigators





# With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

by William Tracy

In last issue's column I offered some tips on how to write a Marvel Super Heroes™ game tournament for the RPGA™ Network. In future columns I plan to alternate between discussions on general subjects (like last time), and columns listing the statistics on various Marvel characters that TSR, Inc. has not gotten around to printing. The super heroes we'll be looking at this issue are the three newest members of the Freedom Force: Crimson Commando, Stonewall and Super Sabre.

## Histories/Backgrounds

The origins of Crimson Commando (alias Frank Bohannon), Stonewall (alias Louis Hamilton), and Super Sabre (alias Martin Fletcher) are unknown. They originally began their careers as heroes during World War II, but they did not appear in the comics until recently (X-MEN #215).

For a few years after WW II, the three men stayed active as super heroes. Unfortunately, their ultra-conservative view points scared the government. During the Cold War of the 1960s, a nervous government asked them to retire, and they complied.

During the next few decades the retired super heroes watched as the crime rate increased, while the country's social values (in their conservative opinions) declined. They finally decided it was time they mete out their own brand of justice, setting up in Crimson Commando's secluded house in upstate New York. The house was located near the Adirondack State Park, with miles of dense forest between it and civilization.

The three men then began to capture criminals who had gotten off on technicalities or through the influence of powerful friends or relatives. They also sometimes captured crooks who had not yet been apprehended by the police. Once they had made a capture, the three men dispensed justice, after a fashion. Each captive was released into the woods around the house to be hunted down again. If the criminal could evade the hunt and escape to civilization he (or she) would be free. Criminals who were caught were killed on the spot. None of the victims escaped until the trio accidentally captured Storm (from the X-Men), believing her to be an arsonist and looter. She defeated the three men, one at a

time. In her final battle with Crimson Commando, she threatened to kill him unless he and his friends agreed to turn themselves in to the authorities. However, only Crimson Commando and Stonewall did this. Super Sabre was believed to have been killed in an avalanche during an earlier fight with Storm.

Months later, the two men's sentences were commuted, on condition that they join the Freedom Force. They agreed and were then joined by Super Sabre, who had not been killed after all. All three men are currently working with Freedom Force.

## CRIMSON COMMANDO

(Frank Bohannon)

F	RM (30)	Health: 90
A	EX (20)	
S	GD (10)	Karma: 36
E	RM (30)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: GD (10)
I	EX (20)	
P	GD (10)	Popularity: 0 (20 to someone who knew him during WW II)

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Enhanced Senses:** Crimson Commando's sight is highly developed, allowing him to see farther and to perceive more detail at a distance than most people. These abilities should be considered Excellent.

**Tracking:** Crimson Commando is also an expert in tracking, using his enhanced sight to follow almost invisible tracks. This ability will only work in natural terrain, that is in places where a being's passage will leave some sort of visible signs. It will not work on a paved city street, for example. This ability is Remarkable.

**TALENTS:** Crimson Commando is an expert with Thrown and Sharp Weapons. He also should be considered a Weapons Master, with training in Martial Arts types A, B and E. He is also an expert in military matters, and he has the Leadership talent.

## STONEWALL

(Louis Hamilton)

F	GD (10)	Health: 84
A	PR (4)	
S	RM (30)	Karma: 22
E	IN (40)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: GD (10)
I	TY (6)	

P GD (10) Popularity: 0 (20 to people who recognize him from WW II)

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Immovable:** Stonewall's flesh is incredibly dense, causing him to weigh a great deal more than a man of his size. Stonewall is almost impossible to knock down (an arrogant Blob once tried to push him, but the Blob ended up on the floor). Stonewall's Endurance should be considered Monstrous for Stun and Slam purposes. He can be tripped if he is surprised (Storm was able to do this twice, so now he is extremely careful).

**TALENTS:** Stonewall has not revealed any talents, yet.

## SUPER SABRE

(Martin Fletcher)

F	EX (20)	Health: 116
A	AM (50)	
S	TY (6)	Karma: 18
E	IN (40)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: GD (10)
I	TY (6)	
P	TY (6)	Popularity: 0 (20 to anyone who knew him from WW II)

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Lightening Speed:** Super Sabre is able to run at Unearthly land Speed. He can reach this speed in a single round and can stop in the same round. He is able to maneuver at this high speed, turning sharp corners and zig-

He has also mastered the use of air pressure. Swinging his fist at high speed, he can use the air pressure generated to damage opponents. These mach one punches do Amazing damage to all characters within the same area as Super Sabre. He can produce a similar effect simply by snapping his fingers. This attack also does Amazing damage, but only to one character in Super Sabre's area.

**TALENTS:** At this point, Super Sabre has not used any talents. His headgear, a leather flying helmet and goggles, and his use of certain aviation terms suggest that he might be a trained pilot, but that has yet to be shown.

# Roll for Surprise

Recalled to Life in the Marvel Universe

by Roger E. Moore

Many of the letters I see as editor of DRAGON® Magazine are about the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. Players are usually eager to describe their superpowered campaigns. As noted in the letters, many heroes live in divergent versions of the Marvel Universe, in which the course of events has been altered to a greater or lesser extent by the Judge and players. The Secret Wars may not have occurred; the Avengers may have split up; mutants might be accepted by society (or they might all be hunted down and imprisoned).

What about groups that want to keep things on a fairly even keel? Maybe the Judge doesn't want to make major alterations in the Marvel Universe, but wants room for his campaign to breathe in the swarm of well-known heroes and villains. Then, too, some of the new heroes may want to start with a reputation — even a small one — that characters in the Marvel Universe would be expected to respect. Starting off as Captain America is a little intimidating for some role-players, but playing a completely original hero like Albedo Man or Captain Competent is not always satisfying, either. A possible solution to all these yearnings appears in the current series of reference comics from Marvel: *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe, Deluxe Edition*. This offers an enormous number of potential heroes for gaming use — but the most unusual heroes are those who can be drawn from issues 16 and on — The Book of the Dead!

Reviving a dead or inactive hero is exceptionally easy. Many are unlikely to reenter the mainstream Marvel Universe for one reason or another, and thus make excellent choices for heroes who won't then suffer the dreaded "same-name" problem. ("You mean there already IS a hero named Phoenix?") To demonstrate this point, three "revived" heroes are presented below, each with three scenarios showing how the hero could be recalled to life as a player character.

One other recommendation: In an earlier issue of DRAGON Magazine, I

mentioned that it was a good idea to start a superpowered hero campaign based in the comic-universe version of your own town, or at least a large city near your home with which you and your gaming group were familiar. This adds a unique and special element to your campaign, and I strongly recommend it for giving the group room to breathe. This advice doesn't apply, of course, if your campaign is in Marvel's New Universe and your home city is Pittsburgh — but give it a try anyway. Who needs New York City when you have Kansas City, Austin, Louisville, or Vancouver?

And now, the heroes — all drawn from issue #18 of the *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*.

## The Mauler

The story of Aaron Soames is a sad one, as you can tell after only a brief glance at his life history under the description of the Mauler in issue #18 of the *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*. Laid off and cheated out of his pension by the president of Cord Conglomerate, the ex-file clerk stole a suit of battle armor, code-named MAULER (Mobile Armored Utility Laser-guided Electron-beam emitter, Revised), from Cordco itself. After embarrassing the company president as his revenge, Soames was slain by company guards. The MAULER armor was stored in a Stark International warehouse, where it was used twice more by criminals — most recently by a mercenary named Brendan Doyle, who is at large. Less-powerful copies of the MAULER battlesuit were made, known as Raider suits. Following their use in criminal activities, Raider suits were confiscated. Plans for both types of armor exist in various Stane International computer centers.

MAULER armor is described in MHAC 8 Weapons Locker, on pages 14-15. Raider armor (dropped from the supplement at the last minute) appears in MH 5 Cat's-Paw.

**Origin 1:** An angry relative of Aaron Soames (with a genius-level knowledge of electronics) steals the plans for the MAULER suit by computer piracy. Building the MAULER battlesuit on his

own (perhaps with minor refinements), the electronics whiz then uses his suit for good purposes — perhaps with a special aim to keep huge corporations in line when they break the law themselves. Whether the whiz is from another major firm or a store-front operation determines his Resource level. Iron Man may be drawn into the fray as he attempts to shut down the pirated armor. Tony Stark is quite touchy about his patents.

**Origin 2:** Stane International, requiring heavier security because of the increasing number of powerful villains, revives the Raider design for use by selected plant guards. One such guard has managed to find a suit that was believed to have been destroyed, and upon his resignation from the firm uses the armor in his new role as a crime-fighter. If the suit proves to be too distinctive, Stane International might become interested (as in the case above), and trouble is sure to follow.

**Origin 3:** The plans for MAULER armor are turned over to a subsidiary company under Stane International's control. The smaller firm, desiring a good public relations ploy, trains a particularly trusted employee in the suit's use and has the employee registered with a local law-enforcement agency as a special deputy. Given limited legal authority within a city-wide area, the new superpowered hero fights crime and incidentally promotes the company's products and policies — under the assumption, of course, that the parent company is a good and fair business. If the assumption proves false, the hero might go his own way but could be charged with theft of the armor if it is taken, thus being pursued by both company men and other heroes. If the sponsoring company remains true, the hero might still find it irksome at times to be a "company man" (perhaps the company logo is permanently emblazoned on his battlesuit). However, the company could also be a valuable asset, with its huge store of information, contacts, and material supplies.

## The Melter

Originally a criminal identity, the Melter was Bruno Horgan, a bankrupted industrialist who fought his rival Tony Stark (a.k.a. Iron Man) using various sorts of guns and belt buckles which fired metal-melting rays. After an abysmal career as a criminal, Bruno Horgan was shot to death by the vigilante Scourge. His last melting device was smashed under Scourge's foot and left that way. The Melter Ray principle is described in MHAC 8 Weapons Locker, on page 30. Melter devices could conceivably come in any form, but would be most recognizable in the ways in which the Melter used them.

**Origin 1:** An ex-employee of Horgan's old company discovers the plans to certain Melter Ray devices in the files of the now-inactive company. Desiring to redeem the company's name, he takes on the identity of the Melter, fighting for the causes of good. He becomes a particular foe of battlesuited villains, and is thus a special target for their fury.

**Origin 2:** A military electronics specialist assigned to study the remains of the last piece of the Melter's equipment solves the device's operational principles, and builds a suit of armor for use by a selected individual. The armor's operator is allowed to use the Melter Ray, but he must go only on missions approved by the U.S. government. Any clandestine activity puts the new Melter at risk of being arrested by military forces or attacked by super heroes summoned by military authorities.

**Origin 3:** A high school student whose parents work for Stane International accidentally discovers plans or parts for a Melter Ray device. While tinkering with the materials for a science project, the student creates a working Melter device, which he sometimes uses for crimefighting purposes in his local area.

## Miss America

The original Miss America was a heroine of World War II, fighting Nazi saboteurs in the United States as part of the Liberty Legion, a crimefighting super-squadron. After the war, she and her husband (another super-crimefighter named the Whizzer) took on various saboteurs and mad scientists until they were irradiated in a nuclear accident. Miss America died in childbirth and was buried in an unmarked location in Europe.

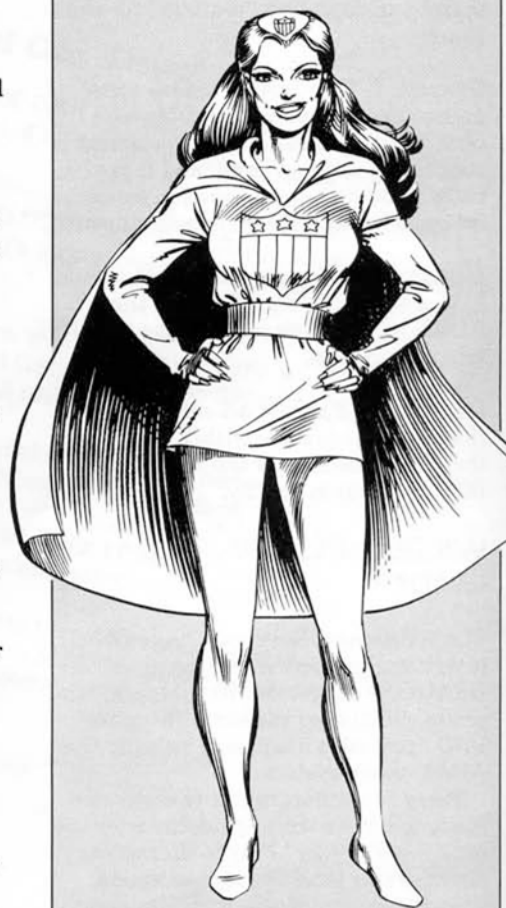
The statistics for Miss America are given in DRAGON issue #104, in William Tracy's module "Sudden Dawn." However, entirely new statistics for a modern Miss America could be generated.

**Origin 1:** A highly trained female athlete with at least one other exceptional talent takes on the name of Miss America, wishing to perform heroic deeds and make a name for herself as well. She adopts the uniform of the original Miss America as well as the name, but retains her own real name and abilities. Association with the Miss America beauty pageant could prove clumsy, and the new Miss America might harbor strong feminist tendencies in reaction.

**Origin 2:** A modern relative of Madeleine Frank, also being a talented athlete, takes on the Miss America role and costume. However, like Madeleine Frank, the new Miss America is a mutant with at least one psionic power, perhaps granting flight or levitation like her predecessor. Hiding her mutant abilities could become a special priority, or she could reveal her powers and champion the rights of mutants everywhere.

**Origin 3:** Thanks to a villain's time-warp or a natural time-space tear, an original Miss America from a divergent universe is catapulted into our own universe, much in the way the new Phoenix entered from her own divergent timeline. If caught at the start of her crimefighting career, which was about 1942, Miss America might have a lot of trouble adjusting to the greatly altered world of the late 1980s. Nonetheless, she would be a dedicated fighter in the ranks of justice, perhaps finding some solace in the company of Captain America, who also hailed from that time period.

In short, the ranks of dead and inactive heroes (and even the ranks of long-gone villains) are fertile ground for new heroes looking to make a living at catching crooks. But the tables could be turned, too — as will be shown in a future issue. Until the Red Skull turns blue, make mine Marvel.



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# With Great Power

## Fitting in with the Team

by William Tracy

Hello and welcome to a special edition of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. You have just joined one of the best super teams in the world. So far, this column has been covering the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game from TSR, Inc., giving statistics on various Marvel Universe characters, and occasionally providing campaign tips and suggestions. In the future I plan to expand the column so that it will cover other super hero game systems.

In this special "generic" column (Trivia: How many people out there know that Marvel put out a one-shot Generic Comic Book, and how many out there actually bought it?), I want to give a few tips on creating or picking out characters for a continuing campaign.

### "Real" Heroes vs. Brand X

When players and referees start working on player characters for a regular campaign, they first have to decide if they are going to create their own heroes or go with already established characters. There are good and bad points for each choice.

When developing your own characters, you have the satisfaction of playing a character you have created yourself. Just be sure to make a detailed personality sketch and make sure you aren't simply role-playing yourself.

On the other hand, with an established character, you get to play a character whose personality and powers have been very clearly defined. It is also fun to run a comic book hero that you have always dreamed of being. Unfortunately, this option is rather limiting in that you do not get to create the character's personality.

There is, however, one way to have the best of both worlds. If you put together a group of established characters who have not worked together as a team before, you have a chance to change (or add to) a portion of each character's history to explain how the team got together. Perhaps this change

in history caused the character's personality to change a little, or to change radically. Just be sure that the changed history and personality make sense.

Of course, the players could choose a well-established team, which would have well-established heroes plus a lot of background information on their headquarters and major enemies.

Finally, the most flexible option seems to be a combination of the above. In other words, they would have an established team with several regular members, plus members that have not worked with the group and whose personal histories have changed, and one or two new characters created by the players. This option gives the players and referees a good, solid basis for a campaign, since the group and its origins, goals, and enemies are well known, and each player is free to choose an established character or a brand new hero.

### The Line-Up

Now you get to pick or create your characters for the super team. It is usually best to have a group of about five to seven members on your team. Or you could take the "Legion" option. In this option, you choose a large team of super heroes (like the Legion of Super Heroes) or have each player create two or more characters. At the beginning of each adventure, the referee and each player can decide which character that player can use during play. This option lets players use a favorite character most of the time, and gives everybody a chance to try his hand at different characters.

When creating or picking one single character, or choosing from multiple characters for one adventure, it is best to use a variety of types of super heroes. If you look at any the various established hero teams, you'll see they use a number of different types of heroes, so that they can handle different types of enemies and situations. A list of the different types of super heroes and some examples of each type follows. When creating a super team, the players should try to limit the group to one member of each type and try to have as many different types as possible.

**Detective/Vigilante:** This character is a normal human (on the average) who mostly deals with street crime. While usually just a normal human, he has trained himself to be highly athletic and skilled in a number of different fields. These heroes usually fight unarmed, but some have a special weapon they use with extraordinary skill. They will also sometimes have a number of gimmicks and devices to help them. Occasionally, such heroes might have one super power. This power is usually a power that increases one of the five senses, or the healing rate, or a physical/mental attribute. But even the increased attribute is not in the super-human range. This category also includes the Martial Arts Masters. This type of hero will have above average physical and mental attributes and will be an expert in unarmed combat. He might also have some minor powers, which are caused by a high degree of mental/physical concentration.

Examples: Batman, Green Arrow, Daredevil, Iron Fist

**High-Tech Wonder:** This type of hero will have average physical attributes, but above normal mental attributes. He will be skilled in a number of scientific and mechanical skills. He usually will use a battlesuit he built himself, or he will carry a number of small technological devices with him at all times.

Examples: Iron Man, Mister Miracle

**Super Human:** This type of character will have well above average physical attributes, and sometimes he will have mental attributes above average. This character will be the strong man of the group and take care of the really dangerous foes.

Examples: Superman, Thor, She-Hulk

**Wizard:** This type of character will have an origin that is magical in nature. He could be a spell-casting wizard, an ordinary human in possession of some magical artifact with defensive and/or offensive abilities, or he could be a member of a supernatural race.

Examples: Doctor Strange, Doctor Fate, Black Knight, Aurora

Continued on page 30



## With Great Power

*Continued from page 4*

**Psychic:** This type of character will have unusually high mental attributes, allowing him better control over his powers. This does not necessarily mean the character will be scientifically inclined. This type of character will usually possess various mental abilities such as telekinesis or telepathy.

Examples: Saturn Girl, Invisible Woman, Professor-X

**Alien:** This type of character can have a wide range of powers. This type of character is usually the member of an extra-terrestrial race, or a member of a hidden race that dwells on the earth.

Examples: Aquaman, the Inhumans, Martian Manhunter

**Shape Changer:** This type of character is able to affect his physical shape in some manner. This includes growing/shrinking, elasticity, and changing to an animal or inanimate shape.

Examples: Hank Pym, Elongated Man, Changeling, Warlock

**Mutant:** This is a special category. Mutants are humans who have been changed genetically, chemically, or by radiation. Such a character can have any type powers (except magic and high-tech). It is usually best to have this character be able to shoot some sort of beams of energy and to fly. On the other hand, mutants might have control over one or more of the basic elements and also be able to fly.

Examples: Tempest, Celsius, Storm, Sunfire

## Final Notes

When creating the super team try to be sure that at least one third of the characters can fly by some means. And if they don't have some sort of long distance vehicle, such as the Avenger's Quinjet or Titans' T-Jet, make sure that one or more characters have the ability to transport most or all of the characters, for example Dr. Fate's Teleport or Green Lantern's Ring.

Finally, one tip that all super teams need to know (and that most have trouble remembering), when faced with opponents whose powers cancel the powers of certain team members in the middle of battle, switch opponents. ☐

# With Great Power

## Notes and Ideas for MX Campaigns

by William Tracy

This column and the next will deal with the MX1-4 MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game modules. This campaign series is set in an alternate time line in which the Sentinels, their anti-mutant sentiments fully intact, have taken over North America. The modules provide an alternate MARVEL SUPER HEROES campaign setting. This column will cover some background that was left out of the series and introduce some new characters of my own creation.

### The MX World Outside North America

The reaction to the Sentinels has been surprisingly small. Nearly every country, including America's staunchest allies, has opted for neutrality. Some countries have gone so far as to return escaped mutants to the Sentinels.

Oddly enough, the Russians have been the most sympathetic to the North American mutants. They have publicly offered political asylum to any mutant who is able to reach the USSR or one of its satellite countries. The Sentinels have ignored this so far, since they are still busy pacifying their part of the world.

Mutants escaping to Russia are placed in an ultra-modern base located somewhere in Siberia and offered a simple deal: work in some capacity at the base or leave the country.

Israelies have secretly allowed escaping mutants to defect to their country. They have even helped some mutants escape. Such mutants are given new identities and lives in Israel. In return, they are expected to become special agents for the Israeli government. Unfortunately, they are expected to follow the government's orders precisely, or be shipped back to the Sentinels. Fortunately, most of the assignments are justifiable.

### The Other Races of Earth

Soon after the Sentinels took over North America, they sent a secret raiding party to the Himalayas. Its mission was to test the Inhumans' strength with

a damaging attack. The Sentinel party was destroyed, but not before it killed more than half of the Inhumans.

During the battle Black Bolt was killed while saving the life of his half-brother, Maximus. After this incident, Maximus inexplicably recovered from his madness. After Black Bolt's death, the Inhumans faltered, and it looked like they might all be killed. Fortunately, the newly-sane Maximus joined the battle and led the Inhumans to victory.

After the attack, Maximus worked himself almost to death, helping the victims. A month later, a special council meeting was held. Telepathic Inhumans and doctors declared Maximus sane and a changed being. The Royal Family, though suspicious, declared Maximus King. He quickly asked for a public vote whether to stay on Earth or leave. He argued that the Sentinels would come back someday to destroy them. The vote was held, with the majority opting to leave Earth.

Maximus created a vast colony star ship to take his race to an uninhabited star system. Before leaving our solar system, they contacted the Eternals on the moon Titan. The Royal Family (Medusa, Karnak, Gorgon, and Triton) decided to stay with the Eternals in the hope that someday they could return to Earth and avenge Black Bolt and their friends. They have sworn to find and rescue Franklin Richards. And they are currently considering returning to Earth and joining the Russian program.

In this time line, the Eternals have already left Earth, except for the few who elected to remain behind. (The ones who remained are the same ones who stayed behind in the main time line.) The remaining Eternals eventually joined the Russians. Also, Ikaris has married Margo Damian, and they have a daughter.

The majority of Deviants decided on a policy of complete isolation, hoping the Sentinels will ignore them. Kro, knowing that one day the Sentinels will turn their attention on the Deviants, left with his most loyal followers, eventually joining the Russian program.

The Eternals have decided to remain neutral for the time being. Many of them fear becoming embroiled in another war and being decimated (as in

the time of Thanos). Mentor and Starfox have so far abided by their wishes, though it rankles them a great deal.

The Atlanteans have been untouched by the ravages of the Sentinels so far. But Namor and his advisors know that sooner or later the Sentinels will come after them. They have been working on a plan to move their people to the deeper and less explored areas of the sea. Unknown to Namor, the Sentinels are already working on a special underwater Sentinel prototype. Once the underwater model is perfected, the Sentinels plan the immediate genocide of the Atlanteans.

### The Aliens

The powerful alien races of space have adopted a "wait and see" policy. Most of the aliens know that after completely subjugating the Earth, the Sentinels will turn their sensors to space, but whether the Sentinels' programming also considers aliens to be enemies is unknown.

The main reason that Earth hasn't already been destroyed by alien attacks is that many alien races hope that the humans can someday free themselves from the Sentinels. All the major alien races have at least one monitoring post on the edge of the solar system.

Another reason is that one of the Celestials also has taken position at the edge of the solar system.

Utua, the Watcher, remains on the moon, undisturbed by the Sentinels so far. The other members of his race have threatened him with imprisonment if he takes any action. Utua is constantly torn between guilt and duty. So far, he has not interfered.

### The X-Groups

A number of the more powerful mutant rebels have joined together to form special rebel commando forces. These groups have named themselves after old groups of heroes; they put an X-prefix in front of the name (X-Avengers, for example). None of the groups have chosen the name X-Men. They hold this name in reverence, and none have felt they could live up to it.

## New Character

This month, we take a look at the leader of the most famous X-Group of all, the X-Avengers.

### The New Captain America

(Rick Jones)

<b>F</b>	IN(40)	<b>Health:</b>	185
<b>A</b>	RM(30)		
<b>S</b>	MN(75)	<b>Karma:</b>	50
<b>E</b>	IN(40)		
<b>R</b>	EX(20)	<b>Resources:</b>	PR(4)
<b>I</b>	EX(20)		
<b>P</b>	GD(10)	<b>Popularity:</b>	50/-50

#### KNOWN POWERS:

**Unique Weapon:** Rick uses the original Captain America's shield, a disc made of vibranium and adamantium. The shield is made of Class 3000 material, making it immune to anything except magical or psionic attacks. Rick can use it to shield himself, but it does not negate Slams or Stuns. Rick can throw the shield up to 7 areas, causing monstrous damage. Rick has recently established the power stunt of bouncing the shield off several hard surfaces and having it return to him at the beginning of the next round.

**TALENTS:** Rick has the Performer talent in guitar playing and singing. During his years with the Canadian Resistance Army (and his small time with SHIELD), he learned Wrestling, Acrobatics, Tumbling, First Aid, and all types of Martial Arts. He is also a

Marksman and a Weapon Specialist with the shield. He has some knowledge in the fields of Law Enforcement, Military, Detective/Espionage, and Electronics.

**Contacts:** Rick is one of the very few public leaders of the resistance. He has a large number of contacts with various resistance members across North America. He is a close friend of Nick Fury, and he and Wolverine share a grudging respect.

**Background:** In this time line, Rick Jones decided to become an agent for SHIELD, joining a few years before the Sentinels took over. Fury himself decided to train him, as a favor to the original Captain America.

When SHIELD was disbanded and Fury went to Canada to form the Canadian Resistance Army (CRA), Rick went with him. During the next few years, Rick became one of the CRA's top leaders. During that time, Rick became friends with Dr. Michael Morbius (who did not become a pseudo-vampire in this time line) who was performing special experiments for the CRA. He was trying to develop copies of the anti-aging formula that had kept Fury so young, and to re-create the super-soldier formula that turned Steve Rogers into the original Captain America.

Rick volunteered to take a newly-developed formula that was supposed to duplicate the effects of those two formulas. The variation worked even better than the originals. Unbeknownst to Rick, he is immortal, he will never age

and he cannot die from natural causes.

Unfortunately, Sentinels attacked the lab right after the formula took effect. Morbius was killed during the attack, and his notes were destroyed along with the lab. Rick used his new abilities to destroy one of the attacking Sentinels. Coincidentally, this Sentinel was the one that had killed the original Captain America. Not only had it painted a copy of the Captain's uniform on itself, it also had the original shield embedded in its chest. After destroying the Sentinel, Rick ripped the shield from its chest and declared himself the new Captain America, vowing to return America to the country for which the original Captain had fought so hard.

**Personality:** Rick Jones is quite different from the young teenager who knew so many heroes. He has become quiet and somber, his personality shaped over the years by the current situation in America. His change into the new Captain America made him even more grim and determined.

Recently, some of Rick's old carefree personality has returned. This is due mostly to the relationship that has grown between him and the Spider (May Watson-Parker). He recently has begun to play the guitar and sing again, something he hasn't done since the original Captain America was killed. He has even written a song, "Shield of Freedom," about Captain America. The song is being passed through the resistance network slowly but surely and has become a favorite, even among the mutants. □

# With Great Power

## The Role of Honor

by William Tracy

Welcome back. I hope everyone has enjoyed what I have come up with so far. As I said before, if you have any comments to make about the column, please send them in.

Last time I described the new Captain America. This column gives data on more X-Avengers.

### THE SPIDER

*May Watson-Parker, Rebel*

**F** IN(40) **Health:** 190  
**A** AM(50)  
**S** AM(50) **Karma:** 120  
**E** AM(50)  
**R** EX(20) **Resources:** PR(4)  
**I** AM(50)  
**P** AM(50) **Popularity:** 40/40

### KNOWN POWERS

**Wall-Crawling:** The Spider can adhere to vertical and upside-down surfaces with Amazing ability.

**Spider-Sense:** The Spider's Intuition score also doubles as a Combat Sense Power (like Spiderman's). This special sense warns her of potentially dangerous situations. The intensity of the feeling is determined by the rank of the danger.

**Webs:** The Spider can produce webs through natural spinnerets in the tops of her wrists. The webbing has Incredible Strength during the round it is fired, and hardens to Unearthly Strength the next round. She can use this natural webbing to restrain opponents; to make swing-lines (traveling 3 areas/round when swinging); as missiles inflicting Remarkable Blunt Throwing damage; and to make shields of Unearthly Strength material. The webbing dissolves after 10 minutes. If her Health is reduced to 20 or less she will be unable to cast webs until she regains all her Health points and rests for at least one week.

**TALENTS:** The Spider is an expert in Martial Arts Type E, Acrobatics, and

Tumbling. She has training in bio-chemistry, genetics, and electronics.

**BACKGROUND:** The Spider is May Watson-Parker, daughter of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson. She was born several years after the Sentinels had taken over.

May grew up in Canada with her mother; her father visited when he could. Her powers developed quickly. At her insistence, her father and a friend of the family, Nick Fury, trained her for combat. During her training with Fury she came to know and care for Rick Jones.

Recently, May's father was captured along with a number of other rebel leaders. May and her mother went with the rescue party. They were able to free everyone, but Spiderman and Mary Jane were killed while staying behind to give the others time to escape. She found one of father's old black costumes and tailored it to fit her. She adopted the name "Spider" and vowed to destroy the Sentinels.

**PERSONALITY:** May is young, but has never had the chance to enjoy her youth; she became a dedicated resistance fighter as a teenager. Many people find her to be cold and aloof.

Only the other members of the X-Avengers have seen her compassionate side. She has found solace with Rick Jones (the new Captain America), who also has lost loved ones in the war. With his help she is learning to enjoy life.

### DOOM'S DAUGHTER

*Cynthia Von Doom, Rebel*

**F** RM(30) **Health:** 150  
**A** EX(20)  
**S** AM(50) **Karma:** 155  
**E** AM(50)  
**R** AM(50) **Resources:** IN(40)/PR(4)  
**I** RM(30)  
**P** MN(75) **Popularity:** 40/30

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Body Armor:** Cynthia wears a suit of battle armor very similar to her father's. She never removes the armor, and only the increased ability scores the

armor gives her are listed. The armor is nuclear powered, computer assisted, and made with the same alloy used to build the Sentinels. The armor provides her with Amazing protection against physical attacks.

**Force Field:** The armor can project a Monstrous intensity personal force field. The force field is effective against all physical and energy attacks, including magnetism. Cynthia has modified the force field so that it provides Remarkable protection against psionic attacks. In addition, she has been able to incorporate some of her magical abilities into the force field so that it provides Incredible protection against magical attacks.

**Force Beams:** Cynthia's gauntlets are equipped with miniature particle accelerators. These fire force beams of Monstrous intensity and range.

**Flight:** The armor has a jet pack built in, allowing Cynthia to fly at Remarkable speed in the atmosphere.

**Air Supply:** When sealed the armor has enough air for eight hours.

**Spells:** During her stay at Doom Castle Cynthia discovered her grandmother's notes on magic and some writings of her father's. She slowly cultivated a number of personal spells. She felt she would need these powers in her fight against the Sentinels. She can cast the following spells:

**Admittance** (Remarkable)  
**Astral Projection** (Remarkable)  
**Flaw** (Remarkable)  
**Heal** (Remarkable)  
**Image Projection** (Remarkable)  
**Invisibility** (Remarkable)  
**Trance** (Remarkable)

**TALENTS:** Cynthia has inherited her father's scientific genius. She is an expert in Piloting, Engineering, Physics, Computers, Electronics, and Occult Lore. She also has the Repair/Tinkering talent. She has also learned Martial Arts Type A.

**BACKGROUND:** Right after the Sentinels began to take over, Doctor Doom



approached them and offered an alliance. Actually, he wanted a chance to infiltrate their computer network and gain control. He was discovered, and the Sentinels attacked him. He was able to escape, but he was badly hurt.

Doom was found by a small rebel cell led by Valerie Majors. Majors was a non mutant who had been labeled Anomalous by the Sentinels. The rebels wanted to kill Doom or leave him on his own, but Valerie insisted that they take him in and help him. Valerie nursed him back to health, and the two became involved — they were unofficially married. When Valerie became pregnant, Doom asked her to sneak back to Latveria with him. She refused gently, explaining that she wanted to continue to fight for America. The usually arrogant Doom was taken aback by Valerie's bravery, and he decided to stay with her.

Over the next year Doom fought with the rebels and became well liked. Soon after the baby was born, however, the cell was discovered and destroyed. Only Doom, Valerie, and the baby escaped. Valerie agreed to let Doom arrange for their escape to Latveria.

Doom was able to get his followers to send a stealth aircraft to get them. The Sentinels found them just as they were leaving, and attacked. Doom and Valerie elected to delay the Sentinels, while the pilot escaped with their daughter. Doom and Valerie were killed, but Cynthia escaped.

Cynthia was taken to Castle Doom and raised by Doom's loyal followers. She was trained and well educated, having inherited her father's scientific genius, plus her grandmother's mystical powers.

At the age of eighteen Cynthia was declared the ruler of Latveria. But she had inherited a sense of freedom from her mother. Within a year she had delegated most of her political power and was able to lead Latveria and its citizens into a democratic government. She returned to America to stop the Sentinels and avenge her parents. She eventually met Fury and joined the X-Avengers.

**PERSONALITY:** Cynthia is a kind and brave person. However, at times some of her father's arrogance will show — she expects people to respect her wishes more than their own. After such outbursts of imperiousness she is very apologetic, but the hot-tempered part of her eventually resurfaces.

## THE NEW MOON KNIGHT

*Steve Nicholas Barton, Rebel*

**F** RM(30)/AM(50) **Health:** 100/180  
**A** RM(30)/IN(40)  
**S** EX(20)/AM(50) **Karma:** 80  
**E** EX(20)/IN(40)  
**R** EX(20) **Resources:** Pr(4)  
**I** RM(30)  
**P** RM(30) **Popularity:** 20/-20

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Unique Items — Moon Bracelets** The deity Khonshu gave Steve a pair of golden bracelets when he declared Steve the new Moon Knight. These white bracelets were made of an unknown material, intricately carved with many hieroglyphics and lunar symbols. When Steve put them on, they disappeared, even though he can still feel them on his wrists.

The bracelets draw energy from the point in space where the gravity of the earth and moon pull equally. This gives Steve the second set of ability scores listed above. These will remain as long as he "wears" the bracelets.

The bracelets also allow Steve to emit beams of force from his hands. These Moonbursts cause Excellent to Monstrous damage, with a range of two areas.

Since the bracelets draw the power directly from space, the moon does not have to be visible for their powers to function.

**Weapons — Moon Knight's Steve** carries the ankh and other special weapons owned by the original Moon Knight. The weapons and the ankh work exactly as described in MH AC 7, Concrete Jungle.

**Weapons — Bow and Arrows:** Steve's father trained him to use a bow. When Steve became the new Moon Knight his father gave him the bow and trick arrows that he had used as Hawkeye. Over the years, Clint Barton had made some slight improvements on the trick arrows, with Steve's help.

For a listing of the trick arrows, look at the Hawkeye entry in the Advanced Marvel Super Heroes Judge's Book. All the effects and abilities of the trick arrows receive a +1CS, due to recent modifications.

**Unique Weapons — Battle Staves:** Steve has also inherited his mother's battle staves. The description of these weapons is printed on page 33 of the Advanced Marvel Super Heroes Judge's

Book.

When Steve uses the staves, they cause Remarkable damage (Excellent if he doesn't have the bracelets on). He can toss them as far as 6 areas (2 areas if he doesn't have the bracelets on). He doesn't use the special spring-loaded arm mounts that his mother used, since they would get in the way when he uses his bow. He is able to bounce them off solid objects. They return to him at the end of the round, as a power stunt.

**TALENTS:** Steve's training from his parents provided him with the following Talents: Weapons Specialist (Bow), Marksman, Thrown Weapons, Blunt Weapons, Martial Arts Types A/B/C/E, Acrobatics, and Tumbling. From Moon Knight he learned the following Talents: Thrown Weapons, Sharp Weapons, Weapons Master, Martial Arts Type D, Wrestling, and Thrown Objects. He is truly a master of many different weapons and styles of unarmed combat. The following table lists all his weapons and the bonuses he gets with each.

