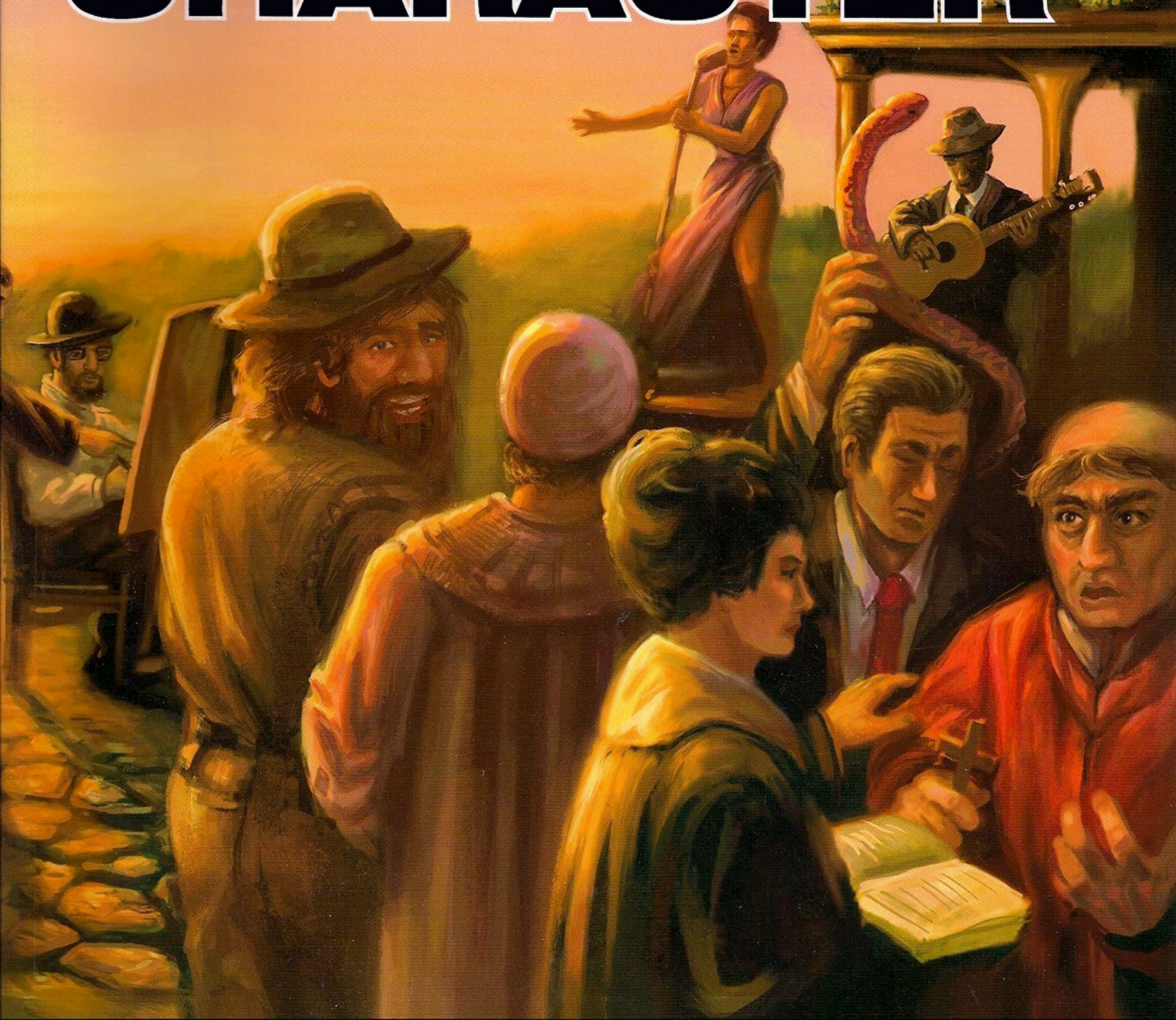


A sourcebook for

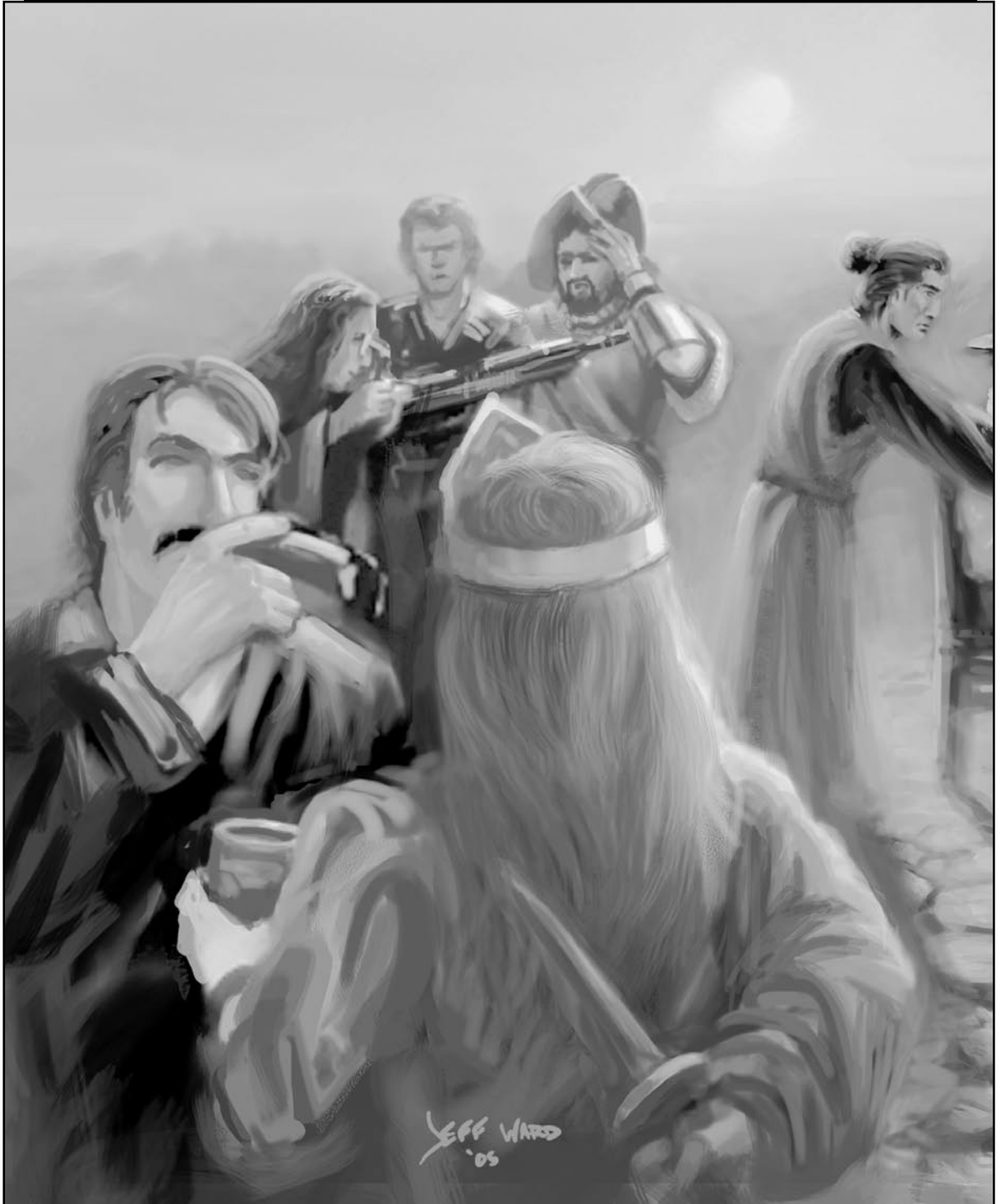
**HERO**  
**SYSTEM**  
FIFTH EDITION

# YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER



# JASON WALTERS

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# YOU GOTTA HAVE CHARACTER

A Sourcebook for the *HERO System*

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## DEDICATION

For my beloved wife Tina, whose assistance and encouragement have made this book possible.

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# YOU GOTTA HAVE TRUTH



By Kenneth Hite

It's kind of a shame that Mark Twain's phrase "Truth is stranger than Fiction" has become such a cliché, because it's absolutely true, and well worth remembering.<sup>1</sup> It just doesn't seem true, especially if you're the sort of person who reads Fiction about orange teenage shapeshifters, or teleporting German acrobats, or robots who hang out with mummies, or a guy in an opera cape who is either an angel or the Wandering Jew. But all that's pretty normal — the teenager hangs out with his friends and does dangerously stupid things, the German acrobat macks on older women, the robot and the mummy generally freak out a lot, and the angel just murmurs inconsequentially and doesn't do much of anything. And the sky god saves the world, and the kid in New York is frazzled by his job and his girl, and the hero has to avoid society if he wants to save it by night, and it's all stories we've read a million times before. Thirty-six situations, as the man<sup>2</sup> says, only in capes and spandex. In other words, Fiction.

But in the world of Truth — well, there's billions of situations, and hardly a one of them makes a lick of sense when you look at it like that. And the situations that make it into the newspapers, or the history books — those are the ones that are even bigger, even stranger, the ones that stand out. They're *Extra True*, in other words, the kinds of things that made Herodotus, the father of history, say "Dude, you are *so* not going to believe what happened today." In just about that many words, only in Attic Greek, so they sounded classier. Or, as Thucydides, the other father of history,<sup>3</sup> pretty much put it himself: "I couldn't make this up if I wanted to."

So, *pace* Thucydides, nobody is smart enough to come up with something as strange as history. Or, put in epigram form: people are stranger than they are smart. Put it that way, and it seems obvious. Especially people like the ones in this book, who were strange enough that smart guys couldn't figure out just where to file them, strange enough even to show up against the raging backdrop of Truth. And if you're telling stories, or playing roleplaying games, which is the same thing, about people, or situations, well, here's 25 hits of pure strangeness, pure Hyper-Truth. Cut it a couple of times with capes and spandex, and you can get it down to street level Fiction quality.

And believe me, I know. Whatever meager level of Fiction I create, I mine it assiduously out of the tailings of history wherever I can. It's just so much easier to bring on Napoleon Bonaparte as an NPC than General Nobodii Youverdov, and the players seem way more interested to boot. And if I need someone really strange, even stranger than Napoleon, you know, "mechanical chess-player impresario" strange,<sup>4</sup> or "faked his own death by firing squad" strange,<sup>5</sup> or "cut his own throat because he was being hounded by imaginary blackmailers" strange,<sup>6</sup> or "killed the Prime Minister to call attention to his insurance problems" strange,<sup>7</sup> I can find them within a year or so of 1812, and I don't even have to read *War and Peace* to do it. Not that Tolstoy wasn't strange, too, but I don't need a wild-eyed aristocratic novelist with no dress sense, weird religious mania, and a complete inability to understand Shakespeare. Yet. My point is that Tolstoy is stranger than anyone in *War and Peace*, and Napoleon is stranger than Tolstoy, and I only have to read one or maybe two history books to find a double handful of even stranger people than either of them.

1 It's also kind of a shame that people keep calling it "Mark Twain's phrase" when Lord Byron (see page 23) said it first.

2 Georges Polti, in *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*. Overrated, but undeniably handy.

3 History has two fathers and no mother. No wonder it never picks up after itself.

4 Johann Nepomuk Maelzel (1772-1838), whose mechanical chess-playing Turk would have beat Napoleon in 1809 if the diminutive Emperor hadn't cheated. Later, Napoleon's brother bought the Turk, but Maelzel skipped to America with it, where it met Edgar Allan Poe. Who was way stranger than even Roderick Usher.

5 Okay, Marshal Ney didn't really fake his death by firing squad, but everyone thought he did, because there was a schoolteacher in North Carolina named Peter Stuart Ney who used to claim to be Marshal Ney when he was drunk, which happened a lot, because he was teaching school in North Carolina ferchrissake when he should have been out there rescuing Napoleon from St. Helena, and after a while that kind of pressure just gets to you, y'know?

6 Lord Castlereagh (1769-1822), Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, went insane after the Congress of Vienna system nearly collapsed in Spain. He only outlived Napoleon, his exact contemporary, by one year. Lord Byron (him again!) wrote a cute little poem about pissing on his grave, which would be pretty tough, given that he was buried in Westminster Abbey, which is better than Byron managed two years later.

7 John Bellingham (1770-1812) shot and killed Prime Minister Spencer Perceval because the British government was unwilling to compensate him for the time he spent in a Russian jail for insurance fraud. Well, it was way more complicated than that, as Bellingham would explain to everyone he met until they invented pressing engagements elsewhere. To the British government's credit, he didn't spend much time in British jail; it only took a week to convict and hang him.

And speaking of strange people....

Jason Walters has written just such a history book, right here. I myself have contributed to two others, the *GURPS Who's Who* books, where I wrote about Alexander the Great and the Comte de Saint-Germain.<sup>8</sup> In fact, some time before any of these books I proposed a book rather like the eventual *GURPS Who's Who* collection, tentatively entitled *GURPS Historicals*, in which I suggested 101 suitably interesting figures for fans of point-build generic roleplaying systems.<sup>9</sup> Of those, I managed to pick four of the 25 people Jason picked for this book here,<sup>10</sup> which indicates something, though just what I'm not sure.

It may indicate that there are some people who are just so strange and True that they somehow seem fictional, to that part of our brain that hasn't figured out that Twain<sup>11</sup> was right. Somehow Lord Byron, to pick someone not remotely at random, just seems like he belongs in a novel (or a roleplaying game) rather than a history book. And indeed, his personal physician, John Polidori, put him in one,<sup>12</sup> although he was hardly the last person to do so.<sup>13</sup> Likewise Sir Walter Raleigh, or Mata Hari, or Nikola Tesla, or Cheng I Sao,<sup>14</sup> or Sitting Bull, or Howard Hughes, or Alexandra David-Neel,<sup>15</sup> or 95 other "larger than life" figures. But that's my point;<sup>16</sup> they're not larger than life. They're larger than the page, larger than the frame of the comics panel, larger than the movie screen. They're life-size. Just right for a game session, or even a whole campaign's worth.

Or it may just indicate that Jason and I are simpatico.<sup>17</sup> This I've known ever since our first long conversation at some convention or other (DunDraCon, I think) about history, which started off with the Congo and as I recall wound through Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck,<sup>18</sup> Soviet ethnic cleansing, Byron and Shelley,<sup>19</sup> and maybe Tamerlane before the hall closed and we could untangle our antlers and mutually agree that yes, our backs were very silvery indeed.

On the other hand, perhaps we're just perfectly matched arch-nemeses, like Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton,<sup>20</sup> or like Aquaman and Black Manta. Every convention since that first one, we've exchanged one or two passes, just to make sure the other guy is paying attention, and let it slide. But you and I both know that a rematch is coming — we haven't read all those comic books for nothing, after all. It's gonna be big, bigger than History, bigger than Eskimo singing contests or the Battle of Hampton Roads<sup>21</sup> or Burke vs. Hastings.<sup>22</sup> We are destined by Fate — by the very power of Fiction Itself — to have another one of those knock-down, drag-out history slams while drinking, ideally somewhere that closes late, if at all. And when we do, I'll bet someone could make another book or four out of whatever we come up with that time. I pick Jason.

8 Who was not a fictional vampire, although what exactly he was isn't very clear since there were at least two people impersonating him at one point, and he may well have been impersonating at least three other people off and on.

9 But not, apparently, suitably interesting to Steve Jackson. So it goes.

10 Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord Byron, Calamity Jane, and Miyamoto Musashi, since you asked. And I also listed William Walker, who Jason cannily left for the sequel, and Lucrezia Borgia, who should count for half given that her odious father Rodrigo is in here.

11 Or Byron.

12 The Vampyre, which comically enough everyone believed Byron had written, so it became Polidori's only best-seller, until Byron renounced it in the newspapers. It was comical to everyone except Byron and Polidori, that is.

13 Or the first; Byron's ex-mistress Lady Caroline Lamb put him in Glenarvon in 1816.

14 Pirate Queen of the South China Seas. She married her son, commanded 400 ships for three years defeating the Imperial Chinese navy throughout, and retired in 1810 to run a brothel and casino in Canton.

15 French anarchist who visited Tibet in 1924, claimed to have witnessed all manner of remarkable psychic feats and magical activity, and wrote a number of books about Tibet that are a big reason why hippies are the way they are. She pottered around China with her faithful Tibetan monk Yongden during World War II, while she was in her seventies, and died at home in France a month shy of her 101st birthday.

16 Such as it is.

17 Which is kind of odd, given that I live in Chicago, the greatest city on Earth, and Jason lives, from what I can gather, in the desert from the Road Runner cartoons except without so many roads. But there you go; as I and Jim Morrison have been trying to tell you, people are strange.

18 German general in East Africa during World War One, and apparently a thoroughly decent sort. He beat the pants off the British, but since he did it in Tanganyika, a strategic dagger pointed at the heart of absolutely nowhere, it didn't matter, except that a sideshow to that sideshow got turned into the movie *The African Queen*.

19 Shelley also wrote a mean poem about Castlereagh, which is much spookier than Byron's:

*I met murder on the way -  
He had a face like Castlereagh -  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
Seven bloodhounds followed him.*

Which, if it were true, would explain a lot about Castlereagh, wouldn't it?

2 Both short, dark-haired lawyers and political bosses who loved the ladies a little too much.

21 You know, March 8-9, 1862? Monitor vs. Merrimack? Except it was actually Monitor vs. Virginia, but that doesn't alliterate.

22 In 1787, Edmund Burke successfully impeached Warren Hastings, former Governor-General of India, for massive corruption on a scale unusual even for former Governors-General of India. Hastings, however, was acquitted at the actual trial, which finally ended in 1794, by which time everyone, especially including Edmund Burke, had gotten distracted by the French Revolution instead. That will be my strategy, too.

# AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION



It all started out innocently enough. Darren Watts, Steve Long, Those-Who-Cannot-Be-Named, and I bought the Hero Games assets from their previous owners, started going to conventions, and began publishing books (in about that order). As part of our planned Hero Games Revival we also decided to publish *Digital Hero*, the online descendant of the late, lamented, and irregularly-published *Adventurers Club* dead-tree magazine. Darren and Steve convinced editor extraordinaire Dave Mattingly to close down his unofficial Hero e-zine “EZ Hero” in favor of taking the helm of our newly re-launched publication, with an eye to releasing ten 64-page issues each year. With this task seemingly completed, Darren awoke one morning to find me perched on the edge of his bedpost like some sort of frightening mustachioed raven, eating a bowl of his King Vitaman cereal.



**Darren Watts** — Resurrector of Hero Games. Still, doesn't make the cut.

“I want my own column,” I munched, pointing at him with a plastic handled Mickey Mouse spoon.

“Get out,” he replied.

The next day Darren opened his bedroom closet to get a pair of socks, only to have me leap out from behind the moldering bulk of his ten-thousand-page unpublished manuscript for a live-action *Pigs In Space* movie.

“I want my own column,” I hissed. “And I think that Reese Witherspoon would make a top-notch Miss Piggy.”

“Kirstie Alley has already been promised the part,” he replied. “Now get out.”

Several hours later Darren walked across the street from his office to Go Getters Market to get his usual lunch: one bottle of strawberry Yoo-hoo, a meatball hoagie, three Alka Seltzers, and a forty-ounce bottle of Camo High Gravity Lager. As he reached into the walk-in freezer to grasp his daily bumper, a hand cold as Death's gripped his wrist.

“I want my own column,” I grunted through chattering teeth. “Oh, and King Cobra is on sale for 90 cents out-the-door.”

“Plebeian!” he howled, slamming the freezer door on my arm. Yet the following morning he

opened the medicine cabinet in his bathroom, only to find my face staring out at him from where the shelving should have been.

“All right, all right,” he said wearily, “you can have a column in *Digital Hero*. Just stop sneaking into my walls at night. What in the heck is it going to be about, anyhow?”

“It's going to be like Phil Masters's *GURPS Who's Who* books,” I answered eagerly, “except that it will feature historical figures nobody's ever heard of. Nothing so pedestrian, obvious, and useful as H.P. Lovecraft or Shaka Zulu. Nope, I'm going to convert Confederate duelist Colonel Alexander Keith McClung into a 252-point villain!”

“Fine, whatever. Now, where's my aspirin?”

Thus did *You Gotta Have Character* slouch off to Bethlehem to be born. The bastard child of net misinformation, fevered midnight research, dog-eared textbooks, slanderous historical gossip, and caffeine-driven wishful thinking, it rather surprisingly proved to be popular amongst *Digital Hero*'s mathematically particular readership almost in spite of itself. Three years and thirty issues later, I found myself starring down the barrel of a quite considerable body of work. When the opportunity to publish a collection of *You Gotta Have Character* columns became a reality, the question then became a rather surgical one: who gets included and who gets cut?

With a heavy heart, I have been forced to exclude, among others, the mad French author Louise-Ferdinand Celine (issue #2), filibusterer William Walker (issue #5), the black-hearted (is there any other kind?) lawyer and witch-hunter Matthew Hopkins (issue #7), archetypal medieval rogue Reynard the Fox (issue #13), and the transvestite Pharaoh Maat-ka-Ra Hatshepsut (issue #15) from this collection due to lack of space. This wasn't because they're insufficiently crazy or evil enough to make the grade; I simply ran out of room. Of course these characters are still available for downloading in back issues of *Digital Hero* if you go to Hero Games's website at [www.herogames.com](http://www.herogames.com).

(Remember, kids: if you don't already have a subscription



**Steve Long** — Writes the live-long day ... not interesting enough for you.



**Tina Walters** — Office goddess, occasional cultist ... my own wife. Threatened bodily harm if I included her.

to *Digital Hero* your life is but a hollow, empty shadow of which it might be.)

*You Gotta Have Character* is intended to serve a wide variety of purposes. Even if some unenlightened soul were to ignore its *HERO System* aspects entirely, it can still serve as an interesting biographical encyclopedia of almost two dozen unique, sometimes villainous, always quirky individuals from our colorful past. Their lives, loves, accomplishments, character flaws,

and failures are all detailed within the pages of this book. A GM looking for interesting NPCs with which to people his world need look no further than these pages, regardless of the intended genre of his campaign. Players who wish to create truly unusual *HERO System* characters can mine inspiration from the dozens of vibrant individuals described within this tome. There are entertainers, misunderstood poet-adventurers, snake-handling preachers, brave frontierswomen, and ancient explorers waiting to meet you between these brightly colored covers.

For me, the voyage into the past that began in Darren Watts's medicine cabinet three years ago has become a voyage into my own deepest self. I have looked across far shores into the eyes of men and women hundreds of years now dead, only to be surprised as they wink back at me from across that misty, misunderstood, yet always flowing river we call Time. I ask you now to take a few moments out of your hectic daily existence to consider the lives of these adventurers of the past, villain and hero alike, by reading my book. Or far better yet to *become* them through the wonder that is the *HERO System*, a fantastic treasure that I was lucky enough to stumble across as a boy of ten two decades ago in a dusty bookstore in Orlando, Florida.

—Jason S. Walters

## SUGGESTED READING

If you're interested in adopting unique historical characters into your *HERO System* campaign — or if you simply need something entertaining to read! — you might want to consider these books in addition to the ones mentioned in the bibliographies for each character.

### The Ancient World

**The Early History of Rome:** First century historian Titus Livius (more commonly known as Livy) recites the impressive deeds of such ancient figures as the warlike King Tullus Hostilius, military dictator Marcus Furius Camillus, and the noble farmer-statesman Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus as he walks us through the first 500 years of Roman history. Although considered a basic text for classical scholars, the Aubrey de Selincourt translation of *Early History* is both pleasant and easy to read.

**The Twelve Caesars:** Although many have justifiably complained that second century historian Suetonius Laetus was more of a gossip columnist than a scholar, his biography of the Roman Empire's first twelve rulers is highly entertaining. Consistently scandalous, extremely racy, often melodramatic, and always amusing, *Twelve Caesars* is our main source of information on the life of the notorious Caligula and the tragic Claudius. Robert Graves' excellent novel *I, Claudius* is based on this work.

**A War Like No Other:** Controversial farmer-scholar Victor Davis Hanson uses this extraordinary book to draw parallels between the world of the chaotic but idealistic ancient Greeks and our modern one. Over a thirty-year period the Mediterranean was wracked with violence as Athens and Sparta battled for dominance in a conflict we now refer to as the Second Peloponnesian War. Both sides fielded fascinating, tragic generals such as the traitorous (but talented) Alcibiades and the doomed Spartan warrior Brasidas.

### The Old West/Victorian Period

**Crow Killer: The Saga of Liver-Eating Johnson:** Authors Raymond W. Thorp and Robert Bunker located and interviewed the last of the old-time mountain men between 1940-1941 to produce this detailed account of legendary trapper John "Liver-Eating" Johnson. Alternately horrific, moving, inspirational, and tragic, it is the single best source of information available for anyone interested in the roughest subculture ever to emerge in America: that of the isolationist mountain man.

**The British Eccentric:** The Victorian Period was a golden age for English eccentricity, a time in which "oddities manifest themselves in delightful, astonishing, sometimes alarming, and even poignant ways." In this wonderful book authors Harriet Bridgeman and Elizabeth Drury assemble 15 dryly-amusing biographies of such noted English oddballs as lady traveler Mary Kingsley, occultist Aleister Crowley, and poet Algernon Swinburne.

### The Pulp Era

**In Darkest London: Antisocial Behavior 1900-1939:** A beyond harsh look at urban poverty, violence, and law enforcement in London penned by Steve Jones, a prolific author specializing in unmentionable British doings. This book is a must for anyone trying to capture the feel of urban living during the Pulp Era.

**One Man Caravan:** In July of 1932 author and adventurer Robert Fulton decided to ride a motorcycle around the world — and did! In one of the very best travel books ever written, Fulton gives us a gritty, ground level look at the final days of the British and French Empires as he rides across Syria, Arabia, Afghanistan, India, and Indochina.

### The Modern Era

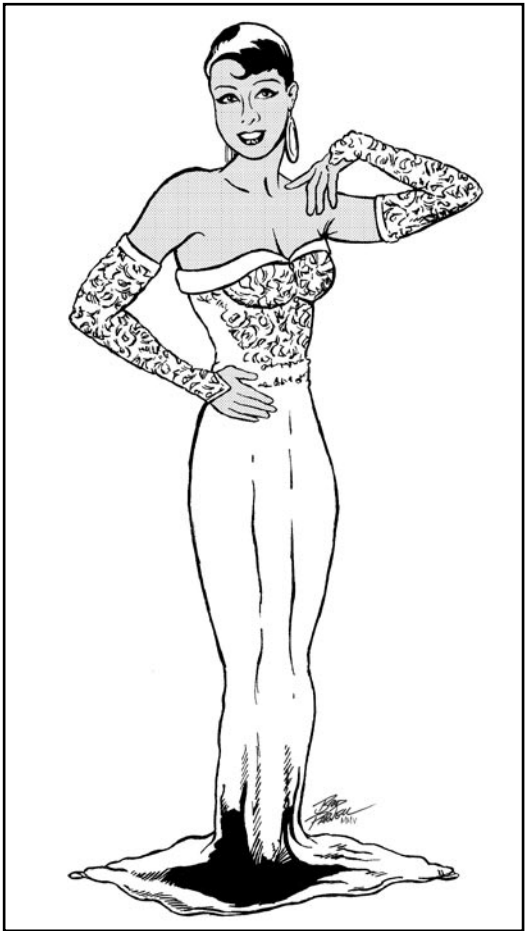
**Death In The Long Grass:** Very few men have known Africa as Peter Hathaway Capstick knew it. A hunting guide, safari leader, tracker, and alcoholic extraordinaire, Capstick was one of the last of the great literary hunters. Cut from the same mold as Teddy Roosevelt and Ernest Hemingway, his accounts of near-death at the hands of the Dark Continent's wildlife are bone-chilling.

**Bad People In History:** Although not exactly brimming with detail, this useful little book by Roland Barker is a straight-up dictionary of the worst villains ever to curse the pages of history. Although each entry is only a paragraph or two long, it lists literally hundreds of ghastly people in alphabetical order.

# JOSEPHINE BAKER

“The secret to the fountain of youth is to think youthful thoughts.”  
—Josephine Baker

Josephine Baker exploded onto the Paris stage during the 1920s with a comic yet highly sexual musical review that took Europe by storm. Along with her act *La Revue Nègre* (The Negro Revue), Baker was famous for her “barely-there” dresses, no-holds-barred “savage” dance routines, and her exotic good looks. Her sensuality and beauty were the stuff of legend, gaining her such nicknames as the Black Venus, the Black Pearl, and the Creole Goddess. Her admirers showered her with gifts, including diamonds, cars, and marriage proposals (she received approximately 1,500 of them during her life). A life-long celebrity in France, she continued to perform dynamically for 50 years until her untimely death in 1975. Unfortunately, prejudice prevented her talents from being wholly accepted in her own home country, the United States, until 1973.



JOSEPHINE BAKER				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
20	COM	5	13-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 80</b>

**Movement:** Running: 8”/16”  
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
4	<i>Swift:</i> Running +2” (8” total)	1
1	<i>Well-Preserved:</i> Life Support: Longevity (see text)	0

- Perks**
- 10 Contact: Powerful French Politician(s) 13-
  - 2 Fringe Benefit: Beloved By The French People
  - 3 Money: Well Off
  - 3 Reputation: Famous Entertainer (throughout the world) +1/+1d6
  - 6 Reputation: Famous Entertainer (Among Europeans), an additional +2/+2d6 (total of +3/+3d6)

**Talents**

- 3 Perfect Pitch

- Skills**
- 3 Acrobatics 12-
  - 3 Acting 13-
  - 2 AK: Paris 11-
  - 3 Breakfall 13-
  - 7 Conversation 14-
  - 3 Contortionist 12-
  - 3 High Society 13-
  - 4 KS: African American Culture 13-
  - 4 KS: French Culture 13-
  - 4 KS: Men 13-
  - 4 KS: Paris 13-
  - 4 KS: Show Business 13-
  - 7 Oratory 15-
  - 3 Paramedics 12-
  - 7 Persuasion 15-

- 3 PS: Author 12-
- 7 PS: Dancing 15-
- 3 PS: Musician 13-
- 7 Seduction 15-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 1 WF: Pistols
- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Language: Black Slang (fluent conversation; English is Native)
- 3 2) Language: French (Idiomatic, Literate)
- 1 3) Language: German (fluent conversation)
- 1 4) Language: Spanish (fluent conversation)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 126**

**Total Cost: 206**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Feature: stunningly attractive, wealthy, fashionable, and famous black Woman before civil rights movement (Concealable With Effort; Causes Major Reaction)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: *Convoitise Pendant La Vie* (Lust For Life) (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Dangerous Love Of Adventure (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Overpowering Love Of Children (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Passionate Romantic (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: scandalous, 11-
- 10 Social Limitation: Minority (Frequently, Minor)
- 10 Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Minor)
- 26 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 206**

**Background/History:** Born Freda Josephine Carson in the slums of East St. Louis, Missouri, on June 3, 1906, Josephine Baker was the daughter of washer-woman Carrie McDonald and vaudeville drummer Eddie Carson. Carson abandoned the two of them shortly after Josephine's birth, and her mother married a kind but perpetually unemployed man named Arthur Martin. Their family eventually included a son and two more daughters.

Josephine grew up in an era of extreme racial prejudice in the United States during which opportunity for blacks were limited largely to unskilled, manual professions and the entertainment world. Opportunities for black women were even more limited, with most in the workforce employed as domestic servants and nannies. While barely a teenager, Josephine began to earn a living clean-

ing up houses and babysitting for wealthy white families. This proved to be a personally degrading experience for Josephine. Because of her great love of children, an emotion for which she was to become internationally renowned later in life, her employers ordered the young woman "be sure not to kiss the baby." Wounded, she stopped babysitting and got a job working as a waitress at The Old Chauffeur's Club when she was only 14 years old. While waiting tables, she met and had a brief marriage to Willie Wells.

Josephine quickly grew dissatisfied with her poverty-stricken life of drudgery in East St. Louis. As a child, she'd learned from her neighbors many of the dance steps that had passed through America's black urban centers during the 1910s, such as The Mess Around, The Itch, and Trucking. So she took such skills as she had and entered the outermost rung of professional show business that existed at the time — the black vaudeville circuit. She performed around the St. Louis area with the Jones Family Band, playing trombone, performing dance routines, and making comic cross-eyed faces. But she got her first true break when she landed the role of Cupid in a love scene staged by the Dixie Steppers, a traveling troupe performing at the Booker T. Washington Theater in St. Louis. Her winged, aerial entrance was rendered disastrous by two crossed wires, but Josephine's gift for comedy, even when dangling midair in distress, enabled her to pull the performance "out of the hole," winning over the audience... and, more importantly, the Dixie Steppers' manager.

Considered too young, small, and skinny to be in a chorus line, Josephine accepted a job as the dresser of blues singer Clara Smith. She maintained the singer's wardrobe, squeezed Smith into her gauzy, undersized costumes, and tried to reduce the performer's calorie intake. While the job was not exactly glamorous it *did* have advantages. It paid \$9.00 a week (a reasonable sum at the time), enabling Josephine to leave her native St. Louis and travel around the country from New Orleans to Philadelphia with the troupe. It also taught her the discipline required for theater work... and, more significantly, revealed to her the intoxicating thrill of being on stage.

By April 1921 Josephine had risen from a dresser to a comic chorus girl. Demonstrating an extraordinary energy along a desire to please the audience, she enlivened every show with the crazy antics and frantic dancing of an end-of-the-line chorus girl who kept forgetting her steps and messing up the routine. Like many dancers of the time, she dreamed of performing on Broadway. Her

### SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Derringer	-1	-2	1½d6	1d6-1	2	4	

### Armor

None

**Gear:** Pet leopard Chiquita, various appropriate accessories

**Clothing:** See Appearance

interest was piqued when she learned that, for the first time in many years, a black show was on its way to New York. Written by Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyles (who would later create the characters Amos 'n' Andy) with music by Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, *Shuffle Along* would prove to be one of the greatest American musical comedies ever written. Although the script was mired in the stereotypical conventions of nineteenth century minstrelsy, the energetic music and dance of *Shuffle Along* broke with that tradition, choreographing traditional black dance and adapting it into the musical. Both the Charleston and the Black Bottom, popular dances of the time, were introduced to the American public in this manner.

Josephine deliberately sought a part in *Shuffle Along*, but her first pre-Broadway audition was rejected due to her age (she was still only 14). Undeterred, she bought a one-way ticket to New York and one again auditioned — and was once again rejected, but offered a job as dresser for the road company. She accepted, biding her time until one of the chorus girls fell ill. When the opportunity inevitably arrived, she pounced on it. Once again audiences were bowled over by her outrageous, impromptu clowning; every night her inspired, scene-stealing comedy stopped the show. When word got back to Sissle and Blake that they had a star on their hands her future in the musical was assured.

When *Shuffle Along* ended its unprecedented Broadway run of more than 500 performances, the show's main company went on the road. The enterprising young dancer performed in the chorus from August 1922 until the tour's end in the fall of 1923. She was exuberant, audacious, and electrifying. Sissle and Blake worked hard to make Josephine's performance more professional, teaching her pacing and other necessary skills. As long as she was in a rehearsal, their student seemed to master her lessons; but once on stage, her urge to improvise destroyed any carefully-coached routines. Josephine Baker had become the dancer's equivalent of a jazz artist, constantly contriving new solo riffs with her own body.

Nevertheless, when Sissle and Blake opened their new show, *The Chocolate Dandies*, in March 1924, Josephine was given top billing as "the highest paid chorus girl in the world." (She was paid roughly four times as much as the other chorus members.) As "Topsy Anna," a part created especially for her, Josephine dressed first as a minstrel clown with blackface, a bright cotton smock, and oversized comic shoes. The poet e. e. cummings remembered her in *Chocolate Dandies* as a "tall, vital, incomparably fluid nightmare that crossed its eyes and warped its limbs in a purely unearthly manner." Then, in the show's final scene, she discarded her comic persona to appear as an abandoned woman, dressed in a suggestive white satin gown with an alluring slit up the left leg. It was this shocking contrast of opposing images — the absurd, outrageous clown and the sophisticated, sensual woman — which Baker would later use to conquer the hearts and minds of the French public.

Josephine's ticket to Paris came in the form of the young New York society diva Caroline Dudley Reagan, who was putting together a stage show along the lines of *The Chocolate Dandies*. This show, which was later to become the famous *La Revue Nègre*, included some of the greatest available black and minority entertainers of the period: musician and composer Spencer Williams; set designer and sketch artist Miguel Covarrubias; bandleader and pianist Claude Hopkins; choreographer Luis Douglas. After some salary negotiations, Josephine was added to this talented group as lead dancer, singer, and comic. Rehearsals began in New York, then continued on board the cruise ship *Berengaria* during their Atlantic crossing. By the time they reached Paris, opening night at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées was only ten days away. During that brief time period, the revue was transformed from a vaudeville act conceived for a white American public obsessed with black stereotypes into something entirely new, original, and unique. First, the program was "Africanized," with less emphasis on tap-dancing and spirituals and more on Josephine's phenomenal ability to dance erotically. Second, the review's artistic director, Rolf de Maré, found a strong dance partner for Baker named Joe Alex, an emigrant from Martinique who frequented the Le Grand Duc — a black club in the Montmartre quarter of Paris where Harlem entertainer Bricktop sang, expatriates like F. Scott Fitzgerald drank champagne, and poet Langston Hughes briefly made a living washing dishes.

On opening night, the house was packed before the musicians could even take their places. After the orchestra's opening number, the curtain opened onto a Mississippi River dock scene with the company's 25 performers on stage at once, strolling, singing, and dancing. Few Parisians had ever seen so many black people together at once; dressed in their dazzling costumes, the performers appeared to be entirely exotic. The audience was both entranced and excited, murmuring with rapt anticipation. Then Josephine entered the performance in black face and wearing plaid dungarees; her knees bent, feet spread apart, buttocks thrust out, stomach sucked in, cheeks puffed out, eyes crossed. Too many she appeared to be an animal — some saw a kangaroo, others a giraffe, yet others a part-human apparition. Her movements were just as shocking — she shook, writhed like a snake, and contorted her torso, all while emitting strange, high-pitched noises. Before the audience could fully comprehend what this apparition might possibly be, she burst offstage on all fours, buttocks extended into the air, with hands spanking the boards as she scuttled off stage.

Eight more minor performances followed before the spectacular, all-important finale for which all else had been but a prelude. It was set in a Harlem nightclub. Josephine and Joe Alex emerged to perform their *Danse Sauvage* with Josephine nude save for a pink flamingo feather between her limbs, carried upside down by Joe Alex. With the crowd shocked into a hushed silence, he held her briefly around the waste

before swinging her in a slow, deliberate cartwheel to the stage floor where she stood nearly naked like a “female ebony statue.” A scream of applause ripped through the audience and, from that moment onwards, European concepts of beauty were forever and irrevocably changed.

Paris’ reaction to Josephine’s performance can be summed up in a single word: shock. No one had ever witnessed such unbridled sexuality on a stage. Words like *instinct*, *primitive life force*, *savage*, *exotic*, *bestiality*, and that peculiarly loaded term *degenerate* raced through the city. To many it seemed that the fragile skin of civilization had been peeled away, revealing something primitive, vital, and savage that lay beneath. Exactly what this meant was a matter of passionate debate both in Paris’s cafes and her press. For some, Josephine’s *La Revue Nègre* represented an infusion of new energy into a European culture held hostage by classical tradition. For others, it symbolized the disintegration of centuries of European cultural achievement into the darkness of a savage, mindless state. In any case, both the show’s admirers and detractors flooded to the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées to see it, wildly boosting ticket sales and transforming Josephine’s rising star into a blazing comet that swept across the night skies of France.

It wasn’t very long before Josephine received an offer from the venerable Folies-Bergère to be the star of their new show, *La Folie du Jour* (Madness of the Day), whose theme centered on the conflict created when the refined appeal of “culture” meets the seductive allure of “nature.” It was in *La Folie du Jour* that Josephine first introduced a dramatic device that would have European audiences snickering and nudging one another for years. Dressed in nothing but a girdle of drooping bananas, thinly disguised phalluses seemingly waiting to be aroused, Josephine engaged in a “diabolic” Charleston in which the bananas were swung in 180-degree arcs as she openly laughed with the audience. For many, she seemed to be the very incarnation of Eros, the living embodiment of natural, sexual force. “This girl,” wrote dance critic André Rouverge, “has the genius to let the body make fun of itself. Her movements, while making a strikingly original rhythmic structure, go from one extreme to the other.”

In 1926 Josephine opened her own nightclub in Pigalle called Chez Joséphine, which was later moved to the more fashionable Rue François I. She had become a chic, affluent French woman with expensive idiosyncrasies, like parading her pet leopard Chiquita down the elegant Champs-Élysées while it wore a diamond-studded collar. She went on a successful world tour from 1928 to 1930, receiving thousands of love letters from around the globe in the process. It was during this period that Josephine evolved from a mere eccentric chorus girl into a full-fledged entertainer who integrated both songs and dance into her performances. In the process, she elevated herself from being “the highest-paid chorus girl in vaudeville” to being “one of the highest-paid stars in the world.”