### Weapons:

Ivory Boomerang	+2CS
Scarab Darts	+2CS
Throwing Irons	+2CS
Lasso-Grapple	+2CS
Bola	+2CS
Bow	+2CS
Battle Staves	+2CS(throw)/ +3CS(melee)

### Unarmed Combat:

+1CS to Strength for Grappling/Escaping  
 +1CS to damage when Grappling  
 +3CS to hit in Grappling  
 +1CS to Agility for Dodging  
 +1CS to Fighting with Unarmed Combat  
 +1 to Initiative in Unarmed Combat  
 Can Slam and Stun stronger opponents  
 Can ignore body armor when determining Slam and Stun after observing an opponent for two rounds

**BACKGROUND:** When the Sentinels began to turn on the heroes who had helped them catch mutants, the heroes Hawkeye and Mockingbird were ignored for the most part. They fought along side other heroes, but watched them fall one by one. Eventually they were able to escape to Canada with a number of former S.H.I.E.L.D. agents.

When their son was born they raised

the boy peacefully. But they trained him in the use of each parent's weapons and martial arts skills. They told him his training was for self defense and to keep him in good physical shape. Both knew this wasn't the real reason, but they never knew what really compelled them to train their son.

Occasionally some of their old friends, such as Fury, visited them. During these visits the parents insisted that the fight against the Sentinels never be discussed in front of the boy. Their quiet life lasted until the boy was eighteen, when Marc Spector (the original Moon Knight), came to visit. He had dropped his Moon Knight guise, and had been using his old mercenary skills to help the C.R.A.

That night, he told the parents that their son was destined to become the Moon Knight, and to help fight the Sentinels. The furious couple threatened to fight if Spector even tried to take their son to the war. Spector insisted, and a loud argument ensued. The noise woke up Steve and he interrupted, demanding to know what was going on. Before everyone's startled eyes, Khonshu appeared and confronted the parents with memories of their long-dead friends, who gave all in the cause of justice and freedom.

The chastised couple reluctantly acknowledged the truth. Over the next year, Spector trained Steve and honed the already capable young man into a fighting machine. After the year's training, Khonshu gave Steve the bracelets, and his parents and Spector gave him their individual weapons. Steve set out to offer his services to Fury. Fury accepted him and told him some disturbing news — Marc Spector had died during an action against the Sentinels a year before.

**PERSONALITY:** Steve has a strange mixture of personalities. Most of the time he is good natured and optimistic. But he sometimes becomes very quiet and withdrawn. This is especially true at night and when the moon is full. He finds himself drawn to Doom's Daughter, but she has so far ignored or not noticed his affection for her.

## TWILIGHT

*No other name known, Amnesiac, Rebel*

F	EX(20)	Health: 100
A	EX(20)	
S	EX(20)	Karma: 26
E	IN(40)	
R	TY(6)	Resources: Pr(4)
I	GD(10)	
P	GD(10)	Popularity: 10/-10

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Darkforce:** Twilight is able to call forth and use the other dimensional force known as the Darkforce. This power has a Monstrous intensity, giving him the following abilities:

- \*Cause darkness in a 3 area range. Only Twilight can see through the gloom; others within the darkness suffer a -3 CS to all FEATs requiring sight.
- \*Cause the Darkforce to solidify and form various objects (cages, vises, walls, etc.). These have an Incredible material strength. Twilight must make a Remarkable FEAT roll to successfully use and shape the Darkforce.
- \*Create beams of Darkforce that have a 3 area range and cause up to Monstrous damage.
- \*Sheathe his body in the Darkforce, providing him with Monstrous protection against physical and energy attacks.
- \*During the night he can blend into the shadows and darkness, giving him Monstrous stealth abilities.

These powers only can be used during the night. Also, Twilight can only use one function of the power per round.

**Light Control:** Twilight has Monstrous control over light, but only during the day. He can only use one function of this power per round.

- \*Burst of intense light with a 2-area range. The light is Incredible intensity; living beings must make a yellow Agility FEAT roll or be blinded for 1-10 rounds.
- \*Create holograms of Incredible intensity. Twilight must make a FEAT roll each round to keep a hologram visible.
- \*Cause light to solidify to form cages or other simple shapes, which have Incredible material strength. Twilight must make a Remarkable FEAT roll to successfully control and shape the light.
- \*Create lasers that have a 6 area range and do up to Monstrous damage.

\*Sheathe his body in light, providing him with Amazing protection against Energy attacks, living beings trying to hit him suffer a -3CS due to the glare given off by his body.

\*He can bend light rays around himself, causing himself to be undetectable visually. This power has Monstrous intensity.

**Dual personality:** Twilight has a dual personality and physical form. During the daytime, Twilight looks like a young black male. During the day he is a carefree and kind person.

At night, Twilight becomes a young white female. During the night, she is somber and quiet, aloof to everyone.

**TALENTS:** Twilight has had little time to learn talents, but he subconsciously knows a unique fighting style using Acrobatics, Tumbling, and Martial Arts Type A.

**PERSONALITY:** Twilight's personality matches the time of day. During the night she is somber and moody. During the day, he is cheerful and optimistic. Both personalities are a little naive and confused, due to their limited knowledge of the real world.

**BACKGROUND:** When the Sentinels first began to take over, they were able to surprise Cloak and Dagger. A lucky shot severely wounded, and possibly killed, Dagger. A maddened Cloak called forth Darkforce to surround a one-mile radius.

Seventeen years later, the cloud of darkness still existed. Any living being or Sentinel that entered the area never returned. One day, a naked Twilight left the Darkforce. He was discovered by a band of rebels that took him in. Knowing of the story of Cloak and Dagger, and seeing the form change at night, they guessed that Twilight was the offspring of Cloak and Dagger.

Twilight was smuggled to Canada and put in training under Fury, who became like a father to the youngster. Twilight is now using his/her abilities to fight the Sentinels.

Once, Twilight tried to enter the area of Darkforce, but some force prevented Twilight from getting in.

# With Great Power

## Foreign Super Heroes

by William Tracy

Admittedly, the majority of the super heroes on the earth of the Marvel Universe live in America. But there are still a few super heroes who are natives of other countries. This installment of the column will dwell on a few of these.

### BLITZKREIG

*Franz Mittelstaedt, Mechanical Engineer, Masked Hero of West Germany*

<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>P</b>
GD	GD	GD	GD	EX	GD	GD
(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(10)	(10)

**Health:** 40

**Karma:** 40

**Resources:** GD(10)

**Popularity:** 3/30 in West Germany

### KNOWN POWERS

**Electrical Control:** Blitzkreig is able to mentally control the electrical charges in living beings, objects, and the atmosphere. By causing the air in a certain area to have a strong positive charge, and an object or person a powerful negative charge, he causes static electricity to spark between them, causing Unearthly damage. The power itself has Unearthly rank, with a control radius of two miles (Class 3000). Since these bolts are drawn to the target, they cannot be dodged. But, a person who moves out of the two mile radius will be safe. The sparks also can be stopped by intervening objects or energy. Blitzkrieg must be able to see a target to be able to charge it. The spark travels at Unearthly speed.

**Wind Creation:** Blitzkreig can cause electrically charged particles to spin in a tight circle, causing powerful winds. These winds are of Remarkable intensity.

**Flight:** By combining high winds with a continuous arc of electricity between his feet and the ground, he is able to fly at Good speed.

**Electric Shapes:** Using his control over charges in air particles, Blitzkreig can form simple objects such as shields, cages and spheres of Incredible

strength. These objects only stay together as long as he concentrates on them. He can fly while maintaining such objects, but that is the only other power action or physical action he can take.

**Electrical Resistance:** Blitzkreig has Unearthly resistance to any form of electrical attack.

**TALENTS:** Franz is a trained Mechanical Engineer.

**BACKGROUND:** While visiting an electrical power plant, a nearby faulty generator was struck by a bolt of lightning. The resulting explosion bathed him in electricity and injured him badly. He woke up from a coma a few weeks later and discovered his new powers.

**PERSONALITY:** Blitzkreig is a solid family man with a strong sense of responsibility. He is very proud of his country and its progress as a democratic society.

### THE COLLECTIVE MAN

*Han, Chang, Lin, Sun, and Ho Tao-Yu, Government Agents of the People's Republic of China*

<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>P</b>
RM	EX	EX	RM	EX	EX	EX
(30)	(20)	(20)	(30)	(20)	(20)	(20)

**Health:** 100

**Karma:** 60

**Resources:** TY(6) personal/UN(100) as agent

**Popularity:** 3/30 in China

### KNOWN POWERS

**Body Meld:** The Collective Man is actually identical quintuplets who are able to merge their bodies into a powerful being. Each individual brother has the following ability scores:

<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>P</b>
RM	GD	GD	EX	TY	EX	EX

**Health:** 70

**Karma:** 46

The Collective Man can run at a Good speed for three minutes before having to rest for thirty minutes. While he doesn't have much knowledge of technology, he

is able to make calculations five times faster than an average human and retain five times as much knowledge as an average human.

By entering a trance for one round, and making a yellow Psyche FEAT roll, he can draw on the knowledge of any of his countrymen. This allows him to briefly learn any of the various Talents available to characters.

By entering a trance for one round, and making a red Psyche FEAT roll, he is able to greatly increase his abilities. During the following round the Collective Man's Strength will be Unearthly; after that round he will pass out for 1d10 minutes, due to the exertion required. All his ability scores return to normal when he regains consciousness. Presently, the number of times per day he can raise his Strength to Unearthly is unrevealed.

**TALENTS:** The Collective Man has been trained in all five types of Martial Arts, and in Oriental Weapons. As an agent of the Chinese government he has also learned the Law Enforcement and Military Talents (but when only applied to China).

**BACKGROUND:** The five Tao-Yu brothers were born identical quintuplets to a family of Chinese farmers. One night, while meditating, the brothers discovered their ability to merge their bodies. The Chinese government soon heard of their abilities and took them into custody. Government scientists trained them to use their powers and they were made special operatives for the government.

Theoretically, the five brothers can draw upon the strength and abilities of any group, maybe even everyone on Earth. Unfortunately, the government has only taught them in terms of the Chinese people, limiting their power.

**PERSONALITY:** The five brothers and Collective Man all have the same basic personality. They are quiet and contemplative, and let their abilities and actions speak for them. They are humble, but they are very proud of their country and its people.



# With Great Power

## More International Super Heroes

by William Tracy

We continue our international tour of the Marvel Universe, this time stopping in the romantic street cafes of Paris, France, and the mysterious jungles of South America. Those places birthed heroes of note: Peregrine, the aerial guardian of France; and Defensor, the armored defender of Argentina.

### DEFENSOR

*Gabriel Carlos Dantes Sepulveda, construction worker, adventurer*

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	GD	EX	TY	TY	TY
(10)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(6)	(6)	(6)
RM						
(30)						

**Health:** 50/70  
**Karma:** 18  
**Resources:** GD (10)  
**Popularity:** 10 in South America, 1 elsewhere

### KNOWN POWERS

**Armored Exoskeleton:** Defensor's suit is modeled after the armor worn by ancient conquistadors. It is made of Vibranium (Incredible strength material) and provides him with Incredible protection against Physical, Energy, and Force attacks. The armor also increases Defensor's Strength by +2 CS. The armor is open at the face and has a built in cooling system.

**Shield:** Also made of Vibranium, this shield is considered Incredible strength material and provides Incredible protection against Physical, Energy, and Force attacks. However, even with the armor and shield, Defensor is subject to Slam and Stun attacks. Defensor can throw the shield up to four areas away, causing Remarkable Blunt Throwing Damage.

**TALENTS:** Defensor has a +1 CS when using the shield. His Reason is considered Good when dealing with engineering or architecture. He knows how to drive a variety of construction and excavation machinery.

**BACKGROUND:** Several years ago, Gabriel discovered an entrance to a secret underground passage while he was digging the foundation for an apartment building. Gabriel's foreman told him to ignore the passage. However, plagued by curiosity, Gabriel returned that night to explore it.

He soon became lost in the labyrinth of ancient tunnels that were filled with old machinery. He discovered a suit of armor, which was connected to a bank of machines. Trying it on, he discovered it fit him well, and he was quickly forced to learn its strengths.

Gabriel was attacked by members of a subterranean race. Fleeing from the fight, he was able to find his way back to the surface. He decided to keep the armor and use its power to become a guardian of the people of South America.

**PERSONALITY:** Defensor believes that he is a Latin charmer. He is always trying to sweep women off their feet. His chivalrous attitude toward women, however, sometimes comes across as chauvinistic. He especially has problems when working with female heroes; he is always trying to protect them.

### PEREGRINE

*Alan Racine, writer*

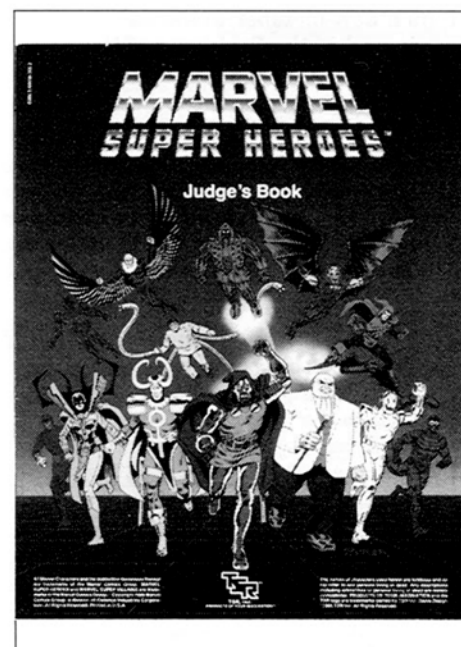
F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	GD	EX	GD	GD	TY
(20)	(20)	(10)	(20)	(10)	(10)	(6)

**Health:** 70  
**Karma:** 26  
**Resources:** GD (10)  
**Popularity:** 10 in France, 1 elsewhere

### KNOWN POWERS

**Flight:** Peregrine flies using glider wings and small jet turbines augmented by an anti-gravity generator. He can fly at Good Speed (eight areas a round), and he has enough fuel for the turbines for about an hour and a half of continuous flight.

**TALENTS:** Peregrine is an expert in savate, a form of French kick-boxing. He is allowed a +1CS to Fighting when using this combat form. In addition, he is given a +1CS to Agility and Strength



when he uses savate while flying. Peregrine also has the Writer and Journalist talents.

**BACKGROUND:** Nothing is known about Peregrine's life before he appeared in Marvel's *Contest of Champions* mini-series. The origin of his flight equipment is unknown, and he has not displayed any knowledge to indicate he built the equipment.

Peregrine apparently began his hero career while living in France. Recently he has been traveling, doing freelance assignments for Silver Sable and her organization, The Wild Pack.

**PERSONALITY:** Early in Peregrine's career he seemed arrogant and believed that he was the best when it came to aerial combat. He also was boastfully proud of his country, displaying a patriotism matched only by few others, such as Captain America.

However, Peregrine's personality has shifted in the past few years. He has become mercenary, and he no longer cares about limiting his operations to France, moving about where Sable's assignments or an adventure takes him. He has also mellowed; his arrogance has abated a little. □



# With Great Power

## Stalking The Wolfpack

by William Tracy

There are several interesting heroes in the Marvel Universe who possess no mutant abilities or super powers to aid them in their feats of bravery. These heroes can be used as player characters for an adventure or for an entire campaign.

The heroes won't have eyebeams, control over the weather, or other special abilities, but the adventure will be just as exciting.

One such group of heroes is The Wolfpack, the protectors of the South Bronx. These characters are scheduled to appear in the Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe #6, set for release in June, 1990.

### History

According to an ancient tale, there always will exist in the world 10 good and just men. Because of the universal laws of balance, in return there always will exist nine evil men devoid of compassion and love. The Nine, as they were called, were said to be extremely successful in their lives, since they could bribe ordinary men with power and money.

One of The Ten good men realized that something must be done to stop The Nine. The man knew that he must leave The Ten and become a renegade warrior to accomplish this. The man formed a group that became known as The Wolfpack, a title that suited them because they had to survive in the wilderness while being hunted by The Nine's followers.

Bringing the legend up to date, in the 1980s one of the members of The Wolfpack, Mr. Mack, came to New York City, which had become through the decades one of The Nine's major bases. He trained five teenagers in the art of hand-to-hand combat and schooled them in ways of the ninja. Mr. Mack seemingly was killed, but the five teenagers continued the struggle for good, waging a war against The Nine's activities in the South Bronx. These teenagers comprised the newest Wolfpack.

All pack members have the following talents: marksman, weaponmaster,

martial arts type A/B/C/D and E, acrobatics, tumbling, and first aid.

### Rafael Vega

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	GD	GD	EX	TY	GD	TY
(30)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(6)	(10)	(6)

**Health:** 70

**Karma:** 22

**Popularity:** 5/0 outside the Bronx

**Resources:** EX (20)

**Background:** Rafael is the best fighter in the group and leads the pack most of the time. He defers to Wheels's strategic skills when the situation calls for it. Rafael is the most emotional member of the team, which contributes to his short temper. However, he is extremely supportive of his friends, protective of his mother and siblings, and is very fond of Sharon, another pack member.

### Slag

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	GD	RM	EX	GD	GD	GD
(20)	(10)	(30)	(20)	(10)	(10)	(10)

**Health:** 80

**Karma:** 30

**Popularity:** 5/0 outside the Bronx

**Resources:** TY (6)

**Talents:** Slag's Reason should be considered Remarkable when dealing with Literature and Philosophy.

**Background:** Slag is the strongest member of the pack, but he is also the gentlest. He is a quiet, intense person who enjoys reading Shakespeare. He is the real willpower and voice of reason behind the pack.

### Sharon

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	IN	GD	RM	TY	GD	GD
(20)	(40)	(10)	(30)	(6)	(10)	(10)

**Health:** 100

**Karma:** 26

**Popularity:** 5/0 outside the Bronx

**Resources:** 4 (PR)

**Powers:** Sharon has Good, Lightning Speed, allowing her to move 4 areas per round. She also has a +5 on initiative rolls, if not surprised or ambushed. She cannot attempt to do power stunts since this is not really a super power.

**Background:** Sharon is the daughter of a black Vietnamese veteran and a Vietnamese woman. Her mother died while she was young, making her learn how to rely on herself. She is a proud young woman and determined to be successful. The loves in her life include her father, who she takes care of, Rafael, and her ability to run like the wind.

### Wheels Wolinski

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	TY	GD	EX	EX	EX	EX
(20)	(6)	(10)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)

**Health:** 56

**Karma:** 60

**Popularity:** 5/0 outside the Bronx

**Resources:** 4 (PR)

**Powers:** A bad traffic accident has confined Wheels to a wheelchair, hence his nickname. He can move 3 areas per round on flat surfaces; going down an incline he can move 4 areas. He is unable to travel over some types of terrain, but he can manage to traverse some obstacles, such as a flight of stairs.

Wheels has been known to build little gadgets into his wheelchair, including an oilslick release, rocket assist (boosting his movement to 6 areas per round), hydraulic brakes, smoke grenade launchers, and side shields (which provide Good protection for himself and anyone in his lap).

He often is accompanied by his trained alley cat, Nine-Tails. Nine-Tails wears studded bands on his legs, allowing him to do Typical edged damage.

**Talents:** In addition to the typical pack talents, Wheels also has the Leadership and Repair/Tinkering abilities.

**Background:** Wheels is reserved and shy, rarely letting his emotions show. He is the strategic and tactical brains behind the group.

*Continued on page 38*

With Great Power

Continued from page 9

Wheels has not let his handicap affect his outlook on life. He considers life precious. His father was killed by robbers, who Wheels tracked down. However, the young man was unable to kill the murderer, even though he wanted revenge.

Slippery Sam Weltsmerz

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	RM	GD	EX	GD	IN	RM
(20)	(30)	(10)	(20)	(10)	(40)	(30)

Health: 80  
Karma: 80  
Popularity: 5/0 outside the Bronx  
Resources: 5 (TY)

Powers: Slippery Sam was an expert at moving quietly, even in the dark. His favorite tactic was to slip behind an opponent and surprise him. Sam also

was good at climbing walls and blending in with crowds. These abilities operated at a Remarkable power rank.

Background: As a child, Sam was good at hiding and sneaking. He also learned to be an expert con man, able to charm nearly anyone if given a chance. He worked as a spy for the pack and served as the group's trickster, always ready to crack a joke or make a coy comment. Sam was killed while saving a young boy. ☐

# With Great Power

## The Great Lakes Avengers

by William Tracy

The MARVEL UNIVERSE™ is ever-expanding, and one such expansion is The Great Lakes Avengers, a lesser-known chapter of the Avengers which watches over the midwest. In addition to the new superheroes listed below, the team also has as members Hawkeye and Mockingbird.

### Big Bertha

a.k.a. Ashley Crawford

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
TY	TY	GD	RM	TY	GD	TY
(6)	(6)	(10)	(30)	(6)	(10)	(6)

**Health:** 52

**Karma:** 22

**Popularity:** 1/0 outside the Great Lakes

**Resources:** RM (30)

**Talents:** Unknown.

**Powers:** Alter Ego. Through some as of yet unknown means, model Ashley Crawford is able to increase her body in density and size. As Big Bertha, she has a weight and body size that rivals the Blob. While in this larger form, she has Amazing Body Armor against physical attacks and Good Leaping Ability.

As an established power stunt, Big Bertha can catch bullets or blunt weapons that are thrown at her in the fatty folds of her dense flesh. She can then expand her muscles, causing the caught projectiles to fly back at her assailant. To hit her assailant she must make a successful FEAT roll on the Good column. This attack only does a maximum of Good blunt throwing damage.

**Background:** Very little is known about Big Bertha's background except that she is a successful model in her Ashley Crawford identity. She has contacts in the fashion world. She has not demonstrated the use of any particular Talents.

### Mister Immortal

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	EX	GD	EX	TY	GD	PR
(30)	(20)	(10)	(20)	(6)	(10)	(4)

**Health:** 80

**Karma:** 20

**Popularity:** 1/0 outside the Great Lakes

**Resources:** Unknown

**Talents:** Martial Arts B and E, Acrobatics and Tumbling

**Powers:** Immortality, Unearthly rank.

Berserker, Good rank. This power allows him to add a +1 CS to Fighting and Strength when it is in effect.

**Background:** Mister Immortal's origin and background are unknown. He is slightly mad and suicidal, not hesitating to take wild risks in a fight.

This unbalanced state of mind is probably caused—at least in part—by his Immortality powers. He is short tempered, and he usually enters a berserker rage when fighting someone who has just "killed" him.

### Dinah Soar

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	RM	TY	GD	TY	TY	GD
(10)	(30)	(6)	(10)	(6)	(6)	(10)

**Health:** 56

**Karma:** 22

**Popularity:** 1/0 outside the Great Lakes

**Resources:** Unknown

**Talents:** Unknown.

**Powers:** Flight. She can maintain Typical air speed because of her wings.

Sonic Generation, Excellent rank. Her hyper-sonics also can be used to disorient or calm a person.

**Background:** Dinah Soar's past and origin are a mystery. Her odd physical appearance could indicate that she is a mutant or a non-human. She is not able to communicate verbally.

She seems to have a fondness for Mr. Immortal.

### Doorway

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	TY	TY	EX	TY	GD	IN
(10)	(6)	(6)	(20)	(6)	(10)	(40)

**Health:** 42

**Karma:** 56

**Popularity:** 1/0 outside the Great Lakes

**Resources:** Unknown

**Talents:** Unknown

**Powers:** Flight, Feeble rank. He is not able to carry anyone while he flies.

Teleport Others. Doorway can somehow cause his body to become a gateway between two points in space. Only normal-sized living beings can move through Doorway to use him as a teleportation gateway. When he is in his gateway form he only can be harmed by mystic, mental, and energy attacks. He cannot move or take any other actions while people are using him as a teleportal. This ability has a Remarkable rank power.

**Background:** Unknown

### Flatman

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
TY	GD	TY	EX	EX	GD	GD
(6)	(10)	(6)	(20)	(20)	(10)	(10)

**Health:** 42

**Karma:** 40

**Popularity:** 1/0 outside the Great Lakes

**Resources:** Unknown

**Talents:** Unknown.

**Powers:** Enlongation, Unearthly rank. Plasticity, Remarkable rank.

Body Armor, Remarkable protection against physical attacks.

Duo-Dimension, Remarkable rank. Flatman truly is flat.

**Background:** Flatman is the Deputy Leader of the Great Lakes Avengers. Nothing else is known about the hero.

# The ABCs Of Acronyms

Filling Out the Initials in Superhero and Spy Games

by Rob Nicholls

**Game Master:** "Okay, just as you open the safe, a half dozen BLADE agents swarm into the room, guns blazing."

**Player:** "What does BLADE stand for?"

**Game Master:** "Uh . . . um . . . you have no idea. Yeah, that's it, no idea." (Combat takes place wherein all of the enemy agents are subdued.)

**Persistent Player:** "I'm going to ask one of these guys what BLADE stands for."

**Game Master:** (rolling dice to make it look good) "The agent says, 'Forget it, I ain't telling you anything!'"

**Annoying Player:** "Okay then, I'll just use some truth serum (and/or mental powers) to find out."

**Desperate Game Master:** (quickly rolling dice) "Oops, it looks like the agent has bitten down on a hidden poison capsule. You'll get nothing out of him."

**Really Annoying Player:** "You did that on purpose! I bet you just don't know what it stands for and don't want to admit it!"

**Annoyed Game Master:** "Oh yeah? Well, maybe and maybe not. Anyway, you don't have time to worry about it."

**Annoying Player:** "Yeah? Why not?"

**Smiling Game Master:** "Because 50 more agents in assault armor are coming through the walls."

Part of the fun in running a campaign for espionage or superhero games is using the exotically-named organizations. ORION and WEB of the TOP SECRET/S.I. game, and many others are ingenious acronyms for elaborate organizations.

However, coming up with a good acronym is not always easy. Usually a Game Master will come up with the acronym first and then struggle to find the proper words to fit it. To help ease that struggle, here is a game aid, a list of words that might fill the gaps in your acronyms. Do you have all the words for HAMMER except for the A and the M? Just look at the proper sections of the list and see if anything sparks your interest. This is not a complete list of possible words, but it contains many useful words that can

help you come up with others. For example, the word judicial is on the list. If it is close to, but not exactly what you are looking for, just check out any dictionary or thesaurus for similar words. In this case, you'll find the words judge, judgment, judicature, judiciary, and judicious all close by.

Don't forget prepositions such as and, of, and the. These can be used in the name of the organization, yet do not necessarily have to be included in the acronym. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is called the FBI, and not the FBOI.

Also remember that more than the first letter of a word may be used in the acronym. An example of this would be NORAD, which stands for NORTH American Defense.

Using this guide, the next time that annoying player asks what BLADE stands for, quickly rattle off "Brotherhood of Lawlessness, Anarchy, and Defiance." No doubt he will be so stunned by your quick and impressive response, he won't even notice the agents coming up behind his character.

## Acronym Word Listings

Abandon, Able, Abnormal, Abolition, Abominable, Accord, Acerbic, Acid, Activities, Administration, Advanced, Advocate, Aerospace, Agency, Aid, Air, Alliance, Alternate, Anarchy, Angry, Annihilation, Armageddon, Armament, Armor, Army, Artful, Artificial, Assassins, Assembly, Association, Authority, Auxiliary

Balance, Ballistics, Basic, Battalion, Battle, Base, Beasts, Beggar, Believers, Berserk, Best, Bestial, Betray, Better, Best, Bewitch, Beyond, Big, Biological, Bionic, Biowarfare, Block, Bloom, Brigade, Brotherhood, Bureau

Cabal, Calamity, Carnage, Cartel, Catastrophe, Cats, Central, Chaos, Chemical, Chief, Civil, Clandestine, Classified, Coalition, Cold, Combat, Combine, Command, Committee, Company, Confederacy, Corps, Council, Counter-Espionage, Counter-Intelligence, Covert, Criminal, Cure, Cute, Cybernetic.

Day, Damage, Danger, Daring, Dark, Dastardly, Death, Decadent, Decay, Decent, Deception, Decimation, Defense, Defiance, Delvers, Demolition, Department, Destruction, Devastation, Development, Disarray, Disaster, Diseased, Discord, Discrimination, Disembodied, Disfunction, Disgrace, Disorder, Division, Doctrine, Dolts, Dominion, Double-Dealing, Draconian, Dragons, Dreadful, Dutiful, Dynamic

East, Educated, Efficient, Effluent, Elite, Employment, Energy, Enforcement, Enterprise, Environmental, Espionage, Ethics, Evil, Execution, Experimental, Expert, Exploration, External, Extortion, Extreme

Face, Facility, Faction, Federal, Federation, Fellowship, Firearms, First, Fistful, Force, Foreign, Foundation, Fraternity, Fraud, Freedom, Front, Functional

Gadfly, Gaelic, Gala, Galaxy, Gale, General, Genetic, Genocide, Geological, Geothermal, Global, Good, Government, Grade, Group, Guard, Guild

Habitual, Hack, Hags, Hair, Hand, Happenings, Hate, Havoc, Hazard, Headquarters, Headway, Healthy, Heat, Hectic, Help, Hermit, Heroism, Homicide, Honor, Horror, Hour, Huge, Humans, Humble, Humiliators, Husky, Hybrids, Hydro, Hyper, Hysterical

Idea, Ideal, Ill-gotten, Illuminati, Independent, Individual, Industrial, Initiative, Inquest, Installation, Institute, Insurgence, Intelligence, Internal, International, Intimidation, Investigation, Irascible, Irish, Irreverent, Italian, Ivy League

Jackal, Jail, Jacques, Japanese, Jape, Jeopardy, Jerks, Jihad, Jingo, Jinx, Job, Joint, Judicial, Junior, Junta, Jurisdiction, Justice, Juvenile

Kendo, Key, Kids, Killing, Kin, Kindness, Kinetic, King, Knaves, Knight, Knowledge, Kung Fu



Labor, Ladies, Laotian, Large, Last, Law, League, Legal, Legion, Liberation, Life, Limit, Lodge, Loose, Love, Lowly, Loyalty

Machine, Magical, Major, Malice, Manslaughter, Marine, Martial, Master, Mechanics, Medical, Mega, Menace, Mental, Metropolitan, Military, Minute, Month, Movement, Murder, Mutant, Mutual, Mysterious, Myth

National, Natural, Naval, Nazi, Necromancy, Nemesis, Network, Neutral, New, Nexus, Nocturnal, Normal, North, Nonmutant, Nuclear, Nuts

Object, Observation, Office, Official, Olympic, Omni, Onslaught, Operation, Order, Ordinance, Organization, Orphans, Outreach

Pack, Paradox, Parahuman, Paranormal, Paratrooper, Partisan, Party, Patient, Peace, People, Perfect, Philosophy, Physical, Police, Political, Potential, Power, Prison, Private, Pro-

fessional, Protection, Public, Punishment, Pure, Pyrotechnics

Quadrant, Quality, Quantity, Quarter, Quasar, Quash, Queer, Quest, Questionable, Quick, Quirk, Quorum

Rabid, Radar, Radical, Radioactive, Rampaging, Rebellion, Reconnaissance, Reform, Regiment, Region, Regulatory, Religious, Republic, Research, Resistance, Resource, Response, Retaliation, Retribution, Revolutionary, Right, Robbers, Rogue, Roman, Runaway

Sabotage, Sad, Saints, Scare, Scheming, Scientific, Scotch, Scouts, Sea, Second, Secret, Section, Security, Service, Sisterhood, Situation, Slime, Society, Source, South, Space, Special, Squad, Staff, State, Stellar, Strange, Strategic, Strikeforce, Subterfuge, Superhuman, Support, Supreme, Surveillance, Syndicate, System

Tactical, Taskforce, Team, Telepathic, Terrorist, Testing, Thermonuclear,

Thinker, Think Tank, Threat, Time, Top, Toxic, Trade, Training, Tragic, Travel, Treaty, True

Ultra, Unconventional, Undead, Underdog, Union, Unit, United, Universal, Unknown, Unnatural, Unstoppable, Unusual, Utilitarian, Utopia

Valkyries, Vandalism, Vanguard, Venom, Veteran, Vicious, Victory, Vigilance, Vigilante, Vile, Villainous, Vindicate, Violence, Volatile, Voluntary, Vulgar, Vultures

Wanton, Ward, Warfare, Waste, Water, Weapons, Week, Weird, West, Wisdom, Work, World, Wrecker, Wretched, Wrong-doer, Wyrms, Wyvern

Xanadu, Xanthic, Xeno

Yankees, Year, Yellow, Yeomen, Yield, Yogi, Yorkshire, Youth, Yule

Zeal, Zephyr, Zesty, Zodiac, Zone, Zoological



# With Great Power

## Setting the Stage

by Steven E. Schend

*Hello, my name is Steven Schend, and I'm a games editor here at TSR, Inc. I'm also a confirmed comic book fan and unreserved devotee of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. If you also are a fan of the game, or of superheroes in general, I think you'll enjoy With Great Power. The column will feature LOTS of information for use in superhero games. I want players and referees to get the most out of their heroes and villains. I also want this column to reflect what you—the reader—want to hear about. Feel free to respond to anything you read here. I want your opinions about the game, the topic of the month, and what you'd like to see next issue. Please send all letters to the following address:*

Mr. Steven Schend/Great Responses  
c/o POLYHEDRON™ Newszine  
P.O. Box 515  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

## Choosing Your World

Your campaign world certainly will have a direct and immeasurable impact on your games. The world you choose, whether it is the "official" Marvel Earth or your own original world, will determine the game's flavor, tone, character role-playing opportunities, and pre-game preparation time for the players and for the referee.

### Marvel Earth

If you read the comics or play the game, you know what planet I'm talking about. This is the place where the Avengers patrol both coasts, the X-men died and became legends, and everyone who's anyone is a mutant (although many people aren't happy about this). Placing your campaign here is simple: pick up the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game and your campaign is off to a grand start. New heroes can race to the rescue, joined by Captain America or Spider Man; your fledgling team might have to face off against the Absorbing Man—it's them or no one because Thor

has been detained in Asgard and the Avengers are away fighting Thanos.

A Marvel Earth campaign can change simply due to changes in the Marvel Universe; many New York heroes' lives were altered drastically when the Inferno broke loose over Times Square.

There are hundreds of pregenerated characters available, along with many graphic materials (comic books) you can use easily. Players can see exactly what Annihilus or the Four Freedoms Plaza looks like, and the referee doesn't have to spend time sketching them. There are literally thousands of adventure plots available from comics and games. What fan wouldn't want to role-play the Masters of Evil Assault on Avengers Mansion? Or the epic battle between the X-men and the Imperial Guard on the Blue Area of the Moon?

Unfortunately, players already know about the characters, and how to defeat the villains. A campaign without any mysteries won't last long. Also, players tend not to think of new ways to use a character's powers, but instead rely on the same old tricks all the time.

### Hero Earth

This is the world as the referee sees it and presents it to the players. It is Earth, probably in the present day, and the era of the superhero has arrived. Current events might play a large role in this setting, and games tend to center on home towns. Minuteman, the super-human Son of Liberty, lives and operates in Concord, Massachusetts rather than Boston (probably because the referee knows Concord better than Boston). The referee and the players set the tone, atmosphere, history, and hero demographics of this unique world.

This campaign always has its mysteries. They might range from "What can that villain really do?" to "Why would that particular villain steal that shipment of experimental tissue restorer?" The participants get the chance to make their own comic book ideas come to life.

However, your own unique world requires long preparation time: character creation, map generation, adventure design, and world history all must be

started from scratch. Consistently role playing brand new characters can be quite a task. Campaigns tend to be limited to areas which are familiar to the players, and many new players will create heroes that are so similar to published heroes that they'd be better off playing the pregenerated versions.

### Pseudo-Marvel Earth

This is a happy medium for creating superhero campaign worlds. This version of earth resembles our own and the Marvel Universe's Earth, but is unique. Marvel's *What If?* comic books and Roger Moore's adventure, *The Gates of What If?* best exemplify this type of campaign world. To create your own, simply take your favorite elements from the Marvel Universe, fold in your own unique characters, locations, and events, and you have a new campaign world.

This alternate Marvel Earth is the ideal setting for your campaign because it allows you to draw upon all the advantages of the other two options. You have a familiar, well-detailed setting for your characters, complete with a long history and plenty of juicy adventure plots. You can use published heroes and villains as ready-made NPCs, but you can ignore anything in the comic books that you don't want to incorporate into your game. New villains can come and go, keeping the players guessing. Old villains can return with new costumes and new powers to keep the players guessing. Cities can be built just by piecing together the maps from the boxed rules sets and modules; these generic streets could be part of any city whether your campaign uses Milwaukee, Boston, Dallas, or anywhere else. Dedicated city builders should consider the *Deluxe City Campaign Set*, which includes 196 pages of information on New York, four huge poster maps, and 15 ready-to-use scenarios to start your campaign off with a bang.

*Go ahead and make the most of your campaign. Now if we only can get Loki to stop cheating on his die rolls!*





# With Great Power

“Hey—This Next One’ll Kill Ya!”

by Steven E. Schend

This month, I thought I’d bring in the spirit of April Fool’s Day and present a villain suited for the event. This fellow you’re about to meet is equally at home playing the fool as playing the cold-blooded killer. His nails and knives are as sharp as his wit, and make sure you laugh at all his jokes!

Harlequin can be played as an insane, foolish villain out to humiliate heroes and have fun while doing it. He can also be a harsh nemesis, impossible to predict and difficult to stop when he’s on a rampage; Harlequin doesn’t play by the laws of the city. The only logic he follows is his own, and his logic is in short supply.

Keep the letters coming in and let me know what you think of Harlequin. I’d like some feedback on what you want to see—more new heroes and villains, or plots, sub-plots, and scenarios for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. ‘Til next time . . .

## Patient Record

#JG-975683-5427-1A

Mr. Roger Tyson—Case Study Patient  
Classification: Schizophrenic Paranoid  
with Persistent Fantasy Identity  
(*Harlequin*);

**Considered Dangerous—Physical  
Restraints Recommended.**

**Dr. Rachel Echaus, Attending  
Physician**

**Initial Patient Observation and  
Interview: 13 October 1990**

Patient is led in by two orderlies, his arms bound in a straightjacket. He talks animatedly to his escorts, telling bawdy jokes regarding his latest killing spree. He smiles and begins to giggle at the obvious discomfort of the orderlies; his malicious reaction is a clear sign of some awareness of his personal actions and a social response to those actions. Contrary to Dr. Joseph’s theories, lack of self-awareness of his immediate reality is far from Mr. Tyson’s problem.

Mr. Tyson is settled in a chair across from me, his eyes looking me over a

number of times. He has, at this time, become quiet, almost passive, as he stares at me. His features are disturbing from a close perspective; his remarkable appearance takes many people aback at first glance. When people view him up close, they suddenly realize these features are not the result of makeup. His skin seems a purplish-gray tone everywhere, save the left side of his face which is bleached of all color. His hair is a deep black with an odd highlight of blue, worn long and reaching six inches past his shoulders. His eyes are most remarkable: at the current time, his eyes are completely white—no visible pupils or irises. Examinations show that his eyes change to a dark blue when he is emotionally excited or stressed.

Enclosed is a doctor’s examination detailing the extreme physical variations of Mr. Tyson’s body. From the data collected therein, as well as from my own observations, I must disclaim any theories that this man is a mutant—a specific and easily delineated visible mutation (the left side of his face) never has been found among variant physical mutations. I concur with Dr. Mathus’ hypothesis that some random chemical mutagens altered Mr. Tyson’s body to its current state; unfortunately, she cannot isolate the random mutagens in his body to possibly return him to normal. It is our current theory that these chemical mutagens are the main contributing factor to Mr. Tyson’s psychoses. Until that time, it is imperative that Mr. Tyson be kept here under close watch. I am to be his physician during this time, and I shall try to bring Mr. Tyson to at least a more controllable level of sanity.

I look up from my notes and find him staring at me with his soulless eyes, a wide emotionless grin on his face. He immediately begins to rock himself back and forth, singing limericks filled with sexual innuendos about me; he’s attempting to take control of the sessions from the start. These sessions will not be easy on either of us. I shall now turn over videotapes and transcripts of our interview. Mr. Tyson is a fascinating case study, and certainly one most in need of our help; I am sure I will not succumb to his persuasive arguments

for insanity over reason as did my predecessor, Dr. Josephs.

*“Why, good afternoon, doctor! And what a fine doctor you are. Anytime you wish, my dear, we can play doctor all you want! My, isn’t it nice to be back among padded walls, padded heads, and padded paper? I do love the outside, but this place has ambiance all its own! You know, I met up with my old chum Dr. Josephs today, and he seemed in a most lucid frame of mind . . . perhaps it was just the light glinting off his shining scalp.”*

“Mr. Tyson, I’d li— . . .”

**‘I’m not Tyson! I’m the Harlequin!’**

[Patient has involuntarily stiffened in his chair, his arms tensing and pulling away from his chest despite the restraints. Eyes are immediately shifting to blue. Despite the presence of orderlies, it is best to just avoid agitation of the patient unless behind a protective screen. Patient clears throat and begins again.]

*“\*Ahem\* Pardon me for the outburst, but we just simply can’t stand to be confused with our dearly departed Roger. ‘Tis a failing of mine, I admit it, Rachel. I may call you Rachel, can’t I? Of course I can. We’re going to be great friends, I can tell. Oh joy, you seem so much more at ease than Edgar ever was—perhaps you were raised in a more tolerant era than he and able to appreciate the grand concepts of true comedy. Imagine! The man absolutely worshipped the theater, but he never truly appreciated the intricacies and subtle dramatic nuances of the all-mighty Marx Brothers or that immortal trinity—Moe, Larry, and Curly! The only true art we could agree on was the French fabliau, though Edgar certainly never saw the grand truth that this was life as it truly was! The poor fuddy-dud, now he only agrees with me in form, not function. What’s that, you ask? Why, I’ll tell you, yes I will—my goodness, where are my manners? Here I sit, chattering my lavender face off, and I don’t let the lovely doctor get a*

*word in edgewise! Well, I stand . . . er, sit . . . chastised! Speak your peace, milady, that we may bask in the melodious and sweet sounds of thy voice as it caresses the air . . .*

"Well, uh, Harlequin, you certainly can be a charmer. Could you tell—"

*"Oh, my heart, it flutters 'way beyond the clouds! Would that I were a swallow to follow it! Thank you for the compliment, Rachel my dear, I'll treasure our times together always. But, now that we're growing so close, I'll need to know more about you. Have to ask, you know, just so we can get Mother's approval before the wedding. Now, where did you come from? Your mother, right? Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! Oh, Harlequin boy, you're such a card! But seriously, darling, where did you go to school? Are you married? What am I saying? Of course not—our fates are intertwined, and dear Rachel has waited o'er the years for our meeting. She cannot have wed another for she loves me, of course! Don't you, dear? Now, let's hurry off to pick out the china and silver patterns. Oh dear, I must have time to work on my jokes for the wedding! Do you think a November ceremony would be lovely out on the lawn?"*

[Patient would not sit still or allow any coherent questioning. Session canceled after an additional ½ hour with little constructive therapy occurring. Further transcripts will be edited, containing only sections relevant to therapy.]

## Harlequin

<b>F</b>	EX(20)
<b>A</b>	UN(100)
<b>S</b>	EX(20)
<b>E</b>	IN(40)
<b>R</b>	PR(4)/ formerly EX(20)
<b>I</b>	RM(30)
<b>P</b>	IN(40)
<b>HEALTH:</b>	180
<b>KARMA:</b>	74
<b>RESOURCES:</b>	FE(2)
<b>POPULARITY:</b>	-15

**Real Name:** Roger Tyson

**Occupation:** Former chemist, former comedian, professional criminal

**Legal Status:** Citizen of the U.S. with a criminal record; declared legally insane

**Identity:** Known to local and federal law enforcement officials and mental health practitioners in Wisconsin

**Place of Birth:** Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Marital Status:** Single

**Known Relatives:** No known living relatives

**Base of Operations:** Mobile

**Past Group Affiliations:** None

**Present Group Affiliations:** None

## KNOWN POWERS:

**Regeneration:** Harlequin regains 40 points of Health each minute, or 4 points per turn, if he is allowed to rest.

**Leaping:** Harlequin has Amazing leaping abilities, covering 50' per leap.

**Lightning Speed:** Harlequin can move at up to eight areas per round, accelerating to Amazing speed within one round.

**Body Armor:** Harlequin's body can become malleable, effecting Excellent Body Armor for physical impacts; his pliable form also allows him to easily bounce away.

**"Cream Pies":** Harlequin generates and throws cream pies with impunity. These pies induce a variety of Sensory Alteration effects upon impact with a victim's face. Body Armor is ineffective against Harlequin's pies unless it prevents any part of the pie from contact with the victim's skin, mouth, or nose. The target must make an Endurance feat roll against Excellent Intensity. Failure indicates any of the following effects:

- Blindness—the victim is blinded for 1d20 rounds.

- Fear/Illusionary hallucinations—the target is afraid of illusionary objects, people, or scenarios, and will flee in panic as quickly as possible. The hallucinations last for 3d12 rounds.

- Humor—The victim suddenly bursts into fits of giggling and laughing. The target will not attack, but sits happily laughing for 2d12 rounds. During this time, the target feels no pain even if attacked.

- Sleep—the target immediately falls asleep for 1d20 rounds.

- Paralysis—victims are paralyzed, and incapable of any physical action for 2d12 rounds. This pie effect does not inhibit any mental powers from functioning.

**TALENTS:** Scientist-Chemist

**CONTACTS:** None known

## ADDITIONAL NOTES:

**ROLE-PLAYING NOTES:** Harlequin is best played off-the-cuff. He does not plan or think about his actions. He simply reacts to impulses, whether good or bad. There is never rhyme nor reason to his actions, but there is always the insistence on having the spotlight and making people laugh. If people don't laugh, he'll give them something to "laugh" about.

## HISTORY

Roger Tyson was employed with a chemical research firm as a chemist with a background in the identification and study of controlled substances. On his own time, Tyson aspired to a career as a stand-up comedian, a calling to which he was miserably suited. The origin of his identity as the Harlequin is unknown at the current time, though his first appearance coincides with the disappearance of Roger Tyson, as well as an indeterminate amount of experimental pain-killing drugs and other controlled substances.

Harlequin first came to the public's attention in 1989 when he embarked on a ten-day killing spree, slashing peoples' throats from ear to ear and cheerfully bounding away over the rooftops. At this time, Harlequin was simply a man in a medieval jester's costume with a domino mask on his face and a razor in his hand. He was apprehended by local heroes in Madison, Wisconsin, and committed to the Mendotta Mental Health Institute. His defense at the time of his arrest was that "the fools wouldn't laugh at my jokes, but they're all smiling now!"

After his committal to the hospital, Harlequin was identified as Tyson, but refused to answer to any name other than Harlequin. During his eight month stay, his body went through a number of inexplicable changes. His muscles grew at tremendous rates until stabilizing at the level of an Olympic athlete. His skin pigmentation radically changed to a purplish-gray tone, except the left side of his face which bleached itself of all color, becoming stark white. Though he did not register in any previous tests as a mutant, he had a supra-normal ability to leap great distances and land just as easily. As his body mutated further, he began exhibiting

*Continued on page 31*



## With Great Power

*Continued from page 24*

strange, metahuman abilities such as incredible agility and speed, and an amazing metabolic rate which allowed for phenomenal healing abilities.

Harlequin also gained the power to generate a "cream pie," with hallucinogenic properties. He seemed immune to his pies' effects, but they induced temporary hallucinations, blindness, and states of severe emotional stress in victims subjected to a "pie in the face." Attempts to analyze the substance of

the pies failed, as the pies too quickly dissolved into harmless gasses. Further, Harlequin would not cooperate when discussing his "culinary" talent, so researchers gave up.

Harlequin escaped the institute after eight months with the aid of Dr. Edgar Josephs. Dr. Josephs is now a patient at the same institute, his sanity shattered by constant contact and interviews with the former Mr. Tyson. After a number of rampages across the country, Harlequin was again incarcerated.

He has abandoned the jester's suit for a "more contemporary costume—sets off

the color of my eyes, don't you think?" His new costume consists of a white dinner jacket and tails worn over a black spandex jogging suit, a neon blue stripe running up the right side of his outfit. He has kept the jester's shoes, bright gaudy blue slippers with curled toes and bells. He has fixed his costume with gadgets, such as a time release gas bomb in his shoes, sonic stun grenades in the shape of small jingle bells, wind-up bomb cars, and other lethal toys. Despite his penchant for foolishness, Harlequin is a cunning and dangerous foe. □

# With Great Power

## Contest of Vengeance

by Steven E. Schend

Welcome back to *With Great Power*. Last summer, Marvel Comics pitted nearly all their heroes against unfamiliar or unknown villains to surprising effect in the "Acts of Vengeance" crossover series. To celebrate POLYHEDRON™ Newszine's new monthly status, we're introducing our "Contest of Vengeance." We are presenting fans of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES role-playing game four new villains for use in their own game worlds. The character roughs appear at the end of this column.

Amnesia victims all, these villains need histories and backgrounds, and Newszine readers can help them! Simply examine the characters' powers and abilities, and provide us with histories, role-playing notes, secret identities, and other details to fully bring these characters to life.

### Guidelines

- Entries must contain full details on either three or four of the villains given below; entries will be disqualified if there are less than three villains accounted for. The number of villains detailed (three or four) will not affect the judging, as each entry will be judged separately. Further, your name and membership number must appear on each page of your villain histories—in the event pages get separated during judging.
- These characters are designed for the Marvel Universe and can be the results of any plots or sub-plots published by Marvel Comics or by TSR, Inc (in MARVEL SUPER HEROES game products). They can have original histories, but there should be at least one specific tie-in to the Marvel Universe. These characters can become a part of any major storyline, but please:
  - \* Don't bring back Phoenix or any other dead characters. Of course, we'll defer to the age-old comics rule: no body found, no death here . . .

\* Unless some established character has a suitably shady past, don't introduce Peter Parker's long, lost brother as Villain X. And despite his own very shady past, none of these villains are related to Wolverine—trust me!

\* If your villains' origins rely on old, obscure comic book references, please supply us with the titles and issue numbers for correlation. If you've come up with a great origin, I might want to read where these ideas originated.

\* If you choose to alter established supporting characters (Willie Lumpkin, Stevie Hunter, Alicia Storm, etc.), find characters who fit the general motif of the villain, or find a very good reason why these characters now act and dress this way.

- Entries must contain the following information:

**Villains' names and misc. information** (marital status, legal status, relatives, etc.)

**Explanations** (within History/Background) of any ability scores higher than normal human levels (PR-GD)

**Role-playing notes** on each villain  
**Contacts and equipment** for each villain

### The Fine Print

- All entries are considered submissions to the POLYHEDRON Newszine.
  - Entries should be typed or printed legibly (double spacing please!). Computer printouts are acceptable if they can be easily read. A separate letter/disclosure form (containing your name, address, and age) should be included with each submission. If you want your entry returned, be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- Mail to: Contest of Vengeance/  
Mr. Steven E. Schend, c/o  
POLYHEDRON Newszine,  
P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI  
53147.**

### Deadlines, Etc.

- Entries must be postmarked by July 1, 1991, to be eligible for this contest.
- All entries will be reviewed by staff members and myself and judged on: **originality, ties with the Marvel Universe, details and completeness of each character, plausibility of overall history and behavior (role-playing).**

### Prizes!

The winners of this contest will be announced in a future POLYHEDRON Newszine. The best entries will be published.

**First Place:** New MARVEL SUPER HEROES game Basic Set: Newly revised and updated for the '90s, this new set incorporates the best of MARVEL SUPER HEROES game Basic and Advanced Rules sets for new gamers and old fans alike. This boxed set has all the rules needed for playing the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game and gives the latest gaming statistics for all your favorite heroes and villains. Release date: May 1991. **Plus—** MSL1/X-Terminate: Factor Three is back after 20 years and they want to make X-Factor x-tinct! This high-powered module pits your heroes against some of their most powerful enemies . . . and some of the most unexpected enemies of all. Release date: June 1991. **Plus—** MSL2/Warlord of Baluur: The first of a trilogy of adventures based on the Negative Zone, Blastaar escapes from the anti-matter universe and begins his siege of Earth. He's searching for the Cosmic Control Rod, and only the Fantastic Four can stop him! Release date: August 1991.

**Second Place:** MSL1/X-Terminate and MSL2/Warlord of Baluur.

**Third Place:** MSL2/Warlord of Baluur.

Best of all, the prizes will be autographed.

## The Villains

### Desperado

**F** REMARKABLE (30)  
**A** EXCELLENT (20)  
**S** EXCELLENT (20)  
**E** REMARKABLE (30)  
**R** REMARKABLE (30)  
**I** EXCELLENT (20)  
**P** GOOD (10)

**Health:** 100

**Karma:** 60

#### POWERS:

- Light Generation: Remarkable ability  
 —Creation of Light "Horse" (Control EX; Speed EX; Body GD; Protection FE), allows Flight (Poor air speed)  
 —Light "Guns" (range 4 areas) with Remarkable energy damage  
 —Light "Lasso" of Excellent strength; entangles on yellow FEAT roll
- Heightened Attacks: 4 shooting attacks per round

Limitation: The forms listed above are the only forms Desperado can generate; these forms are very specific to the Old West—Desperado could not generate a Light Uzi instead of his standard Light Colt .45.

#### TALENTS:

- Weapons Skill: Guns (+1CS)
- Weapons Skill: Lasso (+1CS to grapple)
- Performer

### Kaleidoscope

**F** EXCELLENT (20)  
**A** REMARKABLE (30)  
**S** GOOD (10)  
**E** EXCELLENT (20)  
**R** GOOD (10)  
**I** REMARKABLE (30)  
**P** GOOD (10)

**Health:** 80

**Karma:** 80

#### POWERS:

- "Kaleidoscope Effect:" Kaleidoscope can generate a field of whirling, sparkling, colorful light energy in a flat oval plane—these ovals can vary in size from 3' long and 2' wide to 9' long to 6' wide. This villainess uses these fields to the following effects:  
 —Force Field Generation: Incredible durability

—Teleport Self: Amazing range and ability (the K field does not appear in this case; Kaleidoscope simply disappears)

—Teleport Others: Remarkable range and ability

Limitation: Her Force Field is only a 1 area effect.

#### TALENTS:

- Martial Arts A

### Mongrel

**F** EXCELLENT (20)  
**A** REMARKABLE (30)  
**S** GOOD (10)  
**E** INCREDIBLE (40)  
**R** POOR (4)  
**I** REMARKABLE (30)  
**P** INCREDIBLE (40)

**Health:** 100

**Karma:** 74

#### POWERS:

- Fur/Body Armor: Poor
- Lightning Speed: Amazing
- Claws: Good edged damage, Good material strength
- Tracking: Incredible ability to follow scents
- Resistance to Cold: Incredible
- Extra Attacks: Remarkable attacks with claws

#### TALENTS:

- Martial Arts B: Claw attacks at Incredible ability
- Professional Skills: Veterinary Medicine

### Sidestep

**F** EXCELLENT (20)  
**A** AMAZING (50)  
**S** GOOD (10)  
**E** UNEARTHLY (100)  
**R** EXCELLENT (20)  
**I** UNEARTHLY (100)  
**P** REMARKABLE (30)

**Health:** 180

**Karma:** 150

#### POWERS:

- "Ghost Self:" Sidestep generates an illusionary duplicate of herself anywhere from 1 area to 2 miles away from her actual position (Illusionary Duplication of Incredible rank); this illusionary "ghost self" duplicates all her actual movements and sounds. Sidestep's actual physical

body is invisible to normal vision and heat sensors, but she can be tracked psionically and by scent. She can teleport from her actual position to exchange places with her illusionary self with a Green FEAT roll (Teleportation-Self with Remarkable ability).

Limitations: Sidestep cannot control her power, and her physical body is always invisible in its actual position; her body is only seen as her "ghost self." Sidestep can only generate one illusionary duplicate of herself at one time; this duplicate is still generated if Sidestep is asleep or unconscious.

#### TALENTS:

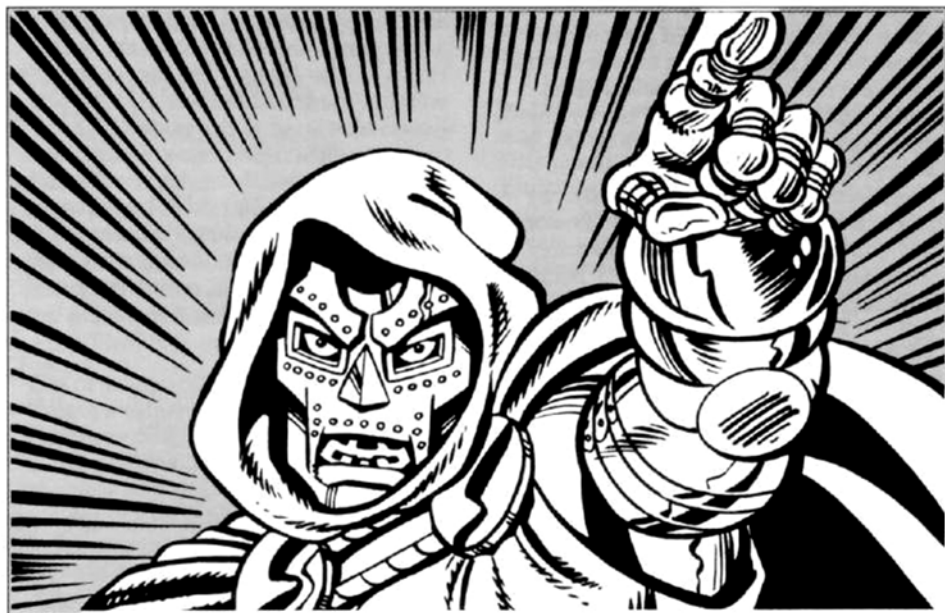
- Martial Arts D
- Acrobatics
- Law Enforcement
- Crime

Well, folks, there you have them. These villains are yours to play with now, and we'll be waiting for your explanations of how they came to be. A few questions must be answered: How did Sidestep develop a career in Law Enforcement and Crime? Desperado was in show business? Was Mongrel a veterinarian? Have fun with this contest, people, and we'll see you next month.



# With Great Power

## The Doom Wars, Part I



by Steven E. Schend

From some heroes' perspectives there are two Dooms too many—although the loyal citizens of Latveria are largely unaware of their multiple monarchs.

No more! In an alternate Marvel world two handfuls of champions have the power to affect Doomdom. The heroes involved, and background on the Dooms, appear in this issue. Pick a side and a character, find a Game Master, and wait for next issue for the war to begin.

### Dooming Them All

Victor Von Doom has been a deposed monarch for several years, his throne usurped by none other than Dr. Doom himself! Victor has woven scheme upon scheme during his life, with one of those plans going awry. His goal to live beyond his own death worked too well.

Victor programmed one of his robots to imprint his own memories and brain engrams onto his adopted son, Kristoff. When Victor was presumed dead, the robot followed its programming and Kristoff essentially *became* Dr. Doom.

Kristoff (referred to as Doom II) has inherited Victor Von Doom's arrogant pride, a serious flaw. And Doom II halt-

ed the memory transfer process before it was complete, thus gaining only partial knowledge of his foes and the world around him.

For example, Kristoff only has Victor's early memories of the Fantastic Four, plus his own more recent experiences; for chronology buffs, Kristoff Doom's memories cover Doom's origin to Fantastic Four #10. Once, he failed to destroy the Fantastic Four because he literally did not know about the Invisible Woman's force field. Doom II was captured and stripped of his armored exoskeleton by the Fantastic Four.

At the time, Victor was believed dead at the hands of Tyros the Terrible and the Silver Surfer, his body reduced to atoms during a clash between the wielders of the Power Cosmic. In truth, Victor transferred his mind into a bystander's body, and soon took steps to recreate his own form. After the Beyonder returned Doom to his rightful body, Victor soon attempted to use Franklin Richards' mutant abilities to free his mother's spirit from Mephisto's nether realm. During Franklin's kidnapping, Doom II managed to free himself and also return to Latveria.

After Doom's plans with Franklin dissolved, he found that Doom II had seized the reins of power in Latveria. Victor Von Doom was forced out of his

country, an exiled leader defeated by one of his own plans. Since Doom II's rise to power, the two Dooms have clashed a number of times. Both have used pawns and hirelings, and neither has had much success against the other. Until now:

### Gaming On Earth-Doom

For the past year or so, the overt clashes between the two Dooms have reached a state of detente. However, both have been busy preparing for another confrontation. This conflict has not yet happened within the pages of Marvel Comics, nor is it likely to occur—it will unfold here and in your games. This "Doom War" is considered a "What If?" scenario, and does not belong on the "official" Marvel Earth.

Events in *Fantastic Four* #350 further set this game away from the "official" Marvel Universe. GMs can fold in events from #350 if they desire, considering Doom I to be a robot with an expanded logic circuit.

GMs easily can use their own worlds and campaign versions of Europe and Latveria to be the settings for the Doom Wars. If your campaigns are firmly entrenched in the existing Marvel Universe, why not have your heroes pulled into an extradimensional warp by one of the Dooms' machines? No matter what world it's played on, the Doom Wars campaign is certain to change the ways your players view the Doctors Doom.

This campaign pits Doom I against Doom II, with Latveria and the player characters caught in between. Players can run characters which, for one reason or another, are allied with the deposed Victor Von Doom in his bid to free Latveria from the iron grip of "the imposter." Players also could operate characters from the other side, allied with Doom II to protect Latveria from the incursion of "the imposter." Both sides of characters are provided below. If you desire, players can use their regular characters instead, running into the Latverian champions as NPCs.

Ambitious GMs can set players on both sides, and let the player characters fight each other to decide who controls Latveria!



## Victor von Doom's Allies

### Cardinal

Scott Denham, mutant

F EX  
A RM  
S EX  
E IN  
R TY  
I EX  
P TY

Health: 110

Karma: 32

#### Powers:

**Flight:** Cardinal flies on red, birdlike wings attached to his back. He can reach Remarkable (30) speeds (15 areas/rd). He flies silently, allowing him to blindside opponents who are unaware of his location or attack. Cardinal can carry up to 300 pounds while flying (this weight reduces his speed by 1CS).

**Deflector Field:** Cardinal can generate a personal force field around his body of Excellent (20) intensity. While this field is up, Cardinal cannot be entangled or held due to the field's slippery qualities. If in flight, the field allows Cardinal to fly at Amazing (50) speeds due to its frictionless surface. Cardinal can breathe normally through the field, but he can only maintain it for 20 turns (2 minutes) before it fails and he must wait for 1-10 turns before he can reactivate it. This power is used to give Cardinal quick bursts of speed as well as protection.

**Talents:** Acrobatics, Aerial Combat, Archaeology, Martial Arts E

**History:** Scott Denham is the son of Josef and Rosa Denham, immigrant Latverian/Americans who grew rich in the real estate market after moving to the United States in the 1940s. While living on an isolated ranch in Colorado, Scott was raised to revel in his mutant powers, growing to be a hero of Meeker, the small town where he grew up. In 1989, he went to college to pursue archaeology. On campus, he was found and recruited by Dr. Doom, who was "... in need of good noble souls to free Latveria from the despot who rules in my name. For your aid, I will grant you a rare chance to catalog and study the centuries-old royal treasures of Latveria. Fear not for your studies or work here in the West, for I give you my word that you can return after loaning your services to my cause for the nonce."

Cardinal has never kept his mutant

abilities secret. He is so friendly and outgoing that many people do not exhibit fear or mistrust around him, as they do around other mutants.

### Charioteer

Lawrence "Larry" Tylas, high-tech wonder

F IN  
A EX  
S GD/RM  
E RM/IN  
R RM  
I TY  
P GD

Health: 100/110

Karma: 46

#### Powers:

**Body Suit:** All of Charioteer's powers are derived from this suit. The suit increases Strength (+2CS) and Endurance (+1CS); the numbers after the slash are the enhanced scores.

**Body Armor:** Charioteer's metallic-fiber suit grants Excellent protection from physical attacks, Remarkable resistance to heat and cold, and Incredible protection from energy attacks.

**Energy Detection:** Charioteer's helmet can identify and track electrical energy trails with Excellent ability.

**Energy Shield:** The suit's right forearm contains a generator that produces an oval plane of green energy three feet high and two feet wide. This shield automatically absorbs or reflects 40 points of energy attacks each round, provided they hit Charioteer on his shielded side. On any round he absorbs at least 30 points of energy, Charioteer can use it one of three ways: boost air speed to Excellent for 2-20 turns, extend life support for 2-20 turns, or increase his strength to Amazing for 2-20 turns. Once one of these augmentations is used it cannot be used again until its duration expires. Reflected energy strikes the attacker if Charioteer makes a successful Agility feat.

**Flight:** The suit includes boots which unfold into a sky sled (Incredible Control, Typical Body, Good Air Speed) in one turn. Charioteer controls the sled cybernetically, and his feet cannot be removed from the sled unless it is disassembled (pressure seals in the boots lock on while the sled is deployed).

**Life Support:** Charioteer's helmet and armor contain life support mechanisms which allow for Excellent life support (20 turns).

**Talents:** Acrobatics, Electronics, Martial Arts A & E, Mechanical Engineering

**History:** A former judo and martial arts enthusiast and college gymnastics champion, Larry Tylas is well known for his physical and athletic accomplishments. However, many tend to overlook Larry's inherent grasp of electronics, assuming him to be another "dumb jock." During his graduate school days and in his post-doctoral studies, he designed and developed a strength-enhancing exoskeleton for use by police and peacekeeping forces against superhuman opponents.

He designed and partially built the prototype "Peacekeeper" armor, but needed more funding to complete his work. Offered financial backing by Roxxon—with many strings attached—Tylas refused to work for the powerful conglomerate, wanting to maintain total control over the armor's use.

Doom anonymously acted as his benefactor and provided funds for the armor's completion, along with additional designs to integrate into the suit's systems. Doom's designs incorporated a collapsible sky sled like Tyros' (see Fantastic Four #259, 260) in the boots, granting flight to the suit. Once the suit was finished, the mysterious benefactor made his wishes and identity known. Doom considered his funding and additional design payment for Tylas' "freeing" Latveria.

Tylas, upon finishing his project and the sled, renamed his armor the Charioteer suit. His helmet has a top brush reminiscent of a Roman chariot driver. He resents Doom's manipulations and regrets becoming an ally to this villain. Regardless, he will work with Doom and the others, honorably keeping his word and his part of the bargain. Doom's plans for this young inventor and his armor are unknown at this time.

### Huntsman

Boris, unknown (mutant or alien?)

F GD  
A EX  
S EX  
E IN  
R TY  
I EX  
P GD

Health: 90

Karma: 36



### Powers:

**Animal Communication and Control:** Huntsman has the ability to communicate with and control wolves with Incredible (40) ability. He can control up to his Rank number of wolves while he travels with the pack; otherwise, he can only control 2-20 wolves by communicating with and influencing the pack leader.

**Animal Transformation Self:** Huntsman can transform into a gigantic timber wolf. Due to his permanent growth power, his abilities are as follows for wolf form:

F A S E R I P  
EX RM EX IN TY RM GD

As a wolf, Huntsman can move 3 areas/turn, attack on the Edged Attack table with his bite, and track with Excellent ability.

**Call of the Pack:** Huntsman can emit a howl which acts as a specialized Teleport Others, summoning 2-20 wolves in 1-10 rounds to within 5 areas of himself. These summoned wolves will be Friendly contacts to Huntsman. The Call cannot summon wolves from greater than 50 miles away.

**Growth:** Huntsman has a permanent Growth power of Poor intensity, granting him a 10-foot stature at all times.

**Regeneration:** Huntsman regenerates his Endurance rank each minute, regaining 30 points in 10 turns, if he gets a chance to rest.

**Talents:** Acrobatics, Hunting, Wrestling

**History:** Boris, code named Huntsman by Doom, has no memory of where he came from or how he grew up. His only memories are those of being in the forest with his "friends and brothers," the wolves. His body is criss-crossed with numerous scars and marks, and a tattoo is easily spotted on his stomach—two fierce eyes over a row of teeth. He knows nothing about it, or when (or if) it was made. However, this doesn't worry Boris, who knows worrying will not make it go away.

Huntsman became involved in the Doom Wars when much of his pack was killed to clear room for Kristoff's mutant training camp. Although this angered him, he could not penetrate the camp's defenses, let alone destroy and remove it from the pack's territory. However, he easily defeated a guardbot that was going to kill a downed woman, Mask/Anya. The two developed a close friendship, and they endured the hardships of life on the run from Doom II. They eventually made their way to

America and formed an alliance with Victor.

Huntsman does not like Doom I, though he respects the deposed monarch much as a wolf respects the pack leader. He cares little for who sits on the throne; he simply wants peace to return after he gets revenge for his slain brothers.

### Mask

*Anya Rodinas, mutant*

F TY  
A EX  
S PR  
E EX  
R PR  
I EX  
P EX

**Health:** 50

**Karma:** 44

### Powers:

**Invisibility:** Mask can become invisible at Shift X rank. When using this power, she is invisible to normal sight, heat sensors, ultraviolet sensors, and any visibility-oriented detection powers save magical or mental detections. She is not invisible to motion sensors or olfactory senses. Once activated, this power functions until deactivated. However, if Mask suffers damage while invisible she must make a Yellow Psyche FEAT to remain invisible.

**Phasing:** Mask can phase with Incredible ability; the only power stunts she has established are disrupting electronics and walking on air at normal speed.

**Sound Absorption:** Mask can absorb sounds of up to Incredible intensity within 3 areas. With a Yellow FEAT roll, she can limit her sound dampening power to 1 area, and a Red FEAT roll reduces the power to personal effect, allowing her to move in total silence.

**Limitation:** Mask only can use one of her powers at a time.

**Talents:** Mask speaks English, German, Hungarian, Latverian, Symkarian, and Russian. Her other talents include: Trivia (gypsy lore) and Performer-singer

**History:** The daughter of Pietro and Valeria Rodinas, Anya Rodinas was born into the gypsy bands which populated the forests of Latveria and Symkaria. When she turned 14, her mutant powers became apparent, and her father taught her how to keep her powers under control. Pietro had the power to absorb sound, though his ability was never as powerful as Anya's.

Seven months ago the gypsies were forced out of their traditional homeland forests by a joint Symkarian/Latverian agreement. About the same time, Doom II's robots also separated a number of young mutants from their comrades. They were all put into a new training camp in the western hills. Anya's father and a few of the older mutants rebelled, and in the confusion Anya escaped to the forests. From a safe vantage, she watched helplessly as her father and some of her comrades were killed.

Anya avoided her mechanical pursuers, but unfortunately had been fitted with a "communication shackle," which sent tremendous pain through her once she moved away from the camp. Through sheer force of will, she managed to drag herself away. Her escape was threatened when a guardbot on patrol found her. However, a large wolf attacked and defeated the construct. The next thing Anya remembered was a huge, unkempt man kneeling nearby, watching her intently. The fragments of her shackle lay on the ground with the wreckage of the robot. Anya found this man fascinating; his appearance marked him as a forest dweller, but she had never seen him before—men 10 feet tall are easy to remember! He spoke only Russian, and he complained that the training camp disturbed his brothers. After a few more close calls, Anya found this man, who called himself Boris, to be closer to wolves than humans. Despite some small fears, she returned in his company to her gypsy camp. During their travels they cemented an alliance which is quickly growing into friendship.

Valeria persuaded a gypsy witch to help Anya find an ally against "Doom's sad madness, and to return Latveria to her proper state." Victor was located in America, and Anya and Boris were magically transported to him to help in the restoration of order and harmony to the tiny Balkan nation.

Anya freely aids the "true son of the gypsies" and hopes Doom I can return Latveria to normal so she can resume her peaceful life. Victor is quite taken with Anya, as she appears every bit like her mother, who is Victor's former lover. Anya tends to stay close to Boris, knowing he needs a friend to keep him in control.

Anya, named Mask by Doom I, dislikes her role as a heroine, but puts aside her fears and dislikes for the good of her people and homeland.

## The Latverian Protectorate

### Combat

*Wanda Stavros, mutant*

**F** RM  
**A** IN  
**S** GD  
**E** RM  
**R** PR  
**I** RM  
**P** GD

**Health:** 110

**Karma:** 44

### Powers:

**Combat Sense:** Combat has this power at Amazing rank. When she uses this, her pupils disappear and her eyes become solid white.

**Darkforce Generation:** Combat can use this only at Feeble level, generating enough dark matter to cover her body. She uses this power to camouflage herself in shadowy areas (-3CS to detection).

**Lightning Speed:** She can move at Incredible speeds, moving 7 areas/round.  
**Ultimate Skill/Martial Arts A:** Combat's fighting style uses her opponents' force against them, similar to judo. She can Stun or Slam with Unearthly ability regardless of Strength and Endurance scores.

**Talents:** Wrestling, Tumbling, Espionage/detective

**History:** This woman, born Diana Athena Stavros, is currently not in her right mind. A former SHIELD agent from Greece, she served the agency well in its original incarnation. She disappeared on a mission in Hungary shortly before the Deltite incident which caused the original SHIELD organization to collapse. She was presumed dead after an informant allegedly shot and disposed of her.