By the late 1920s Josephine Baker rivaled Gloria Swanson and Mary Pickford as the most photographed woman in the world, earning more than any other entertainer in Europe. She starred in two movies in the 1930s, *Zou-Zou* and *Princess Tam-Tam*, as well as recording a number of songs for Columbia Records. With her newfound control of her voice, Josephine took the title part in an operetta in 1934, a revival of Offenbach’s *La Créole* at the Théâtre Marigny, opening in December for a successful six-month run. With her newfound wealth, she moved her family from East St. Louis to Les Milandes, an estate in Castelnau-Fayrac before going on a disappointing tour of the United States with the Ziegfeld Follies in 1936. The American press was openly hostile to Josephine (The *New York Times* called her a “Negro wench”), while its audiences rejected the idea of a black woman with so much sophistication and power. She left her native land feeling both betrayed and heartbroken.

The Second World War broke out soon after Josephine’s return to Europe. When Germany occupied Belgium, Josephine became a Red Cross nurse, watching over refugees who fled into France. When Germany finally occupied France itself, she worked for the Resistance as an underground courier, transmitting information “pinned inside her underwear” to Allied military contacts. Because of her considerable fame, the occupying Nazis, who greatly underestimated both her resourcefulness and her dedication to her adopted country, granted Josephine an unusual amount of freedom of movement. Josephine performed a complicated series of Resistance smuggling missions that took her from London to Pau in southwestern France, through Spain and Portugal, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (where she had theatrical bookings), and finally back to Marseilles. She contracted a mysterious, near-fatal illness that kept her in a Casablanca clinic from June 1941 to December 1942. This illness left her quite weak, but not too disabled to entertain troops in North Africa as a sublieutenant in the women’s auxiliary of the Free French forces.

At the conclusion of the war, General Charles de Gaulle awarded Josephine the Croix de Guerre, the Légion d’Honneur, and the Rosette of the Résistance in recognition of her services to France. Josephine returned to her beloved Paris. There she regularly appeared in the Follies and began adopting orphaned babies of all races to form her “Rainbow Tribe,” a living demonstration of racial harmony and equality. If Josephine’s trips to America in the 1930s and 1940s had been disappointing, her treatment by the staff of New York’s illustrious Stork Club in 1951 was both shocking and offensive. Denied service because of the color of her skin, she became engaged in a head-on media battle over the incident with pro-segregation columnist Walter Winchell (a member of the Stork Club), who accused her, oddly enough, of both Communist and Fascist sympathies. Never as popular in America as in Europe, she found herself fighting vicious rumors begun by Winchell as well as institutionalized racism. She responded by launching a personal decade-long crusade for racial equality in the

## JOSEPHINE BAKER PLOT SEEDS

**Paris Spleen:** Another scream in the night; another woman's mutilated body found in the Siene in the morning! With her beloved Paris threatened by a mysterious cult lead by the sinister Thyrsus Baudelaire, Josephine teams up with the PCs to stop the occult-themed killings as the sinister reasoning behind them becomes more apparent.

**Abducted:** With France in turmoil and the Huns marching through Paris, German authorities detain Josephine Baker for unknown reasons at a château in the countryside. Can five brave but fugitive French Resistance PCs break her out before she's shipped back to the Fatherland for "safe-keeping?"

**The Return:** For twenty years controversial singer Josephine Baker, the distant descendent of one of Josephine Baker's adopted children, has not visited her highly segregated home planet of Europa Nova. A celebrity throughout the rest of the Terran Empire, she plans on returning to her home to perform a benefit concert for the orphaned children of the world's non-Human underclass. Can the PCs keep her alive and themselves out of jail?

## JOSEPHINE BAKER: THE CRITICS SPEAK

"On stage, the old magical transformation took place. She burst into frenetic action. She seemed to move every part of her body in a different direction at once. She clowning outrageously, unable to stop herself. She crossed her eyes. Her feet tripped over each other while the other girls were kicking neatly in step. The effect of her performance was to mock the very idea of a chorus line, a row of people mechanically repeating the same gestures. The chorus line hated her. They had a simple term for what she was doing: scene stealing. But audiences loved her." — *Author Phyllis Rose*

"She was an unforgettable female ebony statue. A scream of salutation spread through the theater. Whatever happened next was unimportant. The two specific elements had been established and were unforgettable — her magnificent dark body, a new model that to the French proved for the first time that black was beautiful, and the acute response of the white masculine public in the capital of hedonism of all Europe — Paris." — *American Journalist Janet Flanner*

"There seemed to emanate from her violently shuddering body, her bold dislocations, her springing movements a gushing stream of rhythm. It was she who led the spellbound drummer and the fascinated saxophonist in the harsh rhythm of the 'blues.' It was as though the jazz, catching on the wing the vibrations of this body, was interpreting word by word its fantastic monologue. The music is born from the dance, and what a dance! The gyrations of this cynical yet merry mountebank, the good-natured grin on her large mouth, suddenly give way to visions from which good humor is entirely absent. In the short *pas de deux* of the savages, which came as the finale of the Revue Nègre, there was a wild splendor and magnificent animality. Certain of Miss Baker's poses, back arched, haunches protruding, arms entwined and uplifted in a phallic symbol, had the compelling potency of the finest examples of Negro sculpture. The plastic sense of a race of sculptors came to life and the frenzy of African Eros swept over the audience. It was no longer a grotesque dancing girl that stood before them, but the black Venus that haunted Baudelaire." — *French dance critic Andre Levinson*

United States, refusing to entertain in any club or theater that was not fully integrated. This resulted in the breaking the color barrier at many establishments. Her efforts culminated in 1963 when she spoke at the now famous March on Washington at the side of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Returning to France, Josephine ran into considerable financial hardship in 1969, resulting in an eviction from her estate in Castelnau-Fayrac. Fellow American expatriate Princess Grace of Monaco and her husband Prince Rainier gifted Josephine, as well as her large adopted family, with a villa inside their tiny, exclusive country. The Rainiers then assisted her financially, enabling the production of the stage spectacle *Joséphine*, a medley of routines from her career, in 1975. Josephine, now age 69, had over a dozen costume changes during

the performance, which received some of the best reviews of her career. With tears streaming down from sequined eyelids, she "stole the show" one last time, quietly dying in her sleep of a stroke after fourteen successful performances of *Joséphine* on April 12, 1975.

**Personality/Motivation:** Josephine Baker's major motivations changed throughout her life depending on the circumstances she found herself in. As a very young woman, she undertook an intelligent, consistent series of steps to promote her dancing career, thereby escaping the discriminatory social and economic conditions that most black Americans of the time found themselves locked into. Thus, in her teenage years, Josephine is motivated by a desire for freedom, financial success, and self-fulfillment.

Having achieved these goals with the success of *La Revue Nègre*, Josephine set out to change European conceptions of physical beauty, style, and aesthetic merit. During this period Josephine's motivations can be characterized as largely artistic, although she's also animated, at least to a certain extent, by that gregariously licentious attitude that typified Paris in the Roaring Twenties.

During World War II, Josephine's motivated both by feelings of patriotic duty toward her adopted country as well as by a horrifying certainty that Nazi Germany is the embodiment of nearly everything she'd spent her entire life working against. After the war, Josephine raised her "Rainbow Tribe," an adopted family of war-orphaned children, to demonstrate the inherent racial equality of all human beings. In this, her motivations are entirely humanitarian.

At the very end of her days, Josephine returned to America amid critical acclaim as well as widespread public acceptance, completing a life cycle in which she elevated herself through the entertainment world from an "American untouchable" to an international symbol of glamour, beauty, and accomplishment. In a small way, one can view Josephine Baker's life as a symbol of the black experience in America during the twentieth century — a slow, hard-fought climb to respectability punctuated by small setbacks as well as periods of startling success.

Josephine is a sensualist, and her *convoytise pendant la vie* (lust for life) is evident in everything she does. She craves adventure for adventure's sake, whether it's erotic, artistic, social, or any other kind. She's extremely witty, disarmingly intelligent, and surprisingly well educated considering the barriers she had to overcome. She's also extremely amusing in everyday life, even though a great deal of her public comic appeal derives from the outstanding "slapstick" dance routines she has created.

**Quote:** "Surely the day will come when color means nothing more than the skin tone, when religion is seen uniquely as a way to speak one's soul, when birth places have the weight of a throw of the dice and all men are born free, when understanding breeds love and brotherhood."

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*Intimate Portrait: Josephine Baker*, 1998  
 Autobiographies  
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*Voyages et Aventures de Joséphine Baker* (Voyages and Adventures of Josephine Baker), 1931  
*Une Vie de Toutes Couleurs* (A Life of All Colors), 1935  
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*Great*, 1996  
*Etoiles De La Chanson* (Stars Of The Song), 1996  
*Banana Girl*, 1996  
*J'ai Deux Amours: Mon Pays Et Paris* (I have Two Loves: My Country And Paris), 1996  
*Portrait Of*, 1997  
*L'Étoile De Folies*  
*Shepherdess* (The Star Of Folies Shepherdess), 1997  
*J'ai Deux Amours* (I have Two Loves), 1997  
*C'Est Vous* (It Is You), 1998  
*Le Meilleur De* (The Best Of), 1998  
*Gold Collection*, 1998  
*Selections Of Josephine Baker*, 1998  
*Etoiles De La Chanson* (Stars Of The Song), 1999  
*Complete Record Works 1926-1927*, 1999  
*Josephine Baker*, 1999  
*Paris En Chansons* (Paris In Songs), 1999  
*Cocktail Hour: Josephine Baker*, 2000

**Powers/Tactics:** Josephine Baker abhorred violence (though this writeup gives her an ivory handled .38 Derringer concealed on her person as a weapon of last resort). She'd rather engage in a battle of words or wits than in an actual fight — because in a battle of wits with Josephine Baker, most men find themselves to be suddenly disarmed!

Josephine Baker remained attractive and vital throughout her entire life thanks to a lifetime of daily exercise combined with an excess of natural beauty and energy. To simulate this,

she has Life Support (Longevity) even though the rate at which she ages doesn't change. Thus, a Josephine encountered at age 65 will be in much the same physical condition as one encountered at age 25, although her physical appearance will show subtle signs of aging.

**Campaign Use:** Josephine Baker is one of history's great beauties, compared by those who know her to Cleopatra, and the GM should treat her this way. Her introduction into a scenario should generate feelings of lust, competitiveness, and wonder in the male characters, while provoking strong feelings of jealousy in the females. Of course, once the characters become more familiar with her, they discover there's a lot more to Josephine than her looks. She's an engaging, well-rounded, and competent individual with a wide variety of abilities.

Since she was considered one of the symbols of a mysteriously interesting (solving a murder, stopping a mysterious villain...), Josephine's adventurous nature will practically compel her to interject herself into the middle of it. When in Europe, the PCs might come into contact with her at a party for the cosmopolitan, socially well-connected Parisian elite. If one of them is incredibly lucky, he might end up with a date for the evening.

In a campaign set during World War II (such as most *Golden Age Champions* games), Josephine might be encountered working as an agent of the French Resistance. She took full advantage of the freedom of movement her fame afforded her even among the racist Nazis, smuggling intelligence reports out of the country in her sheet music. She's also known to have used her considerable charms to convince foreign consulates to process visas for her "close friends," some of whom were intelligence operatives. Josephine was extremely serious about her clandestine work for the Resistance, so the characters could easily encounter her as an Allied contact in occupied Europe.

A far grittier fictional Baker could work as an entertainer on the Strip in Hudson City, where she'd be a useful source of information or a love interest for a vigilante PCs in *Dark Champions* games. In a *Star Hero* campaign Baker could become a blues singer who, while working in an interstellar cruise ship's lounge, saw something she shouldn't have. Now she's on the run and desperately needs the PCs' protection. In a *Fantasy Hero* game, Baker becomes an attractive, alluring, highly-skilled female bard, traveling from tavern to tavern and court to court earning fame and riches, and no doubt having a few adventures along the way. An Urban Fantasy Hero Baker could find herself in the same boat when she ends up playing at *that* nightclub. You know, the one in Chicago where all the warlocks and lycanthropes like to go drinking....

**Appearance:** Josephine Baker is a transfixing, exotic, yet somehow extremely comedic black woman who exudes an athletic, easy confidence in even her most casual movements. She's considered by many to be one history's great beauties, although about her own appearance she once commented "[Am I] beautiful? It's all a question of luck. I was born with good legs. As for the rest.... beautiful, no. Amusing, yes." Very few men in Paris agree with this assessment. Baker has large, riveting eyes (which she enjoys crossing for comic effect), high cheekbones, and a winning, easy smile.

Whether she's performing or socializing, Josephine Baker's personal presence is quite formidable. If she resembles some sort of bizarre, frenzied wild animal on stage, in the street she's a model of civilized Parisian cool, wearing designer Paul Poiret's custom-made dresses with her will-oiled hair hugging her skull. Often escorted by artist Paul Colin, who sketches her in his studio as frequently as possible, Josephine is a noteworthy celebrity who's constantly invited to the best parties in Paris. In fact, the French consider her so attractive that there are Josephine Baker dolls, costumes, perfumes, and even a hairdo for women called Bakerfix

## JOSEPHINE BAKER QUOTATIONS

"The most sensational woman anybody ever saw, or ever will." — *Ernest Hemingway*

"I love performing. I shall perform until the day I die." — *Josephine Baker*

"She was the little girl on the end. You couldn't forget her once you'd noticed her, and you couldn't escape noticing her. She was beautiful but it was never her beauty that attracted your eyes. In those days her brown body was disguised by an ordinary chorus costume. She had a trick of letting her knees fold under her, eccentric wise. And her eyes, just at the crucial moment when the music reached the climactic "he's just wild about, cannot live without, he's just wild about me" [from "I'm Just Wild About Harry"], her eyes crossed" — *Dance Magazine*

"She enters through a dense electric twilight, walking backwards on hands and feet, legs and arms stiff, down a huge jungle tree — as a creature neither infrahuman nor superhuman but somehow both; a mysterious unkillable Something, equally nonprimitive and uncivilized, or beyond time in the sense that emotion is beyond arithmetic." — *e.e. cummings*

# RODRIGO BORGIA

## POPE ALEXANDER VI



“The latter [popes] are forgiven nothing because everything is expected from them, wherefore the vices lightly passed over in a Louis XIV become most offensive and scandalous in Alexander VI.”

—De Maistre, *Du Pape*

Pope Alexander VI has become an almost mythical historical character with countless legends attached to his name. He was a villain of the grandest sort — an ingenious perverted criminal mastermind who ascended to the most powerful position in Renaissance Europe through a combination of bribery, nepotism, and murder. His exploits (along with those of his son Cesare) served as an inspiration to Nicolo Machiavelli when he composed his renowned work *The Prince* (1513). Modern historians generally agree that during Alexander VI's pontificate the Catholic Church was brought to the lowest level of degradation in its 2,000-year history... and it was certainly clear to all of fifteenth century Italy that Rodrigo regarded the papacy entirely as an instrument of his family's criminal schemes, giving almost no thought to the position's spiritual aspects. Strangely enough, he was also one of history's great patrons of the arts, for it was during this same corrupt papacy that a new architectural era was initiated in Rome with the coming of the builder/artist Bramante. In addition, the great Renaissance painters Raphael, Michelangelo, and Pinturicchio all worked on various projects for Alexander VI. It's a curious contrast in human nature that a man so firmly steeped in greed, vice, and crime could take pleasure in the most exquisite works of art his civilization could produce.

### RODRIGO BORGIA (POPE ALEXANDER VI)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5 /DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll: 14-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	15	14-	Presence Attack: 5d6
16	COM	3	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	5		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 103</b>

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"  
Swimming: 4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Strong Will:</i> Mental Defense (10 points)	0
6	<i>Hardy:</i> +2" Running, +2" Swimming	2
30	<i>Lucky Bastard:</i> Luck 6d6	0

#### Perks

6	Contact: Emperor Maximilian of Holy Roman Empire (Austria) 8-
6	Contact: King Ferdinand of Spain 8-
6	Contact: King Charles VIII of France 8-
10	Fringe Benefit: Head of Catholic Church
10	Fringe Benefit: Head of Papal States
15	Money: Filthy Rich
15	Reputation: the Pope (Western Europe) 14-, +5/+5d6

#### Talents

5	Eidetic Memory
5	<i>Blasé:</i> +5 Resistance to Oratory
5	<i>Hard Bargainer:</i> +5 Resistance to Trading
5	<i>Immovable:</i> +5 Resistance to Persuasion
5	<i>Rulesmonger:</i> +5 Resistance to Bureaucratics

#### Skills

6	+2 with Conversation, Persuasion, and Seduction
3	Acting 14-
7	Bribery 16-
5	Bureaucratics 15-
3	Concealment 14-
3	Conversation 14-
3	Forgery 14-
3	Gambling 14-
3	High Society 14-
3	AK: Italy 14-

## GREAT ROMAN BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED UNDER ALEXANDER VI

1) The Tempietto (designed by Bramante for Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain)

2) Palace of the Cancellaria (built by Cardinal Riario)

3) Santa Maria dell' Anima (for Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian by his ambassador)

4) Trinita dei Monti (by the French Cardinal Briconnet)

5) Santa Maria Maggiore (by Alexander VI using some of the first gold Columbus brought back from the New World)

7) The Appartamento Borgia in the Vatican (designed by Pinturicchio for the Borgia family)

- 3 CK: Rome 14-
- 3 KS: Cardinals 14-
- 3 KS: Poison 14-
- 3 Oratory 14-
- 3 Persuasion 14-
- 2 PS: Priest 11-
- 3 PS: Accountant 14-
- 3 PS: Politician 14-
- 3 Riding 12-
- 3 Seduction 14-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 3 Streetwise 14-
- 3 Tactics 14-
- 5 Trading 15-
- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Arabic (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native)
- 1 2) Italian (fluent conversation)
- 1 3) French (fluent conversation)
- 1 4) Latin (fluent conversation)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 228**

**Total Cost: 331**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Age: 40 (he's actually over 60, but is unnaturally healthy)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Paranoid Egomaniac (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy And Lustful (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Very Protective Of Family (Common, Strong)
- 20 Reputation: murderous, scheming, amoral manipulator 14- (Extreme)
- 15 Social Limitation: the Pope 8- (Occasionally, Severe)
- 171 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 331**

**Background/History:** Pope Alexander VI was born Rodrigo Borgia in 1431 near Valencia, Spain. His uncle, Alfonso de Borgia, became Pope Callixtus III when he assumed the throne of Saint Peter in 1455. Callixtus, 77 and stricken with gout, was a "safe" compromise candidate chosen by two competing factions of cardinals within the Church. What serious harm, they probably thought, could a sick old man possibly do in the few years left to him? The answer: if he's a Borgia, plenty.

As soon as he became Pope, Callixtus III immediately began to organize a "crusade" to liberate Christian Constantinople from the heathen Turks. To pay for this project, he began to sell off various "minor" household Vatican items (solid gold artwork, priceless ancient books...) before offering indulgences, cardinalities, annulments, and grants of papal territories in exchange for money. He followed this up by imposing extra taxes on the population of the Papal States (the church's private "nation" in central Italy). Yet for some strange reason his "crusade" somehow never seemed to get off the ground.

Meanwhile Rodrigo, whom Callixtus III had made a cardinal at the age of 25 (1456) and then promoted to vice-chancellor of the Holy See (1457), was also busy amassing enormous wealth. He lived an openly promiscuous life, fathering at least seven children while still a cardinal. Of the many mistresses he had throughout his life, the one for whom his passion proved greatest was Vannozza de Cattani (born 1442) — a widower of three successive husbands all of whom died under mysterious circumstances. She bore him four children whom he publicly acknowledged as his own: the unlucky Giovanni (duke of Gandia; born 1474); the infamous Cesare (born 1476); the beautiful Lucrezia (born 1480); and the unremarkable Goffredo (born 1481). Things got so out of hand at one point that Pius II, who eventually succeeded Callixtus III, had to warn the young cardinal to refrain from his practice of participating in orgies. It was, as Pius expressed it, "unseemly."

By the time he died, Callixtus's heavy-handed methods of raising money, his blatant nepotism, and his racist pronouncements against European Jews had created opposition to his papacy in France, Germany, and even his own native Spain. As soon as his body was cold, the Italians turned on all of Callixtus's Spanish generals, administrators, and cronies (who fled Rome in terror) — all, that is, except for his clever nephew, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who seemingly avoided the wrath of the populace through sheer charisma. He was to enjoy the support (or at least tolerance) of four different Popes over his 34-year career of profitable graft as vice-chancellor before taking a stab at the Throne of Saint Peter in 1492. According to Church historians, in no previous or subsequent election of a pope have such immense sums of money been spent on bribery; the bargaining was fierce, and when the votes were finally counted, his victory hinged on the purchase of the vote of a senile 96 year-old cardinal who, apparently, wasn't too crazy to understand the value of cold hard cash. At age 61 Rodrigo Borgia was reborn as Pope Alexander VI, leader of the largest organized church in the entire world.

The first thing Alexander VI did as pope was eliminate simony — which was, of course, the very means by which he had purchased the papacy in the first place. That unseemly matter out of the way, Alexander VI was free to concentrate his efforts on his principal interests: the acquisition of gold, the pursuit of women, and the promotion of his family. He made his son Cesare, then only eighteen, a cardinal, along with the older brother of his 15-year-old mistress Alessandra Farnese. He then arranged in rapid succession three profitable marriages for his teenage daughter Lucrezia, annulling the first to Giovanni Sforza (who had money, but no title) when it was no longer useful. With the help of his ever-ruthless son Cesare he "disposed" of the second husband Prince Alfonso of Aragon (title, but no money), conveniently making Lucrezia a widow. She finally settled down with the Prince of Ferrara, Alfonso d'Este (title *and* money, at last)

— a strong silent type whose interests included artillery, music, and brothels. The prince proved far too tough for her father and brother to bump off, so she remained happily married to him for the rest of her life... except for a fling with the poet Pietro Bembo, who wisely hoofed it out of Ferrara before her husband could get his hands on him.

With “murder brothers-in-law” crossed off his “to do” list, Cesare occupied himself with running the papacy’s military forces as captain-general — a job he received after his half-brother Juan was mysteriously assassinated, freeing up the position (being a cardinal didn’t seem to have kept Cesare from also taking this job). Alexander VI was always keenly interested in expanding his political influence. He dreamed of creating a new central Italian kingdom that would rival Naples, Florence, Milan, and Venice, with his family as its freshly-minted royalty. The Pope joined his son in prosecuting a successful war to subdue the rebellious cities in Romagna, a semi-autonomous nation that bordered the Papal States. Cesare proved to be an immensely capable (if particularly ruthless and amoral) general, statesman, and *condottiere* (a sort of state-sanctioned mercenary captain). In 1502 he added Piombino, Elba, Camerino, and the duchy of Urbino to his father’s growing empire through a combination of force, guile, and treachery.

All of this gave the Pope little time for religious matters. Lucrezia was often left officially in charge of running the entire Catholic Church while Alexander VI and Cesare were otherwise occupied — which generally meant they were busily experimenting with the creation of what would now be called a “corrupt police state.” Even as the size of their private empire swelled, the condition of Rome began to deteriorate rapidly. The city swarmed with assassins, Spanish adventurers, whores, and informers. Politically motivated murder and robbery were committed with near impunity, while heretics, Jews, and Muslims were admitted into the city only upon payment of bribes. The Pope himself quickly cast aside all show of decorum and lived a nearly secular life. He chased young women, danced with prostitutes, acted in stage plays, and hosted magnificent orgies. One of his favorite drinking companions was Jem, the brother of the Ottoman Sultan, who’d been detained as a “hostage” of the Church. Their prowls through Rome’s cathouses were the stuff of legend.

In spite of all of these demanding extracurricular activities, Alexander VI still found time to involve himself in a series of self-serving political intrigues that contributed to the misery of the Italian people. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Italian peninsula consisted of numerous tiny, constantly bickering nations such as Naples, Genoa, and Venice — as well as a number of city-states, independent baronies, and papal holdings. These political entities were, in turn, controlled by competing “great” families (of which the Borgias were but one) that constantly fought amongst themselves for position across national borders. This chaotic, near-medieval situation left the Ital-



ians ripe for conquest and exploitation by the newly emerging nations of Spain and France, both of which had recently been unified under strong monarchies. By constantly playing one side off against another, Alexander VI embroiled both the Church and the Papal States in a series of military conflicts involving France, Spain, Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice. Always ready to seize any opportunity to promote himself and his family, he carried on a constant double policy by temporar-

## SOME OF THE EVIL CESARE BORGIA HATH DONE

- 1) Conquered the small nation of Romagna with an unprovoked attack in February 1500. He dragged the Lady of Romagna, Caterina Sforza, through the streets of Rome in golden chains.
- 2) Cut off the tongue and hand of a drunken reveler for insulting him.
- 3) Sentenced a Venetian who had written a pamphlet criticizing him to drowning in the Tiber.
- 4) Slept with one brother's wife, then stabbed another brother seven times before slitting his throat and dumping his body in the Tiber.
- 5) Strangled his brother-in-law as he was recovering from wounds incurred during an earlier attempt on his life by Cesare's henchmen.
- 6) Posed as a model for paintings of Jesus Christ.

ily allying with whatever faction, house, or nation seemed strongest at any given moment. This complicated, self-centered scheming eventually resulted in France's short-lived conquest of the entire peninsula in a 1495 campaign which, while producing no long term material gain for anyone involved, left the land and its people ravaged by war.

The personal lives of the Borgias were no less turbulent, marked as they were by violent episodes (usually, but not always, Cesare's), chaotic love affairs (usually, but not always, Lucrezia's), and nearly constant financial greed (always Alexander VI's). Soap opera-like drama was commonplace since the Pope liked to forge alliances by marrying his volatile children into various great houses. For instance, he linked his power to that of Naples by marrying Lucrezia to Prince Alfonso of Aragon, an important principality within that nation. Then, when that alliance wasn't important anymore he had Cesare first mug, then strangle his son-in-law. (The Pope's master of ceremonies, Burchard, recorded in his diary "Since Don Alfonso refused to die of his wounds, he was strangled in his bed.") Earlier he'd attempted to solidify his position with the kingdom of Aragon and Naples by marrying his younger son, Goffredo, to Sancia of Aragon — who, unfortunately, cheated on her young husband with both of his older brothers, Cesare and Giovanni. Things became even more complicated when a jealous Cesare sent Giovanni floating down the Tiber with a slit throat after an unfortunate family dinner in 1493.

It's not that every action taken by Alexander VI during his time as pope was *completely* self-serving... but it seemed difficult for him to do anything without putting a personal slant on it. For example, in 1493 he drew a line of demarcation between Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence in the New World. This was an important achievement that prevented a potentially disastrous world war between two of the superpowers of the day. But even this far-reaching political act had to be modified in 1494 — in its original form the decree greatly favored his native Spain. He also had the privilege of being the pontiff during the Jubilee year of 1500, a magnificent demonstration of the depth and universality of the Catholic faith in which thousands of devout tourists flocked to Rome. The capacity of the Eternal City to house and feed such a large number of visitors from throughout Europe was taxed to the utmost — but Alexander VI spared no expense to provide for the best possible security and comfort for these pilgrims. This made sense because he conducted a brisk business personally selling indulgences to wealthy but guilt-ridden pilgrims during the festival, infusing Cesare's war chest with enough funds to launch a military conquest of the cities of Camerino and Urbino.

Shortly after the eleventh anniversary of his "acquisition" of the papacy in August 1503, Alexander VI and Cesare dined with their mutual enemy Cardinal Adrian Corneto in the latter's villa outside of Rome. Intending to make Cor-

## RODRIGO BORGIA QUOTATIONS

"Once he became Pope Alexander VI, Vatican parties, already wild, grew wilder. They were costly, but he could afford the lifestyle of a Renaissance prince; as vice chancellor of the Roman Church, he had amassed enormous wealth. As guests approached the papal palace, they were excited by the spectacle of living statues: naked, gilded young men and women in erotic poses. Flags bore the Borgia arms, which, appropriately, portrayed a red bull rampant on a field of gold. Every fete had a theme. One, known to Romans as the Ballet of the Chestnuts, was held on October 30, 1501. The indefatigable Burchard describes it in his *Diarium*. After the banquet dishes had been cleared away, the city's fifty most beautiful prostitutes danced with the guests, "first clothed, then naked." The dancing over, the "ballet" began, with the Pope and two of his children in the best seats. Candelabra were set up on the floor, scattered among them were chestnuts, "which," Burchard writes, "the courtesans had to pick up, crawling between the candles." Then the serious sex started...[.] — William Manchester, *A World Lit Only by Fire*

"So died Pope Alexander, at the height of glory and prosperity.... There was in him, and in full measure, all vices both of flesh and spirit.... There was in him no religion, no keeping of his word. He promised all things liberally, but bound himself to nothing that was not useful to himself. He had no care for justice, since in his days Rome was a den of thieves and murderers. Nevertheless, his sins meeting with no punishment in this world, he was to the last of his days most prosperous. In one word, he was more evil and more lucky than, perhaps, any other pope for many ages before." — Francesco Guicciardini, *Chambelain and Borgia cronyn*

"The Papal Palace had [sic] literally become a house of prostitution where harlots sit upon the throne of Solomon and signal to the passerby. Whoever can pay enters and does what he wishes." — Friar Girolamo Savonarola, *shortly before Alexander VI condemned him as a heretic and had him publicly castrated, hanged, and finally burned in the Plaza Della Signoria*

neto their next victim, Alexander VI poisoned his wine using sleight of hand. Unfortunately for the Pope, the eighty-two-year-old Cardinal was also a master of intrigue — he switched the glasses when the Borgias weren't looking. The unsuspecting Alexander VI and Cesare both drank freely from their own poison. Within a few days Cesare recovered, but his father grew weak and died at the age of 77... which, for most people, would be the end of the story. Then again, very few of us (thankfully) are Borgias.

Burchard (Alexander VI's loyal servant and an inveterate diarist) reported that while the pope was still on his deathbed, Cesare's men broke into the Vatican and made off with all the treasure they could carry. As soon as Alexander VI died, his servants immediately plundered his bedroom. After Burchard had prepared the

body, palace guards drove off the priests that were guarding the remains of the dead pope from possible desecration at the hands of the wildly celebrating Roman populace (the Borgias by this point weren't very popular). Burchard then had the body moved to a small chapel for protection, where it remained unattended, slowly rotting in the humid August weather then gripping Rome. At the funeral, the attending priests once again took on the palace guards, turning the entire event into a brawl of epic proportions. When they were finished fighting, the assembled dignitaries realized the coffin was too short for Alexander VI's body, so they removed his miter before forcing the corpse into shape with a few blows from a sledgehammer.

**Personality/Motivation:** Greed. Lust. Revenge for slights real or imagined. Paranoia. Hypocrisy. Megalomania. Ego mania. Sociopathic behavior. Natural love of family. Unnatural love of family. These are all components of Alexander VI's behavior and, when they're combined with heavy doses of both patience and brilliance, make for the sort of villain who just might take over the world... or, at the very least, make the world a less pleasant place for you to live in. His goals are quite simple: to directly control as much territory as possible, to gather as much wealth as is feasible from any available source, to sleep with as many young women as imaginable, and whenever possible to promote his own family at the expense of all others. Alexander VI proved to be unbending in his devotion to these goals.

An extremely charming man, Rodrigo is well mannered, multilingual, exceptionally convincing, and utterly self-serving. The Venetian ambassador Giustiniani commented that "in him were combined rare prudence and vigilance, mature reflection, marvelous powers of persuasion, skill and capacity for the conduct of the most difficult affairs." His love of art, especially architecture, was the stuff of legend — during his papacy some of the most exquisite buildings ever constructed sprung up in Rome. He's both worldly and uniquely open-minded, possessing none of the prejudices common to Western Europeans of his time. This is probably because he wasn't a religious man... despite, of course, being Pope.

**Quote:** "We resolve to amend our life and reform the Church. We renounce all nepotism. We will begin the reform with ourselves and so proceed through all levels of the Church till the whole work is accomplished."

**Powers/Tactics:** Alexander VI is the leader of the largest organized religion in the world, commanding millions of adherents. His private fortune could buy and sell most European kings several times over. His personal army consists of ten thousand battle-hardened mercenaries led by his son Cesare, one of the most skilled soldiers alive. He's also an expert poisoner, a practiced tactician, a master politician, and a first-rate dip-

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lomat. If that wasn't bad enough, things always seem to go right for Rodrigo Borgia. Perhaps God actually is on his side.

**Campaign Use:** Pope Alexander VI's well-documented activities could be the blueprint for many of the great villainous masterminds of fiction. Only the most motivated, careful, intelligent, self-serving, and immoral of men could ever hope to match his accomplishments. In nearly any game setting, Alexander VI's character sheet could be used almost "as is" for any ultra-wealthy mob boss, evil religious leader, or third-world dictator (or some combination of all three... like Alexander VI) who works solely behind the scenes, using others as his chess pieces.

Whether you view a man like Rodrigo Borgia as incredibly capable, inexcusably sinister, or a great deal of both, there can be no doubt that the menacing head of a large, socially entrenched, organized religion makes a fantastic villain in any genre. The church or faith he heads need not itself be completely wicked or without virtue; it may actually be better for the villain if it isn't. One needs look no further than the DC Comics character Brother Blood to find a master scoundrel who viciously attacks heroes on a Monday only to hide behind his robes on a Tuesday, accusing them of religious bigotry when they try to respond.

Rodrigo doesn't need to be changed to become a serious problem to characters in a *Champions* game. As the head of a major religion he can easily have dozens of superpowered NPCs working for him, many ready to die for the faith if need be. Rodrigo Borgia doesn't have to be the head of the Catholic Church, either; a completely imaginary yet influential new religion will serve just as well (while likely avoiding offending anyone in the process). Perhaps "The Pope" isn't a religious figure at all, but instead a powerful organized crime figure who uses religious imagery as part of his motif. This would be particularly appropri-

## RODRIGO BORGIA PLOT SEEDS

**On A Mission From God:** France's king hasn't been kicking down the holy tithe ducats lately, so Pope Alexander VI sends the roguish PCs on special "fact-finding" mission to Paris. To make matters easier he anoints every one of them a bishop before they leave. Can the PCs shake enough cash out of Louis XII to make the Pope happy, or will they have to use sterner methods?

**Persecuted:** A new power has risen within the Galactic Church of the Creator. In a surprise move Precentor Rodrigo Alexander Borgia has been crowned the first Mega-Archimandrite, spiritual leader of the Empire and absolute ruler of the church. His opening act is to call for the abolition of all other religions in the Terran Empire, and the Empress is considering the idea. Can the PCs help the inhabitants of New Canaan and Kundun defend themselves both militarily and politically before it's too late?

### Hudson City Confidential:

A new crime family has arisen in the Pearl City and everybody, criminal and vigilante alike, is having a hard time figuring out what to do about them. The Borgia family is ruthless, capable, violent, and almost untouchable: every one of them is a priest or minister of some sort. Renegade calls his occasional allies the PCs together to discuss strategy.

ate in a *Dark Champions* campaign — Hudson City has many such madmen — but it is also suitable to a normal Champions campaign. For example, the character of *Slun* (“The Bishop”) from *Champions Worldwide* is a feared Russian organized crime figure who uses religious symbols, motifs, and garb as part of his personal “style.”

Rodrigo would be an even more frightening figure in a *Fantasy Hero* campaign, where he could literally command massive armies, vast estates, and millions of followers. In such a setting his intelligence network of spies and assassins should blanket the world, making it difficult for the PCs to avoid his gaze. And of course, even if he can’t cast spells himself, he’ll have powerful wizards and priests at his beck and call.

In a *Star Hero* campaign set in the universe of the Terran Empire, Rodrigo could be the supreme religious leader of the Universal Church of the Creator. His spies, ships, and soldier’s reach would extend over hundreds of star systems throughout human space. In other settings, just change this to an appropriate religion and let him go right on scheming. Perhaps there’s a commercially vital solar system out there with multiple inhabited planets and moons that serve as analogues for the political entities of Renaissance Italy.

Transporting the infamous Borgia Pope into a *Pulp Hero* or *Ninja Hero* campaign, with their cinematic flair and four-colored action, is considerably harder but not impossible. As the secret leader of a cult of would-be world conquerors, Rodrigo could use his intelligence, charisma, ruthlessness, and organizational abilities to infiltrate *actual* religious institutions, corrupting them and bending them to his dark will.

**Appearance:** As a young man, Rodrigo was described as tall, handsome, and charming by his contemporaries. They praised his imposing, athletic figure, his cheerful character, persuasive manners, brilliant conversational abilities, and his intimate mastery of the habits of polite society. In his letters, papal secretary Sigismondo de Conti speaks of him as a large, robust man, with a sharp gaze, great amiability, and “wonderful skill in money matters.” Others admired his florid complexion, dark eyes, and full mouth — sensual hallmarks which have come to be associated with members of the Borgia family (along with greed, violence, and poisonings). By the time he became the pope, however, Rodrigo — who was already in his early sixties — seems to have lost most of his physical charms. The two verifiably accurate portraits of him that still exist (a Papal State coin and a Vatican oil painting) depict a bald, corpulent man with just the hint of a knowing smile upon his broad face.

# LORD BYRON



“Brave men are all vertebrates; they have their softness on the surface and their toughness in the middle.”

— Lord Byron, *Don Juan*

Byron was the Romantic Movement’s most flamboyant figure, a revolutionary spirit who fell into writing because he didn’t have the temperament for politics... and who gave critics plenty to discuss outside of his poetry. His own epic story included a broken marriage, an alleged affair with his half-sister, a flight to the Mediterranean and the Near East, bisexual promiscuity, involvement in the Greek revolution, and a gruesome and untimely death. He created his own cult of personality — the concept of the “Byronic hero” as a sort of outlaw-cavalier, a defiant, misunderstood, melancholy young man who broods constantly on some mysterious, unforgivable sin in his past. Byron’s influence on European poetry, music, fiction, opera, and painting has been immense, although the poet was widely condemned on moral grounds by his contemporaries.

## LORD GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON, THE 6<sup>TH</sup> LORD BYRON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 151.6kg; 2½d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
24	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 43</b>

**Movement:** Running: 5”/10”  
Swimming: 6”/12”

### Cost Powers

*Martial Art: Boxing*

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Cross	+0	+2	4½d6 Strike
3	Jab	+2	+1	2½D6 Strike
-2	<i>Clubfoot:</i> Running -1” (5” total)			

### Perks

- 5 Fringe Benefit: Member of the Aristocracy/  
Higher Nobility
- 5 Money: Well Off
- 2 Reputation (European Intellectuals) 8-,  
+2/+2d6

### Skills

- 5 +1 HTH
- 2 +1 OCV with Flintlock Pistols
- 3 +1 with Conversation, Persuasion, and  
Seduction
- 5 Animal Handler (Birds, Canines, Equines,  
Felines, Reptiles & Amphibians) 8-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 7 High Society 14-
- 3 Oratory 12-
- 3 Persuasion 12-
- 3 PS: Politician 12-
- 7 Seduction 14-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 2 WF: Blades, Flintlocks



indulged in a round of debauchery and undue generosity in London that put him deeply into debt — a pattern that would recur throughout his life. In the summer of 1806 he returned to Southwell, where he supervised the completion, private printing, and exclusive circulation of his early poems in a volume with the title *Fugitive Pieces*. The following June his first commercially published collection, *Hours Of Idleness*, appeared — only to be savagely (although not entirely unfairly) attacked by the literary critic of the well respected *Edinburgh Review*. Enraged, Byron responded with the satirical *English Bards And Scottish Reviewers*, his first major work.

Returning to Trinity later that year, Byron found that, though he was having little trouble with his clubfoot, the effects of his London intemperance were taking their toll — his 5'8" frame was carrying more than two hundred pounds. Adopting a vigorous regiment of exercise with a vastly restricted diet, he reduced himself to a trim 140 pounds within a few months. This was a forewarning of yet another pattern that would recur throughout the poet's life: a distinct tendency toward self-indulgent gluttony followed by a quick, severe period of Spartan self-regulation. At Trinity he formed a close friendship with John Hobhouse, who stirred his interest in liberal, populist ideals. Together they were part of a close circle of young intellectuals and radicals who provided Byron with long-lasting friendships that were to withstand his increasing dedication to eccentricity and outrage. For example, when confronted with a school rule forbidding the keeping of dogs on campus, Byron instead chose to keep a tame bear in the turret above his quarters.

At the beginning of 1808, with college behind him, Byron moved to London, settling into the comfortable role of upper class eccentric bard, dandy, and hedonist. On reaching his majority in January 1809, he took his seat in the House of Lords as a member of the liberal Whig political party to begin what promised to become a successful political career. However, his normal habits quickly drew Byron into "an abyss of sensuality" in London that threatened to undermine his health. An alarmed Hobhouse suggested that the two of them embark upon a traditional upper class "Year Off" upon Byron's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, an idea to which Byron readily agreed.