Her "murder" was an elaborate staging by specialized robots of Kristoff's; Stavros soon was secretly brought into Latveria and subjected to brainwashing. Her "memories" now tell her she is a native Latverian, and a loyal and highly placed agent for the Master. She has recently begun to question why she is the only experienced espionage agent for Doom in his own country; the more she questions her false memories, the greater her chances of breaking the brainwashing (Yellow Psyche FEAT when encountering something which contradicts her "memory").

With her powers and her experience,

she has assumed command of the Latverian Protectorate. She dislikes the public nature of her position, but firmly believes in the group's role as protectors of the homeland. She is very calm and collected at all times, with a rather cold attitude on the surface. A stern leader, she expects perfection from those she leads. The only time she seems to enjoy herself is in a fight, taking pleasure from her brutal ballet with her opponent, and in the company of Herald, the soft-spoken precog of the team.

### Herald

*Erik Holostoff, mutant*

**F** TY  
**A** GD  
**S** GD  
**E** EX  
**R** PR  
**I** EX  
**P** RM

**Health:** 46

**Karma:** 54

### Powers:

**Astral Form:** Herald can project his astral form away from his body with Amazing ability, and can travel 20 areas in astral form.

**Precognition:** Herald has Incredible precognition powers, but his flashes of the future appear to him only in dreams. While asleep, the GM makes a FEAT roll for Herald to determine what he sees. A Green result shows something happening within 10 minutes; a Yellow result reveals an incident which will happen within five hours; a Red result reveals a scene or incident which will occur within 24 hours.

**Psi-Screen:** Herald has a Psi-Screen of Incredible integrity.

**Telepathy:** Herald's telepathic powers are of Amazing rank, allowing him to contact minds up to 20 areas away. He can easily maintain communications with targets whose Psyches are less than Amazing. His only established power stunt is a team mind-link, which allows Combat to instantly give orders to the team and monitor the battles. He has not yet learned to project a psionic force or even a mind probe.

**Talents:** Farming, Martial Arts B

**History:** Herald is the eldest son of a Latverian family whose three children are mutants. His powers have been active for five years, and he has a great degree of control over them. When Doom II came to the family farm and



offered to train all the children to use their powers, Erik resisted the idea, but joined the others, who had not yet fully accepted their powers nor learned to control them.

Herald remains at the training camp, preferring to stay out of combat and guard his little sister Katrina. He is quite watchful of his siblings; he and Protector do not get along due to this protectiveness. Herald has become attracted to Combat, though he has yet to make his feelings known to her.

## Jinx

*Katrina Holostoff, mutant*

F PR  
A TY  
S PR  
E EX  
R TY  
I GD  
P GD  
**Health:** 34  
**Karma:** 36

### Powers

**Probability Manipulation—Bad Luck:** Jinx's bad luck powers have Remarkable intensity and affect everyone within 1 area. Her power is constant unless artificially inhibited.

**Teleport Others:** Jinx has Remarkable teleportation powers, but her control is minimal (see Limitations). If her Psyche FEAT is successful, roll on the Remarkable column to determine the distance the target is teleported. A White result indicates a teleport distance of 1 area, Green indicates 3 areas, and Yellow or Red results send targets the maximum distance of 6 areas away.

Jinx always teleports people directly away from her. Targets cannot pass through or appear inside solid objects. If an object blocks the teleport, the target is teleported to the object then upward one area for each unused area of teleportation. For example, if Cardinal was forcibly teleported 5 areas away from her, and there is a building 3 areas away, he teleports to the building's nearest edge and 2 areas up in the air.

**Limitations:** Jinx cannot use her teleport power voluntarily; she teleports everyone within her area away in a random, horizontal direction. She must make a Yellow or Red Psyche FEAT to use the power.

**Talents:** Botany

**History:** Jinx is a small, shy girl of 17 who was born and raised near Doom-

stadt. She has never traveled beyond Latveria, and before coming to the training camp she had never ventured farther than 20 miles from her home. She has an almost blind faith in her older brothers, Herald and Protector, to keep her from any harm. Her powers frighten her and she is too insecure to stand up to anyone forceful unless she or one of her brothers is physically threatened. Until Jinx learns to control her powers, she remains at the camp to avoid any mishaps.

Jinx and her brothers are working for Doom willingly; their parents are now staff workers in Castle Doom, and many of their relatives are faithful to the Master.

## Oceanus

*Benjamin Amelitt, mutant*

F EX  
A EX  
S GD  
E EX  
R GD  
I GD  
P EX  
**Health:** 70  
**Karma:** 40

### Powers

**Water Animation and Control:** Oceanus has the Remarkable ability to animate and control water. Power stunts he has established are: creation of a whirlpool of Remarkable intensity (1 area of effect); watery arms and hands of Excellent Strength; pull all water within 2 areas to a specific target point within 2 areas of Oceanus (tidal wave effect).

**Water Blasts:** Oceanus can create missiles of water out of the moisture in the air with Excellent ability. These missiles strike with Power rank range and damage.

**Water Form:** Oceanus can transform his body into a humanoid-shaped liquid form, capable of walking about like a normal being but having no solidity unless he desires. The powers of this form, are:

•**Body Armor:** Oceanus' liquid form acts as Excellent Body Armor against all energy attacks.

•**Density Manipulation:** Oceanus can alter the density of his liquid form, allowing its consistency to vary from Feeble (normal water) to Remarkable (high density to absorb impacts), while still maintaining its human shape. This power allows Oceanus to be immune to most physical and force attacks since

they pass through his body; any heat-or fire-based attacks do not affect his liquid form.

•**Elongation:** Oceanus can stretch his liquid limbs up to 1 area away with Amazing ability.

•**Growth:** Oceanus can pull water from the surrounding air and add it to his liquid form. This results in a Typical rank Growth.

•**Resistance to Fire and Heat:** Oceanus has Excellent (20) resistance to heat and fire attacks because his liquid form disperses or douses much of the energy immediately upon contact.

**Limitation:** If Oceanus loses more than half his Health while in Water form, he must make a Yellow Psyche FEAT each time he takes further damage or he will revert to his normal body and suffer the effects of dehydration (-1CS to all physical attributes until water is replenished).

**Talents:** Brewing, Wrestling

**History:** Oceanus is an orphaned ward of the state of Latveria; a curfew guard robot killed his mother during King Zorba's reign, and his father died years before in a hunting accident. He was taken in by Josef, the burgemeister, and he has been apprenticed to Josef as a brewmeister. When Doom II began scanning for mutants to recruit, he quickly found Ben, though the mutant's powers were still dormant.

Ben was summoned to Castle Doom on a delivery for Josef, and was ambushed by robots—the same ones that killed his mother. His fear and rage activated his powers, and he easily destroyed the constructs, which pleased Kristoff. Ben was the second mutant to be recruited into the Latverian Protectorate, followed soon by Slipstream and Combat; he remains with the team because of a flowering relationship with Slipstream.

## Protector

*Mark Holostoff, mutant*

F EX  
A EX  
S IN  
E RM  
R TY  
I GD  
P RM  
**Health:** 110  
**Karma:** 46

### Powers

**Body Armor:** Protector has Incredible



Body Armor against physical and energy attacks.

**Energy Bola (Equipment):** Protector wields an energy bola designed by Kristoff. If it hits, the target is entangled and an Energy attack of Excellent intensity is released on the trapped figure. The bola has Amazing material strength, and Protector usually carries two of them.

**Flight:** Protector can fly with Excellent Air Speed.

**Invulnerability:** Protector has Class 1000 resistance against Radiation.

**Talents:** Martial Arts D, Weapons Specialist—bola, Resist Domination

**History:** Protector is 16 years old. He is the youngest son of a Latverian farming family, and brother to Jinx and Herald. Of the three siblings, he has adapted best to Kristoff's persuasiveness and plans for the future. He pursues the study of fighting and warfare, despite a basically pacifistic upbringing. He is constantly at odds with his older brother, who he sees as a spineless weakling, hardly worth the attentions of the great Master, Doom.

To reward Protector's loyalty, Doom II has made him a figurehead. According to Doom II's propaganda, Protector is to Latveria what Captain America is to the United States—he is the country's pride, the country's power, and the country's soul. Regardless of his brash manner and overzealousness (which often hinder his accomplishments in battle), he has embraced the role Doom has set for him, and he strives to live up to the title of Latveria's champion.

## Razor

*Arthur Von Heinrich, mutant*

F GD  
A GD  
S TY  
E EX  
R TY  
I EX  
P AM

Health: 46  
Karma: 76

### Powers:

**Telekinesis—Slashing Missile:** Razor has an Incredible telekinetic power which manifests itself along one plane or dimension. This plane of telekinetic force has an extremely sharp edge; Razor's force attack is made on the Throwing, Edged column, and he is just learning to reduce the force of his attacks. The

telekinetic force surges at high speed from his mind, though arm and body movements help Razor aim and focus his ability. Each attack follows Razor's arm movements and covers a distance of up to 3 areas. For example, if Razor slashes his arm horizontally in front of him, the force slashes anything at arm height in front of him up to 3 areas away. If he makes Yellow Psyche FEAT, Razor focuses enough to reduce his blast to a straight line; with a Red Psyche FEAT, Razor can mute the damage to Excellent rank.

**Talents:** Metalworking, Metal Casting

**History:** Arthur Von Heinrich was Doomstadt's blacksmith for several years and always had a strong sense of loyalty to Doom. After King Zorba's rise to power, Arthur was singled out as a troublemaker; his business suffered due to his "disloyalty to the new republic." Soon, Zorba's madness grew and Arthur was arrested on trumped up charges of conspiracy and plotting to assassinate Zorba.

During his arrest and trial, Arthur suffered severe migraines and frequently passed out from the pain. When the verdict of guilty (assuredly a death sentence) was read to the blacksmith, he exploded in rage, and his latent powers activated. A wave of energy cleaved through the judge's stand and the floor beneath it; luckily, no one was hurt in the telekinetic blast, and it changed the court's mind about what to do with Arthur. He was imprisoned in a vibranium-lined cell in Castle Doom's dungeons and subjected to study and experimentation.

Soon forgotten during Zorba's rule and Victor Von Doom's short reclamation of the throne, he was released by Kristoff, who offered him membership in the Latverian Protectorate. Arthur's loyalty is now with Kristoff, who he believes returned him to life. Still, Razor remains concerned because his ordeal at Zorba's hands leads him to dislike usurpers. Razor is still in training at the camp. He is a proud man, and he wishes to enter Latverian life again and return to his old profession. He is the oldest member of the Protectorate, and acts as a fatherly figure to all.

## Slipstream

*Tatiana Hyskoldt, mutant*

F GD  
A RM  
S TY

E EX  
R GD  
I GD  
P RM  
Health: 56  
Karma: 50

### Powers:

**Air Control:** Slipstream manipulates air and wind with Remarkable ability. She can surround herself with Remarkable force winds that act as a Force Field of like intensity against physical attacks. She also can inflict Power rank damage at a range of 8 areas, but this attack is negated by any Force Field. She can fly on self-generated wind at Remarkable speed as an established power stunt.

**Density Manipulation:** Slipstream can lower her body's density to Shift 0 and become nearly intangible. While in this state, she can boost her Flight speed to Amazing. While her density is reduced, her body is surrounded by an electrical glow. Any contact with Slipstream in her ephemeral state causes Excellent electrical damage each round.

**Talents:** Baking, Accounting, Acrobatics

**History:** Tatiana Hyskoldt has been an orphan since age 14. Zorba's Doomday robots killed her parents during a rampage through Doomstadt (see *Fantastic Four* #247). The local baker, the widow Stassel, took her in. Tatiana proved to have a good head for numbers and figures, soon becoming the accountant for a number of local shops. Despite a good environment, Tatiana grew stubborn and sullen, desperately wanting to strike out against Latveria's internal and external foes.

When the girl's mutant powers became apparent, word soon spread to Doom II. Tatiana often would be spotted flying about the meadows west of Doomstadt; she was swiftly discouraged from such public displays of power unless she was willing to join The Protectorate. Tatiana eventually agreed, and her powers swiftly developed; she became Slipstream, Mistress of the Air.

Slipstream is obsessed with the idea of keeping Latveria safe from anyone.

*Next issue contains a series of short adventures for the characters, statistics on the Dooms, and all the essential information for running your own Doom Wars.*



# With Great Power

## The Doom Wars, Part II

by Steven E. Schend

*These short adventures make up a "what if" campaign for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. Characters for use with the adventures were presented last issue.*

### Playing the Doom Wars

Each group of pregenerated characters can be considered "heroes." As the campaign opens, every player character is certain he or she is doing good and is on the right side. During play, the characters gain Karma normally. When any hero defeats a hero from the other side he or she receives the normal Karma award.

Each Doom provides his heroes with resources; Doom I has Excellent resources, and Doom II has Amazing.

### Doom I's Allies:

Some heroes' reasons for joining Victor are stronger than others, and it is possible that the players, or the GM (acting as Doom I) will have to make an effort to keep the team together.

Doom brooks no dissension from the heroes. Above all, Doom never reveals the whole plan to his underlings.

### Doom II's Allies:

Kristoff is not known to the world at large as a nine-year-old. Those around him think he is Victor Von Doom, and Kristoff has been thoroughly brainwashed to believe this, too. All but a select few Latverians believe this Doom to be the rightful leader and Doom I to be an imposter.

His current plan to resist Victor, the other Doom, is to round up mutants detected within Latveria's borders. The mutants are placed in a camp in the Latverian woods, where they are trained to be warriors for Doom's causes. Kristoff chooses the best four mutants as shock troops against Doom I. This "Latverian Protectorate" receives its orders in formal audiences with Doom II and is expected to execute them with perfection.

Since Doom II uses deception and intimidation to keep his troops motivated, there is a good chance his team will fragment, particularly if the truth about the two Dooms becomes known.

### Battles for Latveria

The primary focus of the Doom Wars for Doom I and company is to covertly invade Latveria and restore the throne to Victor.

On the other hand, the main goal for the Latverian Protectorate and Doom II is to keep "the imposter" and his allies from overrunning Latveria and stealing "the Master" from his people.

Each scenario includes a list of NPCs who can be used.

Two setups are given with each scenario, one for each team of heroes. Orders for the PCs, the words of Doom I or II, are boxed; the GM should read them to the players, allowing the characters to respond. Neither Doom allows his orders to be questioned.

### Adventure Maps

On the inside mailer cover of this Newszine is a map of Castle Doom and Doomstadt for the final scenario. However, this hardly includes all the terrain the PCs will cover. The outdoors area grid from the Advanced Set is useful for most of the encounters; trees, rocks, and other items of particular interest can be placed on this map as the GM sees fit. GMs also can use the maps from *MH-7 The Last Resort* and *MH-9 Gates of What If*.

### Adventure One: Trouble in Transia

NPCs: Mary Jane Watson-Parker, Mordred, Puppet Master, Silver Sable, Spider-Man

#### Setup Doom I:

You are in Boston, secluded in an old brownstone on Beacon Street. Publicly, you are guests of a man named David Regal; actually you have been summoned and sequestered here by

Victor Von Doom. Doom addresses your group: "All of you have joined me and my cause of your own wills, and you have my word of honor that good will be done here — good for the people of Latveria."

"It is time now to act. We separate at this juncture. I shall continue on my own, and we shall rendezvous in Transia in two days."

Each PC receives a one-way plane ticket to Transia and hotel reservations for a one-night stay at a local inn. One PC receives a map giving a location to meet Doom; written instructions with the map explain how a hidden base can be accessed should Doom fail to arrive at the appointed time—10 p.m. the day after the team's arrival in Transia.

Doom warns the team his counterpart may track the ticket purchases through one of his many aliases. "Do not trust anyone other than the manager of your hotel, Karl Hammak; he knows of your mission and will be helpful to our cause without revealing your mission or your powers."

#### Setup Doom II:

This takes place roughly one day after Setup Doom I.

You and your companions are nervous. Since you were found to be deserving of Doom's attentions, you have been encamped with others of "special" status and trained to use your developing powers. You four are the first to complete the training. Each of you now wears a communications bracelet that puts you at the Master's beck and call—a great honor. The Master's first message via the bracelets summoned you to an audience in Castle Doom. You hear the mechanical whirring of his armor as he enters the throne room and signals all to rise.

"My most loyal subjects, you have been called together and trained for this moment for the past many months, and you are now ready to serve Latveria. May you be up to the task. We have discerned the location



of the imposter, the false Doom who seeks my throne, and we are told he has allies. You are to confront the false Doom and his allies, but do not destroy them. They will be made to see the folly of defying Doom.

"I have tracked them by scanning for the special isotope the imposter uses to power his armor. He is currently in flight and his trajectory suggests a landing site in Transia, near Wundagore Mountain. A special transport awaits you in the courtyard. Its landing site has been programmed, and a servobot is installed to pilot the craft.

"You should arrive there before the imposter, and you can make your own plans from there. Be sure to disable any equipment the usurpers may use against Latveria, and anything you cannot destroy, bring with you upon your return. Under no circumstances are you to capture these miscreants; I do not want them spoiling our country's air with their foul presence. Defeat them and humiliate them, but do no more, lest you risk my wrath."

The team is in costume, and is led to a small ovoid craft. A panel opens on the craft's side, and the team finds four chairs, a small locker of provisions, a computer link with Castle Doom, and the torso of a robot linked with the craft's control panel. There is an auxiliary control panel. See Doom's Toys for the craft's statistics. This craft has a self-sealing port in the outer hull which allows passengers to exit without the craft losing air pressure. There are no weapons on this craft. The team arrives, as scheduled, at a clearing in the Transian woods at the foot of Wundagore.

#### Optional Encounters: For team Doom I:

- There is a hijacking attempt on the plane by terrorists.
- Photograph and autograph hounds swarm around the actors and actresses of the soap opera *Secret Hospital*. The one who draws the most attention is the famous actress-model MJ Watson-Parker; her husband shuffles nervously at her side. The troupe is traveling to Transia for a location shoot of *Secret Hospital*.
- The person seated across the aisle from one hero is elderly and nervous; he is soon approached by a tall, slender

woman with silver hair, who coldly whispers "You've been upgraded to first class, *herr Schwarzer*. You'll soon stand trial for your war crimes." Silver Sable (the woman) attempts to lead him away, but the man is armed with a loaded gun and he tries to resist. Actions now depend on the heroes and NPCs. Keep in mind that any blasts or gunfire could shatter a window and depressurize the plane.

- A young girl at the back of the plane, obviously nervous about the flight, constantly complains of headaches and body aches. The girl is a latent mutant, and GMs can have her powers initially emerge during the course of this 14-hour flight. Her powers and the effects on other passengers are left to the GM's discretion.
- A small, bald man meets the PCs at the airport and asks to escort them to the hotel. He says he is the owner of the best hotel in Transia, with a majestic view of Wundagore Mountain. If they enter his van, it floods with Amazing intensity knock out gas; the vehicle is reinforced with Vibranium (Incredible material strength) to deter any physical attempts to escape. The PCs have fallen victim to the Puppet Master (Philip Masters), who once again works for Doom (II). He wants to reduce them to mindless slaves, setting them to attack the countryside, terrorize the villagers, and wreak havoc. Doom I can free the heroes from control, but the PCs and Victor are discredited.

The following distractions might be devil team Doom II:

- Two unidentified jets intercept the PCs' craft. The robot pilot rattles off identification and clearance codes, but both jets begin firing. Use generic Military Jet statistics from the Advanced Set Players' Book for the attacking aircraft (no missiles). The robot asks the hero next to him, "Evasive or attack maneuvers?" and continues this question until answered. If the PCs choose evasive maneuvers, the ship avoids the jets. Otherwise, the jets attack the PCs' craft six times, then break off. Attack maneuvers keep the craft close to the jets, and allows the heroes to use the port in the craft to fly outside and defend themselves. In any case, the robot uses its control to Dodge all incoming attacks. (If the PCs eject,

they land 100 miles from Wundagore and must get to the appointed place in one hour or they miss the confrontation.)

- Five minutes before the scheduled landing, the PCs' craft comes under attack by a small craft similar to theirs. The PCs see the imposter Dr. Doom at the controls, with unidentified figures in the craft with him. The attacking craft is identical to the PC craft except that it also has a machine gun (IN range and RM damage) mounted on its underside and pointing forward. Play this mini-scenario out as above, in terms of evasive or attack maneuvers. All figures aboard the attacking craft are robots and do not leave the craft.
- The team has landed and is in hiding at the landing site in the woods. A man enters the clearing, floating along just above the ground. This is Modred, a sorcerer once again possessed by Chthon, an evil power entombed within Wundagore. Within a minute, a small craft drops from the sky carrying the robot Doom I and company. Modred seems annoyed and tries to blast it into oblivion. The PCs can choose to interrupt here, otherwise Modred simply floats off into the trees.

**The Action:** If team Doom II arrives at their landing site early, they find that they (and Kristoff) have been duped into chasing a robot Doom. In fact, once the robot craft lands, it is on a timed destruct sequence. Ten rounds after it lands, the craft self-destructs with Incredible force damage to all within its area and Excellent damage to all within one area radius of the craft.

Twenty minutes after the landing of the robot craft, Doom flies overhead in a one-man craft (see Doom's Toys for statistics). He proceeds east around the mountain to another clearing five miles away. Here, he meets his own team and the major confrontation begins.

Team Doom I reunites with their leader here. Team Doom II, if not delayed by any other activity (such as fighting Modred), arrives here after spotting Doom's second craft and following it. The clearing is nearly a perfect circle five areas in diameter. It is ringed by dense pine trees. One small road leads to a village 12 miles away. There is hidden cave in the trees to the west; only Doom I and the PC with the map can find it.

Doom I orders his team to attack to

subdue the Doom II team; he intends to return the Latverian Protectorate to Kristoff in disgrace or recruit them to his side. If team Doom II appears to be winning, Doom takes an active hand; otherwise, he stays out of combat.

If his heroes win, Doom I brings them and any prisoners to the cave and reveals two mobile all-terrain transports and a security cell with iron bars.

The defeated Latverians are placed in the cell. The bars are of Amazing material strength and the cell also drains energy; energy powers and technology-based powers do not function within the cell. Doom offers the other heroes a chance to join him and return Latveria to its normal state. The cave also contains six warrior robots which Doom sets on verbal command: "If any of these people leave that cell, eliminate them."

If team Doom II wins the fight in the clearing, Doom sets off buried charges which fill the entire area with knock out gas of Monstrous Intensity for three rounds. If there are any opponents still standing, Doom physically tries to defeat them, collects his allies, and escapes to the cave. He commands the six robots to act as his vanguard, and he flees down a side tunnel with his allies in one of the all-terrain transports.

#### Follow-up:

*Team Doom I* If defeated:

You are rescued by Doom and rushed into the cave to escape with an all-terrain transport. Doom I is angry. "Your defeat mocks me, and you will be put to the test as to your worthiness; do not fail me again or you shall truly earn the wrath of Doom."

**Karma:** Normal combat and non-combat Karma gains and losses should be awarded, plus specials:

Hero falls under the control of the

Puppet Master -5

Avoiding Puppet Master's trap altogether +10

*Team Doom II* If defeated:

You awaken in a cell. The imposter Doom attempts to dissuade your loyalties to your monarch and persuade you to join his cause.

Role play Doom I's attempt to recruit the characters. If they accept, they

become members of Team Doom I and Kristoff must bring his additional mutants into play. If they refuse, Victor takes his team and leaves the robots on guard. If the cell bars stop the PCs, they might have better luck with the solid rock walls (IN strength). The robots do not attack until someone leaves the cell.

**Karma:** Normal combat and non-combat Karma gains and losses should be awarded, plus specials:

Choosing evasive maneuvers against the jets (Symkarians protecting their air space, they spotted the craft visually) +10

Destruction of robots without confirmation of artificial construction -10

Confirming artificial construction before destroying robots +10

#### Adventure Two: Forest Foray

**NPCs:** Margali Szardos, and the Wild Pack

#### Setup Doom I:

Doom I takes the team through the Transian wilderness and around the Symkarian border to another cave just inside Latveria where they abandon the transport. The team continues on foot for a few miles to a gypsy camp. Doom, once he delivers an old gypsy greeting, is welcomed with open arms.

Kristoff and Symkaria have concluded treaties which make the gypsies hunted outlaws within the two countries; Doom I promises the gypsies a return to their ancestral forests in Latveria upon his return to power. From here, the team's goals depend on which optional encounters the GM uses, and upon the actions of team Doom II.

#### Setup Team Doom II:

Kristoff contacts the team via their bracelets: "Scans indicate there is a tremendous build-up of power three miles north of your current locations. The power you are looking for will be magical in nature, so take caution. You are to close on the location of this power, held most likely in an item, and secure it for Latveria and its Master." Doom tells the PCs how to activate small scanners in the bracelets; this allows the PCs to track the power source.

**Optional Encounters:** Team Doom I's trip to the camp is uneventful, but the following encounters might happen after they arrive:

•The festivities get under way when a

bright flash of light comes from the main wagon. The gypsies have obtained a magical mirror, and its power has been tapped by Margali Szardos, a powerful sorceress. She knows of Doom's quest and offers to use the mirror to teleport him to a base near Doomstadt. In exchange, she desires to share magical knowledge with Doom, which he promises to give her when he reclaims Latveria's throne. It takes an hour to prepare the rituals to activate the mirror's magic, during which time any of the other encounters can take place.

- A few children are noticed missing early into the festivities. No one has seen them for much of the afternoon, and nightfall brings wolves with it. The GM is free to decide what has happened to the children.
- A squad of Doom II's guardbots has ferreted out the encampment. They mindlessly destroy wagons, animals, and gypsies. There are 12 guardbots, spread in a circle around the encampment.
- One of the PCs (roll randomly) notices a figure at the edge of the firelight. The person's eyes flash brightly, and the PC is strangely attracted to this gypsy. The gypsy motions to the PC, leading away from the fire. The PC must make a successful Psyche FEAT against Remarkable intensity or follow the figure away under a hypnotic spell. The gypsy is a vampire who happened across the camp and is stopping for a bite.

Team Doom II spends its time working through the forests and responding to Doom's orders. The group can encounter numerous creatures and situations in the nighttime forests:

- Near the Symkarian frontier, a squad of soldiers erupts from the underbrush and surrounds the PCs. They are members of the Wild Pack, and a few remain in the trees, watching any flying characters.
- "Halt and identify yourselves!" barks one. If the PCs identify themselves by codenames or their status as Latverian operatives, the leader relaxes. "Ah, we were wondering when you'd happen along. Sable has been notified by Doom of your status, and she'd hoped we could recruit you in our latest hunt. We're tracking down a Nazi war criminal, a former ally of the Red Skull, and we've pinpointed his trail along our bor-



ders. Doom promised your assistance, "if there were no other pressing matters." Well, can you aid us?" If they help, they find a young woman struggling to pull an elderly man from the smoking remains of a jeep stuck firmly in a ditch. The man is Wilhelm Fruktaus, a former engineer and weaponsmith for the Red Skull. The woman appeals to the PCs, insisting that her father must meet with Herr Doom about an urgent matter.

- As the PCs move slowly through the moonlit forest, they hear the frantic bleating of frightened sheep. As they approach, the cries of the sheep are suddenly cut off, followed by crunching and chewing sounds. When they cross a small rise, they find a bowl-like depression in the forest. In it, a large creature is huddled over a fallen sheep. It turns and rears up on its hind legs; it is a man with lupine features, his clothes in tatters hanging about him—a werewolf!

**The Action:** The gypsy camp is 4 areas wide and 12 areas long. There are 13 wagons in the outer areas, the easternmost is Margali's, which is set perpendicular to the others to close off that end of the camp. There is a large goat pen filling the 2 central areas at the west end. There are five campfires with empty areas between them inside the camp. Doom I is in Margali's wagon, and his allies are scattered about the camp as the players see fit (as the aftermath of the optional encounters allows). If Doom plans to utilize the magical mirror, it will be ready to transport him and his allies — three minutes after the Latverian Protectorate arrives.

For the Latverian Protectorate, read the following:

Deep in the Latverian woods, and directly on top of the power readings you've been tracking, you come across a gypsy camp. There is some kind of celebration going on. However, the Master has decreed that gypsies are no longer welcome in Latveria, so these folk are defying the law. The encampment is stretched along a partially wooded clearing, its wagons in two rows along the outside edges of the camp with cooking fires in between. Your team is just outside the western edge of the camp. There is a set of goat pens between you and the gypsies.

The goats notice the Latverian Protectorate, even if they attempt to remain concealed and quiet. And the goats make enough noise to alert team Doom I. Victor does not appear until two minutes have gone by, when he warns his allies to be ready for transport.

The members of team Doom I are hard to find in the crowd of gypsies. Each individual remains indistinguishable until a team Doom II character who has previously encountered him comes within 3 areas.

The gypsies defend only their wagons and their kind, assuming the PCs can protect themselves. Margali responds to any attacks with her confusion spell. Doom I remains hidden in the wagon, anticipating the mirror's teleport field. Anyone within the wagon when it activates is teleported with Doom to the next scenario.

**Follow-up:** Karma awards are given normally, though there are special circumstances. For Doom I's allies, 5 Karma are lost with each wagon destroyed, since these heroes are the gypsies' allies. If they stay and help fix the wagons (a day to fix two wagons), they regain 5 Karma for each wagon repaired. The Protectorate gains 20 Karma if they aid the Wild Pack, and likewise lose 20 Karma for aiding and abetting a fugitive from international justice (even if it does help the Master).

### Adventure Three: Closing the Camps

**NPCs:** Frankenstein's Monster, Herald, Jinx, Magneto, Razor

#### Setup Team Doom I:

You find yourselves in a mountain cave roughly seven miles west of Castle Doom, overlooking a small, fenced camp in the forest. Doom declares that this camp must be destroyed, and the mutants inside it returned to their homes. He warns you to avoid coming too close to the fence; it projects a field which disrupts mutant powers, and may impede other powers as well.

#### Setup Team Doom II:

Doom II announces he is sending a craft to return the characters to the camp for further training. If a PC mentions watching the mountains and the scenery as they fly, have that character make an Intuition FEAT roll; on a Yel-

low or Red result, the character notices a flash of light in a cave high in the mountains (team Doom I arriving via the magical mirror or otherwise). The robot craft will not allow anyone to exit until they are within the camp confines. Once there, the PCs are reunited with other comrades of the Protectorate.

#### Optional Encounters:

Team Doom I might face the following distractions:

- The cave the team has entered is the Frankenstein Monster's home. If the creature is treated kindly, he may help the team destroy the camp.
- Doom I attacks the camp without the PCs' help. As he approaches, Doom's voice booms out, amplified by his armor and overriding the guardbots' programming. The camp's two Doombots, however, are not so easily reprogrammed and call for the mutants to attack; this causes the robots to cancel the inhibitor field and Doom is engulfed in a pitched battle.
- Twelve villagers storm the camp gate while the PCs work their way down the mountain. They are armed with rifles, pitchforks, and scythes. They are simply looking to free their abducted sons and daughters. The robots fire on them mercilessly.

Team Doom II can fall into these optional exercises:

- One of the Doombots develops a flaw in its circuitry due to the unusual energy in the fence. Its logic circuits are nearly gone, and it mindlessly attacks the PCs as they attempt to land at the camp.
- One of the other mutants (most likely Herald) has begun to speak against the Master, proclaiming: "We're not trainees or loyal guards of the realm — we're prisoners! The Master who sits on Latveria's throne is the impostor! He is an addled nine-year-old child with the Master's mind!" Such talk, of course, invites action and discipline from the robots. The PCs must decide who to aid and who to fight here.
- The team is awakened by the sounds of battle. Night has fallen, but lamps make the courtyard bright as day. Magneto, master of magnetism and self-proclaimed shepherd of mutants, is destroying the robots. His back is to the PCs, and they spot a robot sneaking up behind him with a power inhibitor. If aided, Magneto



offers the PCs a chance to side with him and become warriors for the mutant cause world-wide. He does not force anyone to his side.

### The Action:

**Camp Layout:** The camp is 10 areas square, surrounded by an inner, barbed-wire fence 20 feet high. There is an outer fence, 40 feet high 2 areas beyond the inner fence. A band of fresh stumps, 2 areas wide, around the outer fence marks the camp as a recent invasion into the forests. Each fence has an inhibitor field that dampens all mutant abilities; these fields are undetectable and are twice as high as the fence that generates them.

There is a 50-foot tall guard tower at each corner of the inner fence, situated in the 2-area space between the fences. Each guard tower has three guardbots on duty. There is a special energy gun in each tower which neutralizes mutant powers for 2-20 turns in addition to Excellent energy damage.

The camp is dotted with six buildings, with a water tower and a power generator in the southwest corner. All the buildings are of Excellent material strength concrete, with the interior walls lined with wood panelling and carpeting. Water and power lines are buried two feet under the compound's packed earth confines. The buildings are arranged with their doors leading into the central courtyard. The buildings ring a courtyard that acts as a landing pad for flying craft, or an open air training ground for the mutants here.

In the northwest corner of the compound, a 1x2 area building serves as the robot barracks and recharging station; eight guardbots are there recharging at any time unless the alarm is sounded (all robots are active while the alarm sounds). Centered on the western end of the camp is a 1-area-square building for the two Doombots. One recharges while the second tends to the training, save during alarms when both are active.

A 1x2 area building centered on the eastern side of the camp houses the mess hall and kitchen. Barracks are separated by gender, and each is 2 areas square; the men's barracks are centered on the southern edge of the camp, while the women's barracks are in the southeast corner.

The training hall, a 3x4 area building which stretches from the northeast corner along the northern perimeter,

contains advanced equipment and monitors to train the mutants to use their powers. The equipment and capabilities of this training facility match that of the X-Men's original Danger Room. All the machinery is of Incredible material strength, and is controlled from a booth high along the northwest wall (reached by a ladder).

There currently are nine mutants in the camp: Jinx, Herald, and Razor are detailed in Part I. The remaining six are trainees with only latent abilities. They have Excellent Endurance and Typical rankings in all other ability scores (Health 38, Karma 18). Each mutant wears a bracelet similar to the ones the PCs wear, but these have been specially keyed to the camp's power generator. If any of the nine stray more than 7 areas from the inner fence the character automatically suffers Excellent damage each round. Each character's bracelet delivers an energy or radiation attack delivered directly to the character's neural system.

**The Action:** The confrontation can include or exclude all of the optional encounters listed above. At the very least, team Doom I will attack the camp, destroying the fences, robots, and buildings, and attempting to free the mutants. Team Doom II has a number of choices to make:

1. Attack Doom and his allies, and defeat "the imposter and his lackeys."
2. Throw in with Doom I and allies to confront Kristoff.
3. Wait until freed by Doom and simply return to their villages to take up their former lives again.

Once the assault on the camp begins, one Doombot contacts Castle Doom. The castle sends a craft which arrives over the camp in three minutes and releases 20 killer robots with orders to eliminate any living beings within the camp; Doom II has tired of his agents' failures and has decided to cancel the Protectorate project — permanently.

**Follow-up:** Karma awards are standard for combat and role-playing, though specific awards can be earned:

#### Team Doom I

- Recruit Frankenstein's Monster +20
- Destroy camp robots + highest ability score/each
- Destroy camp +10
- Harm mutants in camp -20
- Defeat killer robots +75 each
- Teamwork with camp mutants +20/each character befriended

#### Team Doom II

- Defeat faulty Doombot +30
- Save dissenter (Herald) +10
- Help robots vs. dissenter -10
- Attack dissenter -10
- Protect trainees from any attacks +5
- Join Doom I and allies vs. Kristoff +10

Whatever the outcome of any battles, the camp likely will be destroyed by one faction or another. Doom I escapes and makes for a safehouse in Doomstadt. Any allies are welcome to join him as he plans a final assault on Kristoff.

All of Doom II's allies should attempt a Reason feat. A green result (yellow for Combat) indicates that the character realizes Victor is the true Dr. Doom, and that Kristoff is an imposter. The GM might wish to allow automatic success if the members of team Doom II are NPCs. Doom forgives any assaults made against his person by the Protectorate, "...for it is no crime to have been duped by my doppelganger. You have served him well, as I should expect you to obey me." He easily removes the bracelets which the Protectorate and the camp mutants wear, and gives them leave to choose their path.

If team Doom II does not join Victor they face almost certain death or capture at the hands of Doom I and his allies. They have very few options even if they manage to escape. If they return to Castle Doom, Kristoff—who is infuriated by their failure—tries to kill or imprison them. If they hide in Doomstadt, they still must face Kristoff's wrath when he discovers them. If they flee into the countryside, Kristoff probably will send wave after wave of killer robots at them until they surrender or are slain. They cannot hide from Doom II, who can trace them through their bracelets. PCs must make a red Strength feat to remove a bracelet.

### Adventure Four: Assault on Doomstadt

**NPCs:** Boris, Josef (the Burgomaster)

**Setup:** Doom I finds a safehouse for himself and his allies with Josef, his loyal burgomaster. They are soon joined by Doom's faithful servant Boris. Doom explains that Kristoff had gone unbidden into his laboratory and accidentally activated some machines which brainwashed him. "I must cure the boy of this madness soon, before more innocents are harmed." With that, Doom takes off down hidden tunnels leading

to the bowels of Castle Doom.

Just as Doom leaves, cries come from the streets "Help! The robots are loosed! Keep to your homes!" Kristoff has released more robots into Doomstadt, hoping to flush out his opponents.

#### Optional Encounters:

- Boris has contacted the Fantastic Four independently, requesting their aid. He wants their help in preventing the needless deaths Kristoff's excesses are causing. The FF meets the heroes in the Burgomaster's house after Doom has departed.
- The Wizard arrives in Latveria, itching for revenge against Doom for insults traded during the Acts of Vengeance fiasco. He has collected another Frightful Four to combat Doom, and he attempts to draw Doom out by destroying Doomstadt. The Frightful Four consists of the Wizard, the Trapster, Quicksand, and Klaw.

**The Action:** The heroes are beset in Doomstadt by a force of Doom II's robots. The first wave consists of 2-20 guardbots, with a like wave of killer robots and a wave of guardian robots following at five-minute intervals.

There are 14 innocent people out on the streets at this time in the evening spread out along the two streets closest to Castle Doom. The robots emerge from Castle Doom on its southwest side, and move quickly to the attack. Common people, but not the heroes, are safe from attack if they move more than 1 area north of Doomstadt, into the forest.

**Follow-up:** After the robot assault, Doom's voice (nobody can tell which Doom) is heard over loudspeakers. "Dear citizens, you have been done a great evil. My doppelganger was the one who released the mechanized assault forces into our fair city in hopes of destroying any faithful servants I had there. Thanks to our Latverian protectors, we have survived. The imposter is still loose and must be dealt with harshly for these heinous acts! Return to your homes in peace, though my keep may erupt in battle against mine enemies. Keep your faith in your Master, for with Latveria's soul behind him, Doom shall always triumph!"

The PCs are given free lodging in town and are revered by the populace for their aid.

**Karma awards:**

Each building damaged -5

Guardbot destroyed +10  
Warrior Robot destroyed +20  
Killer Robot destroyed +75  
Latverian rescued/saved +5 each

#### Doom's Day!

**Setup:** Doom I is in Castle Doom confronting Kristoff alone. If the PCs decide to storm the keep, they have to contend with 4-40 guardian robots, 5-50 guardbots; 2-20 doombots, and 10-100 soldiers. The soldiers have Typical abilities except for Good endurance and Fighting (Health 32, Karma 18). They are armed with force pistols (Excellent energy damage) or energized pole-arms (Remarkable force damage + Good edged damage), or both. There are also automatic laser batteries: one in each of the smaller towers, three in each of the eastern towers, and five in both the central and southern towers. These batteries fire with Remarkable accuracy on any targets within 1 area, dealing Incredible force damage.

**Optional Encounters:** Once within Doom's castle, it is up to the GM to map and guide the players. Doom's technology is everywhere, with deadly traps and gadgets aplenty to keep intruders busy. PCs searching the castle can stumble across any number of Doom's inventions, including:

- Robotized suits of armor.
- The Micro-projector, capable of sending people to the Microverse and the Micro-World of Queen Pearla.
- Liddleville, the tiny town of puppets.
- Dr. Doom's Time Machine
- Power Cosmic Stealer and Energizer.
- Zorba's Eye-beam weapon.
- A new Darkoth android, ready for new brain patterns.
- The inert body of the Super-Adaptoid, stolen from Avengers Island during the Acts of Vengeance.

The trip through the castle can open up numerous adventures. Could the PCs handle being sent to the Microverse? an alternate past? Who might they find in the deepest recesses of Von Doom's dungeons? Mysteries await. . .

**Follow-up:** Here are a few questions for the GM to answer after the smoke clears:

- Will either Doom allow the Latverian Protectorate to operate within the country's borders as its official super-team?
- Do any heroes return to their families and the normal life?

- Does any PC break with Doom and Latveria altogether, leaving with any of the potential NPCs such as the FF or Puppet Master?
- If a PC abandons his alliance with Doom, how does Doom react to this affront?
- Will Victor Von Doom honor the spirit of his promises to all his allies in this struggle if he survives?

#### Further Options

The Doom Wars offer many possibilities. Will the Avengers, newly reorganized by the United Nations, interfere with the Latverian civil war, especially when it spills over into Transia and Symkaria? Has one of the Dooms recruited the most ruthless of allies, bringing known supervillains into the fray? Could the trainer of Kristoff's mutant forces be the Terminator?

What happens when both Dooms unleash some of their most terrifying technologies upon each other? What if Kristoff uses the Power Cosmic Energizer, and manages to assimilate all that power?

No matter which adventures you play, your heroes (on either side) will emerge with different views of an old foe.

#### NPCs and Innocent Bystanders

##### Non-powered NPCs/Bystanders

##### Farmers

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
PR	TY	GD	EX	PR	TY	TY

##### Gypsies

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
TY	GD	TY	EX	PR	TY	TY

##### Terrorists

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	TY	EX	PR	TY	TY

##### Townsmen

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
PR	TY	PR	TY	PR	TY	TY

##### Doom I

Victor Von Doom, high tech wonder

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	EX	RM	IN	AM	IN	AM

Health: 120 Karma: 140

##### Powers:

Much of Doom's power is provided by

his armor.

**Body Armor (Equipment):** Incredible (40) Material strength; Incredible (40) protection from physical and energy attacks.

**Electrical Attack (Equipment):** Unearthly (100) electrical shock to any in direct contact with Doom, Incredible (40) electrical shock to those in same area.

**Force Bolts (Equipment):** Gauntlets fire bolts of force, up to Amazing (50) damage with range of 10 areas.

**Force Field (Equipment):** Monstrous intensity Force Field against physical and energy attacks; Doom cannot attack while the Force Field is operating.

**Flight (Equipment):** Armor's jetpack allows Excellent (20) Air Speed.

**Handgun (Equipment):** Excellent (20) force damage at a range of 2 areas.

**Life Support (Equipment):** Survival of Incredible (40) rank.

**Magical Ability:** Self-taught magic allows Eldritch Bolts of up to Amazing (50) rank with a 5-area range.

**Mind Transferral:** Amazing (50) ability to transfer minds between bodies upon eye contact; target makes a Psyche FEAT to resist.

**Talents:** Engineering, Inventing, Mystic Background, Occult Lore, Robotics, Weapon and Energy Systems

Dr. Victor Von Doom is a ruthless and dangerous egomaniac who disposes of any opposition he confronts. He easily blames others for his faults, and forever holds grudges about wrongs done to him, whether real or imagined. Despite his vanity and ego, he has a true sense of honor and nobility, and can be trusted to keep his word.

Dr. Doom has mellowed over the years despite constant opposition to his schemes by the superhuman community at large. His setbacks teach him patience, but his pride is not to be stilled. Victor is a powerful warrior, a brilliant scientist, and a strong ruler, but he is a flawed man, forever suppressing the better aspects of his character.

Victor attempts to recruit to his side any Latverians who attack him. He wishes no ill to his people, least of all those whom his double has duped into service. He wishes to set them straight so they can serve their true Master in ousting the nine-year-old despot.

### Dr. Doom II

*Kristoff Von Doom, high tech wonder*

F A S E R I P  
RM EX RM IN AM IN AM

Health: 120 Karma: 140

### Powers:

Kristoff wears a suit of armor which is functionally identical to Victor's armor. The only difference between the two sets of armor is that Kristoff's armor is primarily an exoskeleton built to house his nine-year-old body and mimic the size, movements, and voice of Dr. Doom. There also are cosmetic changes in the armor, such as exposed chain mail along the thighs and arms as opposed to Doom I's full plate armor.

**Talents:** Kristoff also possesses all of Victor's talents.

Since he partially assumed Victor Von Doom's memories, Kristoff believes he is the original Von Doom, trapped in a child's body (though his armored suit gives him an adult's appearance). Like Victor, he is tremendously egotistical and vain.

Kristoff differs from Victor in his degree of self-control. Doom II is much more impulsive, arrogant, and erratic than Doom I. He is a less mature Doom, more possessed of fire and action than the subtler, elder Doom. Doom II's nobility and honor are still to be trusted, but impulsiveness and impatience boil to the surface much more quickly.

### Margali Szardos

*Margali of the Winding Way, Master Practitioner of Faerie Magic*

F A S E R I P  
GD GD TY IN EX AM MN

Health: 26 Karma: 145

### Powers:

**Magic:** All of Margali's powers stem from her mastery of Faerie Magic. Margali has the following spells, in addition to any number of spells she has not exhibited or powers which cannot be quantified:

- **Alteration**—change appearance at AM ability
- **Astral Projection**—UN ability
- **Confusion**—MN intensity; the target must make a Psyche FEAT or be engulfed in a swirling void empty of all but Margali's face and voice.
- **Conjuration**—teleport items and people to her location at UN range and ability
- **Dimensional Travel**—UN ability
- **Eldritch Bolts**—AM force or energy bolts from her eyes
- **Eldritch Beams**—MN energy beams from her hands
- **Image Projection**—AM ability
- **Mystic Shield**—MN protection against

energy or physical attacks

**Talents:** Chronicler of Magic, Gypsy Lore, Mystic Background, Occult Lore

### Werewolves

F A S E R I P  
RM EX RM IN TY AM GD

Health: 120 Karma: 66

### Powers:

**Lycanthropy:** All werewolves are victims of a disease which causes a metamorphosis from a human to lupine form when exposed to the light of a full moon. When in human form, a lycanthrope's statistics range from Poor to Good. The remaining powers listed are for the werewolf form only.

**Claws:** Good Material Strength claws and teeth inflict up to Excellent Edged damage.

**Infravision:** Werewolves see in the dark with Excellent ability.

**Invulnerability:** Werewolves have an Amazing resistance to all forms of physical attacks save those from silver weapons.

**Leaping:** Werewolves can leap with Excellent ability.

**Tracking:** Due to enhanced senses of hearing, smell, and sight, werewolves can track living beings with Incredible ability.

**Vulnerability to Silver:** Werewolves must make an Endurance FEAT with each hit by a silver weapon; a White result is considered a Kill.

### Wild Pack

*Agents of Symkaria and Silver Sable International*

F A S E R I P  
EX EX TY EX GD GD GD

Health: 66 Karma: 30

**Talents:** Each Wild Pack member exhibits at least 1-4 of the following talents: Acrobatics, Demolitions, Detective/Espionage, First Aid, Guns, Law Enforcement/Military, Marksman, Martial Arts A, B, and E

**History:** The Wild Pack is Silver Sable's warrior force, trained to capture Nazi war criminals. Recently they have spread operations to more mercenary goals, lending out their services to support Symkaria's economy. They are professional soldiers who prefer to remain behind the scenes, unnoticed until it is time to strike.



## Doom's Toys

This campaign supplement could go on for 10 more pages regarding the technology available to the two Dooms. Details on items mentioned within the campaign scenarios are listed here. Each Doom certainly can have more at his disposal.

## Transportation

### All-Terrain Transports

Doom's transports are about the size of a regular van. They have six seats and a cargo area. Each has a built-in first aid station and computer. The transports have six wheels, and are capable of land or sea movement. Their statistics are:

*Land transport mode:* Control RM, Land Speed EX, Body RM, Protection RM.  
*Sea/Underwater transport modes:* Control EX, Sea Speed IN, Underwater Speed EX, Body RM, Protection RM

The transports are sometimes equipped with machine guns, and always have 1-4 force pistols (EX force damage, range 2 areas) in the cargo bay.

### Flyers

Doom's flyers ride on magnetic waves, ensuring silent and rapid flight. They are radar invisible, though they can be tracked by scanning specifically for magnetic pulses along their trajectory.  
*One man flyer:* Control RM, Air Speed AM, Body EX, Protection EX.  
*Four man flyer:* Control: IN (robot pilot)/EX (character pilot), Air Speed RM, Body GD, Protection EX.

### Robots

Doom's robots vary in form, function, and effectiveness. There are three specific types which the player characters may encounter in the campaign. Many of the robots in these scenarios are under independent control, not directly operated by Doom II.

*Doombots:* Doombots are designed to act as proxies for Doom, either in negotiations or in battles. When alone, the Doombots each believe themselves to be Doom; their programming allows them to act as Doom unless in the presence of Doom or another Doombot. The Doombots the PCs encounter at the camp are Combat Doombots, specifically programmed to fight, but not kill, the mutants in training sessions.

The Combat Doombots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	EX	RM	EX	EX	EX

Health: 90 Karma: 60

- Incredible(40) Material Strength
- Incredible(40) Body Armor
- Amazing(50) Intensity Force Beams
- Monstrous(75) Force Field
- Unearthly(100) Electrical Shock
- Excellent flight from waist-mounted rockets

*Guardbots:* Guardbots are non-humanoid robots used to patrol Latveria's borders or control the populace. They use wheels for mobility, granting them lightning speed. These robots follow their programmed orders strictly and without thought.

The Guardbots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	TY	GD	PR	PR	PR

Health: 36

- Typical(6) Material Strength
- Typical(6) Body Armor
- Excellent(20) Intensity Force Blasters
- Entangling arms of Excellent Material Strength
- Incredible(40) Intensity Knock Out Gas
- Lightning speed of six areas/round

*Killer robots:* These humanoid robots were designed to be ultimate machines of destruction. They were only intended to be used if Doom was no longer in control of Latveria. Once released, they cannot be controlled by Castle Doom or Doom himself.

The killer robots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	AM	MN	FE	FE	FE

Health: 165 Karma: 6

- Amazing(50) Material Strength
- Amazing(50) Body Armor

*Warrior robots:* These are the standard guards and shock troops in Doom's arsenal. They are humanoid and large (8' tall), built to intimidate the masses. They can speak and are able to receive vocal commands from Doom.

The warrior robots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	GD	GD	EX	PR	PR	PR

Health: 60

- Good(10) Material Strength
- Good(10) Body Armor

•Remarkable(30) Intensity Force or Energy Blasters

## Miscellaneous Technology

Doom has spent the past 30 years designing and inventing hordes of new technology. Only a smattering of this has been seen in comic books or in game material. The following is a short list of various gadgets which the PCs may encounter when inside Castle Doom; perhaps Doom II might equip some of his robots with new technology to surprise the hapless heroes.

*Encephalo Beams:* Subconsciously prevents attacks on Doom (FF #246, 247)  
*Micro-projector or shrinking gas:* Sends (people to the Microverse (FF #16)  
*Power Cosmic Energizer:* (FF #258)  
*Power Cosmic Stealer:* (FF #57-61)  
*Puppet Projection Technology:* Places minds within tiny puppets and Liddleville (FF #236)  
*Time Machine:* (various FF issues)  
*Zorba's eye beam weapon:* (FF #200, 247)

## The End?

*I'd love to hear the results and comments about your Doom Wars campaigns. Right now, my biggest critic is Uatu; the big guy reads over my shoulder as I write. I don't mind so much, but he points a lot, and his hand appearing between me and my computer screen is disconcerting. "Hey, fella, just stick to watching, will ya?"*



# Naming Military Units

## Giving Colorful Titles To Groups Of Soldiers

by Gregory W. Detwiler

Nearly every role playing campaign has at least the potential for military action on a large scale. This means the GM will have to conjure up names for military units. Merely designating 1st Infantry, 2nd Armored, etc., is not very interesting—although it can quicken the paperwork.

Real life is full of units with classy names—The Black Watch, The Coldstream Guards, The Rainbow Division, The Green Berets, The King's Companions, The Ironsides, or the umteenhundredth Legion Victoria Vitrix. All of them have glamorous histories. Many RPG systems also have fancy combat unit names. FASA has done well, especially with regard to their *Battletech* game: Wolf's Dragoons, the New Syrtis Fusiliers, Waco Rangers, McCarron's Armored Cavalry, Kell Hounds, Smithson's Chinese Bandits, Hansen's Roughriders—the list goes on.

To a lesser extent, many other game systems also have great unit names. Even West End Games' *Paranoia* has the dreaded Vulture Squadrons. Military units with glamorous names help make identification and role-playing easier for PCs who enlist in them, particularly if an area's history is sufficiently detailed to permit a complete listing of the unit's battle honors. Adventure planning can be made easier if the unit has a traditional enemy, as in the case of the Waco Rangers and Wolf's Dragoons.

### The Basics

To begin, determine how many units you need to give the same general name, whether Marine divisions or Deneb Light Cavalry. Adding numbers to unit names is all right as long as a number is not the only designation. Affix a unit marker if there is more than one type of weapons system in the army in question: infantry, armor, artillery, spearmen, musketeers—it all depends on the time period and army organization. In many cases, a military unit has been raised mostly or solely in one particular region. Other units could associate themselves with a particular

region after being stationed there for a long period of time—as was the case with many Roman legions. However, that was a practice that backfired on more than one occasion when the legions grew more attached to the region than to Rome, and they refused to pull out to reinforce another sector. So, don't forget the basics: number (assuming the unit is not unique), unit type, and—optionally—area of origin.

### Fancy Names

Now you need to add fancy or fierce-sounding names such as marauders, crusaders, etc. These are usually designed to make the unit sound tough, possibly tougher than it really is. This last would often be the case in many Third World armies. A leader might also have his name inserted into the unit; he could be the outfit's founder or current commander. If naming a unit for its commander becomes a common practice, however, it could give the bookkeepers a headache trying to keep up with a name change every time the unit gets a new commander. Other options include naming units after famed leaders of the past or heads of state or mercenary patrons. In the latter category, the ruler need not be mentioned by personal name, providing a title such as The Emperor's Own.

You can have a lot of fun making up unit names. This applies not only to the GM, but also to PCs who found mercenary units or raise their own private armies or feudal levies. Inevitably, some will favor titles with words that have similar sounds, such as the Raging Red Rhinos of Rawalpindi. This would be my personal choice for a unit of assault Mechs in *Battletech*. Be prepared for fights between units of the same side, though. If a name is popular enough, your traveling MechWarriors may encounter more than one additional Raging Red Rhinos of Rawalpindi. At the very least, it could result in a legal battle to see who has the right to the title. This could be handled by legal adjudication, possibly by ComStar in *Battletech*, or by a no-holds-barred battle, with the title going to the survivors. And if more than one unit of the same name exists, don't ignore the opportuni-

ty for cases of mistaken identity where the PCs' unit gets blamed for the misdeeds of others—or takes credits for their victories.

Unless you are engaged in a humorous campaign, your employment-hunting PC mercenary unit should not have a name like Bozo's Bunglers.

### Sources For Exotic Names

The major source for fancier titles is the oft-mentioned mists of antiquity. Greek and Roman names are common for units with a taste for the exotic. Phalanx, legion, triarii, gladiators, pezetaeri (this one is Macedonian), etc. All are good choices, particularly for ancient campaign worlds or for modernized anachronisms such as the *Renegade Legion* game by FASA. Other options include: Arab and Turkish names—Ialays, Jannissaries, Dervishes, Madcaps, Spahis, or Sipahis; Italian—Bersaglieri, Granatieri, Carabinieri, Alpini; Mongol—tuman, Ordo; Zulu—Impi; and Venetian—Stradiots.

The next best source of real names is from the Renaissance period through the Napoleonic wars. Fusiliers, grenadiers, hussars, dragoons, cuirassiers, and Zouaves came from this time.

Often, the mere translation of a word to a foreign equivalent is enough to give a military unit a touch of glamour. A classic example from World War II is the German "panzer," which essentially means "armor" and is used for tank and mechanized units. You can use straight translations, such as helepolly, which is ancient Greek for "city-takers," or develop variations. For example, the German antitank troops were referred to as Jagers, from the German word for "hunter." In earlier centuries, this was a name for scouts, irregular units, skirmishers and more.

The names of animals and monsters present further possibilities. Lions, tigers, dragons, and gorgons are favorites. Use foreign language translations to add style. Unless the player characters are very well-traveled or live in a world or universe of widespread knowledge, animal and monster names should be restricted to appropriate geographic areas. The Raging Red Rhinos of Rawalpindi, for example, would not be appro-

priate for a European unit in any time period after the woolly rhino became extinct.

## Colorful Add-Ons

Now consider using words that are not adequate names in themselves, but could add color to a unit when combined with other words. Appropriately enough, colors are a major source of adding flavor. Red is often used, since it is the color of blood. Black implies power, stealth, or mystery. Blue would be appropriate for naval and air units—and symbolizes loyalty (true blue). Gray is another power color, especially for units that have been around awhile, since it symbolizes age. In many cultures, yellow would be a poor choice, as it suggests cowardice, and green might imply envy. Green, however, could also conjure images of forests and other wild areas. White can be a symbol of purity, ideal for crusaders and other holy warriors. Although, white might suggest softness and weakness.

Purple is handicapped by being slightly silly-sounding. However, in Western lore it is traditionally the imperial color, because the Caesars of Rome wore it. Pink suggests weakness; and rose and violet have the additional handicap of being associated with delicate flowers. Orange and brown are neutral.

## Sample Names

Here is a smattering of names you might want to choose for your military units, embellishing on them as your imagination allows.

**A** Aces, Afghans, Afridis, Airborne, Airmobile, Alpini, Amalekites, Amazons, Arbalesters, Archers, Argives, Argonauts, Armor, Arquebusiers, Artillery, Assassins, Attackers, Avatars, Axmen.

**B** Badgers, Badmen, Bahairiz, Band, Bandits, Bane, Barbarians, Barracudas, Battlers, Bears, Bedouins, Behemoths, Berbers, Berets, Bersaglieri, Berserkers, Bestiarii, Bobcats, Bombardiers, Bombers, Boxers, Buccaneers, Bushi, Bushmen, Bush Rangers.

**C** Caesar's Own, Cannoneers, Carabiniere, Cataphracts, Cats, Cavaliers, Cavalry, Centurions, Champions, Charioteers, Choppers, Cobras, Cohorts, Colonials, Commandos, Companions, Company, Condors, Condottiere, Copperheads, Corsairs, Cossacks, Cotton-

mouths, Cougars, Count's Own, Cowboys, Cowpokes, Crusaders, Crushers, Cuirassiers, Cutlasses.

**D** Daggers, Dark, Death-Dealers, Death's Head, Defenders, Dervishes, Diadochi, Diamachares, Dinosaurs, Dirks, Doom, Dragonnes, Dragons, Dragonslayers, Dragoons, Drakes, Drakki, Drakkons, Druids, Duelists, Duke's Own.

**E** Eagles, Elementals, Elephants, Enemies, Enforcers, Engineers, Equites, Executioners, Exterminators.

**F** Falcons, Federals, Federati, Fencers, Fighters, Filibusters, Flamers, Forsters, Foxes, Freebooters, Freemen, Furies, Fusileers, Fyrdsmen.

**G** Gamblers, Gang, Gangsters, Gendarmes, Genitours, Ghosts, Giants, Gladiators, Goliaths, Gorgons, Gorillas, Goths, Granatieri, Grenadiers, Griffins, Grizzlies, Guards, Guardsmen, Guerrillas, Gunmen, Gunners, Gunslingers.

**H** Halberdiers, Hammerheads, Hammers, Hastati, Hatchetmen, Hawks, Heavy (unit type), Headhunters, Helepolii, Heroes (or Heroines), Highlanders, High-Rollers, Highwaymen, Hippocampi, Hippos, Hobilars, Hoplites, Hoplomaches, Hordes, Hornets, Horse, Horsemen, Hospitallers, Hounds, Housecarls, House Troops, Huns, Hunters, Huscars, Husars, Hussars, Hypaspists.

**I** Ialayers, Immortals, Imperial Guard, Imperialists, Imperials, Impi, Indians, Infantry, Interceptors, Invincibles, Ironclads, Iron Guards, Iron Men, Ironsides.

**J** Jagers, Jaguars, Janissaries, Jayhawkers, Jousters.

**K** Katanas, Kavelleri, Kerns, Killers, Kingmakers, King's Own, Knights, Kondors, Krakens, Krushers, Kshariyas.

**L** Lancers, Landsknechts, Legion, Legionnaires, Legionaries, Leopards, Leviathans, Liberators, Light (unit type), Lions, Lizards, Lowlifes, Lynxes.

**M** Madcaps, Mad Dogs, Madmen, Magyars, Mahouts, Mamelukes, Mammoths, Maniple, March Militia, Marksman, Marines, Mashers, Mastodons, Maulers, Medium (unit type), Memluks, Men-at-Arms, Men-O-War, Mercenaries, Merces, Militia, Militiamen, Minions, Minute-men, Mirmillones, Moghuls, Mongols, Moors, Mountaineers, Mounted Rifles, Mountain Men, Monsters, Musketeers, Myrmidons,

**N** Nagas, \_\_\_\_\_ of the Night, Nightmares, Night Stalkers, Ninjas, Nomads.

**O** Ogres, Orcas, Ordu, Ospreys, Ostrogoths, Ottomans.

**P** Pachyderms, Paladins, Panthers, Panzers, Paramilitary, Paratroopers, Paratroops, Pathans, Peltasts, Pezezeri, Phalanx, Phantoms, Pikemen, Piranhas, Pirates, Pistoleers, Praetorian Guard, Praetorians, Prince's Own, Principes, Privateers, Psiloi, Pumas, Punks, Pythons.

**Q** Queenmakers, Queen's Own, Quickdraws, Quick-Killers.

**R** Raiders, Range Riders, Rangers, Rapiers, Rattlers, Ravens, Raveners, Red Indians, Reiters, Retiarii, Rhinos, Riders, Riflemen, Ronin, Roughnecks, Rough-Riders, Ruffians, Ryukens.

**S** Sabres, Sabretooths, Samnites, Samurai, Sappers, Saracens, Scalpers, Scimitars, Scouts, Scutati, Sea Lions, Seals, Security, Secutors, Sentinels, Sharks, Shikaries, Shrikes, Sidewinders, Sipahis, Slammers, Slashers, Slayers, Slicers, Smashers, Smilodons, Smiters, Stabbers, Stalkers, Stationarii, Stiletos, Stingrays, Storm, Stormers, Stromtroopers, Stradiots, Strikers, Sturmers, Sturmtruppen, Survivalists, Swashbucklers, Sword of \_\_\_\_\_, Swords, Swordsmen.

**T** Tankers, Tartars, Tatars, Templars, Teutons, Thraceans, Thugees, Thugs, Thunder, Thunderbirds, Thunderbolts, Thunderers, Thundering Herd, Tigers, Timariots, Titans, Triarii, Tridents, Tuaregs, Tulwars, Tuman, Turcopoles, Turkomans, Turks.

**U** Undeclared, Unicorns.

**V** Valkyries, Vampires, Vandals, Vanguard, Velites, Victors, Vigilantes, Vikings, Vindicators, Visigoths, Vultures.

**W** Wakazashis, Wako, Warlocks, Warriors, Wasps, Werewolves, Widow-Makers, Wildcats, Wild Men, Wolf Pack, Wolverines, Wolveres, Wolves, Wraiths, Wranglers, Wyverns.

**X** Xenophobes, Xenos.

**Y** Yataghans, Yeomen, Youngbloods, Young Turks.

**Z** Zealots, Zouaves, Zulus.



# With Great Power

## Playing the Game—Of Playing With the Rules

by Dale A. Donovan

I'm a big fan of the game, but in my years of playing and GMing the system, I've come across a few minor problems. Being a rules-tinkerer by nature, I've come up with some solutions. They should help you get more enjoyment out of this terrific game.

### Problem Powers

**Invisibility and phasing:** While the power-rank system used in the game handles most superhuman abilities very well, there are a few problem powers to which ranks don't seem to apply. How can one hero (with a higher rank) be more invisible or less tangible than someone else with the same power but a lower rank? Simply put, the first hero isn't more invisible or less tangible than the second hero. Ranks for these two powers come into play only in certain circumstances.

Heroes with **invisibility** are automatically invisible only to the eyes of humans and animals. A dog could smell or hear the hero, a security camera could pick up some distortion around the hero, and infrared goggles (while I would rule they cannot detect the hero) could possibly see the residual heat left on the floor from the hero's feet, etc. When attempting to determine whether some nonhuman or nonvisual sensory device detects an invisible hero, use the power's rank to make a FEAT roll against the rank of the device. (See the "Hardware" section of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set's *Player's Book* for details on technological items and ranks.) If the roll is successful, then the device did not detect the hero.

Similarly, ranks come into play when a hero attempts to phase through a wall, for example. Make a FEAT roll using the **phasing** rank against the material rank of the item to be phased through. Success means that the hero can pass through the material.

In both cases above, and whenever a "roll versus" a rank is called for, I recommend using the "Automatic FEATs" and "Impossible FEATs" rules mentioned on page 15 of the *Player's Book*.

These prevent "unrealistic" things from occurring in the game.

**Energy Control** powers: Each of these powers gives a hero the ability to manipulate a form of energy without allowing him the ability to generate that energy. In most cases, this isn't a big problem if the GM allows the hero access to some source of that energy. For example, there would be no problem with manipulating gravity, since gravity is a fundamental force of the universe. I allow my players to select a power that generates the same type of energy their heroes can control, as long as they do not exceed the total number of powers rolled for their heroes. This is absolutely necessary with the **Energy Control** power **Darkforce Manipulation**, as there usually is very little of this other-dimensional energy just lying around.

**Lightning Speed:** Two problems with this power are that the hero gains no initiative bonus for possessing such a power, and the hero cannot make any extra attacks in a combat round.

The first problem is solved by consulting the Initiative Modifier Table on page 14 of the *Player's Book* and using the power's rank number in place of the hero's Intuition. This will give the hero an appropriate reaction-time bonus. Note that this power-rank initiative bonus will replace the hero's Intuition bonus, unless the Intuition bonus is higher. The same is true for any Agility initiative bonus (see below).

The second problem can be solved by allowing heroes with this power to develop a "multiple attacks" power stunt. Use the power rank or a character's Fighting +1CS (whichever is higher) and roll to take "Multiple Combat Actions" as per the *Player's Book*, page 30. This is identical to the "Extra Attacks" power in the *Player's Book*, but read on for a change to that power.

**Extra Attacks:** I suggest changing this power so it automatically gives a hero one (not having to roll, as per page 30) extra attack per round—without any column shift penalties. Selecting this power multiple times gives one extra attack each time the power is taken. To avoid abuse I caution GMs to set some arbitrary limit on the number of times this power can be taken (twice is the limit in my campaign).

### Combat Contentions

Again, the MARVEL SUPER HEROES system handles combat very well, but the following rules add some "chrome" without slowing the combat process.

**Surprise:** The game has no surprise rules. A simple solution is have each hero make an Intuition roll when an unexpected attack occurs to see if he is surprised for that round. If he fails the roll, he is surprised. The rules for "Blindsiding" attacks on page 30-31 of the *Player's Book* then apply to the hero for that combat round. The hero can act normally in the next round. If the Intuition roll is successful, the hero is not surprised and can act immediately. Also refer to the "Blindsiding" section to determine what constitutes an "unexpected attack."

**Initiative:** As with the **Lightning Speed** power, the MARVEL SUPER HEROES system does not give an initiative bonus for those heroes with high Agility scores. Consult the Initiative Modifier Table on page 14, using the hero's Agility to determine his initiative bonus. Compare this bonus to the bonuses, if any, for the hero's Intuition and **Lightning Speed**, and take the highest single bonus as the initiative modifier. This method gives the hero the best possible bonus without adding potentially huge modifiers to the initiative roll.

**Density Attack:** Many heroes with the power **Density Manipulation-self** want to attack foes using Vision's power stunt of reducing his density, inserting his hand into a foe, and then partially resolidifying his hand. Note two things: **Density Manipulation-self** does not allow a hero to pass through physical objects—like bodies, and; Vision also has the **Phasing** power, that allows a hero to pass through solid objects. I have ruled any hero who wishes to use this "density attack" must have both **Density Manipulation-self** and **Phasing**. Otherwise, this power stunt works as described under **Density Manipulation-self**.

**Strangulation attacks:** An attacker wishing to strangle a foe must attack on the Grappling column and achieve a Partial Hold or better. Any victim of a strangulation attack must make a suc-



cessful Endurance FEAT roll versus the strangler's strength to remain conscious. If the roll fails, the victim is automatically Stunned for 1d10 rounds. The strangler also inflicts his normal Strength damage per round. Body Armor of a higher rank than the attacker's Strength renders this attack harmless, although the Grappling result still applies.

**Fire damage:** Flame damage, magical or otherwise, is rolled on the "Energy" column. This is never made clear in the rules.

## Magic & Miscellany

**Magical attacks:** Page 64 of the *Player's Book* notes that magical spells (bolts and beams) that reduce the target's Health are rolled on the Force column to determine any additional effects. This is not a rule change on my part, I'm merely pointing this out, as it is buried at the bottom of a paragraph. So, despite the fact that spells use magical "energy," you should roll most spells on the Force column.

On the topic of magic, I must mention MHAC9 *Realms of Magic* accessory. If you have a lot of magic and magic-wielders in your campaign, this supplement is invaluable. Unfortunately, it has been out of print for a few years. You still may be able to find it on the back shelf of your game store, and TSR's Mail Order Hobby Shop has a limited number of them for sale.

Some name changes must be made on that supplement's Universal Chart columns as this was published prior to the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set. The "Slugfest" column in MHAC9 becomes the "Blunt Attacks" column in the Advanced Set. Similarly, the "Bite-Claw" column becomes "Edged Attacks," "Targeting" becomes "Shooting," and "Blasting" becomes "Force." The Psyche columns can be used as is, and the "Stun" and "Slam" columns should be replaced with the column of the same names from the Advanced Set.

**Karma awards:** I've never felt it was fair to heroes to use the Karma point division method in the *Player's Book* on page 34. If one hero rescues a dozen people from a burning building, that hero gets 100 Karma points (see the Karma Summary Listing on page 37). But, if two heroes rescue those same 12 people, each hero only gets 50 Karma points. In my campaign, I determine the Karma point awards, and any penalties,

for each hero's actions and award that total to each hero present without dividing the Karma point award.

That leads to heroes having more Karma points to spend on advancement, but it also allows for a more *heroic* campaign. If a hero knows he'll only get 40-50 Karma points for an adventure (and believe me, most players do keep track), he is going to be less willing to spend Karma points on heroic feats and maneuvers. He will, therefore, fail FEAT rolls more often. However, if a hero knows he is going to collect 100-150 Karma points, he will be willing to spend more of it during the game in heroic actions.

If you have players who love to horde Karma points and channel it all into advancement, demonstrate the usefulness of spending Karma points in battle. Present a villain with a lot of Karma points who spends them in battle. Once the player realizes why his hero is getting the tar beaten out of him, he should wise up.

Also, be sure to keep track of a villain's Karma points. If in the course of an encounter the heroes lose Karma points, the villain(s) should gain Karma points. Similarly, as heroes can gain Karma points for things they do "off-screen" (civilian identities, weekly awards, etc.), the villains should, too. If a villain goes on a bank-robbing spree and the heroes finally catch him in the act of robbing his fourth bank, then the villain should have received Karma points for robbing the first three banks and getting away with it. This provides a great motivation for heroes to track down villains on a crime-spree—the heroes don't want the villains to get any more Karma points that can be used in battle and for advancement.

## Odds And Ends

Many super hero role-playing games have been published over the years; some are fun and playable, others are neither. Here is a list of topics the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game doesn't cover in detail, but other super hero RPGs handle:

**Campaign Design:** Like Mayfair's DC HEROES game, the MARVEL SUPER HEROES system expects you to play in some version of the published comics' universe, and you certainly can do that and have an enjoyable campaign. What the books don't discuss is how to set up *your own* version of that universe. I.C.E./Hero Games' CHAMPI-

ONS game has an extensive campaign set-up section in its 4th Edition hard-cover rules. The "Campaign Sourcebook" section discusses the tone and outlook of a campaign, the morality and realism levels of a campaign, and has a terrific section on how to *ruin* a good campaign. Fantasy Games Unlimited's VILLAINS & VIGILANTES (V&V) game also has a brief section on setting campaigns in alternate realities, the past, or the future.