Because of the military situation on the Continent (Napoleon was busily burning it), they opted for an unusual Eastern Tour over the usual Grand Tour of Europe — a decision that would overshadow the rest of Byron's life. On July 2, 1809 they sailed to Lisbon on a packet ship, made a dangerous crossing of Spain during the Peninsular War, and proceeded by Gibraltar to Malta. There, Byron fell in love with a married woman and skipped town before he had to fight a duel on her account (this was undoubtedly Hobhouse's good sense prevailing). They next landed at Preveza, Greece, and made an inland voyage to Tepelene in Albania to visit Ali Pasha's sumptuous oriental court. On their return, Byron began at Janina a semiautobiographical poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which he continued during the journey to Athens. There they lodged with a widow, whose daughter, Theresa

Macri, Byron celebrated as *The Maid of Athens*. In March 1810 they sailed for Constantinople by way of Smyrna, where Byron visited the site of Troy so that he might swim the swift current in imitation of Leander, the legendary lover of Hero. He then visited Constantinople with its bazaars, mosques, and luscious palaces — all of which would later take their places in his *Oriental Tales*.

In July 1811, after two years of travel, Byron returned to his native England (after a brief stop in Malta to recover from a bout of gonorrhea) as a cosmopolitan nobleman with a unique understanding of the insularity of his countrymen. His sojourn in Greece had made a lasting impression on his intellect and character. He delighted in the sunshine, moral tolerance, and natural nobility of its people while mourning their captivity at the hands of the decaying Ottoman Empire. After leaving, he often spoke longingly of his visit, his desire to return, and, in the words of his character *Don Juan*, that he "dreamed that Greece might still be free."

On February 27, 1812 Byron made his first speech in the House of Lords, an impassioned opposition to a Tory bill proscribing the death penalty to unemployed Nottingham weavers who destroyed the mechanical looms that had replaced them. At the beginning of March he found a publisher for his *Childe Harold*, which almost immediately took London by storm, propelling Byron to the artistic forefront of liberal English society. A poetic travelogue of exotic lands, *Childe Harold* also gave a voice to the mood of melancholy and disillusionment infecting post-Revolutionary Napoleonic



Europe. This phenomenal poem also conveyed the disparity between the romantic ideal and the world of reality, an almost unique achievement in nineteenth century verse.

Byron was lionized in Whig social circles (“I awoke one morning and found myself famous,” he later dryly commented). The handsome poet with the clubfoot conducted affairs with dozens of upper-class women, including the passionate Lady Caroline Lamb, the “autumnal” Lady Oxford, his half-sister Augusta Leigh, and Lady Frances Webster. The sense of mingled guilt and exultation that these affairs aroused in the young poet’s mind are reflected in the *Oriental Tales* he wrote during the period. Seeking escape in marriage, he proposed to the oddly humorless Anne Isabella Milbanke. The marriage took place on January 2, 1815. After a honeymoon that was “not all sunshine,” the newlywed couple settled in London. Delays in negotiations to sell Newstead left the Byrons financially embarrassed, with bailiffs daily arriving at the house demanding payment of debts. Byron escaped to the home of his publisher John Murray, leaving Anne Isabella to face the bill collectors. Meanwhile, his sister/lover Augusta had come to London for a visit. Byron, exasperated by his debts and recent rise to fame, irritated his wife with drunken, wild talk, which hinted at past sins.

Lady Byron gave birth to a daughter, Augusta Ada, and in January Anne Isabella left with the child for a visit to her parents after letting Byron know she was not moving back. Since the reasons for her decision were never publicly stated, the rumors began to fly about London society, most of them centering on Byron’s relations with his half-sister. With these rumors growing around him, Byron signed legal separation papers with his wife, packed a few belongings, and quietly went abroad, never to return to his native England.

After visiting the battlefield of Waterloo, Byron journeyed on to Switzerland where, at the Villa Diodati near Geneva, he met with fellow Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and his literary entourage (which included his wife Mary Shelley, the future author of *Frankenstein*). A boat trip to the head of the lake with Shelley gave Byron material for his *Prisoner Of Chillon*, and he completed a third canto of *Childe Harold* at Diodati. At the end of the summer, the Shelley party returned to England, and Byron departed for a tour of the Bernese Oberland with his old friend Hobhouse. This provided the scenery for *Manfred*, a Faustian poetic drama that reflected Byron’s brooding sense of guilt and remorse as well as his wider frustrations as a romantic spirit doomed by his own human limitations.

By 1816 Byron had thoroughly integrated himself into the Venetian literary scene. The final sale of Newstead Abbey not only cleared most of his debts but left him with a small income that supported him in Italy. Publication of Canto III of *Childe Harold* and *Prisoner Of Chillon And Other Poems* by John Murray back in England had gone a long way toward recapturing an audience he’d lost to scandal. Yet money seemed not to solve any of his inner problems, notably his dissatisfaction and

restlessness, and Byron once again fell into extreme decadence. His Venetian *palazzo* became a personal harem populated by local prostitutes and housewives as well a menagerie for exotic pet animals, while another bout with gonorrhea left him grossly overweight and seemingly permanently disheveled. Interestingly, Byron’s creative output was at its height during this period as he began work on his now infamous *Don Juan*, an epic poem about a handsome rogue who is both a sexual predator and also the prey of womankind.

A chance meeting with the Countess Teresa Guicciolo in April 1819 ended this period of debauchery and altered the course of Byron’s life. In the space of a few wild days he fell completely in love with the young Countess, a 19-year-old beauty married to man nearly three times her age. Byron slavishly followed her to Ravenna, and, later in the summer, she accompanied him back to Venice, staying with him until her husband called for her. Byron returned to Ravenna in January 1820 as Teresa’s gentleman-in-waiting, a kind of socially acceptable gigolo. There he won the friendship of her father and brother, who initiated him into the *Carbonari*, a romantic, secretive revolutionary society dedicated to creating a unified Italy through spontaneous rebellion. It was during this period that Byron came into closer contact with the soul of the Italian people than he had ever been. He purchased arms for the Carbonari, gave alms to the poor, and devoted his considerable skills to producing artistic tributes to their culture.

This was one of the happiest and most productive periods of his life. Byron wrote *The Prophecy Of Dante*, three cantos for *Don Juan*, the poetic drama’s *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Cain* (all published in 1821), as well as his satire on the poet Robert Southey, *The Vision Of Judgment*. When Teresa’s father and brother were exiled by the Austrian authorities for their part in a failed uprising she was forced to follow them into banishment, ending this romantic period of Byron’s life. He reluctantly removed to Pisa, where Shelley had rented the Casa Lanfranchi on the Arno River for him. He arrived on the first of November 1821, having left his beloved daughter Allegra (a product of a previous liaison) in a convent near Ravenna where he’d sent her to be educated. She died on April 20 of the following year, heaping sorrow upon his sorrow.

Although depressed, Byron stayed doggedly at work on various projects, including cantos VI to XVI of *Don Juan*, *The Age Of Bronze*, and *The Island*. Soon enough, however, Byron’s old restlessness returned. Even the presence of beloved friends and the simple domesticity of his life with Teresa (who had joined him with her family) gave him no satisfaction. He also longed for the opportunity for some noble, self-sacrificing action that would redeem him in the eyes of his countrymen. Accordingly, when the London Greek Committee contacted him in April 1823 to act as its agent in aiding the Greek war for independence from the Turks, Byron immediately accepted the offer. All of his legendary enthusiasm, energy, and imagination were

now put at the disposal of the fledgling Greek army.

On July 16, Byron left Genoa on a chartered ship, arriving at the island of Cephalonia in August. He sent 4,000 pounds of his own money ahead to prepare the newly constructed Greek fleet for sea service before sailing to Missolonghi in December to join Prince Alexandros Mavrokordatos, leader of the forces in western Greece. With tremendous energy and passion he planned to attack the Turkish-held fortress of Lepanto. He employed a specialist to prepare artillery, taking under his own command and pay a contingent of Souliot soldiers, reputedly the bravest of the Greeks. In addition, he made a dedicated but ultimately fruitless effort to unite eastern and western Greece in a common cause. On February 15, 1824 he fell ill; the usual remedy of bleeding weakened him at the same time that an insurrection of the Souliots opened his eyes to their avarice. Though his enthusiasm for the Greek cause was undiminished he now had a more realistic view of the obstacles facing the army. He was also suffering from the emotional strain of his romantic friendship with Loukas Chalandritsanos, a Greek boy, whom he had brought as a page from Cephalonia and to whom he addressed his final poems.

The spring of 1824 was wet, cold, and miserable. While Byron was still weak from his sickness in mid-February, he continued to carry out his duties and seemed on the path to recovery. But in early April he was caught outdoors in a rainstorm; though drenched and chilled, he continued working at various military tasks rather than going inside. Soon he was afflicted with a violent cold, which was quickly aggravated by the bleeding insisted on by his doctors. Though he briefly rallied, the cold grew worse; he eventually slipped into a coma. Around six o'clock in the evening of April 19, 1824, Byron passed away at the age of 36.

News of his death was met with shock and disbelief in England, where Byron's self-sacrifice, poetic talents, and love of liberty had served to make him the living embodiment of the principles of Romanticism. He was celebrated as a national martyr in Greece, one whose untimely death was certain to lead directly to Greek liberty. Deeply and genuinely mourned, he became a hero throughout their land. While his body was embalmed, his heart was removed and buried in Missolonghi so that it might forever remain in the land he died trying to free. His remains were then sent to England and, refused burial in Westminster Abbey, placed in the vault of his ancestors near Newstead.

**Personality/ Motivation:** "The Byronic Hero is the one protagonist who in stature and in temperament best represents the [heroic] tradition in England," the renowned Romance scholar Peter Thorslev once said. A Byronic Hero (as epitomized by Byron himself) exhibits several characteristic traits. He's a rebel, often without "heroic virtue" in the usual sense; he has many dark qualities including arrogance, overconfidence, abnormal emotional sensitivity, and extreme egocentricity. In one form

## BYRONIC HERO PACKAGE DEAL

### Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
12	+4 DEX
5	+5 INT
5	+5 PRE
3	+6 COM
3	High Society (PRE Roll)
2	KS: History 11-
2	KS: Literature 11-
2	KS: Romantic Poetry 11-
1	WF: Blades
9	Three Skills from the following list: Conversation, Oratory, Persuasion, Seduction, Streetwise, any appropriate Background Skill (particularly Language)

**Total Cost Of Package Abilities And Equipment: 47**

### Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Psychological Limitation: Egocentric (Uncommon, Moderate)
15	Psychological Limitation: Melancholy Depression (Uncommon, Total)

**Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 20**

or another he rejects the values and moral codes of the society that he was born into because he's unrepentantly "wicked" by that society's standards. This is usually because the Byronic hero is "larger than life," with titanic or legendary passions, appetites, pride, and an absolute sense of self-identity. He's usually isolated from society as a wanderer or is in some kind of legal or spiritual exile. It doesn't matter whether this social separation is imposed upon him by some external force or is self-imposed. Byron's *Manfred*, a character who wandered desolate mountaintops, was physically isolated from society, whereas *Childe Harold* chose to "exile" himself and wander throughout Europe. Although *Childe Harold* remained physically present in society and among people, he was not by any means "social," perpetually remaining an outsider.

Like Byron himself, the Byronic Hero is usually moody by nature but passionate about a particular issue. Because he also has emotional, intellectual, and artistic capacities that are superior to those of the average man, he often throws himself heart and soul into a monumental project for a period of time only to become despondent and slothful when things do not work out as planned. The Byronic character is obsessed with the idea of his own fated mortality, sometimes to the point of self-destruction (Byron's fellow Romantic poet Keats is said to have died from reading too many negative reviews of his work). His actions are a reflection of his struggle to obtain some form artistic or historical immortality before *the* (dramatic pause) *inevitable* (place back velvet gloved hand on noble brow) *end*.

## WOE AM I: HEROIC SUFFERING

Over a period of many centuries, the Ancient Greeks created a literature of such brilliance that many critics today believe it's never been surpassed and only rarely equaled. In the fields of poetry, tragedy, comedy, and history, Greek writers created masterpieces that have inspired, influenced, and challenged readers to our present age (including Byron). The topics and themes prevalent in Greek literature are so universal that there's scarcely an idea discussed today that was not debated by these ancient writers.

Aeschylus was the earliest, and possibly most important, of the Ancient Greek tragic dramatists. His plays are marked by a strong moral sense, demonstrating not only that suffering is the inevitable consequence of sin, but that suffering must continue until the wrongdoing has been expiated. The philosopher Aristotle later laid the foundations for Western literary criticism in his work *Poetics*. By establishing a relationship between pity, fear, and catharsis in drama Aristotle defined the basic criteria of the tragic hero. His ideas revolve around three crucial effects: first, the audience develops an emotional attachment to the tragic hero; second, the audience fears what may befall the hero; and finally after misfortune strikes the audience pities the suffering hero. According to Aristotle's *Definition Of The Tragic Hero*:

—The tragic hero is a man characterized by good and evil. He is a mixture of good characteristics and bad characteristics.

—The tragic hero is a superior figure politically, socially, in terms of wisdom/learning, or some or all of these categories

—The tragic hero has a tragic flaw, or *harmatia*, that is the cause of his downfall. Often the tragic flaw is *hubris*, meaning to the ancient Greeks insolence and lack of restraint, and to modern minds overweening pride.

—The tragic hero has a person or thing that sets the stage for his fall.

—The tragic hero almost always goes on a journey.

—The tragic hero is someone people can relate to. If people were put into the tragic hero's position, they could see they would probably do the same things that the hero does.

—The tragic hero must always fail in the end — otherwise he wouldn't be a tragic hero. Because of his *harmatia* his story invariably ends up in catastrophe both for himself and for those around him... just like Lord Byron's. To put it another way, the tragic hero labors under a doom that he cannot avoid.

**Quote:** "Man is half dust, half deity, alike unfit to sink or soar."

**Powers/Tactics:** Though he's primarily a poet and inveterate traveler (like many upper class Englishmen of the time), Lord Byron is also adept with his fists, sword, and pistol. He certainly had little trouble defending himself throughout his life. Physically brave, used to giving orders, and capable of strategic planning (as shown by his service to the cause of Greek liberty), Byron also makes a passably inspiring military officer — though he spends

a considerable portion of his life plunged into drunken whoremongering, or laudanum-drenched half-sane ranting. A great deal of Byron's heroism is philosophical, not physical, so his usefulness in a combat situation usually depends on how sunk into his Psychological Limitations he is at the time.

**Campaign Use:** There's a familiar reoccurring figure in many works of film, fiction, and theater: a handsome-to-the-point-of-effete, melancholy, and indolent (yet well-bred) young man (or very occasionally a masculine woman) who must face some horrible, usually secret event from his past (a murder, a betrayal, or the like) so that he can overcome some tremendous threatening evil, thus redeeming himself from his original misdeed. This character is generally a good person afflicted with some sort of character-defining flaw, such as tendencies toward anger, lust, or pride. Shakespeare's Hamlet is a perfect example of this sort of "tragic antihero," as is the character of Oedipus from Aeschylus's Oedipus Rex, Leiji Matsumoto's mournful yet determined anime space-pirate Captain Harlock, Ann Rice's sinister but reflective vampire Lestat, and the drunken, inevitably doomed Jenny Sparks from the comic book The Authority.

While Lord Byron himself makes a terrific PC or NPC for any campaign set in the early 1800s, he's far more useful as the inspiration for a tragic antihero (and for the accompanying Byronic Hero Package Deal than as an actual character. The role-playing game world is full of Byronic Heroes; for example, nearly every vampire PC seems to fit into this category. Lord Soth from TSR's *Ravenloft* setting exhibits many Byronic characteristics, as do R.A. Salvatore's characters Drizzt Do'Urden, Artemis Entreri, and Jarlaxle from the popular *Dark Elf* series. Any player who's sufficiently self-absorbed, intelligent, and gloomy tends to gravitate naturally toward the Byronic Hero ideal, adopting it at the drop of a crushed velvet fedora.

Though a tragic antihero is more often a victim of his own defective personality than outside forces, his struggle against an inevitable doom is the very essence of what the Romantic poets stood for. Much like Byron himself, the Byronic Hero always feels trapped in a world he didn't create, at the mercy of internal or external forces he has no control over. He always feels himself to be fighting a dramatic battle against "Evil," "the Darkness," or "Death" no matter how silly or pointless his actions may seem to others. The GM should feel free to shower excessive cruelty upon this sort of hero, as he has little compunction about dragging innocent friends or loved ones into the maelstrom along with him. After all, without an audience to watch your downward spiral nobody can appreciate how heroic and doomed you really are, can they?

The GM should always give a Byronic Hero ample chance to fail because of his own weaknesses. While all noble characters fight against adversity, a Byronic Hero must further struggle against internal forces that cannot always be explained to other PCs. His psychological limitations are many, his willpower is limited, and he is

easily sidetracked by vice and self-pity. Additional limitations such as Unluck, Dependence: Alcohol, and Hunted are especially appropriate for such a character, as are beneficial abilities like Money or a die (or at most two) of Luck. While many players with Byronic Heroes may wish for their characters to “grow up” by buying off Psychological Limitations, others should be allowed to further decay by manifesting additional Disadvantages over time. This should be treated carefully, however, so that it doesn’t unbalance the game.

Since few campaigns take place in early 1800s Europe, the GM will probably want to adapt Byron for use in other periods and settings. Could there possibly be a finer *Fantasy Hero* character than a romantic, deeply flawed nobleman with heroic ideals? Since Byron’s entire concept of the world was ripped straight from the musty pages of chivalric daring-do, he should feel perfectly at home in an Epic Fantasy world like Ambrethel (detailed in *The Turakian Age*) or in the mythical court of King Arthur. He would also feel quite comfortable in a Low Fantasy setting in which much of the plot centers around romance (okay, womanizing), revolution, and generally roguish swashbuckling.

With some relatively minor changes Byron could be transformed into the sort of drug-addled, half-mad English explorer that *Pulp Hero* characters might have to rescue from the opium dens of Shanghai or the fleshpots of Kathmandu if they want to find *those* ruins (you know the ones). In a *Ninja Hero* campaign a modern Lord Byron might be the only westerner decadent enough to know where the really good “pit fights” happen in Hong Kong. In the dark and violent world of Hudson City a *Dark Champions* Byron might be a “street poet,” a useful contact for vigilante PCs who’s corrupt enough to know the dirt of dozens of criminal enterprises, but ethical enough to want to see them stopped. A Lord Byron endowed with 200+ points worth of Darkness Powers taken from the pages of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* and *Database II* would make an interesting “neutral” character in Vibora Bay who, while disinterested in stopping crime, will take action to prevent the city as a whole from being harmed.

It’s always possible that the infamous poet of doomed romance became afflicted with vampirism during his time in Greece, faked his own death, and is with humanity to this day as a *Horror Hero* character. If he survives his natural predilections, this Vampyre Byron could live long enough to roam the spaceways as a romantic undead pirate in a *Star Hero* or *Galactic Champions* campaign.

**Appearance:** Dark-haired, raven-eyed, and possessing the striking good looks of the English nobleman at his best, Lord Byron sports a wavy shock of unruly hair, an arrogant manner, and an impressive wardrobe of hand-tailored clothing. His overall appearance is calculated to make a conspicuous, almost scandalous, first impression. His sometime lover Lady Caroline Lamb described this look in her personal journal as “Mad, bad, and dangerous to know.” As Byron’s whole outlook on life is centered on the ideals of noble Romantic heroism, he does his best to look, act, and dress as one of the stylishly doomed. Indeed, as the inspiration for the character of Lord Ruthven in the first vampire story composed in English, John Polidori’s 1819 novel *The Vampyre*, he can fairly be said to have inspired the gothic “look” popularized in modern times.

Though born with a clubfoot, Lord Byron wears a corrective brace that makes this disability practically unnoticeable. He stands 5’8” tall and his weight varies wildly from between 137 and 202 pounds, depending on whether he’s bingeing or purging (he once said that everything he swallowed was “instantly converted to tallow and deposited on his ribs”). This pattern of sloth followed by frenzied activity — whether artistic, athletic, or romantic — defines much of his adult life. For example, when Shelly stumbled across the poet in Italy in 1818, he noted in his travel journal that at the age of about 30 Byron looked almost 40, having turned grey, grown his hair long, and put on considerable weight (“the knuckles of his hands were lost in fat”). Yet Byron had recovered completely by the following year: chasing teenage girls, scheming with the secret revolutionary society of the Carbonari, writing brilliantly, and getting in trouble with the Austrian authorities in Ravenna all at once.

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ALVAR NUÑEZ  
CABEZA DE VACA



“Though everyone wants what advantage may be gained from ambition and action, we see everywhere great inequalities of fortune, brought about not by conduct but by accident, and not through anybody’s fault but as the will of God.”  
—Cabeza de Vaca

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was the first European to cross the North American continent. The second-in-command of an ill-fated Spanish expedition to explore Florida, Cabeza de Vaca lost a large number of his men to a West Indies hurricane before he even began his journey. Upon touching ground his exploration party quickly became stranded when it lost contact with its ships. The explorers set out northward on foot, but their numbers were soon reduced from 300 to 4 by starvation, hostile Indians, and disease. Yet Cabeza de Vaca pushed onward, traveling across Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and finally northern Mexico before arriving at what is now Mexico City with his four remaining comrades in 1537.

Cabeza de Vaca detailed his experiences in a report to the King of Spain entitled *The Revelation: Adventures In The Unknown Interior Of America*. In addition to being one of the greatest true adventure stories ever recorded, *The Revelation* exists as an unmatched source of information on the pre-colonial Southwest’s flora, fauna, and native peoples. It has also helped to cement his place in history as one of the New World’s first important authors.

ALVAR NUÑEZ CABEZA DE VACA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	15		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
9	REC	4		
40	END	0		
38	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 112</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”  
Leaping: 3”/6”  
Swimming: 2”/4”

**Cost Perks**  
25 Followers: up to eight conquistadors or Indian disciples built on up to 50 Base Points each  
6 Fringe Benefit: Captain, Member of the Lower Nobility  
5 Money: Well Off

**Talents**  
3 Bump Of Direction

**Skills**  
4 +2 OCV with Arquebus  
4 +2 OCV with Crossbow  
4 +2 OCV with Longsword  
3 Acting 13-  
4 Animal Handler (Bovines, Canines, Equines) 13-  
3 Breakfall 12-  
3 Conversation 13-  
3 High Society 13-  
2 Language: Capoques (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native)  
3 Oratory 13-  
3 Paramedic 13-  
3 Persuasion 13-  
3 PS: Soldier 12-  
2 PS: Writer 11-  
3 Riding 12-  
7 Survival (Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Desert, Marine Surface) 12-  
3 Tactics 12-  
6 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Bows, Crossbows, Early Muzzleloaders, Lances

- 3 Traveler
- 2 1) AK: Italy 12-
- 2 2) AK: North America 12-
- 2 3) AK: Southern France 12-
- 2 4) AK: Spain 12-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 113**

**Total Cost: 225**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 15 Distinctive Features: White European in Pre-Colonial America (Concealable With Difficulty; Causes Major Reaction (fear/curiosity); Not Distinctive In Some Cultures)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Very Complex Code of Personal Christian Chivalry (Common, Total)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Slightly Mad (Uncommon, Moderate)
- 20 Rivalry: Professional (other conquistadors)
- 10 Social Limitation: Minority in Pre-Colonial America (Frequently, Major, Not Limiting In Some Cultures)
- 15 Unluck: 3d6
- 65 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 225**

**Background/History:** Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was born in the Andalusian wine center of Jerez in 1490. The descendant of peasant ennobled by King Sancho of Navarre for marking a mountain pass with a cow's skull during the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, Cabeza de Vaca (or "head of the cow") was the grandson of Pedro de Vera, the sadistic conqueror of the Canary Islands. Young Alvar grew up listening to old Pedro's tales of the New World in a house staffed with Guanche Indians who'd been brought back to Spain to work as servants, an upbringing which must certainly have had an influence on his later decisions in life.

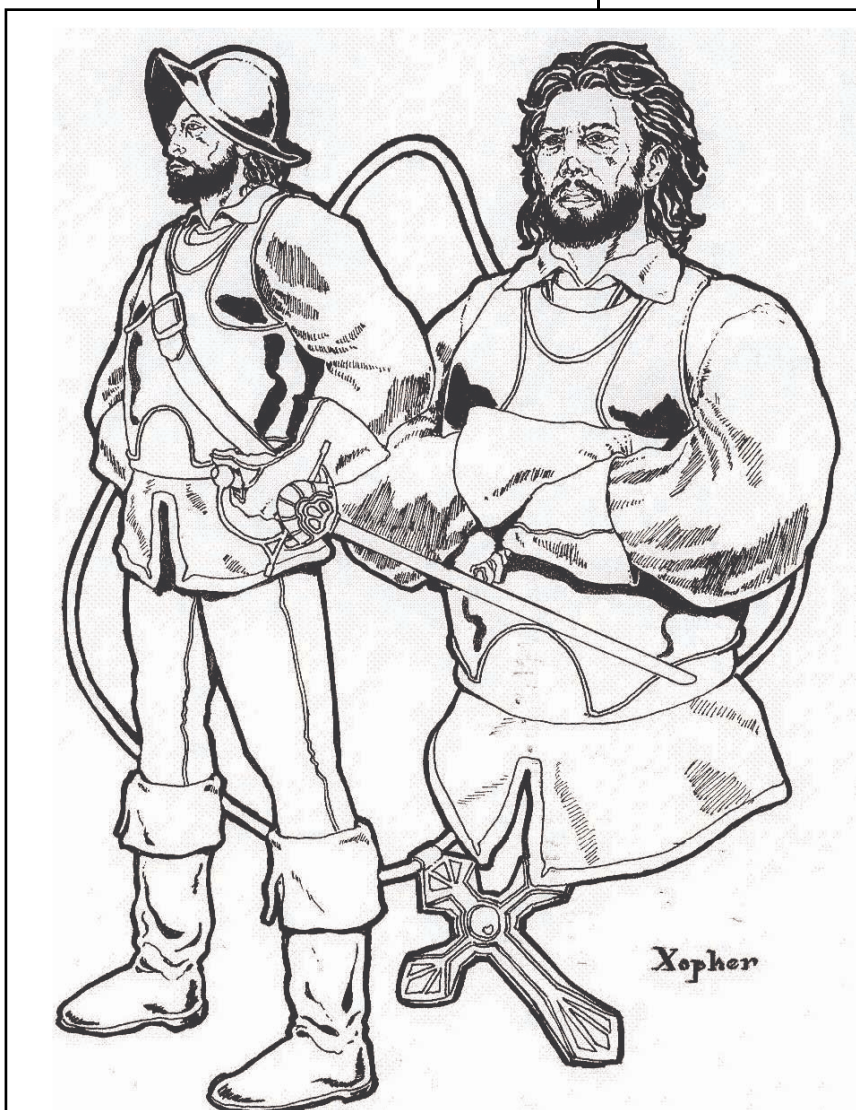
In the tradition of Spanish landed gentry, Cabeza de Vaca entered into a military career while he was still in his teens. At the age of twenty-one he marched in the army King Ferdinand sent to the aid of Pope Julius II in 1511. He saw action in the Battle of Ravenna in 1512 that claimed the life of some 20,000 people. The next year, while in the service of Duke of Medina Sidonia, he survived the Comuneros civil war, which included the recapture of Alcazar from Sevillian rebels, the battles of Tordesillas and Villalar, and finally warfare against the French army in Navarre.

By 1527 Cabeza de Vaca was a veteran of enough distinction to receive a royal appointment as second-in-command in an expedition to conquer the land of Florida, a territory thought at the time to extend indefinitely westward across the new world. Unfortunately this mission was to be commanded by the infamous Pamfilo de Narvaez, a red-bearded, one-eyed conquistador with a reputation for both cruelty and incompetence. The expedition set out for Cuba, where it got caught in West Indies hurri-

cane while in harbor (Alvar's account of the storm in his *Revelation* is the first written record of one). With the loss of several of their ships and a hundred of their men, the explorers had to refit at the now devastated town of Trinidad before setting out again.

Upon reaching the Gulf Coast of western Florida the would-be conquerors landed on an island off of the coast near Tampa Bay, where they raised various flags and announced possession of the land in the name of the King of Spain. After exploring the island a little both Cabeza de Vaca and Narvaez came to the conclusion that it was not suitable for human settlement (although there were Indians living there) and decided to explore further up the coast. A bitter argument then broke out between the two, with Narvaez wanting to divide up their small army into an overland force while sending the remainder up the coastline in their boats, while Cabeza de Vaca insisted on keeping the men together. In the end Narvaez pulled rank. Cabeza de Vaca and his men watched the expedition's ships sail off into the distance, never to be seen again.

The small force of 300 began their march northward toward the Appalachee Bay, where local Indians in their employ had suggested setting up a colony. It was tough going over dangerous, swampy



CABEZA DE VACA  
PLOT SEEDS

**Searching For Gold:** King Markandor of Keshman has recently received intelligence from his royal explorers of a vast, unexplored continent three months' sail south across the Uncharted Seas. There are rumors that this land contains of great riches including gold, silver, diamonds, and pearls the size of childrens' fists. With this new-found wealth the King can raise armies enough to crush the rebellious nobles within his nation, then march south to conquer Korem-Var. To this end he has chartered an expedition of three ships to be led by the loyal nobleman Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca. Would the PCs like to sign up for glory, treasure, and exploration?

**The Long March:** The PCs are a part of Cabeza de Vaca's ill-fated expedition to Florida. Stranded in the New World without weapons, clothing, or provisions, are they skilled enough to survive the arduous walk across a continent to Mexico City? Or will they attempt the dangerous sea crossing by raft back to Cuba?

**First Contact:** Empress Marissa III DeValiere has received word from the Ministry of Exploration that a new inhabitable world with vast natural resources has been discovered in the Voršan Expanse. Eager to lay claim to this rich world before the Mondabi or Thorgons can do so, she dispatches three ships under the command of Captain Alvar Nuñez to establish an outpost, chart the surface, and run a variety of scientific tests. The PCs are amongst his crew. Of course, as soon as they get to this new world things start to go terribly wrong....

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT							
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Cinquedea	+0	—	1d6+1	1d6-1	—	13	
Arquebus	+0	-3	1½d6AP	1d6-1	1	20	
Crossbow, Heavy	+1	+1	1½d6	1d6-1	10 RC		
<b>Armor</b>							
Back-and-Breast Plate (DEF 4, weighs 14 kg, protects Hit Locations 9-12)							
<b>Gear:</b> Varies							
<b>Clothing:</b> See Appearance							

terrain filled with hostile, well-armed, and warlike natives whose arrows were more than capable of puncturing the Spanish soldiers' armor. The men had very limited rations. After weeks of fruitless marching punctuated by constant guerrilla attacks by local Indians, they expedition failed to find an ideal place to build a colony. Additionally, a large portion of the men had contracted malaria, soon aggravated by dysentery. Narvaez and Cabeza de Vaca began to take an intense disliking to one another, a situation the commanding officer tried to solve by giving Cabeza de Vaca assignments that might get him killed: sending him into hostile villages first; dispatching him on "dirty-work" reconnaissance missions; putting him in charge of the vanguard while taking up the rear. Most of the men and officers felt trapped in the middle of this deadly argument, caught between a preference for Cabeza de Vaca's leadership and their respect for Narvaez's rank in their King's army.

Finally making their way back to the sea, the conquistadors slaughtered their horses for food, then began the arduous process of constructing five 30-foot barges. By the end of 1527 the small group had lost nearly sixty of its men to disease, starvation, and Indian attacks. Desperate to escape a land that was increasingly looking more deadly than promising they set out on their makeshift craft in search of a way out to the open sea. Working their way around the northwestern coast of Florida they endured a series of catastrophic water-born ambushes by Indians in canoes, further reducing their numbers. Finally, upon reaching the mouth of the Mississippi, their little flotilla became separated in the darkness as Narvaez (whose barge contained a majority of the healthier men) abandoned the rest of his increasingly troublesome command. His final words to Cabeza de Vaca were that "it was no longer a time when one should command another; that each must do as he thought best to save himself; that that was what he was doing now."

A storm then set in. Cabeza de Vaca and his men watched helplessly as the only other barge in sight sank from view, taking all of its crew with it. Winter had come to the Mississippi, making it bitterly cold for the starving men. Fighting the storm they finally reached the shore, where a cooked meal and fresh water served to revive their spirits. Shortly thereafter friendly (and curious) Capoques Indians re-supplied the men in exchange for some trinkets. Stripping off their clothing and taking to their barge's oars the men once more attempted to brave the sea, only to have their barge swamped by a massive oncoming wave a few miles from the

Capoques village. Most of the men from his boat were killed while dozens of others from the original six barges were now scattered up and down the coastline.

Cabeza de Vaca settled into the island village for the winter. Quickly picking up their language, he learned a number of survival skills from his hosts, assisting them as best he could in their various tasks. He also exhibited a talent for healing, both of the spiritual as well as the physical kind. After working for a year as a member of their village he struck out on his own to the mainland, working as a traveling merchant between the tribes of southern and northern Texas. Over the next four years he would wander as far north as Oklahoma and as far west as New Mexico.

After four years of working as a merchant and medicine man Cabeza de Vaca felt that he had the necessary physical, linguistic, and medical skills to make the trip to Mexico City. He gathered together those few of his fellow Spaniards he could locate (and who were willing to go) in 1534. With only a rough idea of where they were going these four men simply followed the setting sun, walking from village to village where they would trade or heal the sick, depending on the situation. Along the way Cabeza de Vaca took careful note of everything around him including the animals (he was the first European to describe an opossum), the various edible and medicinal plants, the topography, and the culture of the native peoples. The reputation of the four men grew to legendary proportions as they approached the colonized regions of Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca became seized by a desire to bring a humane order to the affairs of the Indians by converting them to Christianity. He had found that he could cure their sicknesses, communicate many of the core ideas of his religion, and solve many of their tribal hostilities leaving the regions he passed through in a state of relative peace. It was rumored that he was even able to raise the (newly) dead.

The four travelers were received with considerable hesitation in Mexico City. Because of certain peculiarities in the Imperial seniority system, Cabeza de Vaca was now the highest-ranking Spanish officer in the New World. He immediately ordered all slave raids on Indians in Sonora and Sinaloa to cease. Because of his considerable stature amongst the natives he convinced the terrified peoples of these provinces to return and rebuild their villages. In the strongest possible language he ordered that the Indians were to be won to King and Christ through non-rapacious, peaceful means. Then he returned to Spain.

Upon returning home in 1537, ten years older and considerably wiser, Cabeza de Vaca composed his seminal work, *The Revelation: Adventures In The Unknown Interior Of America*, as a formal report to the King of Spain (it was later published). This book has come to be considered one of the most culturally, artistically, and scientifically important documents composed in the sixteenth century. Although he hoped to command a second expedition to Florida, a half-year delay during his voyage caused the commission to go to DeSoto instead (Cabeza de Vaca was offered a second-in-command position but, not surprisingly, turned it down). King Charles V, who was impressed on many levels by *The Revelation*, came through with an alternative appointment for him as Governor of the South American province of Rio de la Plata, a position that Cabeza de Vaca assumed in 1540.

Cabeza de Vaca's first action upon assuming office was to lead a relief force to rescue the disease- and Indian-beleaguered colony of Asuncion. Instead of taking a yearlong sea journey via Buenos Aires, he led his men directly overland across a thousand miles of unexplored and supposedly impenetrable jungles and mountains filled with cannibal tribes. He accomplished this, arriving barefoot along with his men in 1542. The following

year he led an even more remarkable expedition into Paraguay in search of the legendary golden city of Manoa. Extreme hardship, particularly during the tropical rains of the fall, forced him to turn back when his men would go no further. Upon his return to Asuncion, Cabeza de Vaca fell victim to the twin menaces of fever and intrigue. As governor he had strictly forbidden the enslaving, raping, and looting of the native Indians — the very activities most Spaniards had come to the New World for! So his men deposed him, returning him wretchedly to Spain in chains in 1543.

Back in his homeland Cabeza de Vaca was allowed to languish in prison. The Council for the Indies didn't even get around to trying him until 1551, and then they gave undeserved credence to the very same lieutenant governor who'd led the mutiny in the first place. His sentence was banishment to Africa for a period of eight years, but the King interceded on his behalf, annulled the sentence, awarding the aging conquistador a pension as well as a seat on the *Audiencia* (his council of advisors). Cabeza de Vaca spent the remainder of his years composing an account of his travels in South America, which was published along with his *Revelation* under the title *Comentarios* in 1555. He died in honor in 1557.

## IN HIS OWN WORDS

In my poverty I was forced to live on a coastal island with the Capoques Indians for more than a year in the land that is now called Texas. Because of the hard work they put me to, and their harsh treatment, I soon resolved to flee to the people of Charruco in the forests of the mainland. My life had become unbearable. In addition to other work, I had to grub roots in the water or from underground in the canebrakes. My fingers got so raw that if a straw touched them they would bleed. The broken canes often slashed my flesh; I had to work amid them without the benefit of clothes.

So I set to contriving how I might transfer to the forest-dwellers, who looked more propitious. My solution was to turn to trade. After escaping to the Charruco in February of 1530, I did my best to devise ways of making my traffic profitable so I could get food and good treatment. The various Indians would beg me to go from one quarter to another for things they needed; their incessant hostilities made it impossible for them to travel cross-country or make many exchanges. But as a neutral merchant I went into the interior as far as I pleased, traveling as far as the lands of the Oklahoma tribes. My principal wares were cones and other pieces of sea snail, conchs shaped for cutting, beads, and mesquite fruit which the Indians value very highly as it is used for medicine as well as a ritual beverage in their dances and festivities. These are the sorts of things I carried inland. By barter I got and brought back to the coast deer skins, red ochre which the Charruco liked to use for face paint, hard canes useful for making arrows, flint for arrowheads (often with sinews and cement to attach them), and tassels of deer hair which were dyed red.

This occupation suited me; I could travel where I wished, was not obliged to work, and was not a slave. Wherever I went the Indians treated me honorably and gave me food because they liked my commodities. They were glad to see me when I came and were delighted to be brought what they wanted. Thus I became well known; those who did not know me personally knew me by reputation and sought out my acquaintance. This served my main purpose, which was all the while to determine an eventual road out.

The hardships I endured in this journeying business are too long to detail — peril and privation, storms and frost, which often overtook me alone in the wilderness. By the unfailing grace of God our Lord I came forth from them all. Because of them, however, I avoided the pursuit of my business in winter, a season when, anyway, the natives retire inside their huts in a kind of stupor, incapable of exertion.

Thus I was a merchant in this general coastal region for nearly four years, alone among the Indians and liked by them. The reason I remained so long was my intention of taking the Christian, Lope de Oviedo, away with me. Your Majesty may remember him as the strongest man that our commander (may God rest his soul) had brought along on the expedition. He was still dwelling on the coastal island amongst the Capoques having been abandoned by our fellows. His companion Alaniz had died shortly after their departure. To get Oviedo, now the last survivor, I passed over to the island every year and pleaded with him to come away with me so that together we might contrive to find our fellow Christians (and together escape from the heathen lands). Yet Oviedo's treatment by those Indians had been much better than mine; each year he put me off, saying the next we would start.

It was, of course, the will of God that when he finally did agree to accompany me on my fourth and final visit things did not proceed quite as favorably as we planned...."

— *The Revelation*, penned by Cabeza de Vaca for his Royal Majesty Emperor Charles V of Spain in 1542

## THE WRITINGS OF CABEZA DE VACA

### Excerpts From The Relation:

#### On Satan in America:

"They said that a little man wandered through the region whom they called Badthing [*Mala Cosa*]. He had a beard and they never saw his features distinctly. When he came to a house, the inhabitants trembled and their hair stood on end. A blazing brand would suddenly shine at the door as he rushed in and seized whom he chose, deeply gashing him in the side with a sharp flint two palms long and a hand wide... We asked them where he came from and where his home was. They pointed to a crevice in the ground and said his home was there below."

#### On Indian Medicine:

"An Indian, falling sick, would send for a medicine-man, who would apply his cure. The patient would then give the medicine man all he had and seek more from his relations to give. The medicine man makes incisions over the point of the pain, sucks the wound, and cauterizes it. I have, as a matter of fact, tried it on myself with good results."

#### On Western Medicine:

"They fetched me a man who, they said, had long since been shot in the shoulder through the back and that the arrowhead had lodged above his heart. He said that it was very painful and kept him sick. I probed the wound and discovered the arrowhead had passed through the cartilage. With a flint knife I opened the fellow's chest until I could see that the point was sideways and would be difficult to extract.

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But I cut on and, at last, inserting my knife point deep, was able to work the arrowhead out with great effort. It was huge. With a deer bone, I further demonstrated my surgical skill with two stitches while blood drenched me....”

#### On Same-Sex Marriage:

“In the time I was living among these people, I witnessed a diabolical practice; a man living with a eunuch. Eunuchs go partly dressed, like women, and perform women’s duties, but use the bow and carry very heavy loads. We saw many thus mutilated. They are more muscular and taller than other men and can lift tremendous weight.”

#### Other Works By And About Cabeza de Vaca

In addition to *The Revelation* there have been several other important works of fiction, film, and history created about Cabeza de Vaca’s adventures in the American Southwest. Cabeza de Vaca, Castillo, and Dorantes drew up a thirty page summary known as the *Joint Report* upon their arrival in Mexico City in 1536. It provides considerable supplementary information to his text as well as supporting the vast majority of his claims about the New World.

Daniel Panger’s *Black Ulysses* is a fantastic semi-fictional retelling of his journey told from the perspective of one of its other survivors: Estevanico, the Moorish slave. Its clean prose, exciting pace, and telling comments about the basic nature of the human experience make it a distinct pleasure to read. It was published to considerable critical acclaim in 1982.