Another engaging aspect in the design of the V&V game is the "You are there" principle. In this game, you don't create a character that has super powers; you quantify *your own* strength, dexterity, etc., into game terms, and then generate super powers for "yourself." You truly become a "hero."

**Campaign laws:** Again, both the CHAMPIONS and V&V games have sections on the law and law enforcement in worlds with super heroes. The V&V game also has an exhaustive listing of misdemeanor and felony crimes and the punishments that perpetrators of these crimes can expect.

**Campaign Worlds:** One benefit of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES system is that it comes with an established universe. However, outside those of the comics, very few other published super hero settings exist. One exception is the setting in Gamescience's SUPERHERO 2044 game. This game, published in 1978, is virtually unplayable, but the rule book includes the island nation of Inguria, set in the year 2044. If you can find a copy of the game, check out Inguria.

TSR has published the F.R.E.E.LAN-CERS and F.R.E.E.AMERICA supplements for the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. These detail a dark future for America where science has advanced to the point that beings who resemble "super heroes" exist. In a way, it is a mixture of cyberpunk and super heroes—it's a very interesting combination. If this intrigues you, you may still be able to find copies in stores.

**Campaign Motivations:** One of the DC HEROES game's best features is the section on character motivations. These motives often deal with the character's origin, and explain why the hero is out laying his life on the line for others. A game with an alignment system somewhat similar to that of the AD&D® game is Palladium Book's HEROES UNLIMITED game. These well-defined concepts and codes of behavior are very

*Continued on page 30*

## With Great Power

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absorbing and could be fitted into any super hero RPG.

**Campaign Accessories:** The MARVEL SUPER HEROES and DC HEROES games have received extensive support from their publishers,

but the most innovative line of accessories lately has been those published for I.C.E.'s Champions game. Recent releases included a sourcebook on Great Britain and its heroes (*Kingdom of Champions*), a book on various races invading Earth (*Invasions: Target Earth*), and one about other

dimensions and alternate realities (*Champions in 3-D*), as well as an assortment of NPC character and organizations books. Whether you play the Champions game, these books will stir your imagination and provide many ideas to incorporate into your campaign. □



# With Great Power

## Alternate campaign settings for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, Part One

by Dale A. Donovan

Many superhero campaigns take place in New York, or another large, often faceless, city. While there is nothing wrong with that, there are an incredible number of interesting, exciting, and diverse locales to explore in the MARVEL UNIVERSE. The list presented here is by no means comprehensive. The places and organizations mentioned in this column were chosen because there is at least some information available to gamers via TSR Inc.'s MARVEL SUPER HEROES game products.

### Marvel-Earth

On the Marvel version of our own planet, there are numerous locations and organizations that could support some fascinating adventures, or even an entire campaign. Listed below are a few with the most adventure possibilities.

**S.H.I.E.L.D.:** Marvel-Earth's best covert-operations agency would make a great setting for an espionage-oriented campaign. Once before, S.H.I.E.L.D. had a "Super-Agent" program, but the only true success from that program was Wendell Vaughn—the hero, Quasar. Perhaps the new S.H.I.E.L.D. is starting a revamped program. This campaign set-up would explain how all the heroes came together, recruited by S.H.I.E.L.D. This setting would also allow them access to high-tech equipment, numerous resources, and contacts with law-enforcement agencies around the world.

This type of campaign would need to be run and played a little differently than a standard superhero campaign. Flashy costumes, extravagant powers, and secret civilian identities would be out of the question. Stealth, undercover operations, and nondescript powers would be the order of the day. If your players are old hands at "standard" superhero campaigns, it could be quite a challenge for them to role-play in this setting. They would not be able to fall back on their powers to get them out of a jam—especially if they are undercover as "normal people." Similar campaigns

could involve Project: Pegasus, The Vault, HYDRA, and A.I.M. For more information on S.H.I.E.L.D., see the *Gamer's Handbook of the MARVEL UNIVERSE*™, #6, 1990 Character Updates (MU #6).

**Eternals/Deviants:** These two powerful Celestials-created offshoots of humanity still have dealings with the other inhabitants of Earth. Recently, most of Earth's Eternals left the planet to explore the universe; some few stayed behind. The PC heroes could be part of that contingent, and, like several other Eternals (Sersi and Makkari, for example), could become more active in Earth's affairs. They could work against their traditional enemies, the Deviants, or they could protect Earth from high-powered, cosmic attackers, invaders, supervillains, etc.

Heroes in this campaign would be quite powerful, since all Eternals are effectively immortal and have control over every molecule of their bodies. From the GM's point of view, however, this just means the PCs will come up against the *really* nasty villains, aliens, Deviants, etc. A campaign of this type would be the perfect opportunity for the players to create and use some truly powerful heroes. For more information on Eternals, see MU#2. MU#1 contains information on their traditional foes, the Deviants.

**Inhumans:** This genetic offshoot of humanity, created by the Kree, could easily generate PC heroes. Though they now live on the Moon, the Inhumans lived for a long time on Earth and still have dealings with Earth's heroes. Perhaps the PCs are distant cousins of the ruling family, or are just well enough off so they can pursue their own interests—being heroes. They could explore their home—the Blue Area of the Moon, also the home of the Watcher, or they could make the trip to Earth. Since Inhumans are sensitive to pollution, the PCs could become eco-crusaders who decide to clean up the planet.

Inhumans generally have only one superpower; this is a great way for the GM to limit the power of the PCs. Many Inhumans also have an unusual

appearance. Since the major occupation of the Inhumans is science, the PCs could develop, or have access to, high-tech equipment. PCs in this campaign would need to work closely together, since their power would be limited. For more information on Inhumans, see MU#2.

**Savage Land/Pangea:** This lush, tropical jungle hidden under Antarctica has been the site of many superhero adventures, including recent story lines in the *Uncanny X-Men* and *Namor, the Sub-Mariner* comics. Perhaps the PCs are Savage Land Mutates (originally created by Magneto) who decide to explore the world outside the Savage Land. The Savage Land could also support more mainstream heroes who merely use the Savage Land as their base of operations. Since the Savage Land is populated by dinosaurs and other "extinct" creatures, supervillains lying low or working on their next big scheme, and Zaladane, who wants to take her army of Mutates and conquer the rest of the world, the Savage Land holds many opportunities for heroes.

Primitive or wilderness-oriented heroes would fit right into this type of campaign. Perhaps the heroes are the leaders of a tribe of non-powered natives. The PCs must protect them, teach them, and lead them. Being in charge can often put a lot of pressure on PCs who are accustomed to acting on impulse. The tropical setting could also lend itself to jungle warfare (perhaps against Zaladane and her Mutate forces). For more on the Savage Land, see MU#3 and MA4 *The Fantastic Four Compendium*.

These four campaign concepts are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to exploring Marvel Earth. Other possible adventure locales include Atlantis, Mt. Wundagore, Subterranea, Wakanda, and such "mundane" places as Britain and the rest of Europe, Asia, the Pacific Rim, and wilderness areas around the world.

### Marvel Space & Alternate Dimensions

As expansive and diverse as it is, even Marvel Earth can't compare to the adventuring possibilities available to



those brave enough to seek their fortune (and Karma) in Marvel's version of outer space. Numerous alien races, galactic empires, Galactus himself, and even other dimensions can await the heroes. Some "humans" already live in space, even if it is still within the boundaries of our solar system: the above-mentioned Inhumans and the branch of Eternals residing on Saturn's moon, Titan.

Heroes who make Marvel Space their home need not be as powerful as the Silver Surfer to survive. They can possess a starship, a power that allows them to travel through space, a space-warp or teleportation power, a dimension-hopping power or device, etc. The possibilities are truly limitless. For information on space travel in the MARVEL UNIVERSE, see *To the ends of the MARVEL UNIVERSE* by David E. Martin, DRAGON® Magazine #159.

**Galactic Empires:** The Skrull, Kree, and Shi'ar empires all have detailed histories that can provide ready-made campaign backgrounds. Whether the PCs are members of one of these races, or are humans working with or against one or more of them, taking on a galactic empire is a big job. These empires also tend to go to war with one another. A campaign could be set in either of the Kree-Skrull wars or in the upcoming (as of this writing) Kree-Shi'ar war. Heroes at war is an interesting concept. Do they stick to their ideals and fight by the generally-accepted superhero rules (no killing, etc.), or are all bets off? Heroes could also become space-faring pirates like the Starjammers.

There are more alien races out there which, at one time or another, coveted Earth. The Badoon aren't that strong now, but by the 30th Century, they will have conquered our planet. The Brood have already tried to infest humans (mutants in this case) with their eggs. Perhaps they will throw caution to the wind and prepare a full-scale invasion. More information on the Brood and the Shi'ar is available in MA1 *Children of the Atom*.

Speaking of invasions, the Horde story line from Marvel's *Strikeforce Morituri* comic, could make a great campaign. Even though it is not in the normal Marvel continuity, it could make for some great role-playing and combat

scenes as the heroes—given powers that are slowly killing them—fight to win as many victories against the Horde's superior firepower and technology as possible before their time runs out.

**Asgard/Olympus:** This sort of campaign would be a dream come true for many superhero game players—the chance to literally play "gods." Adventure with the likes of Thor or Hercules, receive secret orders and missions from Odin or Zeus, and protect the realm from giants and cyclopes. PCs could adventure in their mystical homes of Asgard or Olympus, or they could throw in their lot with quaint little humans.

This type of campaign could involve regal throne rooms, subtle court intrigues, and noble role-playing. After all, the PCs are gods, and they will be expected to act in the best tradition of Greek and Norse legends. This could become quite a swashbuckling campaign (a la the Warriors Three), with most warriors of the realm walking about with swords girded on and so forth. Heroes need not be on the power levels of Thor and Hercules, as even "normal" Asgardians or Olympians are quite tough when compared to humans.

**Negative Zone:** This is an anti-matter universe the size of the matter-version of the MARVEL UNIVERSE. With a universe of this size, and with the vast majority of that universe unexplored (even in the comics), there are infinite adventure possibilities. PC heroes could be Earthmen sent to the Zone by some villain's trap, they could be in search of some valuable material or medicine needed back on Earth, or they could be freedom fighters warring against one or more of the Zone's tyrannical dictators; Annihilus, Blastaar, and Stygorr.

Many heroes could be involved in a Negative Zone campaign. But, unless the entire campaign is to take place there, they will need some way to safely travel within, to, and from the Zone. Heroes in this campaign would brace many of the problems facing heroes in any Marvel Space campaign—transport, life support, finding edible food, etc. Therefore, heroes who are relatively self-sufficient (can fly, don't need to eat or breath as regularly as normal, etc.)

would fare better. More information on the Negative Zone can be found in MA4 *The Fantastic Four Compendium* and in MSL2 *Warlord of Baluur*.

**Alternate Universes:** Of Marvel Comics' numerous graphic novels, several could support alternative campaigns. What if, in *Emperor Doom*, Captain America did not break the Purple Man's mental control of him? What if the Purple man had not died? Victor Von Doom would still rule the world, with most of the world working for him, either willingly or via the Purple Man's mind control.

The PCs could be resistant or immune to the mind control and would have to work covertly to find other heroes to wage a guerilla war against Doom's forces. They would need to develop some means of breaking the mind control to help tip the odds back in their favor. This could be a great, long-term campaign full of firefights, ambushes, treachery, spying and reconnaissance missions, and hero- vs.-hero battles in the best Marvel tradition.

*The Futurians* graphic novel does not take place in the normal Marvel continuity, but it is a wonderful story and could make a great campaign. In the future, Earth is doomed to die. After experimenting on the Sun, the evil Inheritors discover they have damaged it, and life on Earth is threatened. They escape by going back in time. The Futurians are normal, modern-day humans who are transformed into superbeings to combat the Inheritors' schemes on present-day Earth.

The PC heroes could take the roles of the Futurians, or they could be the next batch of people to undergo the process that created the first Futurians. Their primary enemies would be the Inheritors.

There are many more races and places to explore in the MARVEL UNIVERSE. Don't forget about Ego, the Living Planet, Galactus' worldship, the Collector's ship, all the Infinity Gauntlet tie-ins, Subatomica, Jarella's world of K'ai, the planets Xandar, Galador, and so on. With a little imagination and research, you can take your heroes, and your campaign to new heights. □

## MARVEL UNIVERSE



# With Great Power

## Part 2: Alternate campaign settings

by Dale A. Donovan

This column, the second of two (the first part appeared in issue 65), explores campaign settings borrowed from sources not related to the MARVEL UNIVERSE or the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. I'll discuss genres, and settings within each genre, that would make interesting super-heroic campaign bases for your MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters.

Motion pictures are a great source to steal ideas for use in a game of the appropriate genre. Also, there are so many movies on videotape available for rent that movies are a cheap, fast, and easy campaign resource. (Hence the presence of Jim Lowder's terrific movie-review column in this Newszine. I'll try not to step on any toes, Jim.) I'll discuss at least one movie in each genre that I think would work well as a super-heroic campaign setting. I'm assuming everyone reading this is a gamer, and that's why the other source for ideas I'll talk about is other role-playing games. As gamers, I assume you have games other than the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game on your shelves. So, many of the games I mention should be available to you either in your own library, in a friend's, etc. I'll mention at least one game per genre that has a background suitable for use with super-campaigns.

In all the examples below, I'm not suggesting that you take the universe verbatim and plug your PC heroes into it just like that. Every setting suggested below will need to be tailored to your likes and dislikes, your heroes' power levels and personalities, etc. Turn each setting into your version of that universe, suitable for play with your hero characters. If your players are familiar with your source material, much of their wonder in discovering and exploring your campaign setting will be lost.

### Science Fiction

This past summer's release of the film, *Terminator 2*, reminded me of what a great campaign setting that future history could make. Since the events of the second film have put the future back in doubt, I'll talk about setting up

campaigns using just the events from the first film (putting aside those nagging time paradoxes).

You'll remember that the first film foretold of the destruction of human civilization by machines. Your PC heroes can live in the modern world, learn of the world's fate, and try to alter the course of events before it's too late. They could also protect the present day and its inhabitants from further invasions from the future (like those in *Terminator 2*). Or, the heroes could live in that future setting. Perhaps they were the results of some mutagenic experiments carried out by the machines, or the toxic environment of that future, warring world could have mutated them to the point that their super-powers appear. In either case, they could do battle alongside John Connor and other humans against the robotic Hunter-Killers, other war machines, or even the dreaded Terminator cyborgs. Another option is that they could be sent back in time in pursuit of Terminators or to prevent the events that resulted in man's downfall.

A universe that offers an immense amount of available background material is that of the *Star Wars* movies and games. Your PCs could be rebels fighting the overwhelmingly superior forces of the Empire. Jedi Knights can already be considered super heroes, as they possess unusual powers. Your heroes could be Jedi if they all have mental powers, or the concept of Jedi Knights could be widened to include physical powers, all of which also come from the Force. Or, if you're feeling villainous, you could be trusted servants of the Emperor, Vader, and the Dark Side. In any case, I suggest using a set-up similar to that used in the role-playing game. The role-playing game is set just after the events of the film, *Star Wars*. The Rebels have shown they are a force to be reckoned with since they've proven themselves ingenious enough to destroy the first Death Star, but they are still pitifully outnumbered and outgunned. The best sources of information on this universe other than the movies are the source books for the role-playing game. *The Star Wars Source Book*, *The Imperial Source Book*, and *The Rebel Alliance Source Book* are all

chock full of background information useable in campaign construction. All the game material is published by West End Games.

### Cyberpunk

While technically a sub-genre of science fiction, I'll discuss cyberpunk separately since its attitude and outlook are unique.

To my mind, the film *Blade Runner*, starring Harrison Ford, is the quintessential cyberpunk film. That film shows just how a cyberpunk world should look. Your PCs could be police (*Blade Runners*) working to keep some semblance of order in a highly chaotic world ruled by mega-corporations that make their own rules. Or, they could be freelancers, working for justice in the dark streets of the city. If ethics aren't a concern, they could actually work for one of the megacorps, following orders and enforcing company policy. This basic background also applies to most of the cyberpunk role-playing games on the market.

One game that puts an interesting twist on the typical cyberpunk setting is the *Dark Conspiracy* game by GDW. Cyber-horror is the best term I can come up with to describe the game. Take a typical cyberpunk world and add an awakened, malevolent, supernatural force and its minions. Why not add super heroes to the mix?

Player heroes could also be "awakened" beings, destined to combat the evil forces now abroad in this already dangerous world. They could be hired by one of the megacorps that wants to reclaim some *demonground* (areas haunted by Dark Minions), for oil or mineral rights, etc.

Player characters could also work for one of the now-weakened governments of the world, helping to wrest control of territory from the influences of both the megacorps and the Dark Ones.

### Fantasy

Super heroes aren't often thought of when considering the fantasy genre, since most fantastic adventures have their own heroes. But that's no reason not to try a super-fantasy campaign.

A good modern fantasy universe is



that of the film, *Highlander*. The U.S. version of the film was so poorly edited that the resulting film is often confusing, requiring a couple viewings to figure out exactly what is going on. But, any film that has swords and Sean Connery in it can't be all bad.

Basically, the film postulated that a small group of all-but-immortal individuals existed and fought one another for eventual, yet subtle, control of the world. PCs could be members of this elite group (though they needn't be immortal), just discovering their abilities and learning that others like them exist. Some of these others though, are evil and seek to make the world a violent, horrible place for any less powerful than they. Maintaining the proper atmosphere would be absolutely essential in this campaign. Since they are so few, the beings keep their existences secret, to protect themselves from discovery by society at large, which could react violently, and from their foes.

There'd be no flashy costumes or chrome Quinjets in this universe. There'd be instead trench-coated persons engaging in vicious, high-powered fights in dark alleys, with both parties likely fleeing if discovered. Even if the heroes are immortal, they still need one or two vulnerabilities to keep an edge of fear in the game. Perhaps only others like themselves know these weaknesses, but that makes them more dangerous.

For a medieval fantasy campaign, base your super heroes in any fantasy game world of your choice. Imagine your heroes adventuring in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, or Krynn of the DRAGONLANCE® saga. How would these heroes be treated—as powerful wizards and mighty warriors; or as dread fiends from the Abyss, to be hunted down and destroyed? Taking this idea even further, try putting your heroes into one of the AD&D® games alternate genre settings such as the new DARK SUN™ world or the SPELLJAMMER™ setting. A great example of super heroes in a fantasy realm was presented in Marvel's *Iron Man* comic (issues #149-150) when Iron Man and Doctor Doom traveled back in time to King Arthur's court at Camelot.

## Horror

Although I've already briefly touched on horror, true horror campaigns are a wonderful change of pace for heroes who are used to being the toughest kids on

the block. Even an occasional side trip into a one-shot horror scenario can really keep the players on their toes during all their escapades.

For an adventurous romp that can be both fun and scary, the genre of monster movies is the place to start. Find out just how well your heroes would do against Godzilla, King Kong, Mothra, and so on. Or, if one truly huge monster isn't to your taste, put your heroes up against many smaller, but still pretty big and nasty critters like those from all the 1950s "giant bug" movies. *Them!* and the much more modern *Tremors* are two films that stand out in my mind as good films for adaptation. Your heroes could be on vacation or otherwise minding their own business when, suddenly—mutated giant ants, bees, carnivorous worms, or whatever attack without warning. Of course, any normal people endangered by these critters' would turn to the heroes to aid and leadership. This would leave the PCs with trying to come up with a way to defeat the creatures, protect the normal folks, prevent panic and general stupidity, etc. (This is a great opportunity for GMs to play *really* stupid NPCs. You know the type, the folks who always have to find the source of that hideous screaming in the next room.)

As for horror games, I'd normally recommend the *Call of Cthulhu* game by Chaosium (and I do most heartily recommend it for a straight horror campaign), but since heroes can be so much more powerful than normal folks, and since that role is reserved for the creatures of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos in the game, I hesitate to recommend putting heroes into this game for fear of the game losing its formidable mystique of unabashed terror on the part of the characters (and the players). It might be possible to pull off, but your heroes might end up frustrated with their own ineffectiveness against these beasts.

Instead, I'll mention a horror game that takes a unique approach to the role-playing subject of vampires. White Wolf's *Vampire* game players take the role of vampires living in our modern society, masquerading as normal humans. Your campaign's PCs could stumble across this secret society and then must decide what to do about it. Even if some of the vampires aren't rampaging fiends (or are even friendly), they still are blood-sucking vampires, creatures of the night, and all that. Do the heroes callously seek to destroy them all, per-

haps by trying to convince the world at large that vampires really do exist? Or will they keep the secret, try to police the vampires from overindulgence, or even try to find a cure for vampirism (a la *Dark Shadows*)? For a real twist, perhaps the PCs discover that their powers result from a vampiric ancestor, and that ancestor is still "alive" and is now seeking his descendants' aid. Perhaps the heroes' powers are revealed to be supernatural in origin, making the PCs a kind of kin to the vampires. In either case, now the PCs must reevaluate their attitudes toward these undead creatures.

## Other Heroic Universes

Super heroes are no longer limited only to comic books. In the past few years, many films with vaguely super human protagonists have appeared. *Remo Williams*, the wryly humorous *Jake Speed*, and *Batman* are just three examples of fairly mainstream settings that could be adapted for use in a true super hero campaign.

As for other super hero games, why not take your MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters on a jaunt through the DC Comics universe. There is certainly enough of Mayfair Games' *DC Heroes* game source material out there to handle a long-term campaign through Gotham City, Metropolis, Central City, and so on. A good book to pick up if you'd like to try this is *The Atlas of the DC Universe*. If you're looking for a campaign with a darker atmosphere, try Alan Moore's *Watchmen*. I highly recommend the graphic novel to anyone who hasn't read it. That, and Mayfair's *Watchmen Source Book*, by Ray Winninger, are all you'll need to set up a similarly grim campaign.

If you prefer more generic, less well-known sources of alternative super hero campaigns, I have one more recommendation that may sound familiar to you. I mentioned *Champions in 3-D* back in issue #63, and I just can't say enough good things about this clever collection of well thought out alternative campaign settings for your heroes. Places like Nazi World, Rome World, Backworld, and many more await your heroes. If you enjoyed this column, you will love this book. It's published by I.C.E./Hero Games, and it's a must-have for every super hero game referee.



# With Great Power

## Grim Realism: Threat or Menace?

by Dale A. Donovan

It all seemed to start about five or so years ago, with characters like the Watchmen, the Dark Knight, and Marvel's own Wolverine and Punisher. As those of you familiar with any of those characters know, I'm referring to the trend of "grim realism" that seems ever-so-present in comics today. Yet, to my knowledge, there has been no published attempt to integrate this trend into superhero gaming. In this column, I'll briefly discuss ways to add this element of today's comic books to your own Marvel campaign.

Good sources to draw from are, of course, the "grim" comics themselves (see the characters listed above). I particularly recommend **The Dark Knight Returns** graphic novel by Frank Miller. Realism isn't exactly a new idea in gaming, as players of any of the cyberpunk genre games will tell you. A thorough reading of any cyberpunk game, especially the sections on background and the game world, will help you get a handle on how a grim game should feel.

### Adding Grim Realism

A MARVEL SUPER HEROES game GM who wants to add grim realism to his campaign should decide how to integrate this new element. Will the sudden change to grim realism be too great for the campaign's continuity? Are the players ready and willing for such a change? And how about their PCs? Some heroes, like Captain America for example, just wouldn't feel right in a grim campaign. In many cases, you might be better off starting anew with fresh characters designed for the grim setting.

Several years ago, I wanted to add some realism to my Marvel campaign, and this is how I went about it. One of my villains was an alien sorcerer, and one of the NPC heroines was also an alien—both from the same planet. Civil war erupted on their home planet, and they, plus a few other NPCs, were drawn into the conflict.

Before long, the PC heroes received a magical message from this sorcerer that stated the alien heroine and her human partner had been captured by enemy

forces. The sorcerer and his allies were unable to affect their rescue. Would the PCs please come to their aid? After some interesting role-playing, the PCs decided they had to answer the call—even though they knew it could quite possibly be a trap. The sorcerer then magically transported them to his war-torn world.

The PCs then found themselves in a grim setting—an alien world ravaged by war, surrounded by aliens whose true motives were unknown to the heroes.

I won't bore you with any more details, but I hope you noticed how I turned my campaign inside out. I took several elements (in this case NPCs) of my campaign that were already familiar to my heroes, and used these elements to take the PCs, and the campaign itself, in a totally new direction. You can use NPCs as I did, or any GM-ing device that you can come up with, that fits your campaign as a whole, to do the same.

Another method of transfiguring your campaign has been provided by Marvel Comics itself—the *What If?* story line. Your heroes could be summoned to meet with Uatu, the Watcher. He states that your heroes need to travel to another dimension, (one that resembles the MARVEL UNIVERSE, or your campaign if you don't play on Marvel-Earth). The PC heroes could be "needed" for any number of suitably heroic reasons. The "other dimension" is, of course, your grim campaign setting. Examples of how to pull off this dimension-hopping can be found in current issues of the *What If?* comic, and one great example is in *MH-9 Gates of What If?* by Roger E. Moore, an adventure in an alternate, though not "grim," dimension for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game.

### Karma: To Kill Or Not To Kill?

Now that you have your PCs in the grim setting, one other major area needs to be addressed: death. Death, even in the comics, is grim. You need to decide how you will treat death, and the Karma repercussions of death.

First though, let me state that PC heroes going around killing indiscriminately or killing innocents or those incapable of defending themselves is most

emphatically *not* heroic and is certainly not in the tradition of Marvel Comics. Not even Wolverine or the Dark Knight kill indiscriminately. There are a few ways to handle Karma and killing:

- \* Continue to use Karma as described in the rules. This will, in most cases, keep the level of mortality about the same as in other Marvel campaigns, if that is what you wish. Good role playing though, especially in a grim setting, will sometimes result in a hero giving up his Karma to kill a particularly dastardly foe. In the *Born Again* story line in the *Daredevil* comic a few years back, the Kingpin of Crime methodically destroys Matt Murdock's life after he discovers that Murdock is Daredevil. If Daredevil had been a PC hero in my campaign, I probably wouldn't have objected if Daredevil had killed Kingpin in retaliation, especially if the PC Daredevil was role played as mentally unhinged as the comic's Daredevil was.

- \* Use the villain Karma rules (page 20, *Advanced Set Judge's Book*) regarding killing the underlings of "master criminals." PCs would lose 30 Karma points for each henchman, underling, or goon working for the main villain who is killed, instead of all their Karma. After all, the thugs aren't important; it's stopping the villain that's the goal. And, if some goons get in your way, too bad—they probably deserved it anyway. All other normal Karma rules apply, though exceptions, like the Daredevil example above, would still be possible.

- \* Play the PCs as outright *villains*. Again, this is not recommended, as it's not in the heroic tradition of the comics or the game, but I can see where it might be fun to play your favorite Marvel villain and trash the Avengers or the X-Men. Use all the villain rules in the *Advanced Set Judge's Book*, pages 19-21. These rules are intended to help the GM run his NPC villains, but you can easily apply them to PCs as well. This means that PCs would *gain* Karma for committing crimes, beating up heroes, putting those defeated heroes in deathtraps, etc.

This should be enough to at least get you started on a grim campaign. Remember to study some grim comics and apply suitable elements from them.





# With Great Power

## Welcome to the Real World!

by Dale A. Donovan

What would superheroes do if they existed in our world? How would they occupy themselves without staving off alien invasions every week or two? How could they get through the week without having 16 supervillains to punch out? (Okay, if you accept the existence of superheroes, human nature tells us that supervillains would also exist. That's fine, but a balanced super campaign should have more than just an endless stream of baddies.) How would they make their livings? Well, this column will discuss "real-world heroics" that come up when real-world heroes appear in your campaign. Don't worry—there's plenty to do!

### Natural Disasters

One of the most "heroic" activities for real-world heroes would be averting natural disasters or assisting victims once tragedy has struck. Here are just some of the possibilities.

- Imagine how useful a weather-controlling (for the rain he could summon) or fire-controlling hero would have been during the San Francisco Bay Area firestorm several months ago. These heroes could also help extinguish or prevent the annual brush and forest fires that occur throughout the world.

- Weather-control heroes could relieve droughts and avert floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other kinds of destructive weather. They could be the ultimate meteorologists—since they'd never be wrong! (And neither would you if you could change the weather to fit your forecast.)

- Air- or weather-controlling heroes could make great strides in cleaning the world's air, stopping acid rain, or even rejuvenating the ozone layer.

- Earth-controlling or other geologically-inclined heroes could periodically and safely relieve tectonic stresses near faultlines and active volcanoes. They could also check dormant volcanic regions to see if they've remained dormant since the last time they were checked.

Heroes could perform these activities out of the goodness of their hearts or they could do it full-time for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, N.O.A.A. (National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration), the U.S. Geologic Survey, various United Nations organizations, etc.

### Public Service

Another important area for real-world heroes' talents would be in public service, especially in various aspects of law enforcement.

- Superpowered police would be nice to have around, especially during riots or other situations requiring crowd control. The crime rate might even drop if criminals knew they could be arrested by someone who can run faster than their getaway car, or someone who could lift the car clean off the ground—with them in it!

- The courts could use "juries" of telepaths to quickly determine suspects' guilt or innocence, as well as any mitigating circumstances regarding the crimes the person is suspected of committing. (This idea does bring up the topic of law, the courts, and how superheroes work within that system, but that goes beyond the scope of this column. If you want more information on this topic, write and let me know.) Telepaths could also determine suspects' mental health and whether they should be sent to prison or to a hospital.

- Telepaths and healers could work wonders by curing those who are mentally or physically ill or hospitalized.

- Every fire department in the country would want a fire-, water-, or air-controlling hero on their fire trucks.

- Super-strong heroes would be very valuable to rescue squads and E.M.T. (Emergency Medical Technician) teams. After all, they are "walking jaws of life."

- Clairvoyant, precognitive, or post-cognitive heroes could help people recover lost items or find missing persons. Precog heroes could make a living by advising others on "what their future holds," telling the police where the next

bank robbery or drug deal will take place, etc. Postcog heroes could also solve most crimes by just entering the scene of the crime and using their "see the past" abilities.

- What wonderful, life-saving devices or simple conveniences could the scientific heroes come up with if they devoted themselves full-time to research and study. Imagine Reed Richards, Tony Stark, and Hank Pym working together to find solutions for toxic waste disposal, "cold fusion," "warm superconductors," or cures for diseases like cancer or AIDS. Several heroes did try to find a cure for cancer when one of their own, the original Captain Marvel, was afflicted with the disease in the graphic novel, *The Death of Captain Marvel*. The title of the graphic novel gives you a clue as to how successful they were—though there were extenuating circumstances. The characters also briefly discussed why they never got together earlier to try and find a cure for this awful disease. I highly recommend the graphic novel, if you can still find it in the comic stores.

- The mail would move a lot quicker with a few super-fast heroes in the Post Office.

Many of the duties listed here could require a hero's full-time devotion. But hey, even heroes have bills to pay. Heroes could work for local, state, or federal governments. Many of the "brainy" heroes might also work for the top universities, teaching and conducting research with private or corporate funding.

### Para-Military

This area of real-world heroics is occasionally seen in the comics themselves. Remember SHIELD's old Super-Agent program, and the current benefactor of the X-Factor team—the U.S. government. As a result, this section need not be as detailed as the others, as examples already exist in the comics.

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## With Great Power

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- Covert agencies, like SHIELD or the CIA, would love to have agents who can read minds, turn invisible, fly over enemy installations and take photographs, etc.

- Many "law and order" heroes like Captain America might become full-time members of the FBI or DEA, to better combat organized crime, especially drug smuggling.

- Many combat-oriented heroes who lack powers that operate on a large scale) could end up enlisted or drafted into their country's armed forces. This could lead to heroes doing battle with conventional armed forces. After all, modern-day soldiers are the closest thing to real super heroes that exist in our world. What other individuals have

the speed, mobility, and firepower of an F-16 pilot, for example? See DRAGON® Magazine issues #105 and #144 for articles detailing American and Soviet armed forces.

- Heroes could serve as elite commandos, often operating against "enemy" heroes. Supervillains might not be necessary when there are plenty of national teams of heroes to "go to war" with.

For more on an espionage-oriented campaign, see *With Great Power* in POLYHEDRON® Newszine #65.

## Real-World Campaigns

There are two ways to add real-world heroics to your super campaign. The easiest way is to simply throw in one or two real-world heroic activities (make up your own or use ideas from the list above) after your next supervillain epic ends. Use the news for ideas. Your players will

probably appreciate the change of pace.

A possibly more interesting option is to, at least temporarily, send your heroes dimension-hopping to our world. Any dimension-transference device, trap, or dimensional-powered villain could arrange to plop the heroes down *here*. Where would they go? Who would they work for? Who would be out to get them? The answers to these questions only you can answer, since only you know your campaign. Have fun!

*This column is dedicated to our own world's heroes—police officers, firefighters, members of the military, and everyone else who has ever laid his or her life on the line to save or protect the lives of others. These folks don't have super-strength, they aren't immune to bullets, and they can't fly.*



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# Highlander

## Winning Encounters For Your Campaigns

*The contest involving issue #62's Highlander cover challenged members to detail the tartan-clad, battle-scarred character and explain what he was up to. The winners were:*

**First Place:** *The Drunken Giff*, a SPELLJAMMER™ adventure by Timothy D. Minniear, Battle Creek, MI

**Second Place:** *Brigadoon: You Can Take the Scot out of Scotland*, a MARVEL SUPER HEROES scenario by Don Basingthwaite, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**Third Place:** *The Pirates of the Crimson Tide*, a SPELLJAMMER adventure by Dean B. Lynch, Rehoboth, DE

*For your gaming enjoyment, we present the top pair of entries.*

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## Brigadoon

This encounter introduces the PCs to Brigadoon, a mutant who is more than 200 years old. When the encounter is over, the heroes should be guessing about Brigadoon's motives and powers—don't give the players the whole puzzle, just a piece will do for starters. The PCs' first taste comes via the following news item, which can come to them through rumor or the mass media:

A strange phenomenon has swept the city during the past two weeks. Patches of thick fog have suddenly and completely obscured several blocks at a time for up to an hour before vanishing. Witnesses inside the fog report experiencing hallucinations of pleasant, but rugged, countryside.

An unidentified gang of criminals is taking advantage of—or perhaps is creating—the fog as a cover for bank robberies, jewelry store heists, and similar crimes. Until now, the city government and police have refused to comment, but earlier today, the police commissioner scheduled a press conference to address the problem.

The heroes might see or hear the press conference through the media, or attend it themselves. Lieutenant Rachel Elliot, the officer in charge of the investigation, appears at the press conference and gives a brief statement:

“Ladies and gentlemen of the press, the police department has nothing

new to tell you in regards to this case. After consultations with meteorologists, we have determined that the fog patches are definitely not of natural origin, as some of you already have reported.

“This, together with the reports of hallucinations we have received, and with the wave of fog-related crimes, has prompted the police department to conclude that super-powered criminals may be involved.”

The lieutenant squares her shoulders and inhales. She seems to hold her breath. “As we are not equipped to handle this sort of menace, we formally appeal to the heroes of the city for aid,” she finally chokes out.

Lieutenant Elliot is not fond of super heroes. As the assembled press bombards her with questions about which supervillians might be involved, and about which heroes might appear to save the day, Elliot calls the conference to a close and abruptly departs.

## The Real Story

The patches of fog and the altered landscape come from Brigadoon, a mutant who has been battling a faerie sorcerer for nearly two centuries. When the sorcerer came to the PCs' city and began using his spells to perpetrate robberies, Brigadoon followed. Brigadoon can sense magic and has a *reality alteration* power that creates a quasi-real version of the Scottish Highlands. When his foe begins a crime, Brigadoon senses the spell, and quickly rushes to the vicinity. Since he can control elements of his altered landscape, he uses *reality alteration* to gain an advantage over his foe. Eventually, he will catch up with his adversary, but so far, the sorcerer has eluded Brigadoon. Ironically, since Brigadoon's enemy is a disciple of the faerie school of magic, the villain actually gains strength inside the altered reality.

If the PCs question Lieutenant Elliot, not a pleasant task, they can learn that the major crime associated with each appearance of the fog actually is committed slightly before the fog rolls in; however, the GM might want to run the confrontation before the PCs have a chance to do any investigating.

## The Confrontation

Late one weekend afternoon, the heroes learn (by police scanner, crystal ball,



cosmic awareness, or whatever) that a new fog patch has formed downtown. The police have blocked off the area.

When the heroes arrive, they find a mass of very thick, white fog. A television crew has slipped through the police cordon and is filming right next to the fog. According to an eyewitness the TV crew is interviewing, the fog simply rolled down the street and around the buildings like a wall.