**Personality/Motivation:** Soldier, explorer, exploiter, merchant, medicine man, aristocrat, author, and savior: it’s safe to say that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca is an extremely complex man. Like all of the great conquistadors he marched under a king’s name, discovered a fabulous country, and endured legendary suffering in the process. Yet the only real enemies he seems to have been interested in vanquishing are his own body and will. His conquests lie in the realms of the sacred rather than those of territory and treasure. Cabeza de Vaca seems to regard the hostile men he encounters in his travels as an extension of a hostile environment rather than personally evil themselves. His transformation from a man of war to a man of brotherhood and human kinship was involuntary, gradual, and above all wrought with suffering. Yet transformed he was, from the aristocratic grandson of the man who cruelly suppressed the Canary Islanders to a man willing to champion their cause.

Cabeza de Vaca is an above all sympathetic man, adverse to using violence except when it’s absolutely necessary. He has a gentle, powerful way about him that’s seldom found anywhere except among the company of profound saints and sinners. Calm and commanding, he genuinely seems to derive a sort of ascetic pleasure from the physical hardships to which he’s subjected. He’s not brave in the traditional, martial sense of the word — indeed, he flees violence and cruelty many times in his life with seemingly little bravado. Yet, possessed of a certain spiritual strength, he faces incredible hardship and almost certain death to attain his goals.

**Quote:** “[Unlike the other Europeans] we had come from the sunrise, they from the sunset; he healed the sick, they killed the sound; we came naked and barefoot, they clothed, horsed, and lanced; we coveted nothing but gave whatever we were given, while they robbed whomever they found and bestowed nothing on anyone.”

**Powers/Tactics:** As multifaceted as a diamond, Cabeza de Vaca has accumulated a wide variety of skills, powers, perks, and talents over his eventful life. Born an aristocrat, he has the advantages of wealth, status, and culture. A career military man serving the Spanish Crown, he holds a significant rank as well as possessing the many Skills (such as Weapon Familiarities, Combat Skill Levels, Professional Skills, and Tactics) that a lifetime in military service brings. He has also learned a good deal about simple field surgery as a result of his time in the Emperor’s service.

A naturally talented linguist, Cabeza de Vaca needs only a very brief period of time to learn nearly any language fluently. He has an innate sense of direction that’s helped him innumerable times on his many travels around the globe. Even more significantly, Cabeza de Vaca appears to be one of those rare men who are born with supernatural levels of endurance, toughness, and resilience. He’s also learned how to live off of the land in a wide variety of terrains.

Yet Cabeza de Vaca’s most remarkable power is his ability to faith heal. In a campaign that allows some sort of “magic,” this peaceful soldier can perform miraculous cures through the power of prayer. “Our method,” he wrote in *The Revelation*, “was to bless the sick, breathe upon them, recite a *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*, and pray earnestly to God our Lord for their recovery. We concluded with the sign of the cross.” In fact, Cabeza de Vaca became so accomplished in his abilities that there have been reports of his raising men from their deathbeds. (If appropriate, add a Healing-based ability, perhaps with the *Resurrection* Adder, to his character sheet.)

**Campaign Use:** The evil conquistador or military occupier is an accepted convention in many role-playing games, usually as a villain. The exploring, rapacious (yet somehow noble) adventurer is an even more popular one. Cabeza de Vaca is all of these things yet none of them. Transformed by the land he was sent to tame, he attempted a radical, personal, and documented reconciliation between the Old World and the New centuries before such concepts became fashionable. Indeed, in his attempts to convert America’s aboriginal inhabitants to Christianity the line between savior and saved became so blurred that Cabeza de Vaca may have believed (albeit for a brief period of time) that he himself had become the living Christ he so avidly worshipped — through his own sufferings he became a mirror image of that healing, benevolent prophet.

Cabeza de Vaca is useful as a high-level heroic NPC in any setting that requires a well-intentioned, eccentric leader (or second in command) under the GM’s control, most especially if that campaign takes place in an unexplored wilderness. His role should be one of assistance or guidance rather than actual leadership, however. Much as the real life Cabeza de Vaca seemed to mysteriously materialize when the survivors of his expedition needed him, this NPC should appear from time to time during their travels to guide them, heal them, act as an interpreter, or if the situation requires it save them from hostile natives through diplomacy. His behavior should become more mysterious, enigmatic, and inexplicable (in a benevolent way) as the adventure continues until he finally materializes for the eventual climax of the campaign.

Another possibility is that the PCs might be sent out to hunt down a Cabeza de Vaca type character who’s “gone native” and led several primitive but noble tribes in a revolt against the authority of their king or church. Assuming those institutions have some less-than-admirable practices this might lead to some serious soul-searching on the PCs’ part, as well as give the Cabeza de Vaca NPC a chance to use his long-neglected military abilities. (For a fantastic example of this sort of plot, watch Roland Joffe’s *The Mission*, starring Jeremy Irons and Robert De Niro... though you may want to introduce a happier ending.)

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Cabeza de Vaca is a complex nobleman explorer with strong religious beliefs, and as such is most useful in settings that emphasize adventures in uncharted regions and require multifaceted NPCs to help move their plots along. *Star Hero*, *Fantasy Hero*, *Victorian Hero*, and *Pulp Hero* spring to mind as the genres that require the least overall changes to his character sheet (mainly AKs, equipment, and combat skills). A futuristic Cabeza de Vaca living in the Terran Empire could be an exiled noble working as the captain of a Terran Exploration Service vessel. He could be found in *The Turakian Age* working for King Markandor of Keshman as an explorer sent out to investigate an unexplored continent three months' sail south across the Uncharted Seas. In a *Pulp Hero* campaign he might be a Spanish noble working as a riverboat captain in darkest Africa to avoid the horrors of the Spanish Civil War.

Although he doesn't automatically lend himself to modern action genres, a clever GM could modify Cabeza de Vaca by highlighting his spiritual healing abilities and downplaying his martial skills to create a renegade Catholic priest who works amongst the poor (and often very religious) citizens

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### Films

*Cabeza de Vaca* (1992)

of Vibora Bay or various Central/South American cities. In a grittier campaign, he might work in the Hudson City of *Dark Champions* instead.

**Appearance:** Cabeza de Vaca is an aristocratic-looking man with dark, serious features. He has piercing brown eyes that give him a certain air of command. Often thin to the point of appearing unhealthy, he's surprisingly strong for his size and weight. He wears whatever clothing and equipment is appropriate for his location: armor and shield when in service to the King of Spain; buckskins and moccasins when traveling across the highlands of Texas; simple loincloths when in the swamps of Florida.

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The controversial film *Cabeza de Vaca* starring Juan Diego was released in American theaters in 1992. Directed by experimental Mexican filmmaker Nicolas Echevarria, the film deviates greatly (and many would argue, unnecessarily) from the author's account of his journey to enable the director to make several telling points about exploitation, colonialism, and Christianity, often ignoring the historical fact that its main subject was a conquistador (albeit a rather compassionate one) who considered himself a Spanish patriot as well as a devout Catholic. Nevertheless this flawed movie does an excellent job of communicating the feel of many portions of *The Revelation*, if not their substance.

# CALAMITY JANE



“It was a bit awkward at first but I soon got to be perfectly at home in men’s clothes.”  
—Calamity Jane

Calamity Jane was a frontier woman of some considerable renown, a legendary figure whose exploits both real and imagined became the subject of innumerable dime novels during the early twentieth century. Raised in the rugged mining camps of the Montana and Utah territories to be as tough as any man of the time, she was a legendary horse-woman, a crack shot, a scout for Custer, a notorious boozier, and a foul-mouthed brawler of epic proportions. Although much of her life has been shrouded in tall tales, conjecture, and legend, she remains a fine example of the courageous and free-spirited frontier people who settled the Old West.

MARTHA “CALAMITY” JANE CANARY

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3½d6 [2]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
17	PRE	7	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
8	PD	4		Total: 11 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	2		
35	END	3		
40	STUN	8		Total Characteristic Cost: 97

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”  
Leaping: 3”/6”  
Swimming: 2”/4”

**Cost Powers** **END**

13	Brawler: HA +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	2
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**Perks**

2	Reputation: hell-raising frontier woman (in the Western US) 11-, +2/+2d6
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**Talents**

6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
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**Skills**

7	Calamity Prowess: +2 Overall; Only When She’s The Last Man Standing Or The Only One Who Can Save The Day (-2)
8	Pistolero: +4 vs. Range Modifier with Handguns
6	+2 with Firearms
3	Acrobatics 13-
4	Animal Handler (Bovines, Canines, Equines) 12-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Bribery 12-
3	Climbing 13-
3	Fast Draw 13-
5	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Horse Racing) 12-
3	Riding 13-
3	Streetwise 12-
5	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic Forests, Desert, Mountain) 12-
3	Tracking 12-
3	Trading 12-
1	TF: Carts & Carriages, Equines

- 3 WF: Small Arms, Blades
- 3 Traveler
- 2 1) AK: Deadwood 12-
- 2 2) AK: Nevada 12-
- 2 3) AK: The Dakotas 12-
- 2 4) AK: The West 12-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 98**

**Total Cost: 195**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 20 Enraged: when her friends are harmed (Common, Go 11-, Recover 11-)
- 5 Money: Poor
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Argumentative (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Violent (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: dangerous, brawling woman gunfighter, 11- (Extreme)
- 10 Social Limitation: Woman (Frequently, Minor)
- 40 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 195**

**Background/History:** Calamity Jane was born Martha Jane Canary on May 1, 1852 in Princeton, Missouri. The oldest of six children, she was an aggressive, adventuresome child with a fondness for outdoor activities like riding, shooting, and hunting. At a fairly early age she became an expert rider who assisted her father in the breaking of wild horses for use on their family farm.

When Martha Jane was thirteen, pressures leading to the outbreak of the Civil War convinced her father to uproot his family and immigrate to Virginia City, Montana. Though this journey was a brutal trek that took five months she seems to have enjoyed herself immensely, spending the greater portion of the trip hunting alongside the mountain men who acted as their wagon train's guides. She also helped the party's men lower their wagons over ledges with ropes, navigate fast-moving rivers, and scout bogs filled with quicksand. By the time the Canary family reached their destination their oldest daughter had toughened into an expert outdoorswoman, a remarkably good shot, and a fearless rider.

Martha Jane's mother died at Black Foot in 1866, a tragedy which seemed to sap the strength from her father, who passed away two years later. Soon afterward an Indian uprising scattered the Canary children to the four winds, with Jane finding work as a bullwhacker (a teamster that specializes in handling oxen) and cowboy. Standing six feet in height by the age of eighteen and possessed of considerable strength for a member of the fairer sex, Martha Jane signed on as a scout with General Custer's unit at Fort Russell, Wyoming, near the current site of Custer City. Alongside her friend and sometime lover Buffalo Bill Cody, she spent her young adult years trying to keep hapless soldiers from falling off cliffs or getting themselves killed by Blackfoot Indians. "She had unlimited nerve and

entered into the work with enthusiasm," Cody later commented, "doing good service on a number of occasions. Though she did not do a man's share of the heavy work, she has gone in places where old frontiersmen were unwilling to trust themselves, and her courage and good-fellowship made her popular with every man in the command."

In 1871 a massive Indian revolt broke out near what is now Sheridan, Wyoming. Martha Jane and Buffalo Bill were dispatched along with units commanded by Generals Custer, Miles, Terry, and Crook to put down the rebellion that had already claimed the lives of numerous natives, settlers, ranchers, and miners. It was during this campaign that Martha picked up her unique moniker. She



CALAMITY JANE  
PLOT SEEDS

**Murder Most Foul:** With the assassination of Wild Bill fresh in the minds of Deadwood residents, Calamity Jane asks the PCs to accompany her on her quest to get a little “private justice” in the matter of Jack McCall. But after tracking him out into the badlands they discover the lone killer isn’t so alone after all....

**Indian Wars:** Alongside Calamity Jane and Liver-Eating Johnson, the PCs are scouts during the long and brutal Sioux Indian wars. While guiding a detachment of cavalry on a patrol through territory near Fort Russell they’re ambushed and separated. Can the PCs fight their way back to the fort across one hundred miles of Sioux Nation to safety?

**Moon Over Carson City:** The Hudson City serial murderer Siddhartha and his murderous sidekicks “the Rat Pack” have taken a road trip, killing their way across the country until they reach the small Nevada metropolis of Carson City. The PCs team up with local survivalist and vigilante Calamity Jane to stop them before they can terrorize its citizens.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT							
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Colt Peacemaker	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6	6	10	
Derringer	-1	-2	1½d6	1d6-1	2	4	
Winchester Rifle	+1	+1	1d6+1	1d6	14	12	
“Coach” Shotgun	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	2	12	
Buck Knife	+0	RBS	1d6	1d6-1	—	6	Can Be Thrown
Hatchet	+0	RBS	1d6	1d6-1	—	6	Can Be Thrown
Armor							
None							
Gear: Camping gear, horse and tack							
Clothing: See Appearance							

was guiding a unit back to its fort when it fell into a sudden ambush that quickly wounded her commanding officer, Captain Egan. Charging into the middle of combat under a hail of gunfire she pulled the wounded man onto her saddle before sprinting for the relative safety of the stockade walls. The two of them were the only survivors of what quickly became a massacre, leading Egan (who must have been something of a wag) to nickname the brave horsewoman “Calamity Jane” in commemoration of the terrible event. The name stuck.

In 1874 Calamity Jane was ordered back to Fort Russell. The Sioux Indians had rebelled there in response to a veritable invasion of gold miners into the Black Hills, which not only lay within their territory but were also regarded as sacred land by the warlike tribe. During this military campaign she worked as a courier, bearing messages from general to general often over a distance of some ninety miles through bog, river, and rain. After she contracted a severe illness from the cold, General Crook had to forcibly confine her to his hospital out of fear she would kill herself in his service.

After she recovered Calamity Jane was discharged from the Army. She quickly hooked up with James Butler Hickok, better known to history by his moniker Wild Bill. She became part of his close circle of friends along with prospector Charlie Utter and Captain Jack Crawford. Together they all emigrated to the now infamous boomtown of Deadwood that lay just at the foot of the gold-rich Black Hills.

While Charlie mined for gold in the hills and Wild Bill drank himself blind in the Bell Union Saloon, Jane got herself a job acting as a pony express rider carrying the mail between Deadwood and Custer. It was considered to be the most dangerous mail route in the Dakota Territories: fifty miles of some of the most rugged, bandit-infested trails in the Black Hills. Several pony express riders assigned to the run had been recently robbed of their packages, mail, and money. But because Jane’s reputation as a rider and quick shot were well established, the local outlaws — many of whom were her drinking companions — bothered her very little (in her own words “the toll gatherers looked on me as being a good fellow”). She would complete the round trip in two days at a total distance of roughly 100 miles, a considerable feat of horsemanship.

On August 2, 1876 Wild Bill, who was sitting at a gambling table in his favorite saloon, was shot through the back of the head by the notorious desperado Jack McCall. Upon hearing word of her friend’s death Calamity Jane went berserk. She began tearing up Deadwood in search of McCall. She finally cornered him in Shurdy’s Butcher Shop where, unarmed save for a hastily-snatched meat cleaver, she battered and disarmed him. Although he escaped her soon afterward, she caught McCall again at Fagan’s Ranch on Horse Creek. She transported him to Yankton; under her watchful eye he was quickly tried, sentenced, and hung.

Following Wild Bill’s death Jane’s circle of friends seemed to scatter, leaving her once again alone. She hung around the mining camps near Deadwood drinking, fighting, and gambling with casual friends until, seemingly tired of human company, she vanished into the hills for several months. In the spring of 1877 Jane reappeared, riding seemingly out of nowhere to save a stagecoach under attack by the Sioux some twelve miles outside of Deadwood. The coach’s horses were out of control — driver John Slaughter lay slumped in his seat, slain by a bullet through his back. Suddenly Jane rode her own horse out of from the salt brush. Leaping from the back of her horse into Slaughter’s seat she deftly pushed his corpse over the side, followed by all of the baggage save for the mail. She then drove to the Deadwood station as fast as she could with a dozen Sioux braves in hot pursuit, saving the carriage’s six passengers.

After bravely nursing dozens of Deadwood’s citizens back to health during a smallpox outbreak, in the fall of 1877 Calamity Jane left to look for adventure in other parts of the West. She signed on as a scout for the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, assisting them in the founding and construction of the towns of Fort Meade and Sturgis. In 1878 she left to put in a year of prospecting in Rapid City before spending a couple of years driving teams of oxen from Fort Pierce to Sturgis. She then spent another couple of years ranching and keeping a roadside inn (“where a weary traveler could be accommodated with food, drink, or trouble if he looked for it”) before wanderlust once again seized her, taking her to California, Arizona, and Texas. In El Paso she met and married one Clinton Burke. They had a baby girl, but Calamity Jane couldn’t seem to shake off her wanderlust. Perpetually restless, she dragged her small family to Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and

Oregon before her husband decided he'd traveled just about enough. He returned to Texas with their daughter, leaving Calamity Jane alone in the rugged hills of her youth.

On October 9, 1895 a 43-year-old Calamity Jane rode quietly into Deadwood for a drink some seventeen years after she'd left. She was completely unaware of her own notoriety; the spontaneous public celebration that broke out upon her arrival left her astonished. Surprisingly, many of her old friends were still alive and the town's newer citizens were all eager to meet the celebrated frontierswoman for the very first time. Jane enjoyed a short career as a celebrity, touring briefly with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (before getting canned for being rowdy and drunken). She even composed a brief but charming autobiography entitled *Calamity Jane: In Her Own Words*, which was a hot seller in 1898.

In the end, though, years of hard living caught up with Calamity Jane. Now in her early fifties she looked like a woman in her seventies. She still drank hard, chewed tobacco, and swore but the fire had gone out of her. Martha "Calamity Jane" Canary Burke died penniless in 1903. At the end she lived in a small room in the Calloway Hotel in Terry, South Dakota. She requested to be buried in Deadwood next to Wild Bill Hickok on Mt. Moriah overlooking the city. Jane's funeral was one of the largest ever held for a woman in Deadwood. Her coffin was closed by a man that, when he was a boy, had been nursed back to health by her in the 1877 smallpox epidemic.

**Personality/Motivation:** Calamity Jane was raised almost exclusively by rowdy frontiersmen with very little civilizing, feminine input. Correspondingly she's a ripsnorter, a hellraiser, a drinker, a blasphemer, a fornicator, and, when she absolutely has to be, a killer. In other words she's pretty much one of the guys, a point she attempts to drive home on every occasion. She works when she has to, generally selecting the most dangerous jobs available as a way of proving herself to everyone around her. She has a well-earned reputation for exceptional, possibly even suicidal, bravery.

When Calamity Jane isn't working she's playing — hard. She practically lives in a honky-tonk known as Al Swearengen's Gem, where the bartenders know her line when she bellies up: "Give me a shot of booze and slop it over the brim!" She has an extremely short temper, especially when she's been drinking. Jane is never shy about brandishing her deadly pair of Colt .45s at the slightest insult, although she becomes all smiles if the offending miscreant buys her a drink. Around the town of Deadwood she's well liked and popular, recognized everywhere she goes by her swagger and distinctive clothing. Wherever she slaps open a pair of batwing saloon doors the same shout always rings out: "Here comes Calamity Jane!" This is as much a warning as anything else — Jane is fond of trick shooting down chandeliers, whether anyone's sitting under them or not.

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Canary, Martha Jane. *Calamity Jane: In Her Own Words*

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### Movies

The real Calamity Jane was a true pioneer in the arena of women's rights, violating nearly every rule that was supposed to govern the behavior of women at the time (which, oddly, was fine with her male friends but annoyed other women greatly). Yet until recently Hollywood chose to ignore the real person behind the legend in favor of bending the myth of Calamity Jane into something traditional. Doris Day, Yvonne De Carlo, Jane Russell, Jean Arthur, and Ellen Barkin all portrayed cute, perky, and blond Calamity Janes whose primary ambition was to be rescued from their lives of pseudo-maleness. Only recently in the performances of Jane Alexander in the 1984 *Calamity Jane* and Robin Weigert in HBO's *Deadwood* has the character been given any depth... or even been allowed to be brunette. *Calamity Jane* (1953), starring Doris Day  
*Calamity Jane* (1984), starring Jane Alexander

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[www.blackhills-info.com](http://www.blackhills-info.com)

[www.cowgirls.com](http://www.cowgirls.com)

[www.deadwoodunderground.com](http://www.deadwoodunderground.com)

Although later in life alcoholism wreaked havoc on her personality, driving her into a deep, chronic depression, the younger Calamity Jane is loyal, dashing, and charismatic... in a rustic, foul-mouthed sort of way. She has a deeply buried tender side to her as well. Jane is one of the few citizens of Deadwood to stay behind and tend to the infected during a smallpox outbreak that sent most of the town's citizens fleeing into the brush in terror, an act of kindness many people considered far braver than facing gunfire. "When she nursed children," commented the town doctor, "oh, she'd swear to beat the hell out of them, but it was a tender kind of cussin'."

**Quote:** "As a scout I performed a great many dangerous missions, during which I found myself in many close places. Yet I always succeeded in getting away safely. By the time my soldiering career finished I was considered the most reckless and daring riders, as well as one of the best shots, in the western country."

**Powers/Tactics:** Calamity Jane is an admirably capable paramilitary fighter and frontierswoman: tough, practical, experienced, and fearless. Her riding, tracking, hunting, and general outdoorsman abilities are as good or better than that of any man in the territories, and her acrobatic abilities are probably superior to that of most men in the Dakotas. She's also perfectly at home in the crude urban centers of the old west, gambling and carousing in a manner almost identical to her male counterparts save for her occasional trips "off into the brush" with young men when "the itch" comes upon her. (Jane dresses like a man but her tastes are strictly traditional.)

Although Calamity Jane is a powerful and capable hand-to-hand brawler, she's much more at home using knives, pistols, rifles, and shotguns. A walking arsenal, she almost always has the following on her person or close at hand: a buck knife; two Colt Peacemaker .45 single action revolvers; a two-shot 38 derringer hidden in her belt; a 12-gauge double barreled "coach" shotgun; a hatchet; and a .45 lever-action rifle. If for some reason she's caught unarmed (such as during Wild Bill's murder) she improvises with violent gusto.

Calamity Jane has a special combat ability directly related to her name. During *extremely* desperate circumstances in which she's the only combatant from her side left standing or she's the only one who could realistically save the day, she gets +2 Overall Levels.

**Campaign Use:** Calamity Jane isn't so much a person as a broad type, a fantastic example of the American "frontier character" popularized in story, song, and legend. She was so well known during her time that western writer Bret Harte is said to have based his famous character Cherokee Sal on Jane. She was by no means the first or only pistol-packing mama in the Old West. There was the voluptuous Belle Starr who went everywhere in "a swagger with a six-gun on either ample hip." There were bootleggers-turned-cattle rustlers like Cattle Annie McDougall and Little Britches Jennie Metcalf. But it's Calamity Jane, with her larger-than-life deeds, whose name has best endured, partly due to some judicious marketing of her own image late in her life.

Gamers will find Calamity Jane most useful in two capacities. Firstly, she's a fantastic NPC background character for any *Western Hero* campaign, especially one taking place in that most legendary of Wild West towns, Deadwood. The historical Jane was considered colorful by the townspeople of her day so there is no reason she shouldn't provide color for an enterprising GM's campaign. Second, while many players (especially those in *Fantasy Hero* games) enjoy creating tougher-than-nails,

tall-as-a-man women characters that like to "hang with the guys," Calamity Jane actually *was* such a woman. Players could use her as an inspiration to create a dashing female "frontier character" of their very own.

Calamity Jane Canary is a frontierswoman; a person who avoids civilized places and occupations in favor of wild places filled with wild men and danger. As such the GM can adapt her with relatively minor changes to any genre where he can focus upon rough-edged frontier areas. A futuristic Calamity Jane found during the turmoil of the Xenovore invasion (as detailed in *Alien Wars*) might work as the foul-mouthed weapons officer of a human privateer starship operating behind enemy lines in the Anti-Spinward Corridor. A *Fantasy Hero* Jane could be a warrior, scout, and horseman available for hire to PCs heading out into an orc and ogre-infested wilderness. A *Pulp Hero* Calamity might work as an infamous professional hunter and guide in Rhodesia, perhaps the only woman big game hunter in Africa!

Although the historical Calamity Jane Canary would have been distinctively out of place in the dark urban world of Dark Champions, a slightly modified version could work quite well as a *rural* vigilante operating near a small Western metropolis like Carson City, Nevada or Santa Fe. She'd also be suitable as a mercenary working in Central Africa, Central Asia, or other such lawless places.

**Appearance:** Calamity Jane is nearly six feet tall, "thickset" with masculine features. She has long brown hair that she keeps tightly wound in a bun underneath her hat. She prefers to wear men's clothing, generally the sort of rugged gear common to cowboys and frontiersmen of her time: denim pants, work shirts, leather vests, and chaps. When she's out in the brush for long periods of time she wears fringed buckskins with knee-high moccasins. Although she's been known to wear a union private's hat, Calamity more commonly wears a wide brimmed prospector's of the type that is quite common in the Black Hills area.

# HAROLD DAVIDSON

## THE PROSTITUTES' PADRE



"It's all very well for you people, you only have to listen to me once. But what about the poor lions? They hear the same spiel four times a day. One of them had me cornered yesterday. I don't know what they will do to me tonight."

—Rector Harold Francis Davidson, who was later eaten by said lion

Accused by the Anglican Church of neglecting his duties so he could consort with street-walkers, the infamous Reverend Harold Francis Davidson, better known to the citizens of London's West End as "The Prostitutes' Padre," was found guilty and unfrocked following the most sensational English church trial of the twentieth century. Devastated, the-none-too-stable former professional actor and child prodigy used his newfound celebrity to become a sideshow attraction. In an attempt to plead his innocence to the general public he engaged in an escalating series of more and more dangerous publicity stunts resulting in his mauling by a lion in 1932. An expert self-promoter to the very last, his final words were "Don't miss... the final edition."

### RECTOR HAROLD FRANCIS DAVIDSON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
18	CON	16	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
13	COM	2	12-	
5	PD	3		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
40	END	2		
27	STUN	3		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 64</b>

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

Cost	Powers	END
5	<i>Year-Round Night Owl:</i> Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Cold, Intense Heat; Diminished Sleep: only has to sleep 12 hours per week)	0

### Perks

- 1 Fringe Benefits: Right to Marry
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank: Priest

### Talents

- 5 Eidetic Memory
- 9 Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)

### Skills

- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 5 Cramming
- 3 High Society 13-
- 3 AK: London 13-
- 3 KS: British Literature 13-
- 3 KS: The Bible 13-
- 3 KS: Young Women 13-
- 1 Language: French (basic conversation; English is Native)
- 3 Language: Latin (completely fluent)
- 3 Oratory 13-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 PS: Actor 13-
- 3 PS: Play Chess 13-
- 3 PS: Rector 13-
- 3 Seduction 13-

## HAROLD FRANCIS DAVIDSON PLOT SEEDS

**I Am Innocent:** Back during the Great War Chaplain Davidson saved the life of one of the PCs; now he's calling in a favor. Condemned and defrocked by the Church of England, he begs the detective PC and his friends to help him clear his name. Unfortunately, some rather powerful men would rather things stay *exactly* as they are....

**The Fox and the Wolf:** For years the mildly perverse Reverend Davidson has been one of the PCs' contacts on the Strip, where the "Prostitutes' Padre" has his little storefront church. Now, with a serial rapist and murder loose on the streets of Hudson City, the diminutive minister has vanished. Is he the Strip Strangler... or one of the Strangler's victims?

**Tavern Brawl:** While wandering through a deep forest the PCs, a small group of diverse *Fantasy Hero* adventurers, stumbled upon a wandering monk named Brother Francis. He seemed like a descent fellow and together they traveled to the rowdy frontier town of Rickter's Vale, where they've rented a small room at the infamous Hand of Doom taproom (see *Fantasy Hero Battlegrounds*). Unfortunately, after the monk got a few drinks into him his hand slipped onto a surly barmaid's posterior and....

- 3 Shadowing 13-
- 5 Stealth 12-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 2 Survival (Urban) 13-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 81**

**Total Cost: 145**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: Anglican Priest's Garb (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 5 Dependence: must smoke a cigar every Hour or suffer Incompetence (-1 to Skill Rolls) (Very Common)
- 5 Hunted: Battling Flora the Landlady 8- (Less Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 5 Money: Poor
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Prostitutes (Common, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: eccentric womanizing fallen priest, 11- (Extreme)
- 20 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 145**

**Background/History:** The story of Reverend Harold Francis Davidson, Rector of Stiffkey (whose residents rather understandably insist on pronouncing it "Stewkey"), gifted child prodigy, professional showman, sexual predator, fakir, and lion tamer is so astonishing that if it were presented to a publisher in novel form today it would undoubtedly be rejected as too fantastic. Born in 1875, Harold was a child prodigy with a genius level intellect and a photographic memory that allowed him not only to memorize enormous amounts of literature but to perform a variety of almost inhuman feats. For example, Harold could beat five opponents at chess simultaneously while blindfolded. He was also born hyperactive, only requiring about two hours of sleep a day to function effectively. This combination of odd abilities allowed him to excel at his two chosen professions, actor and minister. He loved the theater dearly, spending so much time working on stage productions that his graduation from Oxford required five years rather than the usual three.

After leaving college Harold was appointed Rector of Stiffkey, a tiny burg near Wells in Norfolk. He married a respectable girl named Molly who give birth to the first of their four children in 1907. That Harold should have become the father of four children was something of a surprise to the villagers (and possibly his wife as well) since he seldom spent more than one day out of the week in his parish. The locals joked that it was best not to die on a summer's Monday in Stiffkey lest the body rot before the rector could officiate over the funeral.

Indeed, Reverend Davidson spent a vast majority of his time in London's West End, commuting back to the countryside on Sundays to perform his church duties. He seems to have been irresistibly drawn to the theaters, the teahouses, and the fallen young girls that populated the district. He could frequently be found ogling actresses in

their dressing rooms between acts, a pastime that led to him being banned from most area theaters. Undeterred, he began to troll the streets of London for pretty young girls between the ages of 14 and 20 who seemed to be destined for lives of prostitution. Arguing that he was doing God's work in dissuading them from taking up a life of sin, Harold seems to have struck up friendships with roughly 1,500 of them between the years of 1921 and 1931, earning himself the moniker "The Prostitutes' Padre."

Harold served with distinction as an army chaplain in the First World War. He returned home in 1919 to find his wife pregnant by another man. Although they briefly considered divorce the unorthodox couple resolved to stay married in name for the good of their children, but their romantic relationship was effectively over. Rumors of this unusual arrangement spread throughout the village but Reverend Davidson was seldom there to hear them. Instead he was putting in overtime in the West End consorting with fallen women... especially those with a really good set of teeth, which he seems to have found extraordinarily attractive. He became emotionally (although possibly not physically) involved with a variety of cute yet syphilitic teen tarts of both minimal intellect and minimal virtue, any number of whom could be found dwelling with his wife, her bastard children, and himself at their Stiffkey residence or hopping across the Channel with him under assumed names to Paris. He also ran up a number of rather distressing debts in London, the most noteworthy of which was owed to a fearsome landlady known to West Enders as "Battling Flora." She would eventually track him all over England in her neverending quest to collect her back rent.

Back in Norfolk, tongues were wagging, but as a staunch believer in not preaching to the already converted, Reverend Davidson put more and more energy into his ministry to fallen women in London and less and less into his rectory in Stiffkey. Since new women were falling all the time, it seemed only natural that he should concentrate his considerable energies on the West End. By 1932 the good citizens of Stiffkey had had enough of their inattentive and presumably perverse parson. Stories of Harold's bizarre lifestyle at last began to reach the ears of top Church of England officials. In the spring of that year they summoned him to church court where he was charged by Bishop Oliver under the Clergy Discipline Act of 1892 with perversion, adultery, and negligence of duty. In an event that was to become the most celebrated British religious trial of the twentieth century, Harold displayed exceptional eccentricity even for an English parson. He arrived in front of the church courthouse in a taxi, smoking a fat cigar as he held an impromptu press conference during which he signed autographs like a movie star. He publicly defended his life's work as padre to London's prostitutes, claiming that God Himself had ordained that Harold should do His work in the West End.

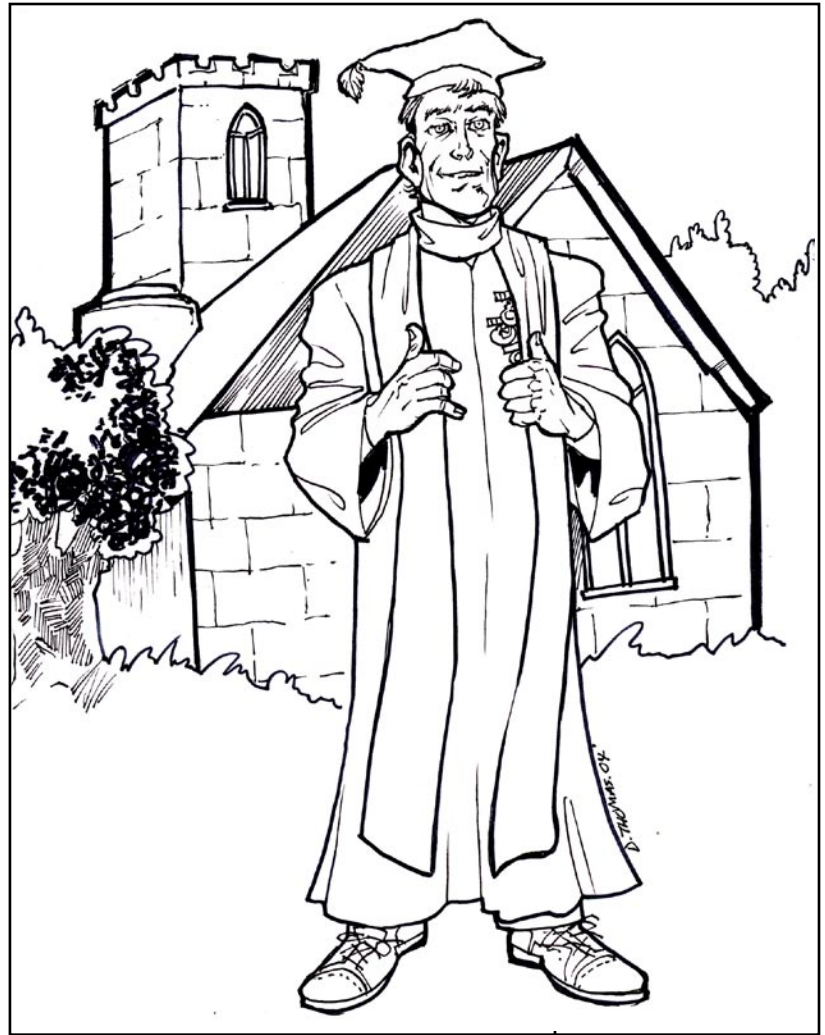
As the juryless trial began the prosecution produced witness after witness who attested to all manner of generally flamboyant yet not overtly

perverse behavior by the padre. At first Davidson appeared to have a good time, especially enjoying the juicier bits of testimony against him. He steadfastly maintained his innocence, even claiming he didn't know what a "buttock" was. But as the trial proceeded Harold became more and more alarmed as increasingly damning and graphic testimony was presented, especially that given by a young prostitute known as Barbara. Davidson loudly proclaimed his innocence as his assistant-counsel brought forth numerous good character witnesses. The icing on the cake, however, was a photograph introduced by the prosecution showing the rector posed beside a naked 14 year-old actress (it was a set up; Harold had been offered 50 pounds by the girl's mother if he would pose with her). He was found guilty and, to his supreme horror, defrocked.

Although devastated by the loss of his parish, Harold was no quitter. The trial had made him a national celebrity. Falling back on his previous training as an actor he exhibited himself in a sideshow in Blackpool while preparing his appeal to the church's court system. Eager curiosity-seekers paid two pence a head to see the disgraced minister studying his law books inside a specially-prepared barrel underneath a banner condemning the Church of England ("The lower he sinks, the greater their crime"). His act proved so popular (and profitable) that the police were forced to shut down the sideshow when the crowds became unmanageable.

When his appeal rather predictably failed, the former reverend chose to divide his time between gatecrashing high-level Anglican functions and staging a series of more and more extreme stunts in theaters, fairs, cinemas, and the occasional nudist camp. He staged a hunger strike in his barrel only to be arrested for attempted suicide. He then displayed himself reading the Bible while engaged in a number of bizarre Hindu-type stunts: frozen in a block of ice, lying atop a bed of nails in a loincloth, or roasting in a glass oven while a mechanical Satan jabbed him in the rear with a pitchfork.

All the same, public interest in Harold's plight eventually began to wane, forcing him to concoct a new act based upon the biblical account of Daniel. This must have taken extraordinary courage, because he was deathly afraid of animals. He began his act, entitled *A Modern Daniel In The Lion's Den*, by delivering a tirade of abuse against the Church's leaders while standing outside a lion's cage. After delivering his speech he stepped inside the enclosure that housed a pair of particularly lazy lions named Freddie and Toto. Although normally quite placid, it seems that after weeks of having this particular clerical cuckoo invade their domestic nest the feline couple at last had enough. One fatal night in Skegness, Freddie, who had no known views on the Church of England, "got the rector by the neck and carried him round the cage like a cat would a mouse" as one eyewitness put it. His neck broken, Harold lingered for a few days before finally succumbing to his wounds. It was a fittingly absurd yet somehow appropriate ending for the man who had provided England with so much entertainment



There's a slim possibility Davidson was innocent of any meaningful wrongdoing. In 2004 his granddaughter Kathryn Collier launched an exhaustive investigation to clear her unconventional ancestor's name. She uncovered previously unreleased letters and documents that seem to indicate Davidson was framed in court by unscrupulous private investigators determined to gain a conviction at any cost. Clearly, the picture of him with the youthful actress was a setup and it's possible the detectives paid Barbara for her testimony. As of early 2006, the Church of England has refused to reopen the case.

**Personality/Motivation:** Lust, pity, misplayed religiosity, and an understandable fascination with good teeth in an age where dental hygiene was still in a primitive state are the prime motivations of Reverend Harold Francis Davidson. He personally believes he's doing the Lord's work ministering to attractive young women who are in danger of walking straight down the Devil's road to perdition. Unselfconscious, seemingly guileless, and almost innocent in his corruption it never occurs to him that he may actually be leading many of them down a road they might not otherwise tread.

Rector Davidson is deeply eccentric in a way only an Englishman could possibly aspire to be.

## DR. EDWARD DRAX FREE DD, ANGLICAN MENACE

Poor Harold wasn't the only publicly-funded menace birthed by the Church of England. More than a century earlier in 1808 Edward Drax Free, the Rector of Sutton from 1808 to 1830, added new depths of low behavior to the holy office. A petty thief who filched the lead off of his church's roof, Free kept an enormous stash of pre-Victorian pornography in his rooms. He allowed his pigs to dig up the church's graveyard so that they could feast on the corpses buried within. He got into fistfights with numerous members of his parish when he was sober or, more often, when he was drunk. He also impregnated any housekeeper foolish enough to agree to work for him, producing five illegitimate children in rapid succession. When the authorities finally came to remove him from his station they quickly found themselves pinned down by a hail of gunfire from the rectory.

He constantly smokes long, thick cigars that he waves about in his right hand for dramatic effect. He quotes the Bible, Shakespeare, William Blake, and Chaucer at great length in his daily conversation without even seeming to realize he's doing it. He's proud, egotistical, self-righteous, inadvertently lewd, and ostentatious. A thespian to the last, he spent the final year of his life as a kind of sad public freakshow, speaking out against the corruption of the Anglican Church to whoever would listen.

**Quote:** "I shall greet them with a holy kiss. Especially the young and pretty ones, as the morals of homely girls are in far less peril."

**Powers/Tactics:** Reverend Davidson is a player. He just plain knows distraught young women of the sort that London's pitiless slums turn out in astounding numbers. After approaching a likely girl on the street, he first compares the unsuspecting lass to a famous film star like Greta Garbo. He then invites her to a show or to dine with him, or alternately gives her a small present. After the initial introductions he begins to explain to her the nature of God's love for her that, as one of His appointed emissaries upon this good earth, Rector Davidson is only too willing to share with her. The predictable result of this showering of divine passion upon the souls of impressionable young women from a charming, fatherly older man is... well, predictable.

Davidson is quite at home in London, able to stalk his amorous prey throughout the city's streets with little fear of unwarranted attention. Should he run into some sort of unforeseen trouble, he'll try to use his Fringe Benefit: Priest and *Conversation Skill* to talk his way out of any potential trouble. He's also comfortable in the theater, able to rub elbows with London's upper class in spite of his seedy reputation and obvious poverty.

In addition to his numerous and considerable skills, Rector Davidson seems to have been born with an odd variety of extraordinary abilities. He needs very little sleep and seems not to be effected by extremes of either heat or cold. A photographic memory supplements his nearly superhuman intelligence, allowing him to quote from the Bible and many works of literature word for word. He's also ambidextrous.