Viewed from outside, the cloud of fog is an opaque half-sphere about three city blocks high and wide. Only flying or clairvoyant heroes can readily determine its dimensions. Entering the fog or using remote sensing to look inside reveals the following:

The cloud's interior is strangely silent. Although the distant sound of automobiles and other urban noise filters in from outside, only the occasional cry of a bird disturbs the air. You find yourself in a rugged countryside, surrounded by green hills and rocky crags. A stream rushes through a ravine nearby; scrubby trees cling to the ravine's walls. The air is damp and chilly, but not unpleasantly so. Where you stand, coarse grass reaches to your calves. The city's buildings, sidewalks, and streets are nowhere to be seen.

Examining the ground reveals chunks of asphalt and concrete half buried in the grass, but these crumble into dirt if the heroes pick them up.

Attempts to detect magic fail, as the fog and the landscape are not magical effects. Mutant detection, however, reveals a mutant's presence roughly a block and a half away, near the cloud's center. The terrain is rough and treacherous, and ground movement is slowed to Poor (two areas a round). Flight is possible, but the fog prevents effective reconnaissance; the fog also prevents reconnaissance by remote sensing. While the PCs are exploring, the character with the highest Intuition score notices:

The fog briefly parts, and you get a glimpse of a big man in a tartan kilt standing on a hill and looking across a valley at a village of stone houses. The mists shift, leaving the hilltop empty; the valley and houses are gone.

A successful Reason FEAT reveals that the valley is too large to "fit" inside the cloud.

The cloud's center isn't noticeably different from the rest of the area. Any psionic scans or attempts at mutant detection instantly reveal a presence behind the PCs. A danger sense reveals this presence, too, but only after the PCs have spent some time searching. Even if the PCs don't detect him, Brigadoon confronts the PCs:

A tall, heavy set man, wearing a tartan kilt and mantle, hails you from atop a lofty, narrow crag. (An Excellent Reason FEAT confirms that the crag wasn't there a few minutes ago.) A deep scar runs from just above his right eye upward through the center of his forehead. He holds a sword in his right hand and has a round shield strapped to his left arm. A dagger hangs from his belt, and you spot the butt of a flintlock pistol jutting from the top of the kilt. He gazes down and shouts in a thick Highland accent: "I call myself Brigadoon. I know not who you are, but I warn you this once—do not interfere with me. I will have my revenge! Leave!"

The man stands quietly on the peak; he's probably waiting for you to leave.

Brigadoon takes no actions against the party. Any attacks against Brigadoon fail: he dodges or deflects ranged attacks. Landslides foil attempts to scale the crag. Leaping or flying attacks meet only empty fog. After Brigadoon finishes addressing the party (and he dodges their attacks) heavy fog closes over him. The surrounding fog banks collapse inward, and the PCs find themselves on an empty street, facing the inquisitive television crew. The reporters lose no time in pressing the heroes for an interview, and might very well launch a negative campaign against them (–5 Popularity) if they refuse to talk.

After dealing with the reporters, the PCs learn that a bank was robbed a few minutes before the fog rolled in. The crooks got away with hundreds of thousands of dollars—making this the biggest fog-related crime yet. The bank's surveillance cameras showed nothing, having been knocked out just before the crime. The security guard was slain by something like a swarm of razors—his

body is a mass of shallow cuts. If the PCs check for magic, they find traces on the body, the bank's cameras, and on the bank's vault. A thorough search of the area reveals a mysterious set of grassy footprints. The grass is the same type the PCs found inside the cloud. However, these tracks go nowhere near the bank. They fade away in less than a minute after the PCs find them. If the PCs follow them immediately, they disappear altogether at a bus stop. Clever PCs will deduce that the tracks must have been left recently, but this is false (see below).

### Brigadoon

*Real name unrevealed, mutant*

<b>F</b>	<b>RM</b>	<b>(30)</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>EX</b>	<b>(20)</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>EX</b>	<b>(20)</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>RM</b>	<b>(30)</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>TY</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>GD</b>	<b>(10)</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>(40)</b>

**Health:** 100

**Karma:** 54

**Resources:** PR (4)

**Popularity:** 0

### Powers:

**Self-revival:** The curse that keeps Brigadoon alive (see History) also gives him this power at Monstrous rank.

**Magic detection and resistance:** Brigadoon has Good resistance to all magical spells. His magic detection allows him to notice his foe (see History) at ranges of up to 100 miles. Whenever the faerie sorcerer casts a spell within 100 miles of Brigadoon, the Scot knows his foe's location within a half-mile. This power has a Feeble rank in regard to other forms of magic.

**Reality alteration:** Brigadoon has an Unearthly ability to recreate anywhere a section of the Scottish Highlands. This section can be from any time from the present all the way back to his birth some time in the 1780s. The alternate reality can be any size from a single area to a 50-mile radius. Beings in the altered area are transported to the area's fringes, where they are free to leave it and re-enter the normal world. The alteration includes cool, foggy weather, the appearance of coarse grass and scruffy trees, and mountainous terrain that contains valleys, crags, and boulders. This power also includes Good *environmental awareness* within the alternate reality. All effects disappear



when Brigadoon drops the power. However, Brigadoon can never completely deactivate the power. Wherever he walks, Brigadoon leaves grassy footprints which normally fade within 30 seconds. However, after he creates an alternate reality which covers five areas or more, the grassy footprints persist for 1d10 minutes. Brigadoon has established many power stunts: Mobile banks of very dense fog, crags and boulders which erupt in specified areas; landslides; ground "waves," which he can ride at a speed of six areas a round; and withdrawing the alternate reality so that foes within it are trapped in the real Scottish Highlands during the time depicted.

**Equipment:** Brigadoon carries a sword and shield made of Remarkable strength material, and a flintlock pistol (treat as a *cheap handgun* with one shot).

**Talent:** Sword specialist (+2 CS and +1 initiative bonus when attacking with a sword).

#### History:

Brigadoon may be one of the oldest living mutants, having been born in the Scottish Highlands more than 200 years ago. After various adventures, he became the champion of his small clan. Unfortunately, he also gained the enmity of a faerie sorcerer. The sorcerer killed Brigadoon's clan and cursed him: First, Brigadoon would live forever. Second, though Brigadoon can recreate any part of the Highlands, he never can use his power to visit his village or his slain relatives and friends. This vision of a Scottish village lost 200 years ago inspired his name.

Brigadoon still wears his clan tartan. Since his clan is extinct, however, even Scottish historians cannot recognize it without a yellow Reason FEAT.

Brigadoon has become obsessed with finding and killing the sorcerer so he can end the curse and avenge his clan. This quest eventually led him to the PCs' city. □



# With Great Power

## Campaign Construction, Part I:

by Dale A. Donovan

Since I began writing this column in issue #63, I've discussed new directions for your MARVEL SUPER HEROES campaigns.

Now it's time to address building a super hero campaign from scratch. Starting with this column, I'll cover the elements needed for a successful campaign. I've got enough topics for several columns, but I want your input, too. I want to hear what you think is important to a good campaign. Send your ideas to:

With Great Power  
POLYHEDRON® Newszine  
P.O. Box 515  
Lake Geneva WI, 53147.

The most important aspect of any role playing campaign is the player characters. In the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, you can play either pregenerated Marvel heroes or you can create your own using the character generation systems in the rules.

Detailed below is a "purchasing" system inspired by the other two major super hero role-playing games on the market, *DC Heroes* by Mayfair Games and *Champions* by Hero Games.

Using my system, the Character Point (CP) System, players can build their ideal heroes within limits set by the Game Master. This system is flexible, so GMs should be wary of canny players who seek to take advantage of that flexibility.

### Character Point System

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES *Advanced Set Players' Book*, page 5, details the steps players should follow to create their own heroes. It is reproduced with minor modifications below:

- Create an origin
- Determine primary abilities (FASERIP)
- Determine secondary abilities (Health, Karma, etc.)
- Ascertain special abilities (powers, talents, and contacts)
- Fill in the blanks (hero and character names, background, etc.)

#### Origin

The *Players' Book* suggests you start with an origin for your hero. However, I recommend you decide which type of hero your PC will be (altered human, mutant, etc.), then create the origin. Be sure to note all the special aspects of each type of character except which column of the "Generating Primary Abilities" table the hero's abilities will be rolled on. You will not be using dice to determine your hero's abilities.

Do not feel compelled to fully detail your hero at this point. Save that for the "Fill in the Blanks" stage.

#### Determine primary abilities

Each player will now be given a number of Character Points (CPs). This number is determined by the Game Master and can range from 200 to 500 CPs or more. Let's say your GM gives you 300 CPs to build your hero. You would now "buy" your primary abilities (FASERIP) by spending CPs.

Purchase primary ability scores on a point-for-point basis. So if you want your character to possess Amazing (50) Strength, subtract 50 CPs from your point total. Do this for all seven primary abilities.

You can purchase ability scores other than the normal rank number in each rank. (For example, you could buy Amazing (46) Strength instead of Amazing (50) and save four CPs to use later.) Just remember any skimping like this will be reflected in your final Health and Karma scores.

Don't be too extravagant with your spending here, as your CPs will also be used to purchase your Resources level, powers, talents, and contacts. I don't recommend spending more than about half of your CPs at this stage.

#### Determine secondary abilities

Total up your Health and Karma points. Add those two figures together and they should equal the number of CPs you've spent so far. This is a good way to check your math.

Now buy your hero's Resources rank by spending two CPs for every point of Resources. (If you want Excellent (20) Resources, it would cost you 40 CPs.)

A player does not buy and cannot modify his hero's Popularity score, as it

is a function of the hero's origin and the public's perception of the hero.

#### Determine special abilities

Since each special ability (powers, talents, and contacts) is purchased slightly differently, each is discussed separately.

**Powers:** Each hero now buys powers and their ranks. All powers, except those with stars, cost 10 CPs each, and starred powers cost 20 CPs. Purchasing powers gives the hero the ability to buy ranks in those powers. Ranks for powers without stars are purchased on a point-for-point basis, as with the primary abilities. (If you wanted to buy the Flight power, it would cost 10 CPs. You can now buy a power rank for that power. Let's say you wanted to fly at Excellent (20) speed, it would cost you 20 more CPs. So buying the Flight power and an Excellent (20) rank cost you a total of 30 CPs.) Starred powers, because they are more powerful or more rare, each cost 20 CPs, as noted above, and their ranks are bought at a rate of two CPs for each rank number.

You purchase both powers and ranks so that five powers, each at Good (10) rank, will be more expensive than one power at Amazing (50) rank. The hero with five powers is much more versatile, and he should pay for that.

**Limitations:** Page 9 of the *Players' Book* gives a list of possible limitations for powers. Players can buy one limitation per hero to gain more CPs. Use the maximums listed at the top of each list of limitations on page 9. This determines the number of CPs gained from taking a limitation. For example, taking the limitation "Power can only be used three times/day" from the list "Maximum of Excellent" for your Flight power would gain you an additional 20 CPs, as it is an Excellent rank limitation.

Points gained through limitations are the normal rank numbers for that rank only. All normal rules regarding limitations apply. Subtract all CPs spent on powers and ranks, and add any CPs from limitations to figure your hero's new point total.

**Talents:** All skills listed under the Weapon, Fighting, and Mystical or

*Continued on page 30*



## With Great Power

*Continued from page 2*

Mental Skills tables, and all starred talents cost 10 CPs each. All other skills cost 5 CPs each (buying Chemistry costs 5 CPs, while the Medicine or the Guns skill would cost 10 CPs each). Subtract all CPs spent here to get your hero's new CP total.

**Contacts:** Unless the GM specifies otherwise, each contact costs 5 CPs. Don't detail each contact now, as contacts often work best when chosen during an adventure *with the GM's O.K.*

### Fill in the blanks

There, you're done. If you have any CPs left over, it's up to the GM what you can do with them. I suggest simply adding them to your hero's Karma points. Beginning heroes often don't have much Karma to spend on their first adventures. Don't forget to modify your hero as per the origin you picked for him earlier, and round out your hero with his heroic and character names, background, job, costume, how he gained his powers, why he risks his life as a hero, etc.

## Character advancement

All normal game rules on character advancement apply. Character Points are used only during a hero's creation and do not apply to the character's future advancement. For example, you cannot pay 10 CPs for a power and not buy a rank for it during the hero's creation.

### GM-imposed Limits

Test this system by creating several characters. You'll realize then, if you haven't already, that the system is flexible and can be abused unless the GM lays down some guidelines. The GM could impose spending limits on primary abilities (no FASERIP scores above Amazing (50), for example), powers (such as no more than four total), power ranks (no power ranks above Incredible (45)), power limitations (one limitation only, no limitation ranks above Incredible), and even the number of talents and contacts.

Breaking down Marvel characters by using this system can give GMs a good idea on what limits to place on character generation for their campaigns. Using the characters listed in the *Advanced Set Judge's Book* for exam-

ple, Invisible Woman, Marvel Girl, and Wasp each add up to about 300 CPs. Spider-Man, Thing, and Vindicator (Heather Hudson) each add up to between 450 and 500 CPs. Magneto adds up to almost 700 CPs.

Discuss with your players the kind of campaign you want to have and then experiment with different point totals before deciding how many CPs to give your players. For Avengers-style campaigns, I'd suggest 300-350 CPs per hero. For low-powered, gritty, "realistic," or pulp campaigns, I'd give out about 200 CPs. If you want to play a high-powered or cosmic campaign, I recommend handing out at least 500 CPs.

This system also allows GMs to build customized villains. By tailoring the number of CPs each villain is built with, a GM can gain a good handle on how well the villain should perform against the heroes. (For example, three 500-CP miscreants, 1500 CPs total, should do pretty well against five 300-CP heroes, despite being outnumbered.)

Next time, I'll continue to discuss PC heroes, including examples of building heroes with this system. Try this system, then write me and give me your impressions. □

# With Great Power

## More Campaign Construction

by Dale A. Donovan

In the previous installment on building super hero campaigns, I detailed the Character Point system for creating MARVEL SUPER HEROES game characters. Now we'll recap that system and cover developing a concept for characters and super hero groups.

### Character Point Summary

The Game Master assigns each player a number of CPs to use when building his hero. This was covered in depth in issue #72. The player does not roll dice to determine his character's abilities, powers, etc. The number of CPs, which can range from 200 to 500 or more, is used for that.

Each player buys his FASERIP abilities on a point-for-point basis. For example, he could buy Remarkable (26) Agility or Remarkable (36) Agility for his heroes, costing 26 or 36 points respectively, with the only immediate difference being reflected in the hero's Health score. Figure the character's Health and Karma normally. Then, subtract the Character Points spent on this process, and this is the number of points you still have to work with.

The player now buys his hero's Resources rank, paying two CPs for every point of Resources Rank. The hero's popularity score is not derived from spending CPs, as it is a function of the hero's origin and public image.

Next, the player purchases power "slots" like those generated in the Powers, Talents, and Contacts Table in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set's *Players' Book* (page 7). Asterisked powers cost 20 CPs to buy, and all other powers cost 10 CPs. Buying these slots allows the player to purchase Power ranks in the powers he just acquired. For asterisked powers, ranks are purchased at two CPs for each point of power rank. All other powers' ranks are purchased on a point-for-point basis.

Page nine of the *Players' Book* gives a list of possible limitations a player can apply to his hero's powers. A player can buy one limitation per hero with the GM's permission to gain more CPs. Use

the maximums listed at the top of each list of limitations on page nine for the number of CPs gained from taking a certain limitation. Points gained through limitations are the normal rank numbers for that rank only (all Excellent limitations gain the player 20 CPs to spend on his hero), and they need not all be spent immediately. All normal rules regarding limitations apply. Subtract all CPs spent on powers and ranks and add any CPs from limitations to figure the new CP total for the hero.

The player now purchases Talents and Contacts for his hero. Talents listed under the Weapon, Fighting, and Mystical or Mental Skills cost 10 CPs each. All other Talents cost 5 CPs. Contacts cost 5 CPs each, unless the GM rules otherwise.

That's all there is to the CP system. Now all the player has to do is fill in the hero's blanks, such as origin, etc.

### Character Concepts

It's true in every super hero system that allows you to build heroes from scratch—having a strong character concept in mind *before* you begin creating the hero results in a more coherent and efficiently built hero. In a super hero role playing game, the first thing most players are concerned with is their PCs' powers. I'll first discuss conceptualizing heroes by type as defined by their powers. (For more information on the types or "templates" described below and combat tactics each type can use, see DRAGON® Magazine #171 for the article "It's Clobberin' Time!" by yours truly.)

**Infantry:** These heroes generally lack actual super powers, such as Mockingbird, Punisher, and Captain America. Characters such as these, if they were created now, would not be spending any CPs on power slots and ranks—so their designing players could devote many CPs to the heroes' FASERIP scores, Talents, Contacts, and, in some cases, equipment that allows the heroes some offensive "punch" (e.g. the Punisher's seemingly endless supply of weapons).

**Speedsters:** This hero template is pretty self-explanatory. High-speed ground movement powers like those of Quicksilver, Super Sabre or Speedfreak

are needed to qualify. When designing heroes like these, spending CPs on a high Agility, Endurance, and even on some Body Armor (to cushion charging attacks) would be helpful additions to the movement power itself.

**Airborne:** These heroes' primary super power is that of flight, usually plus super strength. Both Namorita and Nova of the New Warriors fall into this category. Heroes like these are simple to design. Purchase their flight powers, a high strength, and some Talents that will help either (or both) of those powers work better.

**Shock Troops or Bricks:** These are the strongest characters around. She-Hulk and The Thing are probably the two best examples. When building heroes like these, after purchasing a high Strength rank, select good Fighting and Endurance scores—these are important, as are defensive or regenerative powers to help the heroes last longer in combat against similarly powered super villains.

**Artillery:** Heroes who fall into this category are primarily energy projectors (e.g. Distance Attacks powers). Cyclops and Living Lightning are artillery heroes. Since many energy projectors are otherwise normal humans, additional powers that add to the defensive capabilities of these heroes are important. Likely powers are flight or some other movement power, force fields, body transformation (e.g. Living Lightning above) or a close-range power that is similar to the distance attack.

**Stealth:** These heroes can move about unbeknownst to others in the vicinity. Nightcrawler and the Invisible Woman are quite different examples of heroes in this category. To design heroes such as these players need to buy powers like invisibility, darkness or shadow generation, or illusions to mask their presence. An unobtrusive movement power like wall-crawling or teleportation is also a good buy. An invisible, flying hero is incredibly difficult to detect if the villains aren't actively seeking him out (I know, I played one recently).

**Mentalists:** Mental powers are the specialty of some heroes. Marvel Girl and Charles Xavier are mentalists. As with artillery heroes, some type of defensive power will help these otherwise



normal folks tough it out in combat. For many mentalists, the defensive powers of choice are illusion generation or a force field.

**Special Forces:** these heroes are those who possess such a wide variety of powers that they would qualify for multiple categories listed above. The Vision, Thor and Iron Man are all special forces heroes. Designing such powerful heroes may be beyond the scope of many MARVEL SUPER HEROES campaigns.

## Motivations And Goals

There's more to be concerned with when building heroes than just super powers. Players must also consider just who the people are under the mask. If Peter Parker had been bitten by a radioactive cockroach instead of a spider, the hero we know as Spider-Man would be quite different as far as his powers go, but the man inside the costume would be the same wise-cracking guy motivated by guilt over his uncle's death. Be sure to run down the checklist and answer all the questions listed under "Filling in the Blanks" on page 12 of the *Players' Book*.

The one point I'd like to emphasize again here is why do your heroes do what they do? What are the goals of these people? Why are they out laying their lives on the line for people they do not know and sometimes—even for those who profess to actually hate the heroes for what they are or what they represent? This should be the key to each and every super hero character in every super hero game campaign (and comic, for that matter). The *DC Heroes* super hero RPG has a terrific set of motivations from which players can choose. These motivations include *Responsibility of Power*, *Thrill of Adventure*, *Unwanted Power*, and others. I recommend all super hero RPG players read that section.

Often going hand-in-hand with heroes' motivations are their origins. Exactly how did they receive their super powers? Each origin should tie in with each hero's powers and his motivation. The CP system lets players build the heroes of their dreams; don't sell the characters short by ignoring all the role playing possibilities and sheer cohesiveness a strong origin, motivation, and goal can give each character.



## Characters As A Group

One aspect of character design that is often neglected by super hero RPG players and GMs alike is designing the super hero group. Each player in the group is intent on creating his own hero, with all the Powers, Talents, etc. that the player deems necessary or fun for *his* character—without regard for how his character will fit in with the rest of the group. The CP system, and the other purchasing systems are flexible enough to allow the GM and players to sit down and discuss exactly what kinds of heroes will work best in this campaign and which heroes would make the best team. This discussion often begins with players choosing hero templates like those listed above and then progresses on to specifics as the players narrow their visions of their characters to better fit the group, guided by the advice of the GM.

Once the team makeup is decided, the next thing to work out is why are all these characters together? Did they know each other in the past, possibly before they gained their powers? Do they have a common foe or foes? Do they possess a common origin? Why have the heroes come together now: to save the world from the imminent alien invasion the characters just discovered? To represent their national pride and defeat their

country's foes? To protect the people from evil and super villainy everywhere? Again, the GM can lead this discussion of the group's mission or goals even before the characters are created.

This all may seem like a lot of work, but GMs and players needn't decide every detail of the campaign before play starts. It's really much easier than it sounds, just have a brainstorming session before you create the characters, tossing out ideas and counter-ideas until everyone has a basic grasp of what is going on. Take notes. The GM should guide the discussion, mediating any disputes and helping to clarify the vision of the campaign as it forms. Once this campaign foundation has been formed, build the heroes. Everyone might be surprised how easily the characters form when the players have some ideas to work from.

That's it for this time. In the next installment of the Campaign Construction Series, I'll begin taking a look at subgenres within the world of super heroes and comic books. I'm still looking for comments or suggestions regarding the column, this series, and what you want to see in the future. Write to: Dale A. Donovan, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.



# With Great Power

## Campaign Construction, Part 3: "That can't be good."

by Dale A. Donovan

You might not consider horror and super heroes to be topics that go hand-in-hand. However, some of the best comics of recent years have used, and in a few cases reinvented, many conventions of the horror genre. DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* has been the best-written horror comic at several points in its history, and DC's *Sandman* comic is the book I look forward to reading most every month.

Marvel Comics, with the success of their *Ghost Rider* comic, has gotten into horror books in a big way in 1992 with monthly titles such as *Spirits of Vengeance*, *Morbius*, *Darkhold*, and *Nightstalkers*.

As the books above (among other sources) have inspired me, I hope the suggestions below will inspire you as a super-hero game GM and I hope you frighten the tights right off your PC heroes.

### Undermine PC Confidence

Super heroes are pretty confident people in general. They know they're stronger, faster, tougher, or smarter than almost any other beings they encounter. Therefore, the key to adding a touch of horror to your super-hero game is to strip that confidence away. A few ways to do this are:

**Warp the familiar:** Has the electricity in your home ever gone out during a nasty, window-rattling-loud thunderstorm? It's really amazing how much comfort you can derive from a 60-watt light bulb. Little else is as scary as when a common item, trusted ally, or any familiar element of your life unexpectedly fails you.

For super heroes, these elements include technical equipment, weapons, vehicles, NPC allies (friends and foes), the setting in which the heroes operate, or the heroes themselves.

Imagine during a game Captain America takes a blast from an unknown alien's weapon. Cap blocks the blast with his shield, only to discover it has cracked from the energy discharged by the weapon. While this setback would not terrify Cap, it probably would shake

up Cap's player.

Perhaps an NPC friend or heroic ally suddenly begins behaving in an aberrant manner. Slowly, everyone around the PCs begins to behave this way—except for the heroes themselves.

The heroes' means of long-distance communication (Avengers cards, throat-mikes and ear-jacks, telepathic ear-plugs, etc.), which have always worked perfectly well, begins to function improperly or not at all. And, what if the PC heroes don't notice this until after they decide to split up to search Castle Doom?

Possibly the scariest thing to have happen to a super hero is to have his own super powers begin to fail him. Most heroes are defined by their powers, so what will the PCs do when they can't even trust the abilities that make them super? Remember, without their powers, your heroes are just like everybody else—potential victims.

**Being out of control:** Have you ever driven over a wet or icy patch of road and, even for a fraction of a second, lost control of your vehicle? Aside from the fear of accident or injury, wasn't it scary to realize you were not in control of your situation at that time?

The same feeling can occur deep in players' hearts when you seize control of the role-playing situation. Rather than just have their super powers fail as mentioned above, you can contrive a reason for them to act erratically, unpredictably. Should your lightning-throwing hero dare toss a bolt at a fleeing mugger if he isn't sure he can control the voltage?

Another way to take the initiative away from your heroes is to keep them off-balance. Don't give the heroes (or the players) a chance to collect their thoughts or catch their breaths. Don't give them a chance to discuss the deeper meaning behind the villain's cryptic comment as he teleported away. Collapse the ceiling on them instead. Then have the place enter self-destruct mode. Next, make your heroes rescue the villain's prisoners before the place goes sky high, etc. Keep forcing them to make quick decisions. Chase scenes are a great way to lead your PC heroes down a primrose path you have laced with proverbial anti-hero land mines.

### Trapped!

Have you ever had a nightmare where you were somehow trapped? No matter what you did, you could not escape. Why not subject your PC heroes to similar entrapment ordeals?

The super-villain death-trap is a cliché of the genre, but orchestrated properly they can be terrifying. Good examples of death-traps aren't too hard to find in the comics, but the Marvel master of such devices is Victor Von Doom. Check out the *Lands of DR. DOOM* boxed set for inspiration.

Inventive GMs can also relocate their campaign's setting as a way to make their players feel out of their depth. Have a villain send them through a space-time portal to an alternate dimension or alien world—with no obvious means of getting back home, of course.

A more philosophical type of entrapment is to offer the PCs a limited number of options, none of which the heroes would willingly choose under different circumstances. This is a play on the "lesser of two (or more) evils" cliché. Should your heroes try to run the gauntlet of Doombots set up by the good Doctor, or try to get past Magneto and his Acolytes, or attempt to prevent the Juggernaut from walking through (literally) the ground floor of that 100-story skyscraper?

### Deception

Ever visited a really good haunted house at Halloween? One of the ways the people who put these together scare you is by deceiving you into believing that this "house" is normal (e.g., not filled with fake blood, rubber masks, spray-on spider webs, etc.). Deception is a horror (or in this case, super-horror) GM's best friend. Let me fill you in on one recent use of deception in a game.

As I write this, I'm running a super-hero adventure once a week. The adventure we're in the middle of now involves the heroes trying to find the missing daughter of a noble count who just happens to live in a gothic castle on a cliff overlooking the sea. The heroes have discerned that the young girl was

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awakened on the night she disappeared by a flapping, airborne shape outside her tower window. The heroes have also discovered the body of one of the count's guards with his throat ripped out and minus some blood.

Does it sound like the work of an undead, blood-sucking fiend to you? I hope so, that was my intention. However, as my players will have discovered by the time this sees print, the force behind the murders and abduction is not a vampire, but an entire family of shape-changing werebats who like the taste of human blood and have a grudge against the count's family. These creatures have many of a vampire's abilities (flight, super strength, can take the shape of a bat, etc.), but none of a vampire's weaknesses. I am really looking forward to the expressions on my players' faces when they finally enter the creatures' lair and discover what I just told you. (Heh, heh, heh, he chuckled evilly.)

## Making it happen

To make the best use of the concepts listed above, the GM has to be prepared ahead of time. They do not address how to run a good horror game session once you're sitting at the game table. Here are few brief thoughts:

*Describe, don't tell:* Instead of merely listing the contents of a room, treasure chest, etc., describe the scene. Use all five senses to convey the PCs' impressions of their surroundings. Describe not just what they see, but what they smell, hear, feel, and taste. Think of your Mom's kitchen in the house where you grew up. Do you remember any aromas? Do any the flavors of any foods come to mind? Remember that when you describe the kitchen of one your heroes' mothers.

*Build suspense—slowly:* Fear should start small, and build slowly through the course of the game. Don't beat your PC heroes over the heads with unimaginable horror after horrendous atrocity. For fear to last, it has to be subtle. Do not go overboard. Start with something modest, an unidentified, small red stain on the carpet. It could tomato juice, or is it . . . ? Also, avoid becoming gory. Gore is shocking, not scary, and there is a difference. After the initial surprise, the shock is over. Fear should last.

*Control results, not actions:* Never take the direct control of a PC away from his player. If you do that, the player is now detached from the character, and cares less about him. Any fear you may have built up will be lost. Always let players try to think their way out of the traps and horrors you set for them, just manipulate the results of those actions if you must do so to maintain

the fear in the scenario. This point goes hand-in-hand with my last piece of advice.

*Fear, not frustration:* Keep in mind that when you mess with your players' PCs, they may become frustrated. That is not your goal. You want to frighten them, not anger them. Don't be too heavy-handed with your horror, especially if your players are not expecting it. Also, be aware that an occasional break in the tension is necessary. A session of nonstop gloom and terror is no fun for anybody. Allow the players to relax and their PCs to feel safe once in a while. Allow them some successes—fighting an invincible engine of destruction and mayhem gets dull very quickly.

If you're careful and patient with these techniques, your players will be frightened long before they realize you're doing it on purpose. Then spring the really nasty stuff on them—and enjoy.

For other sources of horrific inspiration, see this column in issue #66. If you have any comments or questions regarding this column and what you want to see discussed here in the future, write to **With Great Power**, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI 53147. I am looking forward to hearing from you.



# With Great Power

## Constructing a Solo Campaign

by Dale A. Donovan

Let's look at a rare subgenre of role playing game adventures—the solo campaign.

Many RPGs, like the D&D® and AD&D® games, are designed to perform best when a group of characters work together toward a common goal. In games like these, each character has strengths and weaknesses; warriors fight, mages cast spells, rogues steal, etc. Each character performs his or her task well, but depends on others in the group to handle the duties he or she cannot. In a solo campaign, however, such a group is impossible. This presents a problem for the GM and solo player.

This difficulty can be overcome in super hero game campaigns—especially in games that allow players to custom build their heroic PCs with points (see POLYHEDRON® Newzine issues #72 and #75 for my Character Point system for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game). Such a hero can be quite self sufficient in a solo campaign.

### The Solo Hero

What does it take for a hero to make it on his or her own? Let's take a look at some of the characters I'll be referring to throughout this column. DC Comics' Superman and Green Lantern (I'll use Hal Jordan as my GL example) and Marvel Comics' Spider-Man and Quasar, are all very competent solo heroes. They have many things in common.

First, all four have some form of movement power—of the four only Spidey can't fly, but his webbing more than compensates in an urban environment. Second, each hero possesses super strength or some form of offensive, damage-causing power (Spidey's strength, Superman's strength and heat vision, and GL and Quasar's energy blasts). Third, each has a damage-avoiding or damage-reducing defensive power (Supes' tough skin, Spidey's speed and agility, and GL and Quasar's force fields). As you may have noticed, the abilities of GL and Quasar are quite similar. They both act as protectors of the universe (or part of it), and they

both derive their abilities from an external power source. The reason I mention this is also to point out how heroes with similar powers can still be quite different in play. Remember this for your campaigns. This also applies to archenemies—foes of a hero with powers similar to his or her own—but more on archenemies later.

Other elements are common to many solo heroes. One is vast resources. DC Comics' Batman and Marvel Comics' Iron Man are both quite wealthy, and both use this wealth to aid them.

It also seems that if you're a solo hero, you must have a secret identity. Without a bunch of super-powered friends around to watch your back, it's imperative to keep your real identity a secret—at least from the general public and your foes.

A wide variety of skills and NPC contacts and allies can be terribly important in a solo game as well. Read Batman's write-up in any of the DC Heroes game products from Mayfair Games for a truly impressive list of skills and talents. Remember, super-strength can't solve every problem, even in a super hero's life. How many times has Batman called on Commissioner Gordon for information or back-up? How effective would Bats be if Gordon wasn't an ally, or was actively hostile to the hero? Thus, not only purchasing, but maintaining good relations with *someone* is important. Even the Punisher, who is considered a criminal by the law and a psycho by most heroes, has a support network. In the game, this translates as good role-playing. Your solo PC can't go around threatening or alienating *every* law-enforcement or authority figure, even if he or she is a psycho, because the hero will eventually need help from somebody.

As a player in the solo campaign, you must decide which of the above elements, and others, your solo hero will possess. As a GM, you must help the player make the decisions that will help the campaign be fun.

### Running a Solo Game

Once the player has created his or her PC hero, the GM's hard work starts. The GM of a solo campaign has a diffi-

cult task; creating an exciting world built not around a fairly large group of characters with plenty of adventure possibilities and plot hooks, but around only one character and his or her life. The universe the GM creates must be challenging without wiping out the hero in his or her first escapade.

As you design your campaign setting and the adventures for your solo hero, keep in mind that in most cases there will not be any other characters around to bail out the PC hero. The GM must be prepared for the possibility of bad luck going against the hero in a battle or when searching for that all-important clue. A GM's margin of error in setting up scenarios for solo heroes is much finer than in other campaigns. If luck turns bad for the PC (especially in a fight), he or she may decide to cut his or her losses and make a strategic withdrawal. This may alter or ruin a GM's plans for the rest of the adventure. A fine balance must be maintained between a solo hero and the forces a GM throws against the hero. Proper foes of solo heroes tend to fall into one of three categories:

**Large organizations:** Like the Maggia families that Spider-Man has fought over the years, and Intergang that Superman was involved with not long ago. These large groups can provide long-term foes and goals for your solo hero. These groups' operations are so immense that the actions of a single individual, even a super-powered one, won't threaten to shut down the organization altogether. Not even Supes was able to stop all Intergang's forces and activities. Stopping such an organization completely can even become the primary focus of the campaign if both the player and the GM are willing to take it in that direction.

**Archenemies:** Batman and Spider-Man probably are the two heroes with the most colorful and the best known rogues' galleries, so I won't even bother listing the miscreants' names, but they serve as wonderful examples. One key to a good (i.e., evil) archenemy is equality. The archfiend should, in some way, be the equal of your hero. This can be in powers or power levels, resources, or

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simply outnumbering the hero with a group of thugs. The archfoe should always be a great challenge to your hero. The other vital element of a nemesis should be the fact that, in some twisted way, the foe is a reflection of the hero. Most of Batman's archfoes are rather unstable mentally. This reflects Batman's own compulsion to fight crime and exact revenge for the loss of his parents. In some of his incarnations (depending on the writer), Bats is downright psychotic about this. My current favorite Spider-Man villain also reflects the hero: Venom. Venom possesses all the same powers that Spidey does, plus Spidey's own Spider-Sense doesn't register Venom's presence. Venom is the force of darkness that Spidey might've become if he had allowed himself to descend into bitterness and spite.

**Small villainous groups:** Gangs of Maggia or Intergang thugs bristling with weapons are bad enough for most solo heroes, but how about a small group of low-level, super-powered bad-

dies who do their best to make life difficult for the hero. The Sinister Six, a collection of Spider-Man's foes who all want revenge on the web-slinger, is the perfect example of a villainous group. Individually, not one of the villains can stack up to the hero for long, but together is another story. Other possibilities for this type of foe are mutant street gangs, groups of high-tech muggers or bank robbers, super-terrorists, etc.

Other things are also important for a super-solo game GM to remember. With only one player, the game may grind to a halt if the hero misses a vital clue or loses a battle he or she was intended to win. The GM must be ready to keep the game moving forward in case of such an eventuality. A solo campaign also provides many more opportunities for role-playing than in a normal campaign where action is often more important than character development. In a solo campaign, the player can role play to his heart's content, without interference from the other players. The GM should accommodate the hero in this, setting the ratio of role playing to action at a level the player is comfortable with. Watching a hero develop a

strong personality over the course of a campaign is one of the most interesting aspects of a solo campaign.

For more inspiration in super-solo campaigns, see the solo-hero comic books themselves. Beyond that, a great source of inspiration on how to structure a super-solo campaign can be found in the animated Batman series on the Fox TV network. I saw some of the animation this past July at the DC Comics' party during the Chicago ComiCon, so I knew that, visually, the show would be quite good. I've been pleasantly surprised to see how well the rest of the show is put together. Pay attention to how each episode's adventure is structured. Note Batman's support network—the cave's equipment, Alfred, Commissioner Gordon, etc. A super-hero game GM could do worse than model the structure of his or her campaign after this excellent program.