**Campaign Use:** Every major city has somebody like Reverend Davidson. Although they may once have been respectable or started out their careers with the best of intentions, eventually the allures of the urban abyss claim their souls. Davidson is a background character typical of this type of fallen religious figure, be he a drunken minister, a lecher-

ous priest, a thieving monk, or an adulterous imam. Their usefulness in any given campaign is partly as tragicomic relief, partly as an easy source of knowledge about the darker side of the city's nightlife.

Reverend Davidson fits particularly well into a *Dark Champions* vigilante campaign as an NPC that the PCs won't feel at all bad about leaning on for information now and again. Alternately he could be portrayed as a more innocent figure — a misunderstood outcast holy man genuinely trying to help the city's prostitutes without any personal motives whatsoever. He wouldn't be out of place in some *Champions* settings, either, such as Vibora Bay, and in more serious *Teen Champions* campaigns you could turn him into a creepy sort of villain who wants to prey on the young heroines. He'd make a great Contact.

Given the time in which he lived, Rector Davidson would make an interesting encounter for *Pulp Hero* characters visiting London in the 1930s. In a *Fantasy Hero* campaign Davidson could be a fallen priest (or not fallen, if you prefer to engage the PCs in church politics). The heroes might meet him as he makes a leisurely pilgrimage to one of the realm's holy places, taking time out to entertain the villagers with his acting skills as he quietly seduces their daughters. The PCs in a *Star Hero* campaign set in the Terran Empire might have to rescue the good Reverend from the planet New Canaan, where his antics would infuriate the exceptionally religious local population.

**Appearance:** Harold Francis Davidson is a small, neatly turned out man with closely cropped white hair and an engaging smile. Standing at a diminutive 5ft. 3ins., he is slight of build with a kind, handsome face. Although Rector Davidson always wears the distinctive white collar with black shirt of an Anglican minister he accentuates it with conservative black or brown woolen dress suits. He occasionally also wears flowing white robes to which he attaches the three medals he won during the First World War.

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# ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS



“The historian must not try to know what is truth, if he values his honesty; for if he cares for his truths, he is certain to falsify facts.”

—Henry Adams

Back in the nineteenth century, Andrew Jackson Davis, popularly known as the “Poughkeepsie Seer,” was one of Victorian America’s foremost occultists. A prolific writer of dozens of books on the paranormal, a renowned psychic healer, inspiration for the Children’s Lyceum school movement, and a proponent of many American utopian experiments, Davis has been called “the John the Baptist of Modern Spiritualism” because his early writings helped lay the groundwork for the founding of the Spiritualist religion. He anticipated Jazz Age American psychic Edgar Cayce by giving effective medical diagnosis while in a hypnotic trance and New Age psychic John Edwards by communing with the dead. He claimed to be able to leave his body, journeying both forward and backward in history to return with the wisdom of the ancients as well as the secrets of the future. This “astral time travel” inspired him to mix social idealism with his mystical writings, influencing the thoughts of such better-remembered historical figures as crusading urban reformer Albert Brisbane, communal settlement founder Thomas Lake Harris, and early horror writer Edgar Allan Poe.

## ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
15	COM	3	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
7	REC	4		
30	END	0		
36	STUN	8		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 96</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”  
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
22	<i>Clairvoyant Powers:</i> Multipower, 50-point reserve; all slots Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	
1u	1) <i>Precognitive Dreaming:</i> Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups, Precognition); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Precognition Only (-1), Only Through Dreams/Mesmerism (-1) 5	
1u	2) <i>Clairsentience:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), One Sense Only (Normal Sight; -¼)	2
6	<i>Perceive Disease Auras:</i> Detect Diseased Organs And Similar Medical Conditions (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze; Concentration (0 DCV throughout use; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0
91	<i>Astral Double:</i> Duplication (create 396-point astral self), Altered Duplicates (100%; +1); Concentration (0 DCV throughout Duplication process and recombining process; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Feedback (STUN only; -½) 0	
20	<i>Astral Bond:</i> Mind Link (between Davis and his Astral Double), Psychic Bond, Any Distance/Dimensional	0

**EMANUEL  
SWEDENBORG  
(1688-1772)**

A Swedish philosopher, theologian, chemist, anatomist, and mystic who was fluent in eleven languages, Swedenborg devoted the first half of his life to scientific investigations. Frustrated, he turned his full attention to theology and metaphysics, exploring the mystical experience through the use of rational scientific method. Among the most popular of the more than 50 books he wrote during his life are *Heaven And Hell* and *Earths In Universe*. His spiritual writings influenced Emerson, Goethe, Henry James, Dostoevsky, and Blake. His books have been translated into more than thirty languages.

**Perks**

11

Contact: Emanuel Swedenborg 15-  
(extremely useful Skills or Resources, Very Good relationship)

2

Reputation: skilled spiritualist and psychic  
(among Victorian intellectuals) 8-, +2/+2d6

**Skills**

3

Conversation 13-

4

KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-

4

KS: Hidden History 14-

4

KS: Literature 14-

5

KS: Philosophy 15-

3

KS: Spiritualism 13-

3

KS: Supernatural Evil 13-

3

Oratory 13-

3

Paramedics 13-

5

Persuasion 14-

3

PS: Writer 12-

3

SS: Medicine 13-

3

Seduction 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 200

Total Cost: 296

**75+ Disadvantages**

5

Physical Limitation: Nearsighted (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

5

Psychological Limitation: Victorian Eccentric (Uncommon, Moderate)

15

Psychological Limitation: Pacifist (Uncommon, Total)

15

Reputation: Eccentric, 14-

5

Social Limitation: cultural and religious revolutionary (Occasionally, Minor)

176

Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 296

**ASTRAL DOUBLE**

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0	STR	-10	9-	Lift 25 kg; 0d6
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
15	COM	3	12-	
6	PD	6		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	4		
30	END	0		
33	STUN	10		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 98</b>

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

Cost	Powers	END
15	<i>Magical Staff Of Healing</i> : Healing BODY 4d6, Resurrection; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)	6
53	<i>Astral Form</i> : Desolidification (affected by magic), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½)	0
27	<i>Astral Travel</i> : Elemental Control, 54-point powers	
27	<i>Astral Flight</i> : Flight 18", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
50	<i>Journey Through Time</i> : Extra-Dimensional Movement (Time Travel, any time or physical location)	8
6	<i>Astral Defense</i> : Power Defense (6 points)	0
45	<i>Astral Form</i> : Life Support (Total)	0
6	<i>Perceive Disease Auras</i> : Detect Diseased Organs And Similar Medical Conditions (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze; Concentration (0 DCV throughout use; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	0

**Perks**

11

Contact: Emanuel Swedenborg 15-  
(extremely useful Skills or Resources, Very Good relationship)

**Talents**

20

Universal Translator 13-

**Skills**

3

Conversation 13-

4

KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-

4

KS: Hidden History 13-

4

KS: Literature 14-

5

KS: Philosophy 15-

3

KS: Spiritualism 13-

4

KS: Supernatural Evil 13-

3

Paramedics 13-

5

Persuasion 14-

3

SS: Medicine 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 298**  
**Total Cost: 396**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 5 Physical Limitation: Nearsighted (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 5 Psychological Limitation: Victorian Eccentric (Uncommon, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Pacifist (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Susceptibility: to locations devastated by violence, takes 3d6 instantly (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Evil Magic (Uncommon)
- 261 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 396**

**Background/History:** Andrew Jackson Davis was born on August 11, 1826, in the tiny hamlet of Blooming Grove, New York. The son of an uneducated, hard-drinking farmer, weaver, and shoemaker, he was largely raised by his sickly, deeply religious mother who reputedly exhibited strong visionary powers. The Davis family moved frequently from one small upstate New York town to another, enduring a life of miserable poverty. Andrew received only about five months of formal education during his entire childhood. He reportedly heard disembodied voices before he had even reached puberty, showing signs of clairvoyance quite early in life.

At the age of 15, Davis was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Poughkeepsie, New York (which is where his later nickname “The Poughkeepsie Seer” came from). He showed little aptitude for cobbling, however, and left to work in a general store. He was a failure at that job as well. At age 17, Davis became interested in hypnotism after attending some lectures by “Professor” J. S. Grimes, a mesmerist visiting Poughkeepsie. Grimes tried to hypnotize Davis, but with no results. Soon afterwards Davis was successfully “magnetized” (hypnotized) by William Levingston, a local tailor interested in mesmerism and trance states. Davis was an extraordinarily adept hypnotic subject, showing such a “rare clairvoyance” that Levingston gave up his tailoring business to devote all of his time to developing Davis’s abilities. Using the young man’s clairvoyant powers to cure diseases, Levingston made effective medical diagnoses while Davis was “magnetized.” With his “spirit eyes,” seemingly in the middle of the forehead, Davis reportedly could read newspapers blindfolded, see activity in the next room, and predict coming events with a surprising level of accuracy. While in a trance, Davis would see human bodies as transparent, reading the auras of each organ with its own special luminosity, which was greatly reduced in cases of disease. Together the two men opened a successful “clairvoyant” clinic in Poughkeepsie.

Davis served as Levingston’s clairvoyant hypnotic subject for two years, a situation that greatly benefitted both men. But in March 1844, Davis had a visionary experience of “psychic flight through space” that forever changed his life, transforming him overnight from a psychic curiosity to an occult philosopher-prophet charged with the salvation of the human race. Flying freely over the



Catskill Mountains, across the Hudson River, then finally through both space and time, Davis’s “Astral Double” traveled far into the past to meet with the ancient Greek physician Galen (129-199 AD) as well as the eighteenth century Swedish visionary and spiritual philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Galen gave Davis a powerful magic staff of healing, while Swedenborg promised to instruct and guide him for the rest of his physical life. Thereafter, Davis considered himself personally guided in his steps by the Swedish mystic.

In 1845, Davis abandoned healing in favor of writing, at first still relying on hypnotism. He began traveling extensively, giving a series of 157 public

## ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS SEER PLOT SEEDS

**Takofanes:** Davis has had a vision of the future in which Takofanes the Archlich destroys much of the city of Boston, transforming its inhabitants into flesh-eating zombie servants. Davis sends his Astral Double to warn the PCs, but what can mere mortals do to stop the Undying Lord?

**Caliburn Vanishes:** The Vibora Bay hero Robert Caliburn has gone missing, and Andrew Jackson Davis knows exactly why — he's been thrown back in time to the nineteenth century! Davis's precognitive powers enable him to understand the true nature of Caliburn's role in the war between Heaven and Hell. While he helps the befuddled hero get back to the twenty-first century, Davis's Astral Double travels into the future to recruit the PCs' help. If they cannot figure out a way to return Caliburn to his rightful time, the war between the Angelic and the Demonic may occur ahead of schedule, with disastrous consequences for mankind!

**Of Monsters And Demons:** Davis has had a vision of the future in which DEMON has regained control of the dread Basilisk Orb that it lost in the 1960s. To prevent this from occurring, he sends his Astral Double to urge the PCs to retrieve the Orb from its secret hiding place before DEMON's agents once again recover it. Unfortunately, this ancient artifact is currently hidden in Zor-gatha's cave on Monster Island....

lectures in New York City alone. These orations, which touched on a wide variety scientific, historical, and philosophical topics, were periodically given in languages that the uneducated young man had no ability to speak, such as ancient Hebrew, Arabic, and Greek. A Bridgeport physician, Dr. S.S. Lyon, was his "magnetizer" at these sessions, while a Universalist minister, the Rev. William Fishbough, served as reporter and scribe, copying down Davis's trance discourses word for word. Edgar Allan Poe occasionally attended Davis's sermons; so did the utopian socialist social reformer Albert Brisbane (the cofounder of Brook Farm) and another utopian dreamer, the religious communal settlement organizer Thomas Lake Harris. All of them were greatly influenced by the powerful, odd young man who seemingly had the ability to commune with the distant past.

In 1847, Davis's trance revelations were published as *The Principles Of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, And A Voice To Mankind*, an exhaustive 800-page anthology of occult history, philosophy, science, and mysticism that echoed with the wisdom of the long dead Swedenborg. *The Principles Of Nature* began with a description of the creation of the Universe from "liquid fire," curiously foreshadowing modern "Big Bang" cosmogonies. It then rather shockingly described the history of human religion from God's own perspective. Davis discussed the destiny of the human soul, rejecting the idea of Hell as well as the unique authority of the Bible. In fact, *The Principles Of Nature* directly attacked conventional religion, displaying an entirely unique, radical social and religious spirit. An incredible success in its day, the book went through 34 editions in less than 30 years.

From 1847 to 1849, Davis published the magazine *Univercoelum And Spiritual Philosopher*, which promoted his views. In 1848, when the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, near Rochester, announced the mysterious rapping that launched the Spiritualist movement, Davis immediately interpreted these phenomena in the light of his philosophy, becoming the leading spokesman of this new religion as well as its chief theologian. From 1850 to 1855, Davis labored on his first major work without relying on hypnotism, the massive five volume treatise called *The Great Harmonia*, providing an intellectual framework for Spiritualism that gave the new religion much of its phraseology and cosmology.

Outside of Spiritualist circles, *The Great Harmonia* had an enormous influence on nineteenth century American nonconformist religious, social, educational, and medical beliefs. After physical death, Davis believed, spirits ascend to a level reflecting the degree to which they have lived in harmony with universal Divine Law. They progress through a series of six spheres above the Earth to greater and greater levels of divinity. He called the highest of these spheres the Summerland — a term that was to become the Spiritualist name for heaven. In the same way, too, Davis believed Earth was constantly evolving, becoming better and better with passing years. His thoughts reflected

the unfailingly optimistic mood of most nineteenth century dissident utopian thinkers. In 1863, he gave a lecture in New York idyllically describing the afterlife education of deceased children in garden schools called "Lyceums," a name used by the popular adult education lecture programs of the time. This lecture so motivated some of his listeners that they began to found similar schools here on Earth, starting the Children's Lyceum movement. The Children's Lyceums were based on Davis's conviction that "a child is the repository of infinite possibilities," bearing the "image" of an "imperishable and perfect being." This scholastic belief foreshadowed much later progressive educational theory, such as that practiced in modern Montessori schools, which aims to draw out a child's innate potential rather than forcing knowledge through rote memorization.

Davis exhibited radical views in his personal life as well. In 1848, he married Catherine DeWolfe Dodge, a wealthy divorcée some 20 years his senior, whom he called his "Spiritual Sister." She died five years later, in November 1853. In 1855, he married another divorcée, Mary Fenn Love, an active Spiritualist and inveterate campaigner for women's rights. She sought escape from an oppressive marriage by embracing Spiritualism, feminism, and, well, Davis, who promptly claimed that marriage is only valid between soul mates. Those trapped in non-spiritual unions have the right, possibly even the duty, to seek divorce. When genuine soul mates come together, Davis claimed, they have the freedom to determine whether their partnership will be temporal or eternal. These radical views of love and marriage, some of the most controversial in America at the time, were tested in 1884 when Davis sought to divorce Mary on the grounds that he now realized they were not true soul mates. Davis defended his action at length in his autobiography *Beyond The Valley* (1885), but the divorce greatly harmed his reputation. In 1885, he married his third (and final) wife, Della E. Markham.

Davis published more than 30 other books after completing *The Great Harmonia*, covering such subjects as philosophy, cosmology, health, and the afterlife. Like *The Great Harmonia*, they were no longer written with the aid of "magnetism," showing Davis's desire to distance himself from his original 1840s mesmerism. He also wrote two autobiographies, *The Magic Staff* (1857) and its sequel, *Beyond The Valley* (1885), which explained a great deal about his mystical abilities as well as his beliefs. In 1878, Davis dissociated himself from the Spiritualist movement to form the short-lived First Harmonial Associated Church of New York. Though a failure, this departure from the movement he was fundamental in founding was an expression of his disillusionment with the majority of Spiritualists, whom he felt were more interested in sensational séance room spectacles than achieving philosophical depth. In 1886, Davis took a medical degree from the United States Medical College in New York. He moved to Boston, where he began practicing homeopathic medicine from a small occult bookstore. There, Davis sold books while prescrib-

ing herbal remedies to his patients. He became a close friend of Marcellus Ayer, founder of the First Spiritual Temple, serving with Ayer on a committee for promoting the work of Professor Joseph Rhodes Buchanan, a pioneer researcher in psychic object reading. Davis spent the remainder of his life quietly practicing alternative medicine, dying in his Boston home on January 13, 1910.

**Personality/Motivation:** Andrew Jackson Davis is the quintessential New England mystic, whose ideas combine the transcendentalism of an Emerson or a Thoreau with the utopian visions of the Victorian period. Like many idealistic philosophers of his time, Davis believes personal and social activism is inseparable from spiritual growth. He sees the metaphysical realm as continuous with natural, moral law, governed by its own rules and therefore approachable through reason when combined with self-discipline — though as his grasp of both is minimal at best. Like many Victorians, his understanding of the scientific method seems hopelessly muddled when compared to that of our sophisticated modern understanding. Yet a lot of these beliefs, which are so demonstratively false in our age, seemed to work as fact during his time period.

Both Davis and his double are pacifists sworn to never raise a hand against another living being, though this does not prevent them from assisting well-intentioned PCs who don't share their beliefs.

**Quote:** “It is a truth that spirits commune with one another while one is in the body and the other in the higher spheres — and this, too, when the person in the body is unconscious of the influx, and hence cannot be convinced of the fact; and this truth will ere long present itself in the form of a living demonstration. And the world will hail with delight the ushering in of that era when the interiors of men will be opened, and the spiritual communion will be established.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Andrew Jackson Davis is a powerful mystic with a variety of sublime abilities that, when combined with his skills, enable him to effectively diagnose ailments in an age when medicine was almost synonymous with butchery and quackery. He can even “look through” walls or other solid objects up to the distance of his normal (albeit nearsighted) vision. While mesmerized in a trance state, he experiences visions of the future, which he can then send his nearly invulnerable duplicate astral body to investigate. His knowledge of the occult, supernatural evil, and the “hidden” history of man is considerable, while his high intelligence level makes him a valuable advisor on nearly any magical or spiritual subject.

Davis's transparent “Astral Double” can move across the time stream with relative ease, speak any human language, fly through the air, heal the injured, and even resurrect the dead. While invulnerable to most forms of physical and energy attack (save those made by another astral being), the Astral Double is vulnerable to attacks made by evil spellcasters, whom it generally goes to great lengths to avoid. Likewise, it is disrupted

by the lingering presence of suffering that exists on major battlefields, in concentration camps, and similar locations.

When seized by terrible visions of the future, Davis views it as his spiritual duty to send his Astral Double through time to assist those forces capable of defeating the evil in his dreams *before* those visions come to pass. He also sends his Astral Double back in time to meet with the great eighteenth century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (who understands the double to be some sort of angel). Swedenborg is perhaps the only historical figure Davis is aware of who can advise him on the proper use of his powers.

There are some fundamental personality differences between Davis and his Astral Double. The actual Davis is prone to appetite, infidelity, and bombast — traits his more noble astral self seems to totally lack. On the other hand, the double lacks not only Davis's “lust for life,” but his literary and oratory skills as well. Though both possess the same medical, philosophical, and spiritual abilities, Davis cannot directly heal injuries in the same manner as his double, who in turn lacks the Clairsentience that makes Davis so perceptive. The two are most effective when operating together at the same place and time, though this seldom occurs.

**Campaign Use:** Although certainly useful as an eccentric NPC in any Victorian Hero or Western Hero setting, Andrew Jackson Davis can be the harbinger of bad news for any mystically-inclined characters or campaigns taking place in twentieth century North America, preferably in New England. His Astral Double's job is to show up, warn the PCs that he has had a vision of terrible supernatural disaster, and then be as helpful as possible during the ensuing adventure. Davis will recall his Double for consultation should he conveniently have any further visions, providing the GM with an expedient way of helping the PCs along with more information should they get stuck. He can also scout both the past as well as the future, if necessary and appropriate. Davis would make a valuable Contact for a hero who wants an odd “guardian angel” to periodically look over his shoulder.

Another roleplaying possibility is to use Davis as a charlatan, madman, or some bizarre combination of the two. All you have to do is replace his actual psychic powers with Skills like Acting, Bribery, Concealment, Forgery, Gambling, Lockpicking, PS: Confidence Man, Sleight Of Hand, and Streetwise. Should Davis be deluded or deranged rather than (or in addition to) being a criminal, give him the 20 point Disadvantage *Psychological Limitation: Deranged (Common, Total)*. In either case this “deviant” Davis acts more or less like he would normally, except that his abilities either produce no results or the results are an elaborate forgery.

Davis makes a good NPC in just about any campaign or setting that features mystic or psychic powers — possibly without his ever having to leave the twentieth century! Because his Precognition allows him to see possible cataclysmic events far into the future, he could potentially send his Astral

Continued from last page

#### A Frozen Future Fate:

Davis has had a vision of the future in which the Circle of the Scarlet Moon has gained control of all the cold-powered supers in the world by casting a complex spell at the Earth's South Pole. He sends his Astral Double to warn the Trismegistus Council... but all of them have gone missing! He then goes to the PCs for assistance. Can they rescue the Council while preventing the Circle from dominating some of the world's mightiest mortals?

Double into *Champions* or *Star Hero* settings. In *Cyber Hero*, perhaps the Astral Double learns how to merge with the Cybernet and become a true “ghost in the machine.”

It should be noted that Davis doesn’t see himself or his abilities as “unscientific;” his psychic powers largely work off arcane energies drawn from the past and future. Thus, a skilled medium, Voodoo priest, or occultist may be able to summon his time-traveling astral double, possibly attracting the attention of a *past* Davis even while the *present* Davis is still alive. With Weird Science or super-science, it might even be possible to capture or harm his Astral Double.

With his ability to travel through time Davis could easily appear in a *Fantasy Hero* campaign, posing as a helpful emissary from some benevolent god. He could also appear to warn *Ninja Hero* characters in a Victorian Wuxia campaign of the coming Japanese invasion (visions of future fascism appall Davis). Finally, this peaceful and benevolent man might manifest as a mentor to a mystically-inclined *Teen Champions* character with an interest in the Victorian period.

**Appearance:** Andrew Jackson Davis is an amiable-looking man of a medium build with a full beard, brown shoulder length hair, and a pleasant, almost mischievous smile. He wears a well-made brown suit with a silk cravat, all tailored in the early Vic-

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The Harbinger of Health, 1861  
A Stellar Key to the Summer Land, 1867  
Beyond the Valley, 1885  
The Children’s Progressive Lyceum, 1893

torian style, as well as a pair of golden spectacles that glint constantly in bright sunlight. Andrew is prone to making nervous, exaggerated hand movements when he speaks, often slapping the back of his right hand into the palm of his left to punctuate a particularly important point. His semitransparent Astral Double is identical in appearance, save for its tendency to hover slightly off of the ground.

# ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE



“Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who ever have been, and ever shall be, animated by the same passions, and thus they necessarily have the same results.”

—Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Eleanor of Aquitaine was heiress of the duchy of Aquitaine, one of the greatest fiefs in medieval Europe with lands extending throughout southwestern France. A handsome, regal queen who was also widely regarded as a devious, witty, and intelligent statesman, Eleanor’s court was a trendsetter in the medieval world, known for its sophistication and luxury. Heavily influenced by the Spanish courts of the Moors, it gave patronage to poets and troubadours, becoming the prototype “Court of Love” which helped spawn the 12<sup>th</sup> century French medieval renaissance.

After an unsuccessful marriage to King Louise VII of France (they quarreled over military tactics during The Second Crusade), Eleanor married the handsome young Prince Henry of Anjou, who shortly thereafter became King Henry II of England. The only woman to ever become both the queen of France and England, she bore Henry eight children, notably King Richard “the Lionheart” of England and the infamous King John “Lackland” of England. After a falling out with her husband, Eleanor led several rebellious sons in abortive uprising that resulted in a fifteen-year imprisonment inside of various fortified nunneries. After his death, she embarked on a dizzying series of journeys to cement her enormous family’s control over the royalty of Western Europe through arranged marriages for her numerous royal grandchildren. Widely respected as “The Grandmother of Europe,” Eleanor died comfortable and content at the abbey of Fontevrault in 1204 at the age of 82.

## ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
3	PD	1		Total: 3 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
5	REC	0		
28	END	0		
22	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 41</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”  
Swimming: 2”/4”

Cost	Powers	END
10	<i>Fortunate:</i> Luck 2d6	0

### Perks

10	Contact: King Henry II of England 14- (access to major institutions, significant Contacts of his own, extremely useful Skills or resources)
7	Contact: King Louis of France 12- (access to major institutions, significant Contacts of his own, very useful Skills or resources)
10	Contact: Richard the Lionhearted 15- (significant Contacts of his own, useful Skills or resources, slavishly loyal)
7	Contact: John “Lackland” 12- (access to major institutions, significant Contacts of his own, very useful Skills or resources)
5	Favors: from various European noblemen
15	Fringe Benefits: Head of State; Member of the Aristocracy/Higher Nobility
15	Money: Filthy Rich
9	Reputation: devious stateswoman (among European nobles) 14-, +3/+3d6

### Talents

5	Eidetic Memory
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### Skills

3	Acting 13-
3	Bureaucratics 13-
5	Conversation 14-
3	Cryptography 13-
3	Disguise 13-
7	High Society 15-
4	KS: History 14-
4	KS: Literature 14-

ELEANOR OF  
AQUITAINE PLOT  
SEEDS

**Rescue!** The PCs are on their way back from the Holy Land with Richard the Lionhearted when they're ambushed by forces loyal to Duke Leopold, a noble whom he recently insulted in public. Although the heroes escape, Richard is turned over to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI to be held for ransom. They PCs return to England to face his mother Queen Eleanor with the ransom demands. Will she raise the money, or send them on a daring rescue mission?

**The Favor:** King Henry II, who's having trouble with several of his vassals in Brittany, approaches the PCs with a generous offer of newly conquered lands in Ireland as well as gold if they'll "pacify" a couple of unruly barons for him. If they agree, he'll ask them to perform a little "favor" for him along the way — transport his wife Eleanor from his castle at Chinon to the abbey of Fontevault. Without, he emphasizes, ever letting her out of their sight!

**Maid Of Honor:** The PCs are men-at-arms in the employment of Duke William X "the Toulousan" of Aquitaine, a good-natured if somewhat bumbling nobleman. Unfortunately, word has just reached them that Duke William has died, leaving his vulnerable 15-year-old daughter Eleanor the sole heir to his vast (if unruly) domain. If word gets out, every petty knight in Aquitaine will be out to kidnap and "marry" the young baroness — a fate to which

- 4 KS: Music 14-
- 4 KS: Poetry 14-
- 4 KS: Politics 14-
- 5 Riding 13-
- 9 Persuasion 16-
- 1 Tactics 8-
- 5 Seduction 14-
- 1 WF: Blades
- 3 Linguist
- 4 1) Language: English (idiomatic, literate; French is Native)
- 2 2) Language: German (fluent conversation; literate)
- 3 3) Language: Italian (completely fluent; literate)
- 2 4) Language: Latin (fluent conversation; literate)
- 2 5) Language: Spanish (fluent conversation; literate)
- 3 Traveler
- 2 1) AK: England 13-
- 2 2) AK: France 13-
- 1 3) AK: Holy Land 11-
- 1 4) AK: Italy 11-
- 1 5) AK: Spain 11-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 184**  
**Total Cost: 225**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Enraged: when her husband cheats publicly (Common), go 11-, recover 14-
- 5 Hunted: potential husbands 11- (As Pow, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Ambitious (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Lustful (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: scandalous queen, 11-
- 15 Social Limitation: Woman (Frequently, Major)
- 75 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 225**

**Background/History:** Eleanor of Aquitaine was born in 1122 in the castle of Belin, near Bordeaux, in that loose collection of baronies, principalities, and kingdoms that eventually became modern France. Her father was Duke William X "the Toulousan" of Aquitaine, the son of Eleanor's living grandfather, the infamous, fun-loving Duke William IX "the Troubadour." Her mother, Aenor de Rouchefoucauld, was, somewhat surprisingly, her father's stepsister, the daughter of William IX's third wife, the infamous "Dangereuse" Vicomtesse de Rouchefoucauld.

Properly speaking Eleanor's name was Alia-Aenor, which means "the other Aenor." This rather casual name demonstrates not only the usual royal disinterest surrounding a firstborn daughter but, perhaps, the irregular nature of her scandalously eccentric, slightly inbred family. Her birth was followed in 1125 by that of an equally-casually named younger sister, Petronella (Latin for "younger sister"). The duke and duchess still longed for a son to continue their family name.

In 1127 William and Aenor got what they were praying for with the birth of their son William. Unfortunately, both young William as well as his mother died in 1130, leaving Duke William X a widower with no male heirs. Traumatized by her death, it wasn't until 1136 that he made plans to remarry. Unfortunately, William's vassals had grown rather fond of having a weak, despondent lord on the throne of Aquitaine, a vast realm that stretched from the river Loire to the Pyrenees. Thus, when he went to collect his bride to be, Emma of Limoges, he discovered she'd been kidnapped and "married" (i.e., raped) by the Count of Angouleme. Enraged yet essentially powerless against his own bondsmen, William went off with his neighbor Count Geoffrey of Anjou to make war upon the Dukes of Normandy (a popular French hobby of the time), where he died of food poisoning after eating a bad eel pie.

This left a vulnerable 15-year-old Eleanor the sole heiress to the wealthy semi-nation of Aquitaine. With more success than was usual in the twelfth century, the dead duke's men kept his death a secret from his treacherous vassals as they hurried her north toward Paris, where they hoped she would be safe from sudden violent "marriage" at the hands of an ambitious nobleman. King Louis VI "the Fat" sat (or more accurately lay — he never left his bedchamber) on the throne of France at this time. Though the King of France was nominally their liege-lord based on the allotment of land and titles made after Charlemagne's death several hundred years before, the dukes of Aquitaine traditionally thumbed their noses at the far-less-powerful Capetian kings of then far-smaller France. Yet Louis was nobody's fool. Alerted by Aquitaine's advance men, he could see that fortune had dropped a tasty apple into his meaty palms. He would be the one who selected the next Duke of Aquitaine, and it would *definitely* be one of his own sons.

Unfortunately, Louis's most "promising" heir, Prince Philip Capet, had suffered an untimely death, trampled to death by a herd of swine while drunk in the gutters of Paris. This left his younger

**SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Dagger	+0	RBS	1d6-1	1d6-1	—	6	Can Be Thrown
<b>Armor</b>							
None							
<b>Gear:</b> Various minor useful items							
<b>Clothing:</b> See Appearance							

son, Louis VII, who had been raised by the Church since birth, to continue the family line. Louis dispatched him south directly from his monastery, along with the King's crony the Abbot of Saint-Denis, to meet Eleanor's entourage in route. She was married into the French royal family before they even arrived at court.

The young king and his new queen proved to be temperamentally mismatched. Eleanor was strong-willed, spirited, and independent, while Louis VII was quiet and religious to the point that many considered him a living saint (a status no one ever mistook Eleanor as possessing). Only a few days after their wedding, Louis the Fat passed away, leaving his timid, unprepared son to rule France. Fortunately for the kingdom, Eleanor proved herself to be an extremely enthusiastic queen. Louis, who quickly grew to respect his new bride's intelligence, consulted her frequently on matters of state. During this period she regularly visited her holdings in Aquitaine, consolidating control of her vassals while she began cultivating a unique new ideal which would in short order seize the imagination of educated Europeans everywhere: the court of love.

Eleanor's "Court of Love" was the trendsetter of the medieval Christian world. Known for its sophistication as well as its luxury, Aquitaine's court was heavily influenced by the Spanish courts of the Moors. It sponsored poets and encouraged the art of the troubadours, some of whom were believed to be in love with their patron. In an effort to correct her retainers' unruly ways, she made up mock trials in which the court ladies sat on an elevated platform so they could judge the knights, who read poems of homage to women and acted out proper courting techniques. They were expected to dress elaborately in tunics with flowing sleeves, don pointed shoes, and wear their hair long. All of these activities proved to have a "softening" effect on that growing class of medieval French warriors known as *chevaliers* (or knights), eventually spreading across Europe and England to become part of the idealistic social concept of chivalry. Her influence on modern, romanticized conceptions of medieval behavior cannot be overstated.

In 1144 the Middle Eastern Christian city of Edessa fell to Muslim forces. As a result, its entire population was lost, either massacred or sold into slavery. Inspired by this event and by the preaching of the militant monk St. Bernard of Clairvaux, both Louis and the German Holy Roman Emperor Conrad III organized their own separate military expeditions to the Holy Land. Neither the French nor the Germans had any interest in cooperating with each other, but historians refer to their combined effort as the Second Crusade.

Not one to be left at home while there was adventure to be had, Eleanor offered her husband the services of a thousand well-trained men from Aquitaine — on the condition that she, as well

as 300 hundred of her ladies-in-waiting, could accompany the expedition. Though the young king was less than thrilled, he couldn't afford to reject the military assistance. The King and Queen of France set out for the Holy Land at the head of a small army, doggedly determined to turn back the Muslim tide. When they reached Antioch Eleanor's uncle, Raymond de Poitiers, who had become ruler of the city through marriage, greeted them. Only a few years older than Eleanor, he was far more interesting and handsome than Eleanor's husband. Raymond entertained the crusading French in grand style, paying special attention to his flirtatious niece. Although Raymond had a reputation for being a faithful husband, Eleanor's reputation was not so spotless. Gossip about their relationship soon began to fly about Europe. These rumors were to follow Eleanor for the rest of her life.

As the French crusaders prepared to leave, Raymond pleaded for Louis's help in defending his city. He insisted that the best strategic objective for the French was the recapture of Edessa, thus protecting the Western presence in the Holy Land. Though Eleanor took his side, Louis refused to assist Raymond, insisting instead that his forces move on Jerusalem. Infuriated, Eleanor declared that she wanted their marriage annulled. Angry and hurt, Louis left Antioch, forcing Eleanor to go with him. She never saw her uncle again; in 1149 he was killed in a battle against the Muslims. His severed head was sent to the caliph in Baghdad.

The Second Crusade ended in total failure largely because of its constantly squabbling leadership. Unable to take Jerusalem, a bitterly defeated Eleanor and Louis returned to France in separate ships. On their way home they stopped in Rome, where an exasperated Pope Eugene III persuaded them to continue their association for the good of their country. Although her marriage to Louis continued for a time (she bore him two daughters, Marie and Alix), their relationship was over. In 1152, the Pope tiredly agreed to an annulment. Eleanor's vast estates reverted to her control, making her once again Europe's most eligible bachelorette.

Eleanor wasn't destined to stay single for very long. Within a short time she threw herself into a stormy new marriage with Henry of Anjou, an ambitious young Norman baron eleven years her junior who was also the grandson of England's King Henry I. Though their ambitious temperaments were well matched — as were their prodigious land holdings — their marriage scandalized contemporary observers. Eleanor, it was rumored, had previously had an affair with Henry's father (among others). According to a contemporary writer, Gerald of Wales, Henry's father warned him not to go anywhere near Eleanor, "both because she was the wife of his lord and because he had known her himself." Henry had "presumed to sleep adulterously with the queen of France, taking her from

she is understandably opposed. Their only hope is to smuggle her north to the holdings of King Louis "The Fat," alternately sneaking and fighting their way across central France. Can they succeed?

**Factions:** With King Richard off in the Holy Land, various factions, including those loyal to his brother John, are plotting to seize the English throne for themselves. A besieged Queen Eleanor, acting as regent in her son's absence, has come up with a desperate plan to save the kingdom from civil war. All she needs is a few heroic adventurers to pull it off....

**"LOUIS HAD A SEIZURE AND I NEARLY DIED OF WINDBURN... BUT THE TROOPS WERE DAZZLED."**

There is a famous, or rather infamous, legend about Eleanor's visit to the Holy Land. While it's a well chronicled fact that she, as well as her ladies-in-waiting, dressed up as "amazons" for much of the journey, wearing specially designed plate armor and bearing lances (though it's generally agreed they never saw combat), there's a completely unconfirmed rumor that she galloped ahead of the troops bare-breasted as they approached the gates of Jerusalem. While it's not inconceivable that the indomitable queen might very well have pulled such a stunt (perhaps to gall her pious husband), it's far more likely that it's an unfounded historical rumor. All the same this lovely little legend (which has proven hard to kill) is attributed to Eleanor in an amusing speech given by Katherine Hepburn in her immortal film *The Lion in Winter*.

his own lord and marrying her himself. How could anything fortunate, I ask, emerge from these copulations?"

One of the first fortunate things to emerge was, ironically enough, Henry of Anjou's ascent to the English throne in 1154, making Eleanor the first (and only) woman to be Queen of France as well as England. Henry proved to be an extremely dynamic and capable ruler, quickly forcing the chaotic kingdom of his great-grandfather William the Conqueror into a semblance of order. The second fortunate thing was the production by Eleanor in rapid succession of six children: Henry, Matilda, Richard (later known as "the Lionhearted"), Geoffrey, Eleanor, Joan, and John (known as "Lackland"), two of whom (Richard and John) were destined to become kings of England. Through a combination of military prowess, clever alliances, and the utilization of a horde of ambitious children, Henry and Eleanor created an empire that rivaled Charlemagne's in wealth as well as size. Known as the Angevin Empire, it controlled all of England, western France, eastern Ireland, and most of Wales.

By 1173, however, the two powerful nobles had drifted apart. With his children grown, Henry embarked on a series of affairs, quietly at first, then with increasing insensitivity to his wife's feelings. He began a very public relationship with a young noblewoman named Rosamond Clifford, whom he hid in a palace at Woodstock that was surrounded by a maze. Legend has it that an enraged Eleanor made her way through the maze, confronted the luckless royal mistress with a dagger in one hand and a bowl of poison in the other, and then forced her to select which way she would die. Rosamond chose the poison and was found dead a short time thereafter. She was buried in the nunnery at Godstow.

With their volatile marriage spinning out of control, Eleanor led three of her four sons in a surprise rebellion against Henry. In her eyes it was justified: after two decades of bearing him children, putting up with his infidelities, and perhaps worst of all having to share her independence and power, Eleanor was simply fed up. Her goal may have been the right to rule a sovereign Aquitaine with her beloved third son Richard... and without Henry, who put down her insurrection with his usual ruthless efficiency. The royal conspirators were forced to flee to France. Eleanor tried to follow disguised as a man, but was captured by Henry's forces and dragged back before the king.

At 55 years of age Eleanor was banished from the English court. She was destined to be imprisoned in various fortified buildings for the next sixteen years. Her sons continued to war against her husband; in the end even Henry's favorite son, John, turned against him. Finally, in 1189, Henry II died. With the oldest son, Henry, already dead, Eleanor's favorite, Richard the Lionhearted, became king. Richard soon went away on the Third Cru-

sade (he only spent six months out of his 10 year reign in England), leaving his mother as regent. "He issued instructions to the princes of the realm, almost in the style of a general edict, that the queen's word should be law in all matters," wrote a contemporary chronicler, Ralph of Diceto.

She proved to be an able ruler. When the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI took Richard hostage, Eleanor arranged for his "king's ransom." She also stood up to Richard's scheming brother John, who constantly plotted to seize the English throne. She even got Richard and John to reconcile after Richard's return to England. When Richard died in 1199 John became king. Like Richard, King John respected (though didn't necessarily like) his mother, generally heeding her advice on matters of state. She, in return, supported him against his numerous enemies, which included not only foreign rivals such the King of France but even the Pope, who excommunicated John in 1209.

Regrettably, history remembers Eleanor's second royal son as one of England's worst monarchs. So unpopular did John prove as a king that he quickly provoked popular uprisings led by bandit-revolutionaries such as Fulk Fitzwarin and Eustace the Monk. It was during this period of chaos and tyrannical misrule that a yeoman known William Robehod had his property seized by agents of the crown to help pay for John's foreign wars. Impoverished without due process and outlawed by the Justices of Eyre in Berkshire for resisting, Robehod withdrew to England's uncharted Sherwood Forest to wage a guerrilla war against the king's officials using the moniker "Robin Hood." Other desperate men soon joined his uprising. Together they struggled against the king's agents until his own discontented barons eventually overthrew him. The British nobility revolted in May 1215, seizing London and forcing John to sign the Magna Carta, a document spelling out the limits of English royal power over common Englishmen.

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Perhaps fortunately, Eleanor didn't live to see the collapse of the empire she worked so hard to craft. Though now elderly by the standards of her time, she continued to lead an active life in her twilight years. She worked hard to maintain the loyalty of her English subjects, cement alliances for her enormous family, and manage her considerable estates. She also traveled through Europe arranging marriages for her grandchildren, who by now were so numerous that she was known far and wide as the "Grandmother of Europe." She traveled to Spain to collect her 13 year-old granddaughter Blanche of Castile so she could become the bride of King Louis VIII of France... the grandson of her first husband Louis VII! At the age of seventy she rode over the Pyrenees to claim her candidate to be Richard's wife, Princess Berengaria of Navarre. She traversed the Alps, traveling all the way down the Italian peninsula, and brought Berengaria to Sicily so she could travel to Cyprus, where Richard married her in 1191.

Finally in 1202 Eleanor retired to the abbey of Fontevrault, a religious community where older aristocratic women and battered wives came to find spiritual comfort, sympathy, and a place to recover from the traumas of existence. She spent the remaining two years of her life there, passing away quietly in 1204 at the age of 82. Her body was buried on the grounds, where it lays to this day under an effigy that still captures a faint shadow of her majestic beauty.

**Personality/Motivation:** Eleanor of Aquitaine is the very picture of a dynamic, successful medieval queen: ruthless, plotting, brave, cunning, amoral, and deeply passionate. While ambitious to a fault, she never loses sight of the fact that her own legacy can only be assured by the success of her descendants, a project to which she devotes the final decade of her life.

Eleanor is an independent person with an almost innate ability to skillfully sail the stormy seas of medieval politics. Although her role is somewhat mitigated by her gender, she achieves levels of political power undreamt of by most noblewomen through a combination of audacity, willpower, and educated risk-taking. At different times in her life, she rules Aquitaine, France, and eventually England with a firm, wise hand. She's certainly one of the most astute political operators of her day.



**“I’VE SNAPPED  
AND PLOTTED  
ALL MY LIFE.  
THERE’S NO  
OTHER WAY TO  
BE FIFTY, KING,  
AND ALIVE  
ALL AT ONCE.”**

Henry II, first of the Angevin kings, ranks as one of the most effective of all England’s monarchs. He came to the throne amid total anarchy created by a running civil war between his predecessor King Stephan and his mother, the self-styled “Empress” Matilda. He promptly collared the nation’s errant barons, refined the chaotic Norman government, and created a capable, self-standing bureaucracy. His energy was equaled only by his ambition and intelligence. Henry survived wars abroad, rebellions at home, and a controversial marriage to rule one of the Middle Ages’s most powerful kingdoms.

Also well known as one of history’s great romantics, Eleanor is a patron of the courtly arts of poetry, music, and unrequited, idealized love. In the midst of barbarity and violence, she creates (at least for a time) a chivalric subculture that embodies the very best medieval man had to offer. When most people think of a noble, virtuous knight in shining armor on his great steed, saving the innocent from the predations of the wicked, they’re feeling the winds of Eleanor’s work wafting down from the past. Even though the coming of the Black Death in 1348 completely destroyed the “court of love,” it remains influential in modern fiction, film, and popular culture as the embodiment of everything that’s considered noble in the otherwise chaotic and bloodthirsty world of the Middle Ages.

**Quote:** “We’ve got the King right where we want him. Of course, he’ll betray us all: but only if he thinks we think he won’t.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Eleanor of Aquitaine is a schemer, a peddler of influence, and a behind-the-throne political maneuverer who occasionally gets the chance to run the show and determine the fate of entire nations. Though there’s little evidence she ever learned actual swordsmanship or even became involved in a direct physical confrontation, she has a good grasp of military tactics, logistics, and equipment (she has her own well-run army). In many ways, she’s far more dangerous an opponent, or valuable a friend, than any warrior no matter how skilled or brave. She almost always seems to get her way in the end.

**Campaign Use:** Eleanor is the very model of an ambitious, capable queen, suitable as an NPC in any campaign setting that needs a powerful female political figure. Though she seems most appropriately (and obviously) useful in a Fantasy venue, there is no reason why she couldn’t be used in a Science Fiction, Victorian, or similar setting which calls for a powerful, highly-skilled political woman. You can use her as a villainess, a hero, or (more realistically) a combination of the two, depending

on circumstance. Queen Eleanor was a woman of extreme passions who deeply loved her often-horrible husband and sons, even while scheming against (or with) them for power and influence. Thus, it would be highly advisable for the PCs to tread a fine line when dealing with her family regardless of any offhand statements she may make. They’d be most likely to come into contact with her by serving as crusader knights with her son Richard the Lionhearted, who was quite the adventurer in his own right, or by working for her ever-dynamic husband Henry II, who had an eternal need for skilled warriors willing to help him deal with his squabbling, rebellious vassals in Brittany.

Beyond the fields of Fantasy and historical gaming, you can adapt Eleanor for a wide variety of campaigns. In *Champions*, turn Eleanor into the matriarch of a Lemurian noble house (see page 119 of *Hidden Lands*) who is scheming to remove King Arvad from the throne. If you’re not using the Lemurians, she could be a queen of another hidden race, an alien species, or the like. In a *Ninja Hero* or *Pulp Hero* game Eleanor could be the queen of some long forgotten, isolated land in the Himalayan Mountains who seeks to expand her power for good or ill by manipulating world events from behind the scenes. In a *Star Hero* or *Galactic Champions* campaign she could be the rightful ruler of the planet Aquitaine who’s been ousted by her ambitious husband and seeks the PCs’ assistance to restore her to the throne. In any case, she should regularly spin complex plans that somehow always end up entangling the PCs in their convoluted webs.

**Appearance:** By all accounts Eleanor of Aquitaine is a tall, thin, beautiful woman who kept her good looks throughout much of her long life. She wears only the most expensive, flattering clothing available in Western Europe in her time, generally flowing silk or linen gowns with elaborate headgear ranging from heart-shaped headdresses to Italian turbans.

# ARTHUR 'WEEGEE' FELLIG



"He will take his camera and ride off in search of new evidence that his city, even in her most drunken and disorderly and pathetic moments, is beautiful."

—William McCleery, *Naked City*

Weegee the Famous, *a.k.a.* Arthur Fellig, was the greatest freelance crime photographer in the history of New York. The only city "shutterbug" to ever be issued an official police radio, he elevated the spontaneous, gritty, and often-harsh genre of newspaper photography to a recognized art form almost singlehandedly. Eccentric and brave to a fault, he roamed the night in his specially equipped 1938 Chevy Coupe looking for the perfect shot to sell. To this end he treated vice-squad raids, riots, fires, disreputable nightclubs, political rallies, and high society gatherings with exactly the same nonchalant attitude. In doing so Weegee became an accepted fixture of World War II-era Manhattan nightlife.

## THUR FELLIG (WEEGEE THE FAMOUS)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	2		
26	END	0		
24	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 49</b>

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

### Perks

- 27 Contact: Manhattan Police Department 13- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, good relationship, Organization)
- 18 Contact: The Mob 12- (significant Contacts of its own, useful Skills or resources, good relationship, Organization)
- 2 Favor: Police Chief
- 2 Favor: Mob Boss
- 2 Favor: City Alderman
- 3 Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers (Radio Only); Press Pass
- 3 Reputation (as a daring shutterbug, among New Yorkers) 8-, +3/+3d6

### Talents

- 3 Lightsleep
- 3 Immovable (+3 to EGO Rolls to resist Persuasion)

### Skills

- 5 Bribery 13-
- 3 Bureaucratics 12-
- 3 Combat Driving 12-
- 5 Criminology 13-
- 3 Disguise 12-
- 3 Forensic Medicine 12-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 5 Inventor 13-
- 5 AK: New York 14-
- 6 KS: Photography 15-
- 5 Persuasion 13-
- 9 Streetwise 15-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 6 PS: Photographer 15-

## WEEGEE'S WORKDAY

"I would drop into Police Headquarters at around 7:00 p.m. If nothing's stirring and my elbow don't itch — and that's not a gag, it really does itch when something is going to happen — I go on back to my room across from Police Headquarters and go to sleep. At the head of my bed I have a hook-in with the police alarms and fire gongs so that if anything happens while I'm asleep, I'm notified... When I get my pictures I hurry back to Headquarters. There is always a follow-up slip on an accident (or crime) with all the names and details coming in over the teletype. I found out who were injured, where they lived, and on what charges they have been arrested, so that I can caption my pictures correctly. Next I go back to my darkroom and develop my prints. By this time it is around six in the morning and I start out to sell my prints."

— Weegee quoted in "Free-Lance Camera-man," by Rosa Reilly, *Popular Photography*, December 1937

QUOTES ABOUT  
WEEGEE

“The best newspaper photographers have understood intuitively that it is not their function to interpret the news; they have left this task to the caption-writers, who ascribe to pictures whatever moral, political, social, or historical meaning seems appropriate in light of the temper of the moment. The function of a news photographer is to give us the look and smell of events that we did not witness.”  
—John Szarkowski, *Looking At Photographs*

“It is a mistake to see Weegee’s bold, harsh, often chaotic-seeming nocturnal police-call photographs as somehow *accidental*... This is nonsense. These photographs, whose brilliant framings and masterful command of flash illumination, whether by day or night, bespeak an enormously disciplined and gifted artist.”  
—Jane Livingston, *The New York School: Photographs, 1936-1963*

“...an impressive collection of pictures, the photography of which was uniformly poor. But however bad they were technically, what was in them was true and alive.”  
—Bruce Downes, *Weegee — A Tribute*

- 4Linguist
- 11) Language: Yiddish (fluent conversation; English is Native)
- 12) Language: German (fluent conversation)
- 13) Language: Russian (fluent conversation)
- 14) Language: Polish (fluent conversation)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 135  
Total Cost: 184

75+ Disadvantages

- 15Psychological Limitation: Obsessively Self-Promoting (Common; Strong)
- 10Psychological Limitation: Fearless (Uncommon; Strong)
- 15Reputation: Aggressive Shutterbug 11-(Extreme)
- 5Rivalry: Professional (Wants to be Most Famous Shutterbug in New York, Humiliate, Rival Aware)
- 10Social Limitation: Shutterbug (Frequently; Minor)
- 54Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 184

**Background/History:** Weegee was born Usher Fellig in 1899 in Zloczew, Austria (later part of the Ukraine), the son of an aspiring Rabbi who also worked in the import/export business. To escape the vicious pogroms waged against Eastern European Jews in the early nineteenth century the family immigrated to America in 1909 where his name was Americanized to Arthur at Ellis Island. He attended school until the eighth grade when he had to quit to help support his family. He worked with his father running their family pushcart business (a common occupation for new immigrants) while moonlighting as a clerk in a local candy store.

In 1913 young Arthur had a revelation while having his picture taken for the first time by a street photographer. From that moment on he knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life. He immediately ordered a primitive tintype camera rig from a mail-order catalogue. Within a few weeks he’d obtained his first job as an assistant to a commercial photographer, but after a few years he grew tired of his employer and left to try out a business idea. Renting a pony from a local stable, he set out each weekend with a secondhand 5x7 view camera to photograph adolescents. Families dressed their children up in their best clothes on these days of the week, so Arthur would photograph them on the pony’s back, develop the negatives, then sell them back to their families for a quarter a shot.

In 1924 Arthur got his first big break, landing a job at Acme Newspictures (later United Press International) working as a darkroom technician. Occasionally he went out at night to work as an emergency photographer while the staff Acme employees were at home in bed. After a few years of working part time, he began to work steadily on assignments and cover stories. His reputation for knowing where disaster would strike became so infamous that the girls in the Acme office pool nicknamed him “Weegee” after the Ouija board game. The work was everything Arthur had always wanted except for one problem: as an Acme staff photographer he received absolutely no public credit for his work.

Weegee left Acme in 1935 to attempt a career as a nocturnal freelance photographer, a calling he was to pursue with unparalleled gusto for the next ten years. With his camera in his hand and a cheap cigar planted in his puggish face he would begin his evening by arriving at the Manhattan Police Headquarters around midnight, where he would hang out around the Teletype machine and wait for stories to break. But after a few years he decided that he didn’t want to hang around the station anymore; he bought a 1938 Chevy Coupe, got a press card, and became the first and only New York photographer to be allowed to have a police radio in his car. Amusingly, it had no “off” button — every time he turned the ignition he was at work. He then specially modified his vehicle to include a miniature darkroom built into the trunk, removed to back seats to make room for his gea: extra cameras, flashbulbs, loaded holders, and a mounted typewriter. He also kept cigars, salami, and a change of clothing in his car so he wouldn’t need to stop by his apartment (which itself was basically a giant darkroom). Thus equipped he was consistently able to beat competing photographers to vice squad raids, murders, riots, fires, celebrity gatherings, brawls, and political events. He sold prints from these shots to such newspapers as the *Herald Tribune*, the *World Telegram*, the *Daily News*, the *Post*, and the *Sun*.

Weegee became a well-known fixture of New York’s nightlife, going to far as to stamp the back of his photographic prints with the moniker “Credit Photo: Weegee the Famous.” An accepted part of the evening scenery in America’s greatest city, he was on equally good terms with beat cops, detectives, mobsters, prostitutes, bouncers, socialites, and city politicians. His trademark was hard-flash frontal shots that captured, for better

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Special Flashbulbs	+0	+0	Flash 2d6	—	2	N/A	3” Range

Armor  
None

**Gear:** 1938 Speed Graphic Camera; film; flashbulbs; spotlight bulb (Sight Group Images to create light); infrared film and flashbulbs; police radio (in car)

**Clothing:** See Appearance

or worse, the raw emotion of his subjects. He often used infrared flash and film that allowed him to work as unobtrusively as possible in sometimes-dangerous situations. His reputation for being completely unconcerned with his personal safety garnered him respect from both law enforcement and organized crime.

His technique, now considered by photographers to be amongst the most influential of the period, produced a result very different from the complex, planned out, and “socially conscious” magazine shots that were considered the artistic standard of the time. None of Weegee’s photos were thought out in advance. His 4x5 Speed Graphic camera with its linked Graflex synchronized flash was simply preset to a focal distance of ten feet... where he made it his business to stand in every situation. He worked at point-blank range in a desperate, fevered pitch to produce the most raw and unplanned photographs possible. Style, texture, and film quality mattered very little to him; they were incidental to his goal of capturing history as it happened. His main concern was making sure the camera captured people’s post-traumatic responses to life-altering or defining events. Nothing else counted. This gave his work the gritty intimacy for which it’s best remembered today.

New York’s artistic community embraced Weegee relatively early in his career. By 1943 his work was being shown in the Museum of Modern Art as well as at the Photo League. The same year saw the publication of an incredibly influential collection of his crime photography entitled *Naked City*, the rights to which were later bought by Hollywood for a successful film and television series. Yet by the end of the 1940s Arthur had abandoned the crime photography that made him famous to concentrate on well-paid advertising assignments for such magazines as *Vogue*, *Holiday*, *Life*, *Look*, and *Fortune*. He moved to Hollywood for five years, working as a consultant and bit part actor while he experimented with a wide variety of photographic techniques. He began to produce a series of distorted celebrity photographs based on a lens he had devised for his 1948 film *Weegee’s New York*. He also investigated a variety of innovative darkroom techniques. For example, he placed squares of textured glass between an enlarger lens and photographic paper to alter the image of the negative to varying degrees depending on the texture of the material he used. He manipulated copy negatives by placing them in boiling water or melting them with an open flame.

Arthur later designed a system in which he affixed a kaleidoscope to the end of his camera lens, allowing the refractive designs to multiply what the camera would normally have recorded as a single image. He produced a series of short films in the 1950s using this and other distorting techniques. He also composed his autobiography *Weegee By Weegee* before embarking on lecture tours throughout the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union. He died, obscure but artistically satisfied, of a brain tumor in 1968.



**Personality/Motivation:** Weegee is an artist possessed by a desire to capture history as it happens by grasping explosive, revealing moments out of the air. Nothing else matters to him. He believes in a kind of pure holy intensity, a *zeitgeist* that only photographs can ever possibly capture for posterity — and that he alone is the one man tasked by God almighty to take them. To this singular end he travels a tough, hazardous, unpredictable road. He unhesitatingly risks his life, the PCs’ lives, his fortune, and everyone’s reputation without a second thought if it means getting the perfect photograph. He’ll even smile while doing it. Weegee’s conscience is bulletproof.

On a personal level, Arthur is a pretty ordinary if obnoxious guy with simple wants and needs. He enjoys good cigars, decent bourbon, well-cooked meals, and expensive hookers with about the same level of gusto. He lives in a moderately hip portion of town in a small three-room apartment stuffed with photographic equipment. Most of his friends are cops, thugs, or newspapermen. The two great intertwined loves of Arthur’s life are his work and the people who give birth to it — the inhabitants of his city. Weegee can almost be thought of as a peeping tom, constantly spying on people so he can catch them in their most revealing moments — which often means catching them at their most petty, terrified, violent, or self-absorbed.

The great Achilles’s heel of Weegee’s personality is his relentless self-promotion. It’s so ingrained into his psyche, so innate and innocently executed, that it’s almost charming... almost. Arthur wants *everyone* to know that his photographs are uniquely his; he obsesses about it to the point that he stamps the back of every photograph he takes with his pretentious moniker. Anyone wanting to get a handle on Weegee needs look no further than this to manipulate him.

Arthur does have some sense of honor, though. If the PCs keep him informed about their activities, or somehow tip him off to a crime in progress, he’ll return the favor periodically by warning them if he

## ARTHUR “WEEGEE” FELLIG PLOT SEEDS

**No Go, No Info:** Through his underworld connections Arthur has caught wind of a major bank heist being planned by The Ultimates using Ogre and Ankylosaur as extra muscle. He alerts the PCs, but there's a catch: they have to bring Weegee along with them so he can document the battle.

**This Should Sell:** Holocaust, who's planning to take over the world (again) by singlehandedly kidnapping the chairman of the Federal Reserve, wants to make sure his actions are recorded for posterity. He's notified Weegee about the wheres and whens (but not the hows or whos) of his plan. Arthur has, reasonably enough, contacted the PCs to warn them about this “master” villain's plans. But to make things even more interesting he's also contacted VIPER and UNTIL....

**A Nut For The News:** For reasons unclear Foxbat has abducted the owner of Kountry Komiks, a popular comic book store chain. This is the known unknown of the situation. The unknown unknown is why he'll only negotiate with infamous crime photographer Weegee. Arthur is delighted. The PCs are not.

stumbles across rumors of a crook's master plan, corruption within the police department, or some other noteworthy underworld gossip.

**Quote:** “What is this? You asked me for help; the next thing I know a mobster is mopping the floor with me and the FBI is accusing me of being a Communist. You people had better have something good for me next time around!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Weegee is a fearless, hard-bitten gadgeteer/photographer. His primary purposes in life are to (a) take pictures of (extremely) dangerous situations and events from a ridiculously short distance, and (b) to get in the PCs' way whenever possible.

Although he's small, loathes firearms, and has no physical combat abilities worth mentioning, Arthur knows a few tricks that he's learned over the years on the mean streets of the city. He carries several special bulbs in his jacket pocket in case of emergencies: two extra-powerful flashbulbs (Sight Group Flash 2d6, 3” range), one continuous bulb that runs off his camera's batteries like a spotlight, and one infrared bulb.

Weegee's automobile is a James Bond-like marvel by the standards of its time, as discussed above. Everyone on the street knows it by sight..

Weegee is a remarkably well-connected and well-informed person. He has strong ties to the worlds of law enforcement, organized crime, politics, high society, and the arts. His connections can be purchased, too... but not for money. In return for any favor, Arthur demands the right to be present at the scene of the PCs' next daring exploit where, camera in hand, he'll try to stand ten feet away from their climactic battle with the villain of the story — regardless of whether he promised to keep a safe distance. The ends always justify the means to a true artist.

**Campaign Use:** Weegee is the quintessential annoying NPC photographer who constantly sticks his nose into the PCs' business — if he thinks there are some good photos to be gotten out of it, that is. There's not very much they can do about it either. He's on such good terms with the police that they'll allow him to wander about crime scenes at will, taking pictures of whatever he pleases regardless of how much noise the PCs make about it. If that wasn't bad enough, he's got an excellent reputation amongst criminals as the photographer to have around when a crime is being committed. Many infamous mobsters have made a point of having their picture taken specifically by “Weegee the Famous” before, during, and after they were arrested.

Arthur is right at home in *Pulp Hero*, *Golden Age Champions*, or World War II-era *Dark Champions* campaigns, but you can easily adapt him for more modern-day games. In *Champions*, for example, he's still the same annoying shutterbug — it's just that now he puts himself in even more danger

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as he tries to get candid photos of supervillains. Some of them, particularly loonies like Foxbat and Bulldozer, might even go out of their way to make sure he gets plenty of photos of them. His equipment would be much more advanced (digital cameras of every size and variety, laptops, PDAs, cell phones, wirelessly networked devices, you name it), but it might be made to look like old-fashioned gear as a personal quirk.

Going even further into the future, Weegee could be a war correspondent during the Alien Wars, a Galaxy-trotting newshound during the Terran Empire period, or fit into just about any sort of *Star Hero* setting that has a news media. If you're in a *Fantasy Hero* campaign, he might be a bard or scribe with a penchant for collecting the best and latest news (even at great danger to himself).

**Appearance:** Weegee is a pugnacious looking little man with closely cropped black hair. He always looks completely unkempt and disreputable. His suits are crumpled, his fedoras are battered, and his shoes are unpolished. It's almost as if he's been in some way cursed by nature to forever look seedy. A five o'clock shadow creeps across his face mere moments after he shaves, new clothing wrinkles as soon as it touches his body, and his hair becomes unkempt before he even leaves the barber shop. His small, cynical mouth is invariably clamped around the nub of a cheap, long-extinguished cigar.

In the rainy season Arthur wears a long, heavy black trenchcoat rather than carry an umbrella (which would fill one of his hands). In the summer he wears a lighter jacket, but both of them have special extra-deep pockets sewn into the lining for cigars, flashbulbs, small cameras, matches, and other such tiny sundries. Although he owns several rather nice suits, he usually prefers to wear clothing that somewhat understandably has a “second hand” look to it rather than ruin his best duds. Weegee always has his press pass with him, jammed either into his hat or his front pocket with the word “press” predominantly displayed so there can be no mistaking who he is and why he's there.

# REVEREND GEORGE HENSLEY



“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover”

—Mark 16:17-18

One fateful Sunday in a small church in eastern Tennessee, itinerant preacher and reformed bootlegger “Little” George Hensley experienced a revelation: since Pentecostals believe in exorcisms, speaking in tongues, and laying hands on the sick, why should they not take up serpents as well? So he closed his sermon on that day by removing a large rattlesnake from a box hidden behind the altar with his bare hands, then challenged his congregation to do likewise or else be “doomed to eternal hell.” To avoid this dreadful punishment and as a demonstration of their triumph over the forces of evil, each member of the congregation took turns handling the dangerous animal. Thus was the now-infamous Appalachian Snake Cult born.

## “LITTLE GEORGE” HENSLEY

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
28	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 57</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>I Cast The Demon Out!</i> Dispel Summon 15d6; Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x8 END; -3½), Only Versus Demons Possessing People (-½), Requires A PRE Roll (-¾)	24
7	<i>Laying On Of Hands:</i> Healing BODY 2d6; Activation Roll 14- (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Incantations (-¼)	2
3	<i>Snakeproof:</i> Life Support (Immunity: Ophidotoxins, Neurotoxins); Activation Roll 13- (-¾)	0
4	<i>Fireproof:</i> Armor (6 ED); Activation Roll 12- (-¾), Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (fire/heat; -½)	0
<b>Perks</b>		
7	Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank: Minister	
1	Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry	
<b>Talents</b>		
3	Resistance (3 points)	
11	<i>Speaking In Tongues:</i> Universal Translator 12-; Activation Roll 12- (-¾)	
<b>Skills</b>		
2	+1 with PRE Rolls	
3	+1 with Persuasion, Oratory, and Seduction	
2	Animal Handler (Reptiles & Amphibians) 13-	
3	KS: Bible Learning 12-	
4	KS: Moonshine 13-	
2	KS: Snakes 11-	
3	Oratory 13-	
2	PS: Bootlegger 11-	
3	PS: Minister 13-	
3	Persuasion 13-	
3	Seduction 13-	

## SIGNS FOLLOWERS AND THE LAW

Snake handlers have suffered very real persecution at the hands of law enforcement throughout the last century. Since the beginning of their movement they’ve found themselves under the almost constant scrutiny of local and state government. In the 1940s six southern states — Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama — forbade the practice of the Signs Follower religion. Each of these states based their legislation on the premise that the danger to non-participants superseded First Amendment rights to the free practice of religion. In Alabama and Georgia the “taking up of serpents” was deemed to be a felony crime, while in the other four it was merely a misdemeanor. Both states later reduced this punishment to misdemeanor status. More often than not, however, there wasn’t enough evidence to prosecute snake handlers effectively. The situation was further complicated by the fact that most local sheriffs believed (reasonably enough) that if a person felt he was in personal danger, he would simply leave. Thus in many municipalities the legal clause mandating that bystanders be endangered before an arrest could take place was rendered void.

- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 3 TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Equines
- 2 WF: Blades, Handguns

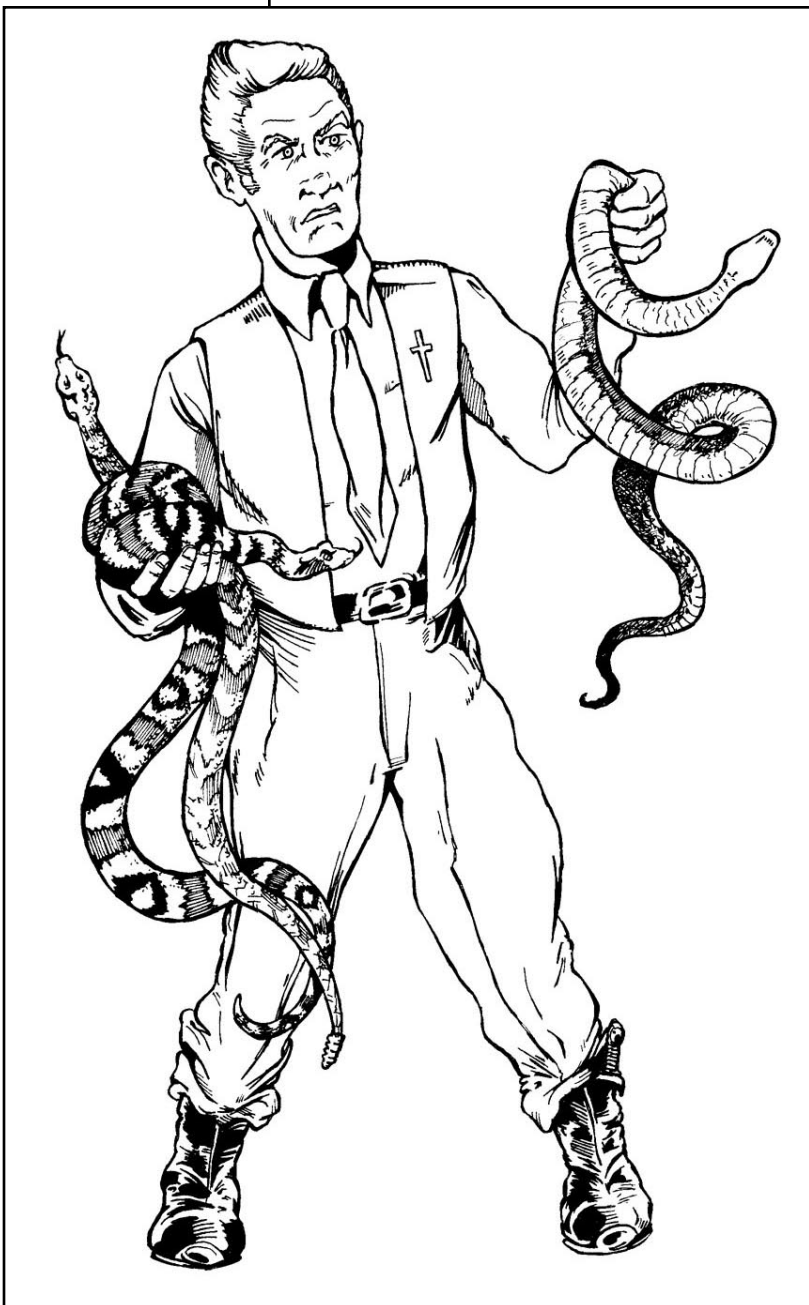
**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 74**

**Total Cost: 131**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Hunted: Tennessee State Police 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Capture)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Extremely Religious Christian (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Reputation: insane snake handling preacher, 11- (Extreme)
- 5 Unluck: 1d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 145**



**Background/History:** George W. Hensley was born in 1881 in the Grasshopper Valley region of Tennessee a few miles from Cleveland, Ohio. The youngest son of a former Confederate soldier turned bootlegger, “Little” George, as he came to be known, grew up solidly walking in his father’s nefarious footsteps. By the time he was 18, George was well-known by his kinsfolk for being “light on his feet,” running from revenue agents, chasing women of easy virtue, and sneaking corn whisky across “dry” county lines. The feckless youth seemed fated for an early grave or a long career breaking rock on a chain gang. But George was destined for greater things.

One fine summer’s day in 1901, while smuggling a mule-load of booze through an isolated valley, Little George stumbled upon an outdoor religious revival being led by a blind colored preacher. Thinking that it would be amusing to join in the festivities, the lighthearted young criminal lined up to be baptized in a creek. Yet when he came up from below the waters, an albino crow descended from the treetops to alight upon his head. In an instant Little George was transformed from an easygoing hoodlum into a brooding miracle worker able to cast out demons, speak in tongues, and banish the restless dead back into their cold earthy beds.

Haunted by his newfound powers, Little George left his home to begin a decade-long voyage across the hills and mountains of Tennessee as an itinerant wandering minister. He preached on street corners, atop soapboxes, and in tent revivals to anyone who’d listen. Eventually he became the minister of the small, isolated Church of the Holy Witness. Then one fateful Sunday in 1910 after a period of meditation and prayer Little George “took up the serpent” in the form of a large rattlesnake while giving a sermon on the true meaning of Mark 16:18.

News of Hensley’s unique ministry spread quickly throughout Appalachia, bringing both converts and skeptics to his tiny church. In one particularly noteworthy incident a practical joker emptied a box filled with cottonmouths, rattlesnakes, and copperheads onto the floor while Hensley was preaching. Although his congregation ran screaming from the building, Little George calmly picked up the frightened animals and placed them back in the box. News of Little George’s snake-handling feats spread throughout eastern Tennessee. The stories caught the attention of evangelist, Bible salesman, and Church of God of Prophecy founder A.J. Tomlinson, who quickly ordained Hensley into his gospel ministry. For the next ten years Little George demonstrated the power of the Lord by faith healing, handling serpents, drinking strychnine, and performing the odd exorcism as a minister of the Church of God.

Then, while on a preaching tour far from home, Hensley got word that his teenage wife was having an affair with their next-door neighbor. Returning home to confront his faithless bride, Little George entered his own home to find her engaged in an act of marital infidelity of a particu-

**SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Roscoe Revolver	+1	+0	1d6-1	1d6-1	5	8	
Hunting Knife	+0	RBS	1d6	1d6-1	—	7	Can Be Thrown

**Armor**

None

**Gear:** Snakes; Bible**Clothing:** See Appearance

larly shocking nature. Enraged, he drew his trusty Arkansas toothpick from its leg sheath and plunged it repeatedly into the man who'd cuckolded him.

Disillusioned and thinking himself a murderer (unbeknownst to him, his neighbor recovered), George turned his back on God. He set aside his Bible, shaved off his evangelist's pompadour, and returned to the hills above Grasshopper Valley. He rebuilt the family still so he could resume his bootlegging career. During a run across a county line the police apprehended him. Convicted of attempted murder Little George was given a ten-year sentence on a Tennessee chain gang, but within a few months he executed a brilliant escape to Ohio. Feeling the grace of the Lord once again upon him, he picked up the serpents for a second time. Heading to Kentucky, he continued making a name for himself as a wandering Oneness Pentecostal miracle worker who could (on a good day) heal the sick, cast out demons, return the restless dead to their graves, and drink poison with impunity. Always popular with the ladies yet perpetually unsatisfied, he married and divorced four more times in his life.

By 1928 the increasingly respectable Church of the God in Prophecy had become thoroughly scandalized by the colorful minister's antics. Revoking Hensley's license to preach, it forbade all of its members to handle snakes. Undeterred, unrepentant, and facing increased harassment by law enforcement officials, Little George once again retreated back to a cabin the hill country to dwell among the birds and beasts. For a decade he lived as a semi-mythical spiritual Robin Hood, periodically appearing to his former parishioners to provide assistance with supernatural problems. Then in 1943 a disciple of Little George's named Raymond Hayes led a revival of snake-handling in the Grasshopper Valley that resulted in a large number of local Pentecostals once again taking up serpents. Feeling that the time had come for him to live among men once again, Hensley returned from his self-enforced exile to help found the Dolly Pond Church of God with Signs Following. Located on the site of his church from 30 years before where the first snake-handling service was conducted, it remains the most sacred site in the movement to this day.

Serpents would bite little George many times over the next decade, but survived despite refusing medical treatment each time. Many of his followers were not so fortunate; lacking his unique abilities, an increasingly large number of them died at church. Alarmed, various state legislatures passed laws that forbade the taking up of snakes in

religious services. Hensley refused to follow these laws and was repeatedly arrested for endangering the lives of others. In court Hensley insisted he was innocent because lawmakers were being led by the Devil to outlaw serpent handling. State judges, who considered him something of a local character, never seriously punished Little George on the assumption that his malfeasance would prove inevitably self-correcting. They were right — on June 24, 1955, he died of snakebite at age 74.

**Personality/Motivation:** Little George Hensley is an odd bird. Part con man, part holy man, and part Appalachian Casanova, he's essentially the originator of an ill-conceived religious stunt which inadvertently ignited a religious movement that endures to this day. Mystifyingly gifted by God with genuine (if unreliable) supernatural powers, he's a man of stark contradictions defined as much by his weaknesses as his strengths. He's outgoing yet melancholy, abrasive yet subtle, devout yet sinful, and chaotic while at the same narrowly directed. Pastor Hensley also possesses a wicked temper that, combined with his absolute contempt for the authorities, leads him to commit violent acts with little regard for their consequences.

Little George's primary obsession is with his spiritual life. He has the sort of delinquent-son-to-patient-father relationship with God that certain key Old Testament figures such as Jonah and Job had. Much like one of these ancient prophets he spends a great deal of time questioning God's motives, testing his own faith against the tribulations of his eventful life. On several occasions he lost his faith completely, abandoning his special spiritual gifts to take refuge in his former sinful existence as a bootlegger. Yet each time the desire to experience close intimacy with the Divine leads him to "take up serpents" once again.

**Quote:** "Now it's handlin' serpent that's again' the law, but after a while it'll be against the law to talk in tongues, and then they'll go after the Bible itself!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Reverend Hensley has a wide variety of potent and interesting powers that have been granted to him by the Lord of Hosts for the express purpose of doing battle with the forces of evil. He can heal a considerable amount of BODY, act as a universal translator, and with a great deal of effort banish demonic entities. (Of course, in a game where there are no mystic abilities at all, he just thinks he can do these things.) Since these abilities are based on his often-wavering faith they require Activation Rolls, PRE Rolls, and Incantations in the form of riotous evangelical preaching.

## LITTLE GEORGE HENSLEY PLOT SEEDS

**Deliverance Me From Evil:** With a string of snakebite deaths on their hands, local authorities have asked the PCs to help track down and apprehend the renegade preacher known as “Little George” before his “missionary work” causes any more fatalities. Thus begins an odyssey through the backwoods of Tennessee filled with heavily armed (and hostile) locals, demons, zombies, and giant snakes.

**I Saw The Light:** The PCs receive word that a strange and sinister cult has taken over a small Kentucky town. Sent to investigate, they find that most of the townspeople have converted to the Church of God with Signs Following. Is this religious epiphany voluntary or are darker forces at work?

**The Way Of All Flesh:** With infestations of the living dead breaking out all over Appalachia, the PCs are badly in need of assistance from a true man of God. After doing some research they find out that there may only be one person alive who can help them with their plight: the semi-mythical Reverend George Hensley. But can they find him in time?

Little George has also been granted several abilities with which he can display God’s power to protect men from harm... or at least to protect them when they are faithful and true. When his faith is strong he can handle or walk through fire without being burned, drink deadly poison without suffering ill effects, or receive the deadly bite of a viper without dying. He uses these abilities in conjunction with his Oratory to deliver the signature sermons for which he’s known or to gain extra dice for Presence Attacks. Although he appears at first to be a relatively rough and uneducated man, Little George actually knows a great deal about the Bible. He’s able to present his theological arguments in a convincing (if rustic) manner when given the chance to do so. Additionally, Preacher Hensley can handle and care for snakes. Like other members of the Church of God with Signs Following he’s careful to release the animals used in his sermons back into the wild before they become sick, distraught, or hungry.

Finally, Little George isn’t the least bit shy about using either the enormous hunting knife he straps to his ankle or the small caliber “Rosco” revolver he keeps tucked lazily into his belt when confronted with a situation he feels requires a bit of old-fashioned violence.

**Campaign Use:** Although he’s perfectly appropriate for Western Hero, Victorian Hero, or Pulp Hero games in various respects, Little George Hensley is most fundamentally at home in a Horror Hero game set in America’s Deep South. He’s spooky Southern Gothic personified; it’s almost impossible to think about the man without hearing the banjos from *Deliverance* played in the background. With his focus on snake handling and casting out demons, Little George makes an entertaining and appropriate NPC for the PCs to stumble across when they’re hunting zombies on the bayou or chasing werewolves through the hill country. An inventive GM could have him either help or hinder them depending on a variety of factors, not the least of which should be their ability to handle poisonous serpents. He’d also make a good template for a villainous cult leader bent on taking over a small Appalachian town. In games where mystic powers are more common, he might not even have Activation Rolls or Requires Skill Rolls on his powers, or could have additional powers.

For *Champions* and *Dark Champions* purposes, you’ll probably need to transplant Reverend Hensley to the Big City, at least temporarily, but that shouldn’t pose a problem. After all, doesn’t the Good Book say, “They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick?” Who could be sicker than the inhabitants of, say, New York City or Hudson City? Little George might feel especially at home in Vibora Bay, where the High Apostolic Church would probably accept him with open arms.

Although it’s difficult to imagine Little George flying between planets in a *Star Hero* campaign, it’s less thorny to envision him as the suspicious leader of a remote religious colony on an isolated rural world somewhere on the edge of human space. As a controversial “mad monk” in a *Fantasy Hero* campaign he might drive the local religious authorities absolutely up the walls... until an infestation of the undead suddenly has them begging for his help. In a similar vein Little George’s unique mystical abilities might make him a sought-after figure in a *Ninja Hero* campaign that includes demons, even though his Kung Fu is weak indeed.

**Appearance:** Little George Hensley is a slight man with a florid complexion. He has wild blue eyes that glow with an unearthly light when his various powers activate. He sculpts his hair into a careful grey pompadour that quickly becomes disheveled when he gets excited. Little George likes to wear white cotton suits with tiny gold cross pins on the lapels. Unfortunately, the combination of his animated manner, unorthodox lifestyle, and the natural humidity of the southeastern United States often causes his clothing to have sweat stains in the armpits, grass stains on the cuffs, and lipstick stains on the collar. He generally carries a dog-eared King James Bible tucked under his arm, a cheap revolver tucked into his belt, and a buck knife tucked into his boot.

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# ROBERT HOOKE



“History is a science, no more and no less.”

—J.B. Bury

Infamous seventeenth century scientist Robert Hooke may have been one of the most brilliant, irritating, prolific, inventive, perverse, and cold-blooded men ever to walk the Earth. An artist, linguist, astronomer, microscopist, alchemist, mechanic, architect, civil engineer, chemist, optician, inventor, physician, philosopher, botanist, and anatomist, he served as the first Curator of Experiments for the now infamous Royal Society of London before being appointed Royal Surveyor after the Great Fire of London in 1666. Later he helped design the Royal Greenwich Observatory as well as the Bethlehem Hospital and Asylum — better known as Bedlam.

Hooke is remembered as the inventor of, amongst other things, the iris diaphragm in cameras, the universal joint used in motor vehicles, the respirator, the anchor escarpment and balance wheel used in watches (which made accurate timepieces possible). He also originated the word “cell” in biology. He’s best known for *Hooke’s Law of Elasticity*, which states that the extension of an elastic spring is linearly proportional to its tension. He also worked out the first correct theory of combustion. He was an important early surgical pioneer and a prolific vivisectionist of epic proportions. In his spare time he laid the groundwork for modern paleontology, postulated a theory of evolution two and a half centuries before Darwin was born, hit upon the theory of petrification, invented the compound microscope, kept his underage niece as a mistress, and slept his way through most of London’s low quality brothels.

## ROBERT HOOKE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
8	CON	-4	11-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll: 14-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
7	REC	4		
26	END	5		
26	STUN	2		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 54</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/12”

### Cost Perks

- 7 Contact: King of England 13- (access to major institutions, significant Contacts of his own, good relationship)
- 30 Contact: The Royal Society of London 14- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, good relationship, Organization)
- 2 Fringe Benefit: Membership (the Royal Society)
- 6 Reputation: famous savant (among Londoners) 14-, +3/+3d6

### Talents

- 5 Eidetic Memory
- 3 Lightning Calculator
- 3 Lightsleep
- 4 Speed Reading (x10)

### Skills

- 5 Bureaucratics 13-
- 15 Cramming (x3)
- 3 Cryptography 14-
- 3 Forensic Medicine 14-
- 5 High Society 13-
- 3 CK: London 14-
- 5 Inventor 15-
- 5 Mechanics 15-
- 2 Navigation (Land) 14-
- 3 Oratory 12-
- 3 Streetwise 12-
- 3 Weaponsmith (Firearms, Muscle-Powered Ranged) 14-
- 3 Jack Of All Trades
- 2 1) PS: Alchemist 14-
- 2 2) PS: Architect 14-
- 2 3) PS: Artist 13-

**HOOKE AND THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON**

On a cheery Sunday morning in 1666 a fire broke out in King Charles II's private bakery on Pudding Lane. Quickly reaching the neighboring inn's haystack, it spread with startling rapidity. Within five short days the city that Shakespeare had known, indeed all of medieval London, was forever gone. An area of almost 650 acres lay in unrecognizable ashes. Some 87 churches, including St. Paul's Cathedral, had been annihilated along with 13,200 homes. It was a disaster of apocalyptic proportions, destroying both the City's closely packed buildings and its equally closely packed inhabitants with equal abandon.