If you have any comments regarding what you want to see in this column, write to **With Great Power**, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. I am looking forward to hearing from you. □

# With Great Power

## Constructing A "Golden" Campaign

by Dale A. Donovan

The comic books you and I read today are not spontaneously created on store shelves. No, today we are still enjoying the legacy left to us from the "Silver Age" of comics in the 1960s. It was during this time that most of the heroes you and I read about were created. The Fantastic Four, Spider-Man, the X-Men, the Avengers, the Justice League, and the current Green Lantern and Flash characters are just a small sampling of the products of that creative time.

But that generation of comic books also owes a debt; a debt to comics' "Golden Age," of the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Justice Society of America, Captain America, Namor, the original Human Torch, Sandman, Green Lantern, Superman, Batman, and Flash characters all first appeared during this era.

Again, many of the concepts that helped make the Golden Age "golden" can be traced back even to the innumerable "pulp" fiction magazines of the 1920s and 1930s. (They were called pulps because the very cheap type of paper they were printed on.) The pulps covered many genres; science fiction, espionage, horror, westerns, and swords-&-sorcery fantasy, among others.

Many authors who are today considered to be giants in their fields of literary endeavor got their starts in the pulps. Edgar Rice Burroughs, Isaac Asimov, Fritz Leiber, and many more created the heroes, the villains, the settings, and the adventures that served to inspire the creators of the comics' Golden Age, and so on down the line, to the super hero books (and super-hero RPGs) we enjoy so much today.

This column considers building a campaign directly on the foundations of the pulps and the comics' Golden Age.

### Heroes

The most important aspect of any super hero campaign is the heroes themselves, particularly their powers and motivation. In the Golden Age, heroes fell into three general power categories:

*The gimmick hero:* Heroes of this type were normal people who donned a cos-

tume and fought crime with only their wits, fists, and a gimmick or two that made them memorable but did not give them any true "powers." Batman and Captain America are both normal humans in peak physical condition who, armed only with a utility belt and a shield respectively, clobber bad guys without the aid of any super abilities. Sometimes the gimmick isn't even a weapon. It can be as simple as the costume and name a character adopts, for example, the Wildcat is a professional boxer who puts on a dark costume with a cat's face and uses his pugilistic skills to pummel law-breakers into unconsciousness.

*The super-equipped hero:* These heroes also have no internalized super powers. They do possess some device or item that allows them to use superhuman powers, however. If they lose their super-goodies, they're just normal folks. Green Lantern and the original Starman both qualify for this class.

*True superhumans:* These are the heroes who, through mechanical, mystical, or accidental means have true powers without relying on external widgets. Unlike today, these heroes were relatively rare in the 1930s and 1940s. The pulps' Doc Savage, and comics' Spectre, the Flash, and the android Human Torch all fall into this category.

As there were only a few categories of heroes in the pulps and Golden-Age comics, they had similarly few reasons for performing their heroic acts:

*Bored millionaire:* This vastly wealthy person has conquered all that life has thrown at him. He's bored. He seeks excitement and adventure. He soon discovers he can find that which he craves by fighting crime. The original Sandman has this motivation.

*The avenger:* This hero is taking revenge on the criminal world for some wrong done to him in the past. Batman is the perfect example of such a hero.

*The patriot:* The patriot is a hero who sees his country in need and rises to its defense. The comics are full of such characters, the most famous being Captain America.

*The cop:* This hero is some sort of law-enforcement official (police officer, district attorney, etc.) who, frustrated by all the injustice she sees in her job and

legally can't do anything about, dons a costume and goes outside the law to catch criminals. The original Guardian fits this description.

*The reporter:* Similar in motivation to "the cop" above, this hero is a journalist who goes after law-breakers when the authorities can't or won't. Plus, they'll probably get a good story out of it. Liberty Belle and Johnny Quick have this motivation.

*The scientist or genius:* This hero discovers or invents some magnificent device that allows him to go out and tackle the bad guys—often bad guys who want the very device the hero has uncovered. The original Starman and Hourman are two such heroes.

*Caught up by circumstances:* These heroes, very common in the pulps, are just normal folks who get caught up in some great, life-threatening adventure simply because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. A fatally wounded spy might whisper top-secret code phrases to the hero before expiring. The hero might receive and read a misdirected letter regarding a murder mystery or a foreign plot. The hero could simply take a wrong turn and witness a heinous crime. Whatever the set-up, the villains are soon after our hero to find out just how much he knows and "silence" him before he divulges the information. Read almost any H. P. Lovecraft story for such characters.

A final element common to all Golden Age comic characters was their unfailing cheerfulness. Not only did they fully expect to win the war (not a safe bet in the early stages of World War II), they also believed that there was no problem humanity could not solve if we put our minds to it. They believed in the innate goodness of the human soul. It was this attitude that led the heroes to utter so many uplifting and patriotic (campy by today's standards) soliloquies and speeches.

A great campaign could be built around putting that hopeful, if naive, attitude to the test. It would be interesting to hear those heroes' reaction to some of the aspects of the war. Would they have approved of dropping the atomic bombs on civilian Japanese targets (the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki)? How would they have felt



about the simple existence of such weapons of mass destruction? How would the heroes have dealt with the knowledge of the Nazi concentration camps or the Japanese-internment in the United States and Canada?

Most of the heroes of the pulp and Golden Age eras were much less formidable than heroes today, and many of them also had to deal with a debilitating weakness or limitation. The original Dr. Mid-Nite of DC Comics (a gimmick hero) was blind in normal daylight without his special goggles. The original Green Lantern (a super-equipped hero), one of the most powerful heroes of the era, had a power ring whose beam had no effect on wood.

When creating heroes for this type of campaign, bear in mind that the vast majority of pulp and comic book characters would fall into the "gimmick hero" class. The character-creation process must be modified to reflect this lack of power. For the MARVEL SUPER HEROES (MSH) game, all heroes should roll on Column 3 of the Advanced Set's "Generating Primary Abilities" table when determining abilities and power ranks whether the heroes are "High-tech." Also, the heroes do not receive the special High-tech hero benefits. For super-hero RPGs where players buy their heroes' abilities with points, a lower point-total is called for (I suggest 50% to 67% of the game's normal allotment). For my Character-Point system for the MSH game (see POLYHEDRON® Newzine issues #72 and #75), I recommend 200 points for Golden Age heroes.

## Villains

What use are heroes without villains for them to battle? Here are some villainous archetypes to include in a Golden Age or pulp campaign in addition to "standard" super villains—folks with super powers who use those abilities to punch out as many heroes and get as much cash as they can. The three power categories above also apply to villains, so they are not repeated here:

*The mad scientist:* This villain has some new invention, discovery, or formula that drives him insane. He then hopes to use his device, etc., in an effort to gain revenge on the colleagues who laughed at his earlier theories; to wipe out his enemies (be they real or paranoia induced); or simply to conquer the country, world, universe, etc. Mad scientists can fall into any of the three power

categories. For those with super powers, mental abilities are very popular choices. The original Brain Wave was such a villain.

*The evil genius:* Similar to the scientist above, this villain has some master plan that will grant him "power over weak-minded fools." Unlike mad scientists, however, these villains are genuinely evil and are well aware of it. In fact, they seem to revel in it. They are often described by heroes as "despicable," "inscrutable," and "devilishly cunning." Many of these characters also were depicted as members of an ethnic minority (an unfortunate bit of racism). The legendary Fu Manchu and the Ultra-Humanite are two good examples.

*Gangsters:* Although the era of "gangbusting" was over by the 1940s, organized-crime gangs and their bosses made numerous appearances in the pulps and the comics. They tend to resent heroes cutting in on their action. Examples are easy to find in the pulps and comics, as well as from our own history. Simply move Al Capone's 1920s Chicago gang to the time and place your campaign is taking place.

*Cults and secret societies:* In the pulps, conspiracies and secret groups (or "illuminati") are everywhere. Whether they are cultists who worship the ancient demon-god Yeeeahh-ho (and have the nasty habit of sacrificing young people to it) or the ever-present Bundists (German-Americans who were loyal to Nazi Germany during World War II) of the comics who were constantly sabotaging a wartime facility, the heroes must determine just how deeply these villains have infiltrated American society and root them out.

*Spies/Saboteurs:* Like the Bundists above, these villains are up to no good in the name of a foreign power, usually an Axis power during World War II. Spies are different in that they are not Americans, generally are better equipped than local saboteurs, and are often super-powered. These villains ran rampant in many Golden Age comic books. Iron Cross, Baron Blitzkrieg, and the Red Skull are all spies or saboteurs.

## Adventures

The pulps are the source of the widest variety of adventures for your campaign, so let's take a look at four of the genres that were pulp favorites:

*Crimebusting/Detective:* There's a mystery, usually involving a crime like murder, and it's up to the heroes to piece

together the clues and catch the perpetrator. Examples run from private eyes Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade to Arthur Conan Doyle's consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. The American Movie Classics cable channel shows many of the best movies depicting this era. I especially like the Humphrey Bogart films, *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Big Sleep*.

*Espionage:* Imagine your heroes have to infiltrate an enemy camp, base, or homeland to rescue a scientist or steal top-secret plans of the Nazis' newest terror weapon. Once they reach their objective, they still need to escape—most likely back the way they came. Some of the best examples of espionage are the novels by Ian Fleming and Robert Ludlum.

*Horror:* Horror stories were very popular in the pulps, and so they should be represented in any pulp or Golden Age campaign. Note the elements of horror in the film, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" for examples of supernatural trappings. Also read the works of H.P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe.

*Science fiction:* Your heroes can join John Carter in his exploits on Mars. They can undertake a journey to the center of the Earth. Or they could help Buck Rogers in his battles against the alien Tigermen. Aliens are common in today's comics, so why not have some of the nastiest decide to help out the Axis powers during WWII? (Imagine the Dominators, Skrulls, Khunds, or the Brood working with the Axis.)

Perhaps the easiest way to come up with adventure ideas and plot hooks for a Golden Age or pulp campaign is to check out the "Sources" section below, then locate and borrow a plot idea that strikes you as appropriate and fun. Modify the story to fit your campaign (especially if you've borrowed it from a source one or more of your players are familiar with), add some twists of your own, and run with it. There are a few things every Golden Age GM needs to be aware of, and they are:

*Pacing:* I've talked about keeping heroes on their toes before, but in a pulp or Golden Age campaign, it's vital. Keep your game moving at a breakneck pace. A catch-phrase to remember is: "Action, action, action." Never let the players catch their breaths. Keep throwing obstacles (physical, mental, or combat) at their characters. Use the film, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," as a model on how to run a Golden Age game session.

*Settings:* Especially in the pulps, exot-



ic locations are a must. Bangkok, the pyramids of Egypt, the Scottish Moors, Antarctica, the wilds of Africa, these places and others all but demand to be explored by heroes. Lost civilizations are another standard locale for pulp adventures. Take your fantasy-game campaign setting and drop your pulp or Golden Age heroes smack in the middle of it. The "Lands of Mystery" supplement for Hero Games' *Justice Inc.* system is the definitive source for creating such a lost world from scratch. An excellent African campaign setting appeared in *DRAGON* Magazine issue #189. Although designed for a fantasy game, it can be adapted for a pulp campaign easily enough.

**Deus ex machina:** This phrase, which roughly means "god from the machine," is a term that describes a plot device that miraculously appears just when the heroes need it most. Pulp authors raised the use of this device to an art form. (Many game masters use such devices regularly in campaigns to save the PCs' collective bacon.)

"Just as you leap off the cliff to avoid the rabid, mutant dog-men pursuing you and fall into the shark-infested waters below, a Coast Guard cutter steams around the point and hurls lines and life-preservers to your soaking heroes."

When using such a device, be certain it does not solve all the heroes' problems—it merely leads them directly to the next catastrophe.

"As the cutter pulls away from the island fortress and your PCs draw a deep breath, your characters hear a muffled explosion from below decks. As the cutter rocks from the blast, a Guardsman points to starboard and yells, "U-boat! We've been torpedoed! Here comes another one!"

**History:** The eras of the pulps and the comics' Golden Age are parts of our own history, unlike super heroes, interstellar travel, or magic spells. Make use of your local library for books on the history of these eras. Watch PBS or the Discovery Channel for documentaries, especially on WWII, or look for WWII-era movies.

Combining super heroes with real-history events is an intriguing possibility. How would the addition of superhuman soldiers have affected the outcome of WWII? Airborne heroes or those with distance attacks could help fight the Battle of Britain, or, maybe they just happen to be in Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

Flying or amphibious heroes could guard the American seacoasts, escort supply or troop convoys, or hunt the Nazi U-boat "wolf packs" or the fearsome battleship, *Bismarck*. Land-based heroes might find themselves assigned to special commando units to perform top-secret missions behind enemy lines. Some heroes could work with the U.S. Marines when they land on Japanese-held Pacific islands. Some could fight Rommel and his Panzers in the North African desert, or a few may assist British forces in the jungles of Burma.

Imagine the heroic forces that could be gathered to aid the Allies for the D-Day landings—an entire campaign could be built around preparing for and taking part in the invasion of Fortress Europe.

As if supervillains, saboteurs, bullets, and bombs weren't enough, the DC Comics' heroes who operated during WWII had another problem to deal with. Both the German and Japanese homelands were protected by vastly powerful magical artifacts. These artifacts would automatically convert any heroes who had true super powers to the side of the Axis forces.

The effect these "barriers" had was to prevent all the Allied heroes from simply flying to Berlin or Tokyo and ending the war virtually overnight. I recommend some similar type of barrier if you intend to host a WWII campaign. In the Golden Age campaign I'm currently running, I've modified the barrier to take effect only on enemy-held territory. This will allow my campaign's heroes to aid Allied forces in slugging it out against the Axis on the many battlefields of the war.

## Sources

I've broken down the numerous sources you can use to put together your own pulp or Golden Age campaign into three areas:

**Gaming:** The primary source for any GM who wants to run a Golden Age super hero campaign is *The World at War Sourcebook* for the DC HEROES game by Ray Winninger. Regardless of the game system you use, this book is mandatory for any Golden Age campaign. Other games are also very useful: the *Justice Inc.* game by Hero Games is specifically devoted to the pulp era (and its outstanding supplement on creating and playing a lost-civilization campaign, "Lands of Mystery," by Aaron Allston, deserves a

second mention); the *GURPS Cliffhangers Sourcebook* is not a stand-alone game, but is an excellent overview of the pulp and war eras; the *Agent 13 Sourcebook*, for the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, is another treat from Ray Winninger. Although I never cared for the Agent 13 character, this book is very well done; and the *Daredevils* game, by the defunct Fantasy Games Unlimited, also was a complete system for running pulp adventures.

Other games that do not deal directly with the pulp or super-hero genres still can be helpful. These include: the *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes* game, originally published by Flying Buffalo—this simple game gives terrific tips on how to run mysteries in a role-playing game. The *GANGBUSTERS*™ game from TSR Inc., is the definitive game of combatting the organized-crime gangs of the 1920s and 1930s. The *BOOT HILL*™ game, also from TSR, similarly handles the American Wild West. The *BUCK ROGERS*™ ADVENTURE game, due out this August, will take Buck back to his pulp-era roots—the original comic strips he appeared in. And the *Call of Cthulhu* game, by Chaosium, is set in the late 1920s and makes liberal use of H. P. Lovecraft's (and others') pulp horror stories that were originally published in that era. For those *DRAGON* Magazine collectors out there, issue #104 contained a Golden Age MSH adventure, "Sudden Dawn," by William Tracy.

Many of these products also are filled with extensive reference lists worth checking out at your local library. Bear in mind that at least some of these games are out of print—it may take some hunting through your game store's back shelves to find copies.

**Comics:** The most obvious comic sources are the books published by Marvel and DC that were set in the WWII era. *The All-Star Squadron*, published by DC, and *The Invaders*, by Marvel, detail each company's WWII heroes and universes. Back issues might still be available in your area. If not, many old DC stories are being reprinted in its "Archives" series. Also, Marvel is publishing an *Invaders* mini-series this spring and summer.

Other comic sources do exist. Look for these books: *The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes* and *The Encyclopedia of Super Villains*, by Jeff Rovin, published by Facts on File in 1985 and 1987 respectively; *Superhero Comics of the Golden Age: An Illustrated History*, by Mike

Benton, published by Taylor Publishing Co., in 1992; and *Crawford's Encyclopedia of Comic Books*, by Hubert H. Crawford, published by Jonathan David Publishing, Inc., in 1978.

**Fiction and other media:** GMs are pointed toward two essential characters of pulp fiction: the Doc Savage stories by Kenneth Robeson (a pseudonym of Lester Dent, among others) and the Shadow stories by Walter Gibson. Beside the authors mentioned above, look for books or story collections by Jacques Futrelle, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammett, Manly Wade Wellman, Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Hugh B. Cave, Randall Garrett, Raymond Chandler, E. E. "Doc" Smith, Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, and H. Rider Haggard.

A series of books was published in the 1970s by Byron Priess Visual Publications that attempted to revive the popularity of pulp stories: *Weird Heroes* consisted of eight volumes, at least

some of which should be available at used-book stores.

TSR Inc., published three paperback collections of pulp stories in 1987. The AMAZING® science-fiction anthologies series reprinted works that originally appeared in AMAZING STORIES® Magazine. Look for *The Wonder Years: 1926-1935*, *The War Years: 1936-1945*, and *The Wild Years: 1946-1955*. Collections like these are a terrific resource since they contain many stories by different authors.

The Time-Life series of books on WWII should be available in most school or public libraries and are packed with photographs of the prewar and wartime eras. Other, non-historical sources include: the three "Indiana Jones" movies—tributes to the pulps and the movie serials of the 1940s they spawned. Many of the 1940s serials themselves are now for sale on videotape. *The Rocketeer* was a terrific pulp story inspired by the comic book. *Remo*

*Williams: The Adventure Begins*, is a film derived from the Destroyer series of pulp novels. *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*, is a zany film tribute to the pulps—Buckaroo is an exemplary pulp character, he can do *everything*.

Another source for good movies is Jim Lowder's *Into the Dark*. That column has recently featured reviews of movies about Fu Manchu (issue 77), super heroes (issue 72), and pulp heroes (issue 73). Horror movies, one of Jim's favorite topics, are great places from which to steal super-villain ideas, too.

I'm interested in hearing from readers who implement some of my suggestions. If you have comments, questions, or a good campaign story that resulted from something you read in this column, I'd love to hear from you. Write to *With Great Power*, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI 53147. □

# With Great Power

## Constructing Random Adventures

by Dale A. Donovan

There comes a time in every campaign, super-hero game or otherwise, when the GM runs out of ideas. Maybe she is tired, sick, or just doesn't have an adventure ready when the players unexpectedly descend, saying, "Well, we thought that since we were all here anyway, you could run *something*."

This column should aid those beleaguered super-hero game masters who need an adventure, and need one fast. Below are several tables to help a GM get his creative juices flowing. A GM can roll the appropriate dice for one or more of the tables and run with the results. Or, a GM can simply scan the charts until she finds an element that she likes and that fits her campaign.

In either case, the GM still has work to do. The chart results are merely the barest bones of an adventure. The GM needs to flesh out the ideas listed below with NPCs, settings, role-playing opportunities, and villains. Not every idea below will work in every campaign. Pick and choose. If the GM rolls a result that doesn't seem to fit into the current campaign, ignore it and reroll.

### Adventure Starters

Adventure starters, or "hooks," are what gets the characters involved in an adventure in the first place. Good hooks lure the PCs into the main plot of your adventure. Roll 1d20 or choose an appropriate hook.

**1. "My hero!"** Someone is in love with a PC. This sort of role-playing experience is best run with an NPC, but can be run between two amenable players and their PCs. In any case, a hero is the target of someone's affections. The person offering these feelings could be a hero-groupie, a young person infatuated with the hero who saved his or her life, or this could be true love—real *Romeo and Juliet* stuff. What, if anything, the PC does about this is left to the player, but one must always tread carefully around matters of the heart. (True heroes are not defined by their powers, but by the manner in which they treat others.) This scenario can be played for humor as the PC's pursuer is

constantly showing up at the wrong time (in the middle of battles, etc.), or this can lead to a serious romance if the player agrees. Look to the comics for suitable romantic possibilities. Also, see *DRAGON*® Magazine issue #161's Editorial by Roger E. Moore and the article, "Romance and Adventure!" by Tom Schlosser, for more in-depth tips on running romances in role-playing games.

**2. A challenge.** The PCs receive a public challenge to meet a foe or foes in combat. The foes could be the PCs' arch-enemies, or they could be completely unknown to the heroes. The PCs must decide whether to walk into what is almost certainly a trap or risk losing face in the public's eyes. Few heroes enjoy being labeled cowards by the general public.

**3. A dying messenger.** At a public appearance, someone rushes up to the heroes, utters a few cryptic words, hands them a clue, and dies. This most commonly occurs when the heroes are in costume, but having it happen while they are in their civilian identities is a good twist. Did the messenger just happen to die at the heroes' feet? Or did he somehow know who the PCs really were? The PCs have a lot of questions to get them started.

**4. The enigma.** The enigma can be anything—a name, an item, or an NPC. Whatever it is in your campaign, the enigma keeps popping up in the heroes' lives. Perhaps the enigma is someone or something the heroes encountered in the past, but did not defeat, solve, recover, etc. In any case, the enigma is back now. If the PCs don't pick up on it immediately, file the enigma away and pull it out again another time you need a hook.

**5. New evidence.** Some element from one of the PCs' past cases surfaces anew. Perhaps some piece of evidence is uncovered, or a new witness comes forward with heretofore unknown information. However this comes about, this new evidence sheds some doubt on the conclusions the heroes previously reached. Maybe the person they helped send to prison really *was* framed. Suppose that "reformed" super villain *was* lying, after all. It now falls to the PCs to admit they may have made a mistake

and investigate the case again.

**6. NPC in peril.** A highly distressed NPC friend of the heroes calls or visits the PCs. The NPC begs the heroes for their help with some crisis. Perhaps the NPC is gravely ill and needs a rare medicinal herb to live. Maybe a loved one of the NPC is missing or has been kidnapped. Whatever the circumstances, only the heroes can help.

**7. Extortion.** Someone has something on one or more of the PC heroes and intends to use the PCs do his dirty work for him. The government could discover that illegal break-in the heroes committed last year while in pursuit of their nemesis. Perhaps some villain has learned the heroes' secret identities. Whatever it may be, the extorter wants something from the heroes in exchange for not disclosing the information that would ruin the PCs' lives. One old variant of this trick is to poison the heroes, and tell them they have 24 hours to live. The antidote will be given to them after they perform a service, likely one they'd never consider otherwise.

**8. Heroes for hire.** Some legitimate force or agency wants to hire the PCs for short-term service. Most heroes aren't desperate for work, so some other motivation is needed. Perhaps a charitable or public organization requests the heroes' presence (and abilities). This request could take the form of appearing on a telethon and doing super-powered "tricks" to solicit donations, helping beached whales back into the ocean, guarding important foreign dignitaries (who just *love* American heroes), or acting as the Grand Marshals of a local parade. Do the heroes accept and possibly endanger innocent people (if, for example, an old villain attacks them during the function), or do they appear as complete cads by turning down the request?

**9. Impostors.** The PC heroes are being impersonated. The impostors are robbing banks, destroying bridges, and generally ruining the heroes' good names. How do the heroes react? Do they deny the charges despite dozens of eyewitnesses? How does the public react? How do the local law-enforcement authorities react? How do any NPC heroes react?





**10. Emergency!** There is an emergency or disaster and the heroes are needed to help. Only they can get a critically ill child to the one hospital in the world that can save her in time. A high-rise building is on fire, and the heroes must help the fire-fighters battle the blaze and rescue the occupants. There could be some environmental disaster (flash flood, oil spill, tornado, forest fire, etc.) that the heroes could help to prevent the spread of or aid in the rescue and recovery efforts.

**11. Visitors.** The PC heroes must react when they discover a group of extraterrestrials is in their city, perhaps even landing in a local park. The PCs must determine the aliens' motive for coming here. Are the aliens extending the hand of galactic friendship? Did they just get lost? Or are they the advance force for an invading alien army? The heroes must also keep the public and the authorities calm while the aliens are investigated. Some members of society or the government would be afraid of the aliens regardless of their motives, and might well advocate arresting or destroying the aliens and their equipment. Others, including super-villains, might want to take advantage of the aliens and use them and

their high technology against mankind (not to mention the heroes.)

**12. Coercion.** The heroes encounter a new villain. He could be a normal person who is caught stealing or embezzling money (perhaps from the PCs), a new super-powered menace, or an NPC hero gone rogue. It is not that simple, however. The NPC is being forced to act in a villainous manner. Perhaps the NPC's spouse needs expensive medical treatment that insurance won't cover, or the NPC's children have been kidnapped by a third party and are demanding the services of the NPC as a condition of the children's release. In any case, the NPC feels she *must* commit these acts to achieve a greater good. If your heroes are fond of punching first and asking questions later, they'll miss the true villain of the scenario, put a person who isn't evil (at least not yet) in jail, and fail to right a great wrong.

**13. Bomb!** The PC heroes discover a bomb; perhaps it's in their HQ, in one of their homes, or in a building with hundreds of innocent NPCs. Wherever it is, the heroes need to secure the area, and either remove or defuse the bomb. For people with superpowers, this may not seem difficult—but the bomb could be booby-trapped to prevent tampering,

and the PCs have only a limited period of time before it goes off, taking a large portion of the city with it.

**14. "Up, up, and . . . hey!"** For some reason unknown to the heroes, their powers become erratic, deteriorating until they disappear completely. The GM must come up with a suitable reason to do this (exposure to radioactivity or toxic waste in some past case, a new scheme of their nemesis, etc.). Test the heroes' mettle with this; see what kind of heroes they are when they don't have super powers to fall back on.

**15. Monster!** A huge beast, many stories tall, is loose in the city. The Army can't stop it—the beast steps on tanks like we step on bugs. Only the PC heroes have a chance of ending this monster's destructive rampage. This hook is borrowed from the "guys-in-rubber-suits" school of Japanese movies. If you've ever seen a Godzilla, Gamera, or King Kong film, you know how a scenario of this type should go. This is especially fun if a PC hero has some growing power and can attempt to go toe-to-toe with the beast. See *The MARVEL®-Phile* in *DRAGON®* Magazine issues #186 and #198 for collections of some of Marvel Comics' most fearsome monsters of the 1950s and '60s.

These two columns were penned by none other than POLYHEDRON's own movie critic, Jim "Latislav" Lowder.

**16. Missing hero.** This starter works best when one of the PC heroes can't make it to a gaming session, but it can work with an NPC hero as well. A hero has gone missing, and no one knows where he went. He could be off on a solo mission, tracking a villain, being held prisoner, or lying in an alley, wounded and dying from some villain's sneak attack. In any case, his life could depend on the PCs finding him in time.

**17. Ambush!** This hook is pretty straightforward. A villain or villains have set a trap for the heroes. Spring this on the PCs when they're vulnerable—set this up to take place just after the climactic battle from the campaign's last session. Just when the heroes are expecting a well-deserved rest (and are low on powers, weapons, hit points, etc.), somebody else shows up wanting to hand the heroes' heads to them. Do the heroes stay to defeat this new threat? Or do they run and live to fight another day?

**18. Traitor.** One of the heroes' trusted NPC allies turns out to be an infiltrator. He betrays the heroes in some way: setting a trap for them, revealing their secret identities to the public or villains, stealing high-tech gadgets from their HQ, etc. The heroes must identify the traitor, bring him to justice, and find out why he did it in the first place. This could be linked to the Coercion hook above.

**19. Attacked!** The PC heroes' city, world, or dimension is being attacked, and the heroes are recruited to fight on the front lines. The attackers could be villains out to destroy the PCs' city, or the attackers could come from space, from beneath the sea or deep underground, from another dimension, or simply from a neighboring nation. The PC heroes must determine the attackers' motives and stop them, while trying to prevent too much damage to their city and protecting the city's citizens from falling buildings, fires, etc.

**20. Manipulation.** Every hero (and each hero's player) has particular beliefs and emotions. Play on these to motivate the heroes into action. Perhaps one of the PCs is wilderness-oriented or just loves to go camping. Have that PC discover a large corporation is illegally dumping toxic waste in the hero's favorite campsite. Or, one of the heroes is a mutant, and a wave of anti-mutant hysteria is building in the

press. What does the hero do about it? Does she ignore it, hoping it will soon pass? Or does she take steps like exposing the dumping ground to the press or working to actively promote mutants and deride the anti-mutant views as bigoted propaganda?

## Complications

Imaginative GMs can make use of the same basic plot several times by adding twists, conditions, or dilemmas to the central story line. Add these plot twists to your own adventure ideas or combine with appropriate adventure starters from the chart above. Roll 1d10 for a random complication.

**1. Deadline.** Whatever the heroes' mission is, they must perform it under a time limit. There's only so much time for the PCs to regain control of the experimental laser-defense satellite before the villains who've taken it over can bring its weapons' systems online—allowing the villains to hold the Earth for ransom under the threat of the satellite's energy weapons, not mention blowing the heroes out of orbit.

**2. Transformed.** The newest foes of the PC heroes turn out to be innocent NPCs who've been transformed into evil-doers (monsters such as werewolves, de-evolved apes, etc.). How and why is up to the GM. How will the heroes defeat the next batch of these beings without injuring the innocent people the monsters really are?

**3. Mind-switches.** Some force to be determined by the GM has switched the minds and personalities of the heroes. The PCs' minds could be switched just amongst themselves (The Mole learning to use Captain Victory's super strength and flight power), the heroes could find themselves in the bodies of normal NPCs, or in the bodies of their arch-enemies. Remember whichever bodies the heroes find themselves in, somebody else is running around in the heroes' bodies—with their super powers.

**4. Immunity.** The PC heroes have got the bad guys right where they want them, but for some reason, they can't bring the fiends to justice. Perhaps the villain's secret identity has diplomatic immunity, or a legal loophole allows the villains' release mere hours after the heroes' valiant actions to capture them. How do the heroes deal with this frustrating setback?

**5. Wanted.** Through either a simple case of mistaken identity or an outright

framing, the PC heroes are accused of a crime they did not commit. They are currently wanted by the authorities. Not only must they execute their mission, but they must do it without any assistance from standard law-enforcement officials. In fact, they may need to flee from or fight those same officials or NPC heroes who want to bring them to justice.

**6. Break the law?** The heroes are faced with some situation where they must break the law to accomplish their mission. Do they steal the top-secret experimental transonic aircraft to pursue their escaping arch-enemies? Do they break the NPC informant out of jail so he'll reveal some vital information? Do the heroes kill the villain who wiped out their families?

**7. Give up item?** Do the heroes sacrifice some material object to achieve a goal? Only a PC hero's magical sword can wound the mystical alien, but the alien's acidic blood will destroy the sword. Only the hero's power ring has enough juice to ignite the starship's hyperdrive engines and take the heroes back to their own galaxy, but the strain will cause the ring to burn out.

**8. "Goodbye."** When a particular hero's views differ from the rest of the group, does the hero leave the group and the campaign? This situation often arises over the idea of killing foes. Alternatively, a hero could leave the group to go off on some secret solo mission. The player then introduces a new character to the campaign and the group—maybe a character the other PCs know nothing about.

**9. Reveal identity?** This complication requires a bit of work to set up properly. Present a dilemma in which the player must decide whether to reveal the hero's secret identity. Perhaps the hero's secret identity is charged with a crime (see "Wanted" above). The hero was out battling some foe at the time he was to have committed the crime, but he cannot use his alibi and clear his name.

**10. Team up.** For some reason, the campaign's heroes and villains need to work together. The heroes and villains are battling in a spacecraft, and they must use their brains and powers in concert to safely pilot the craft through the asteroid field they've accidentally entered. I was planning, but never got around to running, a scenario in my old *Super-hero* campaign where the city's heroes (the PCs) and its resident villains would need to fight side-by-side to repel an alien invasion.

## Motives

As a GM, I've always enjoyed creating characters, especially villains. I considered it a kind of research; when a villain really came together well, I'd want to use him in an adventure. What I had to figure out then was *why* the character had become a villain in the first place. What was his motivation? The chart below gives 10 generic motives for a villain's activities. Roll 1d10 for a random motive, or choose one and individualize it for the next villain you create.

**1. Corruption.** Villains with this motive are truly evil. They seek to debase and corrupt all that is good and true and right in the world. These villains are sinister, even horrifying, and are often supernatural (demons, etc.) in origin.

**2. Avoiding capture.** This motive isn't one for the long-term campaign, but does work well for a scenario. The villains with this motive have encountered the heroes before, lost to them, were captured and sent to prison. When the heroes meet these villains again, the villains will do *anything* to avoid being captured and imprisoned once again.

**3. Insanity.** Villains like these are just plain nuts. Their mental illnesses cause them untold grief and suffering, and they decide since they're miserable, everyone else should be too. These villains are often nihilistic, seeking to destroy not just the heroes, but everyone and everything. Also, many of these villains have very little sense of self-preservation, so they might take outrageous risks to achieve their insane goals. Perhaps their ultimate goal actually is to commit suicide, taking as much of the world as they can with them.

**4. Ideology.** Villains don't see the world the way we do. They could have political views that conflict with ours (Nazis, communists, etc.), or they could believe all human life is inimical to them. (Many aliens have this view.) In either case, these villains seek to remove that which offends them—namely the heroes and all they represent and protect.

**5. Mischief.** These villains are bored, and turn to crime to brighten their days and to have fun. Many villains with this motive are less than sane, but not often in a truly malevolent way. These villains often come across as complete

goofballs, and scenarios they appear in can be played for humor.

**6. Power.** This motive is pretty straightforward. These villains want to take over. These monomaniacs want to remake the world in their images, but their plans are so often interrupted by those pesky heroes. That obstacle (the heroes) must be removed so the villains' plan of conquest can continue unhindered.

**7. Pride.** Similar to "Power" above, villains with this motive consider themselves better than the rest of the world. Problems for these villains arise when the heroes show themselves to be equally competent, if not superior, to the villains. The villains know they are the best, smartest, strongest, etc., but the world doesn't appreciate them and won't as long as those overblown heroes are around.

**8. Wealth.** These villains are just greedy. They want all the world has to offer, and they'll use their powers to take all they can. They don't want to destroy anything, they just want to possess as much as their brains and powers can get them.

**9. Survival.** These villains aren't necessarily evil, they are doing what they must to survive. These things they do to survive are what brings them to the attention of the heroes and what causes them to be labeled villains. Perhaps they need a rare drug to live, and the only company that manufactures the drug charges so much the villains cannot afford to purchase it. So, the villains either steal to pay for the drug, or steal the drug directly. This motive works well with the "Coercion" adventure hook above.

**10. Vengeance.** This is a common motive. These villains are convinced they've been wronged by the world, society, the heroes, etc., and the villains intend to take revenge on those who offended them, to teach the heroes the error of their ways. These are the villains who hold grudges against everyone who over slighted them. They never forget an insult.

## Quotes

I've always had a problem coming up with appropriately menacing dialogue for my super villains in the middle of running a fight scene. So, the table below provides examples of what most megalomaniacs consider to be snappy patter. Roll 1d10 to use these quotes, pick one, or come up with variants. The

concept for this table was very liberally borrowed from Steven E. Schend's "Maniacal Quotes" table in the BUCK ROGERS® HIGH ADVENTURE™ game's *War Against the Han* boxed set. I've adapted and expanded it to fit the modern super-hero genre.

1. "You FOOLS! I'll destroy you all for what you've done!"

2. "Now, with a single master stroke, I'll eliminate all obstacles from my path and take my rightful place as the MASTER OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ (world, galaxy, etc.)."

3. "You thought you were so clever, so smug in your safe little world. Well, who's the clever one now? TELL ME, WHO?!"

4. "It is time for you to learn who is the true master here, my little heroes."

5. "You cannot defeat me. I shall conquer all my enemies. I have foreseen it. It is my DESTINY!"

6. "Admit defeat? To such as you? NEVER! I'll die before I'd let myself be defeated by the likes of you."

7. "Your feeble minds cannot conceive the awesome grandeur of my designs. I do not expect such dolts to comprehend my ingenious plans."

8. "You expect me to fall for such a simple-minded tactic? I think you sorely underestimate me. You will come to regret that mistake."

9. "You shall rue the day you dared to interfere with me. Now, I shall have my REVENGE!"

10. "I can be merciful. If you surrender to me now, you have my word that I will kill you quickly."

Have fun with these tables. Expand them with your own ideas. Don't feel limited by the format. If you've read something you particularly like, just take the idea and run with it.

Inspiration for this column is owed to the following people or their work: Jean Rabe, Allen Varney, and Steven E. Schend. If you have any comments or questions regarding this column and what you want to see in it in the future, write to **With Great Power**, c/o POLYHEDRON® Newszine, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva WI 53147. I can't promise to respond to everyone, but I'm looking forward to hearing from you.