In the wake of this horrific event, Hooke (ever a devoted Londoner) produced a workable, well-thought-out plan for the reconstruction of the city and presented it to King Charles. Though this plan wasn't adopted due to its high building costs, it did result in his being appointed Lord Surveyor of London. In this capacity he laid out new foundations, adjudicated property rights, set property boundaries, and supervised the enforcement of building regulations. He was responsible for the construction of sewers, paving, bridges, quays, markets and public clocks. Thus, in many ways, Robert Hooke became the father (or maybe the midwife) of London, one of the greatest cities of the modern world.

- 2 4) PS: Musician 13-
- 2 5) PS: Surgeon 14-
- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Language: Dutch (fluent conversation; English is Native)
- 2 2) Language: French (completely fluent)
- 1 3) Language: Greek (fluent conversation)
- 2 4) Language: Latin (completely fluent)
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Ancient History 14-
- 2 2) KS: English History 14-
- 3 3) KS: History Of Medicine 15-
- 2 4) KS: History Of Science 14-
- 2 5) KS: Western Philosophy 14-
- 3 Scientist
- 2 1) SS: Anatomy 14-
- 2 2) SS: Architecture 14-
- 3 3) SS: Astronomy 15-
- 2 4) SS: Botany 14-
- 2 5) SS: Chemistry 14-
- 2 6) SS: Geology 14-
- 2 7) SS: Geometry 14-
- 2 8) SS: Microbiology 14-
- 2 9) SS: Optometry 14-
- 2 10) SS: Paleontology 14-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 173**  
**Total Cost: 227**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Dependence: must consume various substances in arcane combinations, including opium poppies, quicksilver, metal shavings, rare herbs, and "curative" waters, or take 2d6 damage every 6 Hours (Difficult To Obtain)
- 15 Distinctive Features: bizarrely crooked back (Not Concealable)
- 15 DNPC: Grace Hooke (niece/wife) 11- (Normal)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Cruel (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Jealous (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Xenophobic (Uncommon, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: eccentric, foul-tempered alchemist most cruel, 11-
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (Christian Huyghens)
- 15 Rivalry: Professional (Sir Isaac Newton) (Rival is Significantly More Powerful)
- 47 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 227**

**Background/History:** Robert Hooke was born in 1635 in the town of Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. His father, John Hooke, was a curate at All Saints' Church who also ran a small school to help supplement his income. He undoubtedly hoped that his youngest son would enter the clergy of the Anglican Church, as was normal for all Hooke men (John's three brothers were all ministers). Unfortunately, as was all too common for English children of that age, Robert suffered from poor health and

was thus not expected to reach adulthood. All the same, his parents began to set up his education with the church in mind; but he continually suffered from headaches that made studying very hard. Lacking confidence that he'd ever amount to anything or even reach adulthood, Robert's parents gave up on his education, leaving him largely to his own devices.

Fortunately for history, Robert was born with uncanny observational and mechanical skills. He carefully scrutinized the plants, animals, farms, rocky cliffs, oceans, and the beaches of the isle. He became fascinated by mechanical toys and clocks, making delightful things for his parents from wood, such as a working clock and a model of a fully rigged ship with working guns. Yet not only did young Robert have a talent for mechanical science, he also showed considerable skills at drawing. He befriended a portrait painter who was working in Freshwater at the time; soon he was imitating the way the painter used pen and chalk. Before very long he was making copies of the man's portraits.

Robert's talent was clear and, after the death of his father in 1648, his family decided that drawing was the best way for the odd, sickly boy to make a living. His father left him 40 pounds (a sizable amount in those days), as well as his "*best joined chest and all [his] books.*" He was sent off to London to be apprenticed to Peter Lely, a portrait painter of some repute. Hooke soon realized, however, that not only was he more talented than Lely, but he had no desire to become an artist. Unwilling to waste any more of his inheritance, the precocious 13 year-old enrolled himself in the Westminster School, boarding in the house of eccentric headmaster Dr. Richard Busby. Realizing he had an extraordinary student on his hands, Busby intuitively understood that Hooke wouldn't thrive under a restrictive curriculum. Allowed to study by himself in Busby's private library, Robert mastered the first six books of Euclid's *Elements* within one week, then began teaching himself Greek and Latin. Later, Hooke learned to play the pipe organ, "*contrived several ways of flying*" through application of mechanical inventions, and gained a profound understanding of the relatively new science of geometry.

Feeling that he'd learned everything he could at Westminster, Hooke entered Christ College, Oxford as a poor scholar in 1653. This was a particularly auspicious time to attend this great historical institute of learning, as Cromwell's seizure of power in England had resulted in England being largely cut off from continental society (and scientists). To help compensate, many of the country's greatest minds had gathered at Oxford in a "philosophical college" or "invisible college" to carry out various experiments and swap results. This group included anatomist Thomas Willis, astronomer Seth Ward, chemist and inventor Robert Boyle, mathematician John Wilkins, the ingenious multi-disciplined scientist Sir Christopher Wren, economist, physician, and surveyor Sir William Petty, and now young Robert Hooke. Hooke learned astronomy

## DESCRIPTIONS OF HOOKE

“He’s but of middling stature, something crooked, pale faced, and his face but little below, but his head is large, his eye full and popping, and not quick; a grey eye. He has a delicate head of hair, brown, and of an excellent moist curl. He is and ever was temperate and moderate in diet, etc.” —*John Aubrey, a contemporary and friend*

“As to his person he was but despicable, being very crooked, tho’ I have heard from himself, and others, that he was strait till about 16 Years of Age when he first grew awry, by frequent practicing, with a Turn-Lath . . . He was always very pale and lean, and lately nothing but Skin and Bone, with a meager aspect, his eyes grey and full, with a sharp ingenious Look whilst younger; his nose but thin, of a moderate height and length; his mouth meanly wise, and upper lip thin; his chin sharp, and Forehead large; his Head of a middle size. He wore his own hair of a dark Brown color, very long and hanging neglected over his Face uncut and lank....” —*Richard Waller, a contemporary and enemy*

“Hooke came in. His spine was all awry: not only stooped, but bent to one side. His long brown hair hung unkempt around his face. He straightened up a bit and tilted his head back so that the hair fell away to either side, like a curtain opening up to reveal a pale face. Stubble on the cheeks made him look even gaunter than he actually was, and made his grey eyes look even more huge.” —*Neal Stephenson, a modern novelist and Hooke admirer, in his novel Quicksilver*

from Ward, impressed Wilkins with his knowledge of mechanics, and assisted Willis with his vivisection experiments. Now deeply involved with the top English *savants* of his day, he became Robert Boyle’s lab assistant. Together they constructed the first modern air pump, then along with Willis used it in a variety of (exceedingly cruel) experiments on dogs from which they gained a profound understanding of breathing and respiration.

Hooke was never a man content to do one thing at a time; indeed, he seemed to prefer hopping from one project to the next. At the same time he and Boyle were working on their air pump, Robert was also pondering how best to use clocks to determine longitude at sea. Understanding the inherent weakness of trying to use a pendulum clock to keep time on a pitching ship, he created an accurate, portable watch by inventing two important devices known as the balance spring and the anchor escapement in 1660 (though he oddly neglected to publish his findings until 1678).

Unfortunately, political circumstances now intruded upon the work of the “invisible college” at Oxford. Cromwell’s death in 1658 quickly led to the Restoration, in which Charles II returned from France to assume power. Many of Hooke’s associates at Oxford, who’d been appointed due to their Puritan sympathies, lost their positions and moved to London. Indefatigable as ever, these *savants* were soon meeting once more at Gresham College and, in November of 1660, the previously “invisible” college was revived as The Society for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematical Experimental Learning.



## ROBERT HOOKE PLOT SEEDS

**Privateers:** The year is 1685. With Spain's power all but broken and France waxing aggressive under Louis XIV, a bankrupt English crown turns to its nation's most brilliant natural scientist in a last-ditch attempt to stabilize its devalued currency. Hooke's solution is as daring as it is simple: gather together a brave group of Englishmen, sail halfway around the world in a single ship, and capture Spain's silver-laden Manila Galleon as it leaves Acapulco.

**Poisoned!:** The Lord of the Isle of Wight has been slain by a mysterious drug. All eyes fall upon Robert Hooke, the jealous uncle of the Lord's betrothed about whom many unpleasant rumors exist. Desperate to clear his name, the infamous savant hires the PC to locate the real killer before he (Hooke) is dragged before the merciless Star Chamber.

**The Cure:** William III, King of England and Scotland, has come down with a very serious illness that has no cure known to late seventeenth century medicine. Through his researches into the writings of Saracen explorers, Hooke has learned of a rare African flower whose petals, when ground up into a fine powder, may cure the monarch's sickness. The PCs are hired to lead an expedition up the Niger River to locate this "royal orchid"

Hooke quickly joined them in London where, in 1661, he published a pamphlet describing the basic theories behind capillary action.

After some considerable backroom maneuvering between Royalists, radical Puritans, nobles, businessmen, Anglicans, and Catholics of various stripes, The Society petitioned the King for recognition along with a royal grant of incorporation. Charles II, by all accounts a rather clever, farseeing man, understood the inherent value of keeping a stable of Europe's greatest scientific minds at the crown's disposal. Thus, in July of 1662, a royal charter created The Royal Society of London. This charter contained a provision for the appointment of an official Curator of Experiments, a position for which the Society already had Hooke in mind. With some assistance from Boyle, Hooke became an employee (and later a fellow) of the Royal Society. It was a position he was to hold for the remainder of his active life.

Although this position may, at first, sound like an enviable one, it was in many respects a nearly impossible job. The Curator was responsible for researching, preparing, and demonstrating at least three experiments at every weekly meeting of the Society. Though this occupational requirement undoubtedly accounts for much of Hooke's prodigious scientific output, it's doubtful that anyone in London besides Hooke could have actually pulled it off. Also, though the Society had promised him a salary of some £30 a year, it was founded during a period of severe economic strain, so he was required to begin work without any reimbursement until such time as the Society had the capacity to pay him. This precarious financial position was somewhat ameliorated in 1665 by his appointment to Gresham College as a Professor of Geometry, where he had a suite of rooms that he, along with his various "housekeepers" and his niece, would live in until his death.

In the same year, Hooke published the book for which he's best remembered: the *Micrographia*, a book of elaborate sketches of various objects he'd observed under a compound microscope (a device he helped to invent). Hooke's remarkable freehand drawings were accompanied by accessible prose commentary that, among other things, suggested the use of the word "cell" in a biological context, speculated accurately on the origin of the Moon's craters, and suggested the wave theory of light. His friend, colleague, and famed diarist Samuel Pepys commented "[Micrographia is] *the most ingenious booke that I ever read in my life.*" Later that year when the plague struck London, Hooke, along with John Wilkins, retired to the relative safety of a laboratory in Epsom to continue various experiments uninterrupted by the threat of infection. While there he composed his next important work: *Cometia*, a series of largely accurate observations about the nature of comets.

When the Great Fire of London struck in 1666 (conveniently putting an end to the plague), Hooke and Wilkins hurried back to the city to assist Charles II in its reconstruction. Appointed Lord Surveyor of London, Hooke worked fever-

ishly alongside his friend Sir Christopher Wren in a desperate bid to plan out and then reconstruct some the 650 acres of the ruined city within a period of only two years. They were largely successful, ensuring not only their financial fortunes but the gratitude of, and a lifelong close relationship with, the King of England. Along the way Hooke either designed or oversaw the construction of over a hundred buildings, including Montague House, the Royal College of Physicians, Bethlehem Hospital (popularly known as Bedlam), and about thirty Anglican churches. During this time he also produced his required three to four weekly experiments for the Royal Society, the surviving members of which had reassembled in the wake of plague and fire.

In 1672, Hooke's ten-year-old niece Grace came to live with him in London. Although their relationship was initially quite properly that of a parent and a child, it grew as the years went by into an odd, incestuous pseudo-marriage that was to last for the rest of both of their lives. Robert, who despite his fame and genius was nervous around women because of his deformities, generally only formed sexual relationships with prostitutes or his housekeepers. According to his personal diary, he fell in love with and seduced his niece around the time of her fifteenth birthday. Unfortunately his brother John, an ambitious smalltime politician working his way up toward petty nobility, wanted Hooke to find Grace a suitably wealthy and powerful husband. She was presumably an attractive girl, judging from the quality and quantity of the male attention she received. Much to Hooke's concerned jealousy, his diary catalogues a number of her male liaisons of varying intimacy during their life together. In this manner Grace made her uncle pay for his sins, so to speak, in a ghastly affair that involved the Governor of the Isle of Wight, a child born out of wedlock, and the suicide of Hooke's brother John. In the end, however, uncle and niece remained together in a caring (if unstable and unfaithful) relationship.

In 1672 the first of many fights between Hooke and famed scientist Sir Isaac Newton broke out on the floor of the Royal Society. Their first confrontation centered on a paper presented by Newton demonstrating his theories of light and color. Hooke claimed that what was right in Newton's theory was stolen from his own work in *Micrographia*... and what wasn't stolen was simply wrong. Their argument (the first of many) became so severe that only some serious toadying on the part of Oldenburg, the heroic and legendary first secretary of the Royal Society, kept Newton from resigning his fellowship. The two would maintain a bitter love/hate relationship for the rest of their lives, alternately corresponding and collaborating on projects until promising results had been reached, then publicly denouncing, attacking, and accusing each other when those same results were made public. Indeed, one of Newton's most famous statements, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" is considered by many a sneering comment on Hooke's deformity.

Despite (or perhaps because of) this and other vicious, long-running rivalries with different great scientists of the age, such as Polish astronomer Johannes Hevelius and Dutch inventor and astronomer Christian Huyghens, Hooke's experimental output remained prodigious. In the following decade he explained the scintillation of stars, constructed the first Gregorian telescope, attempted to measure the parallax of a fixed star, designed a deadly air gun, perfected a functional (if insanely dangerous) surgical procedure for removing gallstones, made the first observations of a star in daylight, and conducted various experiments dealing with gravity, petrification, and geology. On top of this, he took over the position of secretary of the Royal Society upon Oldenburg's death. Indeed, his output was so varied and well known during this period that playwright Thomas Shadwell wrote and performed a wildly successful work entitled *The Virtuoso* that satirized the Royal Society in general and Hooke in particular.

In 1687 Grace Hooke died of smallpox in Robert's arms, sending him into a spiral of escalating depression from which he would never emerge nor his health ever recover. Waller, Hooke's friend and biographer, wrote about the loss he felt: "*In the beginning of the Year 1687, his Brother's Daughter, Mrs. Grace Hooke dy'd, who had liv'd with him several Years, the concern for whose Death he hardly ever wore off, being observed from that time to grow less active, more Melancholy and Cynical.*" He began to shut himself away from friends and family for months at a time while conducting his experiments. Even his scientific writing from this last period is filled with bitter comments about life. At the same, he continued to sporadically produce, writing a now-lost "curious discourse" upon the Tower of Babel, a paper which expounded upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, worked out largely accurate theories on earthquakes, geology, and paleontology, and created a marine telescope.

Hooke's final years were filled with little but pain and sickness. Waller commented that he was "*often troubled with headaches, giddiness, and fainting, and with a general decay all over.*" He'd almost certainly become diabetic; his legs were swollen, his eyes went blind, and he was confined to his bed in the final month of his life. But mainly he'd lost his will to live. Finally, on March 3, 1703, Robert Hooke died where he lived at Gresham College. He is buried at St. Helen's Cathedral at Bishopsgate.

**Personality/Motivation:** Robert Hooke is not an easy man to get along with. He's rude, blunt, arrogant, cold, and seemingly unconcerned with the feelings of others. When this generally unpleasant disposition is grafted to an almost frighteningly unattractive physique, a propensity to cut open living things, and a preference for having sex with one's younger relations, you have what most people would consider, at least at first glance, to be a villain. Indeed, several of his contemporaries, such as Newton, believe he is a villain of sorts. Even his friends, such as Waller, agree he looks like one.

If you look a bit deeper, however, you find in Hooke a man who's genuinely fascinated by the material world, a world he desperately wishes to more completely understand. His generation of *savants* moved Western civilization almost completely out of the Middle Ages into the modern world by inventing entire sciences, practically from whole cloth in some cases. Although Hooke has frequent bitter disputes with some scientists throughout his life, he's on genuinely excellent terms with others (such as Boyle and Wren). Although history has often described him as a difficult man, this is harsh judgment. Hooke genuinely feels others are stealing credit for ideas he put forward first. Though he doesn't like it to show, he genuinely cares, both personally and often financially, for his friends, family, colleagues, and the various women with whom he shares his life.

Hooke is fabulously xenophobic; there's no record of his ever having left British soil. In fact, he spends a great deal of time and energy launching attacks upon perfectly respectable Continental scientists over the alleged theft of his ideas. But he's also extremely patriotic, so it's not beyond possibility that he'd be willing to leave his native land in the service of his country — say on a scientific expedition of some sort or a spying mission where his various skills might be of some use to king and country.

To best understand Hooke's character, consider this comment about his daily life from the introduction to his biography: "*He was a brisk walker, and enjoyed walking in the fields north of the City... he generally rose early, perhaps to save candles, and to work in daylight to prevent strain to his eyes... Sometimes Hooke would work all through the night, and then have a nap after dinner. As well as drinking a variety of waters... he drank brandy, port, claret, sack, and birch juice wine which he found to be delicious. He also had a barrel of Flanstead's ale and Tillotson's ale. There are a few instances when he recorded that he had been drunk... He was a gregarious person, who liked to meet people, particularly those who had traveled abroad....*"

**Quote:** "Your experience is merely a hodgepodge of statistics, consisting of those cases that you happen to remember."

**Powers/Tactics:** Although a lifetime of suffering from various medical maladies has left him with very little concern for his personal safety, Hooke has no martial skills of any sort. Rather, his abilities lie in the application of his incredible intellect to his not inconsiderable scientific, mechanical, and artistic knowledge. Give him an interesting problem to solve or the funding to embark upon some fascinating research experiment and some time and he'll bring back results if they're even conceivably achievable within the framework of seventeenth century science... and possibly even if they aren't. He's an expert in numerous scientific disciplines, has a photographic memory, speed reads, and is exceptionally well connected.

**Campaign Use:** Hooke is the archetypal “man of science” whose entire existence is given over to the cold, clinical dissection of the natural world. Actually, by the standards of the Baroque Era, he’s the man of science, one of that incredibly small group of enlightened researchers who lead the mighty stag that is modern knowledge out of the wilderness of medieval alchemy. He works best as an NPC science expert for either a historical campaign that takes place in the swashbuckling seventeenth century or a Low Urban Fantasy campaign in which the “magic” of alchemy is an important plot device. In a more typical Fantasy Hero campaign he might be a powerful alchemist-wizard with a fascination for the natural sciences — perhaps even one whose work is subtly altering Reality so that Science, not Magic, becomes the governing paradigm of existence. (This would certainly make many types of people his enemies, if it became known.)

In a *Pulp Hero* or *Victorian Hero* game, Hooke becomes a stereotypical steampunk/Weird scientist — the sort who devises the weird rays and other weapons that gangsters steal and use to threaten the city with. He’d make a great “science advisor” for a group of heroes without a scientist among their ranks. Alternately, he could become a villainous scientist. He is, after all, a coldhearted researcher whose experiments require a constant, even say *horrific*, supply of living bodies.

A modern day Robert Hooke might have his bleeding-edge laboratory in Millennium City, located right next to Dr. Silverback’s Cambridge Biotechnologies facility. Undoubtedly, it will be a constant source of extra-dimensional incursions, freak mutations, and runaway killer robots. (See Chapter Five of *Villainy Amok* for many ideas along these lines.) Although not cut out for physical combat, a Dr. Hooke living in the grim urban reality that is *Dark Champions*’s Hudson City might take it upon himself to become the nemesis rival of the sinister Kyphotic Man, even going so far as to finance his own team of vigilantes or thugs.

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**Appearance:** Robert Hooke is a pale, thin, ill-kept man of medium height. His large, intelligent grey eyes dominate a face otherwise given over to a generous forehead and small, tight mouth. The overall effect is cold, quizzical, sensual, and a little cruel. He wears his curly brown hair unusually long; it tumbles about his shoulders in an era during which most men shave their heads so they can wear either powdered or blackened wigs. His posture is unusually bad, reducing him to a stooped and sideways middling height when he might otherwise have been a tall man.

Hooke is far from being a snappy dresser because most of his clothing is quickly ruined by sudden, unsolicited introductions to fire, grease, acid, rare chemicals, and (most commonly) large quantities of blood. He occasionally tries to prevent this by wearing a butcher’s apron over his clothes while he’s in his laboratory — but it never really works. Hooke is a fashion disaster living among some of the most fashionable men in the world in one of its most fashion-conscious ages and places. When one of his women (a housekeeper or his niece) produces a decent set of Baroque clothing for him to wear, it always comes out looking wrong: his rhinegraves fall halfway down his buttocks, his canions end up at his ankles, and a goodly percentage of the hundred or so galants a fashionable man is expected to wear invariably come untied. Thus, Robert generally chooses to assume the undistinguished, puritanical clothing of the English working class under most circumstances, even when dealing with the King. This would make him the laughingstock of upper class England... except that he’s that much smarter than them and they know it.

# EL SANTO



“He’s not only a wrestler, he’s kind of a crime fighter.”  
—Cop, in *Santo vs. the Zombies*

There are certain men in history that, through a combination of their own natural abilities, above average willpower, general good character, and perhaps a little luck, achieve enough renown to be thought of as “legendary” among their kind. Then there are those men, such as Babe Ruth or Stephen King, who are so incredibly successful in their undertakings that they actually become synonymous with their chosen occupation. Finally, there exist a select few who attain such levels of notoriety that they become not only legendary or synonymous with their calling but actually transcend mortality itself to become symbols of their nation and culture.

In Mexico until recent times there existed such a man. His name was Rudolfo Guzman Huerta, yet few people knew him by that name. The world knew him as *El Santo* (The Saint), the most beloved *Lucha Libre* (“Free Fighting”) wrestler in Mexican history, as well as a hero of the common man in Mexico City. For while the traditions and history of pro wrestling in Mexico are rich, deep, and widely respected, with literally thousands of masked men thrilling crowds throughout that nation over the last 75 years, El Santo alone transcended the sport entirely to become a movie star, comic book hero, and national cultural symbol. During his multi-decade career, which began in 1935 and would last for more than 40 years, El Santo created a mystique both inside and outside the ring that elevated him in the eyes of his millions of fans to the level of a demigod during his life and a saint after his death. His athletic abilities and honorable character were so popular with poor Mexicans that he influenced not only future *Luchadores* (masked wrestlers) but also his nation as a whole. He may have worn silver but, for his sport, his fans, and his nation, he ushered in what has become a golden age of masked wrestling.

## RUDOLFO GUZMAN HUERTA (EL SANTO)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
14	INT	4	12-	PER Roll 12-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
19	PRE	9	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
14	COM	2	12-	
12	PD	8		Total: 18 PD (6 rPD)
9	ED	5		Total: 15 ED (6 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
55	STUN	15		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 161</b>

**Movement:** Running: 7”/14”  
Swimming: 4”/8”

Cost	Powers			END
	<i>Martial Arts: Lucha Libre</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
	<i>Submission Holds/Grabs</i>			
5	Abdominal Stretch/ Sharpshooter	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 45 STR to hold on
5	Atomic Piledriver	+0	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 40 STR to hold on;; 8d6 Strike; Target Falls
5	Flying Plancha	-2	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 40 STR to hold on, FMove
4	Russian Legsweep	+0	-2	Grab Two Limbs, 35 STR to hold on; 2d6 NND(2); You Fall, Target Falls
	<i>Pressure Squeezes</i>			
3	Basic Squeeze	+0	-1	10d6 Strike, Must Follow Grab
3	Super Squeeze	+0	-1	4d6 NND(1); Must Follow Grab
3	Deadly Squeeze	+0	-1	HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR), Must Follow Grab

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

First of all, I would like to thank Hero Game's own Darren Watts for providing me with a copy of his excellent Santo article *El Santo: The Man, The Myth, The Mask* that was published in Pyramid Magazine some years ago. I would also like to thank Lethal Wrestling contributor Tokage for his web biography of Santo.

As the actual public career of El Santo involved the constant perpetration of a peculiar mythology that consisted of blending wrestling fact (a questionable concept at best) with film fiction in the minds of his millions of fans, I have chosen to do the same. For while Rudy Guzman may never have saved the planet from Martians or rescued a beautiful woman from the clutches of the Daughter of Frankenstein, El Santo did these sorts of things before enjoying his *huevos rancheros* in the morning.

*Strikes/Takedowns*

5	El Santo	+0	+0	3d6 NND(8); Target Falls; Must Follow Grab
3	Body Press	+2	+1	6d6 Strike, You Suicida
3	Death Valley	+0	+0	8d6 Strike, Target Falls
4	Sudanese	+1	-1	10d6 Strike, You Meat Cleaver
				Fall, opponent must be Prone

*Escapes/Dodges*

4	La Campana	-1	-1	45 STR versus Grabs; 8d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
2	Use Art with Chairs, Brass Knuckles, Referees			
20	<i>Tough Guy:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 50%			
2	<i>Fast:</i> Running +1" (7" total)			
2	<i>Strong Swimmer:</i> Swimming +2" (4" total)			
7	<i>Radio Watch:</i> Radio Perception/ Transmission (Radio Group); OIF (-½)			

**Perks**

20	Base: mansion with secret headquarters beneath, built on 100 Character Points			
12	Contact: The Police 8- (access to major institutions, very useful Skills or resources, limited by identity, good relationship with Contact, Organization)			
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: EMLL Wrestling Association			
10	Money: Wealthy			
9	Reputation: Crime Fighting Masked Wres- tler (among Mexican and Lucha Libre fans) 14-, +3/+3d6			
12	Vehicle: sportscar (typically an Aston- Martin) built on 60 Character Points			

**Talents**

12	Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)			
10	Universal Translator 12-; Limited Effect (see text; -1)			

**Skills**

5	+1 HTH			
12	+4 with Lucha Libre			
3	Acrobatics 13-			
3	Acting 13-			
3	Breakfall 13-			
2	Cryptography			
1	Electronics 8-			
3	AK: Mexico City 12-			
3	KS: Anatomy 12-			
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-			
3	KS: Lucha Libre Rules And History 12-			
1	Mechanics 8-			
3	Oratory 13-			
3	Seduction 13-			
3	Shadowing 12-			
3	Streetwise 13-			
2	WF: Small Arms			

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 230****Total Cost: 391****75+ Disadvantages**

10	Distinctive Features: Masked Wrestler (Con- cealable With Effort [Rudy rarely wants to take his mask off]; Noticed and Recogniz- able)			
15	Hunted: Heels of the EMLL 11- (As Pow, Limited Geographical Area, Mildly Punish)			
15	Psychological Limitation: Tecnico's Code of Honor (Common, Strong)			
15	Psychological Limitation: Lady's Man With A Love of Luxury (Common, Strong)			
5	Rivalry: Professional (with all Heels in the EMLL)			
15	Social Limitation: Lucha Libre Identity (Fre- quently, Minor)			
15	Unluck: 3d6			
226	Experience Points			

**Total Disadvantage Points: 391**

**Background/History:** The man who was to be known as El Santo was born Rodolfo Guzman Huerta in the Mexican state of Hidalgo (now considered the holy land of Lucha Libre) on September 28, 1917. The fifth of seven children, young Rodolfo excelled at several sports, including baseball and football. At this time many sporting and social events in Hidalgo took place in casinos, which he frequented from time to time with his family. It was in these gambling houses that the Huerta children first set their eyes on a wrestling ring. They were all immediately hooked on masked wrestlers, with their mysterious dramatic personalities and impressive athletic skills. Rodolfo was actually the fourth member of his family to wrestle professionally: his brothers Miguel "Black" Guzman, Jimmy Guzman, and Pantera Negra all laced up their masks before he entered the ring.

In 1934 the 17 year-old Rodolfo, who'd realized he wasn't going to make it as a professional baseball or football player, began to train seriously for a wrestling career under the guidance of his older brother Miguel. He also began to practice both jujitsu and Greco-Roman wrestling to give himself an edge. Later that year he made his debut in the ring alongside his brother as "Rudy Guzman," and they were quickly signed by the prestigious EMLL (Empresa Mexicana de Lucha Libre) wrestling league. From there Miguel "Black" Guzman's career took off. He won a long series of matches, awards, and accolades that included becoming the 1939 EMLL "rookie of the year." Unfortunately, Rudy seemed stuck in his brother's shadow, shackled with a role as his older brother's sidekick. So he dissolved their tag-team partnership and struck out on his own, trying out a variety of masked personas including *El Hombre Rojo* (the Red Man) and *El Murcielago Enmascarado* (the Masked Bat) II. He even left the well-established EMLL to join a new league that had been formed by renegade wrestling talent scout Jesus Lomeli. Together the two of them brainstormed various ironic masked personas in which an evil ruffian could wear an image of good.

El Santo was born as a *rudo* (or villain) on July 26, 1942, when Rudy entered the ring dressed in an inexpensive silver mask and costume he'd pur-

## EL SANTO'S LUCHA LIBRE MANEUVERS

### SUBMISSION HOLDS

These maneuvers allow the attacker to seize a foe in some way. In some cases the maneuver itself inflicts some injury on the opponent (when first used, not in all subsequent Phases), but usually they're designed to set the victi up for a Pressure Squeeze maneuver (see below).

**Abdominal Stretch:** Standing behind his opponent, the attacker wraps a leg around the victim's body, hooking it between his legs. He can then overextend the victim's abdominal region for damage.

Similar to the Abdominal Stretch (in game terms) is the *Sharpshooter*, in which the attacker steps between a prone victim's legs, forcibly crosses the legs around one of his legs, and then clasps them in place with his hands. He then turns the victim over onto his abdomen and crouches to pressure his spine.

**Atomic Piledriver:** The attacker clamps his thighs around his victim's head, then locks his hands around the victim's midsection. He then lifts the victim upside down before dropping to his knees, driving the victim's head into the ground. The victim remains Grabbed, ready for a Pressure Squeeze.

**Flying Plancha:** The attacker leaps horizontally at his victim, slamming into him with his upper body and driving him to the ground in a Submission Hold with the attacker on top.

**Russian Leg Sweep:** Facing his victim, the attacker wraps one arm around his neck (thus choking him) and hooks one leg around his leg. He then falls backward, sweeping his legs out from under him and twisting his neck at the same time. The victim is then in a Submission Hold.

### PRESSURE SQUEEZES

Pressure Squeezes allow an attacker to hurt a victim who's already been immobilized by a Submission Hold. Crude, simple ones are known simply as "Crushes" and require no special training; in game terms, this is just applying typical Squeeze damage to the victim of a Grab. Actual Pressure Squeezes are much more complex and advanced; to learn and use them a luchador must first have KS: Anatomy 11- or higher and KS: Lucha Libre 11- or higher.

**Basic Pressure Squeeze:** With his victim securely in a Submission Hold, the attacker uses his knowledge of anatomy to twist his victim's limbs, causing intense pain and potentially severe injury.

**Super Pressure Squeeze:** With his victim securely in a Submission Hold, the attacker uses his knowledge of anatomy to apply pressure to his victim's nerve clusters for NND(1) damage.

**Deadly Pressure Squeeze:** With his victim securely in a Submission Hold, the attacker uses his knowledge of anatomy to tear his victim's tendons, muscles, and internal organs for Killing Damage.

### STRIKES/TAKEDOWNS

Strikes, the most basic of combat maneuvers, involve hurting the victim by hitting him somehow — whether it's a punch, headbutt, kick, or a weird maneuver like the Frankenstein Death Swing. Some Strikes are *Takedowns*, meaning they also have the effect of knocking the victim off his feet. This is a good way to set up a victim for a Submission Hold or some other type of attack while he's prone (and thus at reduced DCV).

As always, don't forget that in the *HERO System*, combat is governed by the standard rules for special effects. Thus, the description of a Strike or Take-down may involve "grabbing" a target — but as long as the attacker doesn't gain the benefit of Grab, and the victim doesn't suffer any of the drawbacks of a Grab, that's just a "special effect" of the maneuver and has no impact on the fight.

**El Santo Spinebuster Slam:** The attacker lifts his victim dramatically over his head, then slams him spine first into the turnbuckle (or some other solid object). The defense is rigid resistant PD over the entire body or a PD Force Field. This is the Signature Move of *tecnico* El Santo; he only uses it on dishonorable opponents.

**Body Press Suicida:** The attacker jumps at the victim from an angle, knocking them both to the ground.

**Death Valley Driver ("DVD"):** The attacker lifts his victim across his shoulders in a fireman's carry, then falls sideways, driving the victim's head into the ground.

**Sudanese Meat Cleaver:** With his victim already on the ground, the attacker leaps into the air and falls on him elbow first.

### ESCAPES

Sometimes a luchador would rather avoid being hurt or controlled than make an attack. When faced with opponents of unknown ability, many wrestlers choose to Hold a Half Phase Action in case they need to defend themselves, such as with an Escape — a defensive maneuver that lets a victim break free from a Submission Hold or like attack.

**La Campana:** Also known as the Bell Clap or Ear Ringer, this maneuver is double-handed blow to the head commonly used to break a bearhug. The attacker claps his hands or forearms around his victim's head, stunning him and disrupting his equilibrium. If the Grab affects the character's arms, he can still use the extra STR to break free, but cannot make a Strike against his opponent.

chased with his remaining meager wages from the EMLL. The match was an eight-man elimination battle royal with the two finalists wrestling under a two out of three falls stipulation. The last two men standing were El Santo and *Ciclon Veloz* (Fast Cyclone). The first two falls were unremarkable, but in the third fall El Santo displayed such unrelenting *rudeza* (or villainy) that he became an immediate hit with the fans. He poked his opponent in the eyes, brawled without restraint, and attacked the referee (Jesus Lomeli himself) when he got in the way. El Santo lost the match by disqualification but the fans were hooked. A rudo's rudo, Rudy exhib-

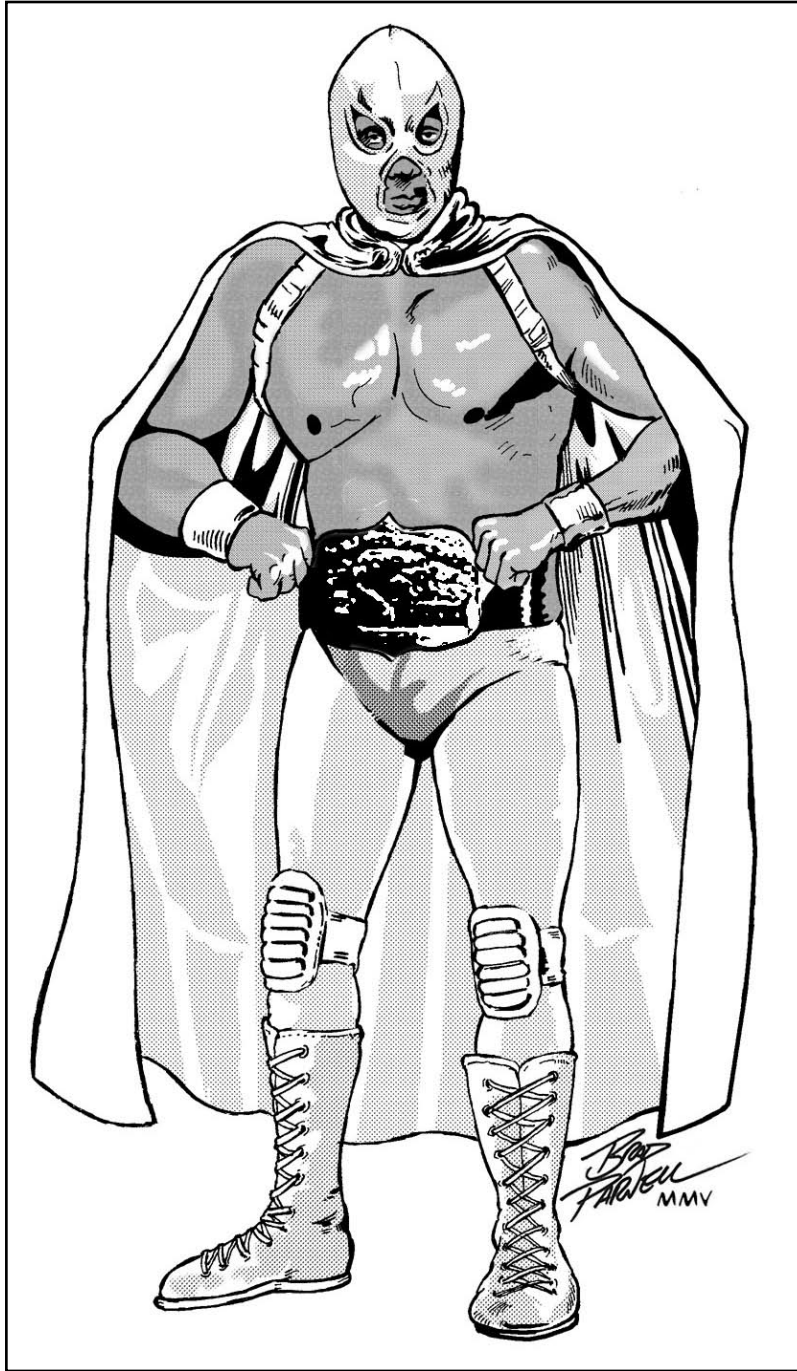
ited his plentiful and devious talents in dozens of subsequent matches against all takers, going so far as to land eight straight low blows against an opponent in a single match.

Villain or not, El Santo's masked visage was turning up in the sports sections of all the newspapers and magazines in Mexico City. He defeated *Ciclon Veloz* to win the Mexican National Welterweight in 1943 and, ironically, the original El Murcielago Enmascarado for the National Middleweight title becoming Lucha Libre's first double champion. He inaugurated the completion of the Arena Coliseo by wrestling Tarzan Lopez in a

## EL SANTO FILM SAMPLES (PLOT SEEDS)

**El Santo In The Wax Museum (1964):** El Santo is up against mad Doctor Carroll, a concentration camp survivor who hates all things that are beautiful. The nefarious physician kidnaps a female reporter, then has one of Santo's friends stabbed and tossed into boiling wax. He also commands an army of monstrous wax statues created from living human beings. Carroll plans to turn the attractive reporter into a panther/human hybrid, and ultimately all of the inhabitants of Mexico City into monsters. Santo arrives just in time to foil him and wrestle a Frankenstein monster before throwing it into an electrical array. Unable to defeat El Santo, the wax monsters turn on their creator. After the creatures kill Carroll, El Santo topples a vat of molten wax over them, ending their evil forever. Then he drives off in his sportscar.

**El Santo In The Treasure Of Dracula (1968):** El Santo is not only Mexico's greatest wrestler, but its greatest scientist as well! After inventing a device that can transport people back in time to relive their past lives, El Santo's friend Dr. Supulveda gathers a small group of incredulous scientists to help verify his claim. The Silver-Masked One needs a volunteer to save his scientific reputation by using the device. Supulveda's daughter Luisa volunteers. She enters El Santo's time tunnel device wearing a silver suit. Transported into the late nineteenth century she becomes the child



main event mask versus hair match. In 1944, after recovering from a near-fatal automobile accident involving one of his beloved convertible sports cars, El Santo teamed up with Gory Guerrero to form *La Pareja Atomica* (the Atomic Pair), one of the most influential teams in wrestling history. It was during this period in his career that El Santo experienced a radical change of heart, one that was to win him not only a world title but the hearts of fans throughout Mexico as well. The EMLL held a tournament to determine who would hold the recently vacated NWA Welterweight title. The final match boiled down to a contest between El Santo and The Bulgarian, Pete Pancoff. Santo had just made his opponent submit to a Boston Crab when something odd happened. For the first time the crowd was cheering for him rather than booing against him. In defeating a foreign threat to his native land

El Santo has ceased to be a rudo and become a *tecnico* (or good guy).

Over the next several years a series of talented new *Enmascarados* (or masked men) began to enter the leagues, posing a serious threat to El Santo and Gory Guerrero's titles. One of Lucha Libre's most legendary feuds was born in a match between La Pareja Atomica and the tag team of Blue Demon and Black Shadow. When the veteran luchadores triumphed Black Shadow swore dire revenge, setting off an epic rivalry that culminated with El Santo taking the Black Shadow's mask in 1952. To avenge his friend, Blue Demon took Santo's NWA welterweight title the following year. This victory elevated Blue Demon's status among wrestling fans at exactly the same time that Lucha Libre began to get major television coverage in Mexico.

Almost overnight El Santo became a recognized symbol of rising Mexican national pride and ideals, with Blue Demon as his trusted companion (sidekick would be pushing it). They both became the main characters in several popular comic books (as well as a series of pulp fiction thriller stories) fighting monsters, demons, alien invaders,

and mobsters in addition to evil wrestlers. The financial success of El Santo's comic books spawned a series of films beginning with *Cerebro Del Mal* (Brain Of Evil; 1958) that were even more profitable and, correspondingly, led to other *Enmascarados* starring in their own films — 96 to date, as they are still made sporadically. In these films brave masked wrestlers fought not only rudos in the rings but mobsters, monsters, and mad scientists in the streets, suburbs, jungles, and deserts of Mexico. Although filmed on incredibly limited budgets, they are fun (if cheesy) films that were heavily influenced by low-rent American and British horror. El Santo starred in 52 of them during his 40-year wrestling career, making him one of the most prolific and popular film stars in Latin American history.

The best of these films (such as *Misterio En Las Bermudas*) feature a teaming up of the ever-confident El Santo, the suave *Mil Mascaras* ("Man of a Thousand Masks"), and the grouchy Blue Demon into a friendly "Rat Pack" of wrestling.

By the 1970s old age was beginning to wear on El Santo. He was still as skilled and popular as ever, but he began to relegate himself to six-man tag matches, forming a popular trio with his friends Mil Mascaras and *El Solitario* (Solitaire). In 1980 he fell unconscious in the middle of a match and was diagnosed with a heart problem. As a result his wrestling license was revoked until he had a secret operation to fix the problem. But Rudy could see the writing on the wall. In 1982 he retired after a successful three-match tour, fighting with fellow *Tecnicos* and old friends Gory Guerrero, Hurricane Ramirez, and El Solitario against the villainous team up of the Sign, the Black Navarrese, the Texan, and Mad Dog Aguayo in his final match anywhere. He then handed his mask over to his son *Hijo del Santo* (Son of Santo) to carry on the family *Tecnico* tradition (there is now a Nieto (grandson) del Santo as well).

Two years later, on February 5, 1984, Rudolfo was rushed to the Mosel Hospital with chest pains. He died later the same day. As a statement about his life, legacy, and beliefs El Santo was buried with his mask on. More than 10,000 people, wrestlers and fans alike, attended his funeral to say a final goodbye to their hero. In his memory the CMLL (the modern descendant of the venerable EMLL) holds an annual tournament for young wrestlers called *La Leyenda de Plata* (the Silver Legend) in which the winner receives a special plaque adorned with El Santo's image. It is currently the highest honor that can be achieved by an enmascarado.

**Personality/Motivation:** Although one can only hypothesize about Rudy Huerta's motivations, his famous alter ego has a well-established personality. In Mexican culture El Santo holds about the same position as Superman holds in American culture, except better because you can throw James Bond and the Lone Ranger into the mix for good measure. Better, because an American comic fan will never see Superman fighting Bizarro in public on a Saturday night for his personal entertainment or catch him dining out with Lois Lane and Lana Lang at the same time, while El Santo does all these things and more. He lives life large, driving expensive sportscars, residing in a fabulous mansion with a secret headquarters beneath it, and dating one beautiful woman after another.

As the greatest *tecnico* of Lucha Libre, El Santo follows, indeed practically embodies, the *tecnico's* code: he always protects the weak (especially women and children), never breaks his word, and never uses questionable tactics in the ring unless his opponent does so first. (Of course, when he fights the undead, monsters, or space aliens all bets are off, because only humans can have honor. So riddling unnatural foes with bullets, pouring gasoline on them then lighting them on fire, hacking at them with swords, and blowing them up with a half ton of

explosives is just fine.) He will also make any effort necessary to keep himself from being unmasked; he rarely likes to take his mask off at all, and only does so when in strict and absolute privacy.

Although El Santo is honorable, brave, and straightforward, he's also streetwise with a good grasp of "how things are" when it comes to dealing with corrupt police or the greedy, petty nature of his fellow man. This outlook, coupled with the fact that he's immensely popular with most Mexicans and intensely feared by the underworld, often helps him complete his adventures successfully.

Whenever a famous Mexican archeologist needs to investigate an Aztec ruin, he calls El Santo to come along as protection against attacking mummies. Whenever a south-of-the-border scientist conducts a dangerous experiment, he asks El Santo to attend just in case zombies are the unintended result of his endeavors. When crimes get too strange for the Mexico City police to solve then... well, you get the picture. El Santo is a very popular guy. That said, he never lets his incredible fame, overwhelming machismo, unbeatable martial prowess, and irresistibility to the fairer sex go to his head. That's just the way in which the universe El Santo lives in functions.

**Quote:** "Zombies are generally weak opponents as their bodies have been corrupted not only by death, but by evil as well."

**Powers/Tactics:** El Santo is a master of Lucha Libre, a form of wrestling known best for its high-flying body slams, off-the-rope kicks, elaborate submission holds, complex takedowns, and wild theatrics. Although flamboyant, this Martial Art can also be extremely effective, especially as practiced by a master like El Santo. (See accompanying text box for descriptions of the maneuvers.)

With his array of technical wrestling moves and his innate physical toughness (50% Physical Damage Reduction, Combat Luck), El Santo can hold his own against many normal "superheroes" built on a similar number of points. Yet the Man in the Silver Mask has a wide variety of other abilities. His Lucha Libre skills include a superb grasp of acrobatics, acting, oratory, and anatomy. His years in the squared circle have also made him one of the most wealthy and famous men in Mexico. A decade of fighting mobsters in the mean streets of Mexico City has given him knowledge of the street and how to survive there, plus a friendly relationship with the police. His frequent encounters with the supernatural have made him knowledgeable in such matters and give him the unique ability to read whatever ancient language he needs to read at the moment he needs to read it.

Rudy likes to drive expensive sports cars (he has an Aston-Martin and a Bentley), lives in a fantastic mansion with a secret headquarters below it, and goes to nightclubs wearing stylish clothing and a mask. Beautiful women swoon over him everywhere he goes. He fights the three evil M's of Mexican horror cinema (Monsters, Mobsters, and Mad Scientists) because (duh!) that's what a hero does.

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of a Professor Soler, who is worried about his daughter's declining health. He calls on his old friend Professor Van Roth for advice. Van Roth immediately sizes up the situation and suspects Solaria's neighbor, the mysterious Count Alucard (who is secretly Dracula). Back in the present El Santo, Dr. Supulveda, and their cowardly friend Perico witness these events unfold on black and white closed circuit television. After Dracula bites Luisa, El Santo saves her from becoming one of the living dead by returning her to the present. El Santo then decides to try to locate Dracula's lost treasure, but another mysterious masked wrestler who seems intent on the same goal complicates things.

**Santo And Blue Demon vs. Dracula And The Wolf Man (1972):** After a grueling match with his arch-rival the White Angel, El Santo is summoned to the home of Professor Cristaldi, a direct descendant of the man who killed both Count Dracula and the Wolf Man. Having recently received a death threat against his entire family, Cristaldi asks the Silver-Masked One to help protect his cute seven year-old granddaughter, her highly attractive mother, a good looking maid, and his insanely beautiful niece. Realizing that this task is too much even for a man of his abilities, El Santo calls on his friend the Blue Demon for help. Meanwhile, an evil bearded hunchback known as Eric kidnaps Professor Cristaldi and cuts his throat, draining his blood over the remains of Dracula and the Wolf Man. Back among the

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living, the two monsters create more vampires and werewolves out of helpless kidnapped citizens while Eric hires some gangsters to kill El Santo and Blue Demon (who defeat them handily through the power of wrestling). The Wolf Man is then given the task of assuming his handsome mortal form so he can seduce Crystal-di's daughter. Eventually El Santo, Blue Demon, and the insanely beautiful niece figure out that Dracula is hiding out directly next door to them. They confront him, the Wolf Man, and an army of werewolves below an abandoned mansion, where the twin supernatural menaces are defeated when our heroes toss them into a pit of sharpened wooden stakes.

**Campaign Use:** El Santo obviously is most at home as the most famous NPC in a Lucha Libre Hero campaign in which the heroes are all masked wrestlers fighting the three Ms (Monsters, Mobsters, and Mad Scientists), but he has potentially unlimited uses for a creative GM. If there's but a single lesson that Rudy Huerta's films teach you, it's this: no genre exists that cannot be improved by the introduction of Mexican wrestlers. He can be used to inject a bit of levity into an otherwise serious Champions, Dark Champions, or Horror Hero campaign in which the characters must fight a supernatural menace of some sort (or, in the case of Vigilante Crimefighting games, he could focus on fighting just gangsters and similar threats). After the PCs suffer an initial defeat, El Santo arrives to show them "how it's done" south-of-the-border old school style, easily dispatching the very same monsters which gave the PCs such a solid thumping the day before. Certainly it will make players' heads spin if they show up to combat an invading alien menace only to find an enormous masked Mexican wrestler already pummeling little green men into submission when they arrive on the scene.

A time-traveling El Santo wouldn't seem terribly out of place in *Western Hero*, especially if there are outbreaks of supernatural menace out on the prairie somewhere. (Indeed, in some versions of Santo's legend he's only the latest in a line of silver-masked heroes that stretches back into the misty depths of time.) Similarly, he could show up in the Pulp or Victorian eras to assist spirit-hunting heroes. In a "Danger International" *Dark Champions* game of espionage and secret agents, the GM could drive his players out of their minds by introducing El Santo as a wildly out of place and obvious secret agent that, perversely, the NPCs simply accept as part of the scenery without question. Or perhaps in the distant universe of *Galactic Champions* El Santo is found frozen in a

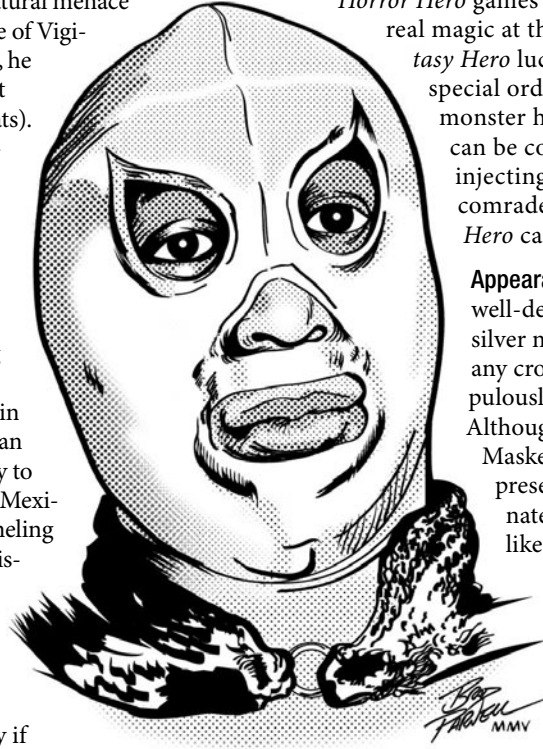
block of ice in Antarctica and, when released, forms a crime fighting partnership with the retro Golden Age hero Bulletproof.

In *Champions*, some luchadores, including El Santo, might have actual superpowers, possibly given to them by magical masks (much like the Champions Universe's hero El Espectro). In a *Teen Champions* campaign Rudy could be the high school's mysterious Mexican gym coach who dons his mask only to assist the PCs when they get over their heads. Similarly, in some

*Horror Hero* games luchadores might have real magic at their command, and in *Fantasy Hero* luchadores could become a special order of mystic martial artist monster hunters. Since Lucha Libre can be considered a martial art, injecting El Santo or one of his comrades into many types of *Ninja Hero* campaigns should be a snap.

**Appearance:** With his trademark well-developed hairless chest and silver mask, El Santo stands out in any crowd, even if the crowd scrupulously pretends that he doesn't! Although not very tall, the Silver-Masked One has a larger than life presence that seems to dominate his surroundings. Much like Frank Sinatra, men want to be him and women want to be with him (even if they stand a few inches taller than he does). Seemingly immune to age, he remained an active and popular wrestler well into his sixties with

no noticeable change to his appearance. Rudy is never seen in public when not wearing his distinctive silver mask with teardrop-shaped eyeholes (but which otherwise covers his entire head; he owns a special version of his mask with an open chin that he wears when he's drinking or dining). In the ring he wears silver wrestler's leggings and boots but leaves his massive chest bare. He also occasionally wears a flashy silver cape studded with sequins. El Santo generally dresses in his wrestling gear when fighting crime or the undead but, just as often, he puts on hand-tailored suits, fashionable leisure wear, or safari outfits.



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### Filmography

- 1958 Cerebro Del Mal (Brain of Evil)
- 1958 Santos vs. Hombres Infernales (Santo vs. The Infernal Men)
- 1961 Santo Contra Los Zombies (Invasion of the Zombies)
- 1961 Santo Contra El Rey Del Crimen (Santo vs. the King of Crime)
- 1961 Santo En El Hotel De La Muerte (Santo in the Hotel of Death)
- 1961 Santo Contra El Cerebro Diabolico (Santo vs. the Diabolical Brain)
- 1962 Santo Contra Las Mujeres Vempero (Santo vs. the Vampire Women)
- 1963 Santo En El Museo De Cera (Santo in the Wax Museum)
- 1963 Santo Contra El Estrangulador (Santo vs. the Strangler)
- 1963 El Espectro Del Estrangulador (The Specter of the Strangler)
- 1964 El Poder Satanico (The Satanic Power)
- 1964 Atacan Las Brujas (The Witches Attack)
- 1964 El Hacha Diabolica (The Diabolical Axe)
- 1965 Profanadores De Tumbas (The Grave Robbers)
- 1965 El Baron Brakola (Baron Brokola)
- 1966 Santo El Enmascarado De Plata vs. La Invasion de Los Marcianos (Santo the Silver-Masked One vs. the Martian Invasion)
- 1966 Santo El Enmascarado del Plata vs. Los Villanos Del Ring (Santo the Silver-Masked vs. the Villains of the Ring)
- 1966 Operacion 67 (Operation 67)
- 1966 El Tesoro de Moctezuma (The Treasure of Montezuma)
- 1968 Santo En El Teroso De Dracula (Santo in the Treasure of Dracula)
- 1968 Santo Contra Capulina (Santo vs. Capulina)
- 1969 Santo Contra Blue Demon en La Atlantida (Santo vs. Blue Demon in Atlantis)
- 1969 Santo Y Blue Demon Contra Los Monstruos (Santo and Blue Demon vs. the Monsters)
- 1969 El Mundo De Los Muertos (The World of the Dead)
- 1969 Santo Contra Los Cazadores De Cabezas (Santo vs. the Head Hunters)
- 1969 Santo Frente A La Muerte (Santo Faces Death)
- 1970 Santo Contra Los Jinetes Del Terror (Santo vs. the Riders of Terror)
- 1970 Las Venganza De Las Mujeres Vampiro (The Vengeance of the Vampire Women)
- 1970 Santo Contra La Mafia Del Vicio (Santo vs. the Vice Mafia)
- 1970 Santo En La Venganza De La Momia (Santo in the Vengeance of the Mummy)
- 1970 Las Momias De Guanajuato (The Mummies of Guanajuato)
- 1971 Mision Secreta En El Caribe (Secret Caribbean Mission)
- 1971 Santo Contra La Hija De Frankenstein (Santo vs. the Daughter of Frankenstein)
- 1971 Mision Suicida (Suicide Mission)
- 1971 Asesinos De Otros Mundos (Killers from Other Worlds)
- 1971 El Aguila Real (The Royal Eagle)
- 1972 Santo Y Blue Demon Contra Dracula Y El Hombre Lobo (Santo and Blue Demon vs. Dracula and the Wolf Man)
- 1972 Santo Contra Los Secuestradores (Santo vs. the Kidnapers)
- 1972 Santo Contra La Magia Negra (Santo vs. Black Magic)
- 1972 Las Bestias Del Terror (The Beasts of Terror)
- 1972 Santo vs. Las Lobas (Santo vs. the She-Wolves)
- 1972 Anonimo Mortal (Anonymous Death Threat)
- 1973 Santo Y Blue Demon Contra Dr. Frankenstein (Santo and Blue Demon vs. Dr. Frankenstein)
- 1973 Santo Contra El Doctor Muerte (Santo vs. Dr. Death)
- 1973 3 Dev Adam (Three Mighty Men) (This Turkish production does not feature the real Santo, but an unauthorized duplicate; it also includes an unauthorized Captain America and a villainous Spider-Man for good measure)
- 1974 Santo En El Misterio De La Perla Negra (Santo in the Mystery of the Black Pearl)
- 1974 La Venganza De La Llorona (The Vengeance of the Crying Woman)
- 1975 Santo En Oro Negro (Santo in Black Gold)
- 1977 Misterio En Las Bermudas (Mystery in Bermuda)
- 1979 Santo En La Frontera Del Terror (Santo on the Border of Terror)
- 1981 Santo Contra El Asesino De La T.V. (Santo vs. the Television Killer)
- 1981 Chanoc Y El Hijo Del Santo vs. Los Vampiros Asesinos (Chanoc and The Son of Santo vs. the Killer Vampires) (This is the first Son of Santo film; El Santo himself has a cameo.)
- 1981 El Puno De La Muerte (The Fist of Death)
- 1981 La Furia De Las Karatecas (The Fury of the Karate Experts)
- 1992 Santo, La Leyenda Del Enmascarado De Plata (The Legend of the Silver-Masked One) \*This stars the Son of Santo as himself and Daniel Garcia as Santo
- 2000 Jesus Christ: Vampire Hunter (This Canadian movie also features an unauthorized Santo duplicate.)
- 2001 Santo, El Enmascadrado de Plata: Infraterrestre (Santo, the Silver-Masked Man: Infraterrestrial) (As of this movie, the Son of Santo has now become Santo.)

# 'LIVER-EATING' JOHNSON



## THE CROW PEOPLE

It is extremely unfortunate that the actions of a few violent renegades pitted the entire western Crow Nation against John Johnson. As *Dapiek Absaroka* was to point out many times in his later years, the Crow possessed many excellent qualities. They were proud, brave, and stalwart. Unlike their neighbors the Blackfoot (who were continually at war with some tribe or other) they were not quarrelsome. The Crow braves were good family men who listened to such wisdom as their women might have, despite the fact that other tribesmen mocked them for this "weakness." The Crows were skilled artisans and manufacturers, able to trade rather than existing as thieves and marauders like many of their neighbors. They were peaceful in that they did not seek wars, but when attacked they usually won. In short, the Crow exemplified the nobility, dignity, wise counsel, and fighting strength for which the Western Indian is now best remembered.

"Surely, as mere killer of Indians, mere bloody-bearded eater of red men's livers, the Crow Killer would be worth little investigation; we could easily dismiss him as inhuman or insane. But he was not simply inhuman or insane; he was not even simply cruel; he cannot be so easily understood."  
—Raymond W. Thorp, *Crow-Killer: The Saga Of Liver-Eating Johnson*

John "Liver-Eating" Johnson was the most notorious and feared of all the Old West's mountain men: hard-bitten, fatalistic individualists who lived alone or in pairs in the high country, fighting Indians, trapping for furs, and hunting for their food. Mountain men such as "Crazy Bill" Williams, "Portuguese" Phillips, and "Bear Claw" Chris Lapp were a fiercely independent, colorful, unlearned, unwashed, drunk, and violent bunch who tore a bloody swath across the then-Wild West from the 1810s to the 1890s. Yet it's Johnson — a feared warrior, accomplished fur-trapper, celebrated woodsman, and unabashedly ghoulish cannibal with a peculiar twist — who's remembered as the embodiment of their ethos. One dark morning in 1847 he returned to his Rocky Mountain cabin to find the slaughtered remains of his Flathead wife and her unborn child, slain by a Crow raiding party. Swearing a blood oath he began a personal war against the entire Crow Nation. Tracking their warriors both singly and in groups, he killed an estimated 300 of them in hand-to-hand combat, scalped them, and consumed their livers raw as a gesture of his vengeance. Later in life he made peace with the Crow, even becoming an honorary chief of their tribe. He fought for the Union in the Civil War, for the Crow and Flatfoot in several Indian Wars, and acted as both Deputy Sheriff of Custer County as well as Town Marshall for Red Lodge Montana.

JOHN "LIVER-EATING" JOHNSON				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
23	PRE	13	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
13	COM	2	12-	
10	PD	6		Total: 16 PD (6 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 12 ED (6 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	10	Total Characteristics Cost: 154	

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END		
<i>Martial Arts: Indian Fighting Techniques</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 3d6 NND
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm; 43 STR to Disarm
5	Joint Break	-1	-2	Grab One Limb; HKA 1½d6 , Disable
4	Low Kick	+0	+2	8½d6 Strike
5	Passing Strike	+1	+0	6½d6 +v/5; FMove
4	Sudden Strike	+2	+0	8½d6 Strike
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			

**Perks**  
9 Reputation: most feared mountain man in the west (among Americans, Native or otherwise) 14-, +3/+3d6

**Talents**  
12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)  
15 Combat Sense 13-  
20 Danger Sense (self only, in combat, sense) 15-  
2 Trackless Stride (see *Fantasy Hero*)  
8 Mounted Warrior (HTH and Ranged Combat) (see *Fantasy Hero*)

**Skills**  
24 +3 with All Combat  
9 Range Skill Levels: +3 versus the Range Modifier with All Attacks  
2 Animal Handler (Equines) 14-  
3 Breakfall 13-  
3 Climbing 13-  
3 Concealment 12-

- 10 Defense Maneuver I-IV
- 6 AK: The Rocky Mountains And Surrounding Regions 15-
- 5 CuK: Mountain Men 14-
- 5 CuK: American Indians 14-
- 3 Language: Crow (fluent conversation; English is Native)
- 3 Language: Salish (fluent conversation)
- 4 Navigation (Land) 13-
- 3 Paramedics 12-
- 2 PS: Cooking 11-
- 5 PS: Trapper 14-
- 3 PS: Military Scout 12-
- 3 Riding 13-
- 3 SS: Anatomy 13-
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 10 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Desert, Mountain) 14-
- 3 Tactics 12-
- 5 Tracking 13-
- 3 Trading 14-
- 7 WF: Axes/Maces/Hammers/Picks, Blades, Early Firearms, Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Thrown Knives/Axes/Darts

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 233**

**Total Cost: 387**

#### 75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
- 25 Hunted: Crow Nation 14- (Mo Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 5 Money: Poor
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Crow Indians (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Mountain Man's Code Of Honor (Common, Moderate)
- 15 Reputation: most dangerous mountain man alive, 14-
- 232 Experience Points

**Background/History:** John "Liver-Eating" Johnson was born John Garrison in Little York, New Jersey in 1824. A military sailor of Scottish descent, John changed his name after striking an officer during the Mexican War and then deserting to avoid punishment. Since desertion was a capital offense, he headed west. Arriving on the scene in St. Joseph, Missouri in the fall of 1843, the newly-named Johnson (or, according to some accounts, Johnston) outfitted himself with the necessities of a trapper

from the trading post of infamous frontiersman Joe Robidoux, a merchant so crooked he later cheated his own son out of a small real estate fortune. Yet there must have been something about the 20-year-old Johnson that stilled old Robidoux's swindling instincts because he treated the young man kindly, even putting him up for the night. The following morning Johnson set off into the wilderness with a .30 caliber Hawken rifle, a Bowie knife, some traps, tobacco, and a horse.

Still, the joke was on Johnson. As a mischievous trick Robidoux pointed him in the direction of the trapped-out Big Blue region. Fortunately the greenhorn trapper met Old John Hatcher, an elder mountain man of considerable renown. Their introduction served as Johnson's first lesson: Hatcher ambushed him for amusement. The older man, who needed a strong partner for the coming year's work, took him on as an "apprentice" mountain man. Over the following year Hatcher taught him how to hunt, trap, scalp opponents, move silently and unobserved through the brush, and in general stay alive in the uncompromising environment of the Indian Territories. Johnson proved to be an apt student, staying with Hatcher at his cabin on the Little Snake River in Northern Colorado for several years. In 1846 Hatcher sent his two Cheyenne wives back to their people and moved to California. Johnson took over the cabin and set out with a new partner, a bald Quebecois trapper with six-inch mustachios known as "Del" Gue.

After a successful year together Johnson split up with his partner and set out with well-loaded packhorses for the Flathead (or Salish) Nation located in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, south of present day Missoula. The previous year a sub-chief named Bear's Head had offered to sell his "homely" daughter "the Swan," a beautiful maiden so named because her mother had chosen to allow her forehead to grow with a natural curve rather than flattening it when she was an infant, to Johnson for a minimal price. Johnson arrived with a massive dowry of rifles, knives, horses, and spices that he offered in exchange for her hand in marriage. The surprised and delighted father readily agreed and, after several days of celebrations, the newly married couple left on the return trip to his cabin on the Little Snake. During their time on the trail together Johnson gave her a rifle and taught her to use it so she would have meat during the winter while he was away trapping. In return she taught him to speak Salish. By the time they reached the cabin it was early autumn and, after

## 'LIVER-EATING' JOHNSON PLOT SEEDS

**The Ogre:** The Absaroka Indians have come to the PCs with a problem. A terrible monster known as *Dapiek Absaroka* is attacking their young men, tracking and killing them and then eating their livers. The tribe's elders have offered a large reward to the PCs if they'll hunt down this cannibal murderer and bring him to tribal justice. Of course, accepting the assignment and actually bringing in the Liver-Eater are entirely different matters....

**The Sioux Indian War:** The PCs have been hired as scouts and skirmishers against the Sioux Nation in a bloody war that's been ravishing the Montana and Dakota territories for the last few years. Their job is to accompany the infamous mountain man Liver-Eating Johnson and his Crow followers on a punitive raid against a nearby village. In the course of the adventure Johnson exposes the PCs to his unique culinary tastes.

**The Old Sheriff:** Outlaws have been menacing the peaceful community of Red Lodge, even going so far as to shoot their sheriff! While recovering from his wound, John Johnson charges the PCs with bringing these desperadoes to justice before they can harm any more members of the community. Although destitute he also explains a little bit about his fascinating and brutal life to them in exchange for their assistance.

#### SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Hawken Rifle	+0	+1	2d6+1	1d6	1	12	
Colt Army	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6-1	6	9	
Bowie Knife	+0	RBS	1d6	1d6-1	—	7	Can Be Thrown
Tomahawk	+0	-1	1d6	1d6-1	—	7	Made of stone, Can Be Thrown

#### Armor

None

**Gear:** Camping gear, traps, rations, flint and steel, tobacco, horse

**Clothing:** See Appearance

## LIVER-EATING JOHNSON QUOTATIONS

“A sight met her passengers which was certainly calculated to shock the nerves of any eastern tenderfoot. Along the brink of the river bank on both sides of the landing a row of stakes was planted, and each stake carried a white, grinning Indian skull. They were evidently the pride of the inhabitants, and a little to one side, as if guarding them, stood a trapper, well known throughout eastern Montana by the sobriquet of “Liver-Eating” Johnson. He was leaning on a crutch, with one leg bandaged, and the day being hot his entire dress consisted of a scant, much shrunken, red undershirt, reaching just below his hips. His matted hair and busy beard fluttered in the breeze, and his giant frame and limbs, so fiercely exposed to view, formed an exceedingly impressive and characteristic picture.”

—Peter Koch, private journal, 1869

“Accounts vary as to why or how he got the name, but generally it appears that in July of 1870 Mrs. Captain Hawley was picking Juneberries with an Indian Squaw about 300 yards from a post on the Musselshell River when she was hit in the neck by a bullet from a Sioux war party of nine men. Johnson and nine others found the woman, scalped, but alive. They pursued the Indians intent on killing all. Johnson reported he removed a liver from one of the Indians, who may or may not have been dead when he started to cut it out, and asked ‘who would take

setting up stores to keep her comfortable, he set out to do his winter’s work in the Uintahs where beaver and mink were reported to be plentiful. Neither of them knew the Swan was pregnant.

Early the following spring Johnson returned to his cabin with a belt full of enemy scalps and an unexpectedly large catch of furs. Little did he know he had a date with his destiny. At his cabin he found the vulture-picked remains of his wife and unborn child sprawled in the doorway. His home has been stripped clean save for a stool, a kettle, and, revealingly to the experienced mountain man, a single long eagle feather indicative of a Crow (or *Absaroka*) warrior. “Crow, or this child never et beaver tail,” he muttered darkly to himself. Placing the remains of his wife and child in the kettle, he hid his “kittle of bones” in a private cache in the mountains nearby where they would be protected from predators of both the two-legged and four-legged variety. And from that moment on, no Crow warrior in the West was safe from his wrath.

In the summer of 1848 the scalped and mutilated bodies of Crow warriors began appearing throughout the Northern Rockies, the plains of Wyoming, and Montana (basically wherever the Crow roamed). Each warrior was found in the same condition: with a slit beneath his ribs through which Johnson had removed his liver. Over time it became publicly known that Johnston was carrying on a one-man war with the Crow, killing and scalping their warriors and *eating the dead warriors’ livers*. From that point forward, Johnson was known as *Dapiak Absaroka* (the Killer of Crows) or simply Liver-Eating Johnson. At first people didn’t understand what set Johnson on the trail of the Crow, but in time, they learned Johnson was on a mission of vengeance for his murdered wife.

Public opinion of the Western Crow (with whom Johnson carried on his feud) in the Indian world swung from one of initial sympathy to anger, disdain, and even mockery. The Sioux and Blackfoot, in particular, mocked their ancient foes at trading posts, drawing their fingers across their abdomens before crying out *Insantanka* (Big Knife)! Such insults to honor almost immediately resulted in fights to the death, but the Liver-Eater’s one-man war on the Western Crow Nation was beginning to wear on them. Whatever the tribal elders might have thought of original rights and wrongs in Johnson’s case, extreme measures had to be taken if their (deserved) reputation as superb warriors were to survive. The tribe’s principal chief Big Robert called a council of war in which 20 handpicked warriors were put on the trail of the Crow Killer. They were to follow a strict set of rules to ensure the restoration of Crow honor: they were to operate alone; they had to confront *Dapiak Absaroka* in hand-to-hand combat; and they could not return or even visit their families until they completed the task.

None of these legendary warriors ever came home — Johnson killed them one by one over the next eighteen years. But in 1861 the Crow came close to getting their hands on their tormentor. In an uncharacteristic moment of inattention, a Black-

foot war party got the drop on Johnson while he was transporting two 20-gallon kegs of whisky to his Flathead relations. Captured, beaten, humiliated, and held for ransom to the Crow by an ambitious young chief known as “the Wolf,” the Liver-Eater spent a torturous evening listening to his captors consuming his whisky while he chewed through his sinew bonds. Once free he overcame his drunken guard using a series of crippling kicks, removed the young warrior’s entire left leg for use as food, and fled into the night. He faced a 200 mile hike naked through freezing winter snowdrifts. Sleeping in caves when he could, on several occasions he had to fight off wild animals using the unfortunate brave’s semi-frozen leg as a club. Finally, half-starved and nearly insane, he reached the cabin of his friend Del Gue, who nursed him back to health over the following months.

In 1864 the Liver-Eater took time out from his normal happy routine of trapping, hunting, Crow killing, and generally wild adventure to join the Union Army along with a band of young trappers. He spent the next seventeen months as a sharpshooter under general J.A. Blunt, where he distinguished himself as a brave combatant in the third and fourth battles of Newton, Missouri. Unfortunately, Johnson’s lust for taking scalps overcame his good sense on the battlefield; he received a severe reprimand for scalping the bodies of Union-allied Cherokee as well as Confederate-allied Seminole on the battlefield. In spite of this misunderstanding he was honorably discharged in 1865.

Returning to the mountains, Johnson traded his uniform and boots to the Pawnee chief Bear That Walks On Two Feet for a fresh set of buckskins and a pair of moccasins before picking up where he left off almost two years before. But fate had other plans for the Liver-Eater. In the year 1866 the greatest concentration of hostile Indians ever seen in the West initiated a series of military engagements and massacres that were to continue until the early 1870s. The Sioux had convinced the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Blackfoot, and some Crow tribes to join them on the warpath in a last desperate attempt to drive the white man out of the West. Soon Johnson was caught up in the general fighting, both as an individual combatant and while working with the military and small groups of mountain men. He helped with the defense of Fort Haley against the Sioux in 1869. Later that year, he assisted Portuguese Philips during his infamous “death ride” to rescue of the garrison at Fort Phil Kearny. More importantly, the Liver-Eater killed the twentieth and final Crow brave who’d been sent against him. After publicly reflecting upon the many positive qualities of the Crow to his friend “X” Beidler, Johnson tracked down and formally made peace with the great Western Crow chief Grey Bear. He was even given a sacred (and razor sharp) stone tomahawk as a symbol of his new friendship with the tribe.

In 1870 Nez Perce Indians of the Salmon Eater band fell upon a group of Shoshone women and children gathering roots, killing all of them. The tribe formally asked Johnson (who was an honor-

ary chief of that tribe as well as of the Flatheads and Crow) to assist them in their war against the hated band. He quickly agreed, forming up a group of 50 hardened mountain men, 28 Shoshone, 50 Flathead, 30 Crow, and three Ute trackers. After being led into an ambush by their trackers, the fighters did battle with their foe at the Lemhi River. They were victorious, but in the process both the infamously vengeful mountain man Mad Mose (who lived most of his life *sans* his scalp) and the legendary Mexican trapper Big Anton were killed.

By the 1880s Liver-Eating Johnson was ready for a change of pace. Still youthful, vigorous, and feared in his sixties (X Beidler described him as still having a “magnificent physique fit to take hand with anyone that wished to collide with him”) he became Deputy of Custer County, where he was extremely popular with those ordinary citizens who wanted peace and quiet. The county’s hardened desperadoes simply left as soon as he got the appointment. His policing style was unique and, by the standards of the time, particularly nonviolent. “Wa’al boys,” he would tell offenders, “this hez gone far ‘nuff. An’ whichever coon don’t like thet, kin meet me now, hyar on the spot, wi’ fists, knives, clubs, or guns.” Understandably, nobody took the massive mountain man up on his challenge.

After a few years of working in law enforcement Johnson returned to the mountains, trapping the Upper Milk River area of Alberta with his old friend Arkansas Pete. In 1888 he returned to his home country, building a cabin near Bear Creek in Montana. He was busy enjoying a solitary life of trapping and hunting when he discovered, much to his surprise, that he’d been unanimously elected to be the first marshal of the nearby town of Red Lodge. He accepted the position, which immediately caused every outlaw in the vicinity to relocate. With his duties reduced to occasional hassles with drunks (which he handled with ease) he had plenty of time to hunt in the nearby Big Snow Mountains for food.

Liver-Eating Johnson’s health failed him all at once in 1895. Although he was beloved by the townspeople of Red Lodge, who did everything they could for him, Johnson hated the idea of charity. He fretted constantly about becoming a burden for others. Finally, unable to work at the age of 76, he moved to the Los Angeles Veterans Home where in 1900 he died and was buried nearby. Interestingly, his story does not stop there. Thanks to the efforts of a Lancaster, California seventh grade teacher moved by the Robert Redford film *Jeremiah Johnson*, the Liver-Eater’s remains were exhumed from the “San Juan Hill” section of the Los Angeles Veterans Cemetery in 1974. He was reburied in the cemetery of Old Trail Town, a recreated Western Town near Cody, Wyoming — a far more fitting resting place for this man of the wilderness. Two thousand people attended his final services and Robert Redford, who portrayed him in the movie *Jeremiah Johnson*, was a pall-bearer in the ceremony.

**Personality/Motivation:** Liver-Eating Johnson is a man who enjoys solitude, friendship, adventure, and revenge in about that order. Indeed, he has little choice but to enjoy solitude. A brutal legend among mountain men (who were themselves legendary for their toughness) in general, he became so infamous for his vendetta against the Crow that mothers in far-flung outposts would threaten their children with cries of “Behave or I will set Liver-Eating Johnson after you with his knife!” On those rare occasions when he comes down from the high country to visit outlying posts, womenfolk close their shutters and peer through the crack at the dreaded solitaire cannibal woodsman with his blood-red beard and belt of bleeding scalps. Socially proscribed, feared, and even hated, yet respected by Indian and settler alike, he’s perhaps the loneliest figure the lonely West ever saw.

Yet Johnson seems to enjoy his infamous life. He settles into his place (a thousand miles of untouched wilderness) with his family, the small number of other mountain men (such as Bear Claw Lapp, Bigfoot Davis, and Del Gue) whom he considers his close friends. After his initial burst of bloody vengeance against the Crow, he seems content to let them come to him rather than actively seeking additional revenge. Although violent and murderous when provoked, he’s more than content to adopt a “live and let live” attitude toward others as long as they leave him alone. He enjoys the steady routine of hunting, fishing, trapping, woodcraft, and baking that, when combined with annual *rendezvous* during which he socializes with Indians and other trappers, comprises his life.

But events keep intruding on his peace and quite. When that happens, things tend to get kind of macabre in a culinary sort of way.

**Quote:** “Watch yer scalp.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Liver-Eating Johnson is Old West death on two legs. He’s deadly with rifle, pistol, bowie knife, tomahawk, and his bare hands. He fights equally well from horseback or foot. He’s developed his own personal “Indian Fighting” martial art that relies on kicks, crippling blows, and chokeholds. Most sane individuals avoid angering or crossing him at all costs because those who don’t often end up not only dead but often missing their scalps and livers as well. Nobody wants to earn a place on Dapiek Absaroka’s dinner menu.

A superb woodsman, Johnson excels at hunting, trapping, stalking, and ambushing. He can live off of the land indefinitely. He’s fast and agile, immensely strong, and has a keen (if somewhat narrowly-focused) intellect. He’s so attuned to his surroundings that it’s practically impossible to take him by surprise or catch him in a trap. His reputation as a dangerous combatant is nothing short of legendary and his appearance so fearsome that black-hearted murderers have been known to move to the next territory to avoid coming into contact with him. He ages slowly and seemingly without any effect upon his physique or constitution. He can move freely through dense forest undergrowth without leaving tracks. He’s a scary fellow.

Continued from last page

his liver rare?’ Blood from Johnson’s chin may have added a little color to the story, as some accounts state the Indians were ‘quartered, piled, and scalps taken’ by the group. Whether or not Johnson actually ate any of the liver was never revealed.”

—S.P. Panton, *Billings Gazette*, 1881

“Dave introduced me to a big man with a heavy red beard and said he was Liver-Eating Johnson.... There was a hide-hunter down there said that he’d shook down Whistler’s squaw’s corpse from a tree where she was resting on the Republican; Mexican dollars, about 200, had been buried with [her] to make her journey easier... Some of the men wanted to hang the hide-hunter right then and there, but Johnson said it was too much trouble over nothing and threw the fellow out. The door was shut and when the hide-man hit it, it came off the hinges.”

—Doc Carver, private letter, 1877



**Campaign Use:** Liver-Eating Johnson works best as a colorful (and possibly dangerous) NPC in a Western Hero campaign, either as himself or as a general “mountain man” type modified to create different characters. Many of Hollywood’s cinematic “mountain men” are loosely based on Johnson or his friends. Blazing Saddles’s memorable Gabby Johnson (who speaks “authentic frontier gibberish”), Robert Redford’s Jeremiah Johnson, the wizened and cantankerous Henry Frapp (played by Brian Keith) in *The Mountain Men*, and the character of James “Grizzly” Adams from the 1970s television series of the same name are all based on information gleaned from Thorpe and Bunker’s seminal (and refreshingly politically incorrect) 1958 book *Crow Killer*. In a Western Hero context, Johnson could be a mentor, a *deus ex machina* who helps the heroes out of a tough spot, the toughest town marshal the PCs ever encounter, or, if any of them are Crow Indians, a deadly enemy.

You can also use Johnson in other genres and settings — he’s the sort of ghoulish anti-hero that haunts nearly any genre that involves unexplored frontiers and uncharted wildernesses. Although he has been somewhat modernized, the infamous mountain men survive even in the twenty-first century, trapping pelts in isolated government-owned mountain ranges to this very day. A modern day Johnson whose was killed by gangsters might chose to travel to Hudson City in search of macabre, cannibalistic revenge (or could limit himself only to fighting crime in his general region). If greedy corporate developers threaten his isolated mountain home, he and his friends (who are built on similar numbers of points) might go to war, forcing the heroes to take action against them... or join their

crusade. And in the world of *Champions*, Johnson’s strength, endurance, resilience, and ferocity might reach superhuman levels, so that it takes a team of heroes instead of just the cops to bring him in.

In the distant future of *Star Hero* a John Johnson who lost his world to the carnivorous Xenovore Invasion might become the infamous Captain Brain-Eating Johnson, a privateer obsessed with visiting the same fate upon his hated foes as was visited upon his home planet. A *Pulp Hero* Liver-Eater might be a former missionary who lives (and could guide adventurers in) the dark heart of the Belgian Congo, where he takes revenge on the tribesmen who slew and ate his family. A *Fantasy Hero* Johnson might mistakenly conduct his terrible one-man war against the innocent, civilized orcs of Thordar. With his distinctive “Indian Fighting Techniques” martial art Johnson would be a difficult foe for PCs involved in a *Ninja Hero* *King Of The Streetfighting Warriors* campaign.

**Appearance:** Standing 6’6” tall and weighing in at 250 rock-solid pounds, “Liver-Eating” Johnson is a fearsome sight. With his long auburn hair, bushy red beard, and extraordinarily long arms that hang from thick, broad shoulders, he’s the very picture of an ogre — and in fact, many Indians and white settlers view Dapiiek Absaroka (the Killer of Crows) with the same sort of dread that a medieval peasant would have reserved for werewolves. He has a full, strong face dominated by a set of pale blue eyes that seem to become almost grey when he’s angered or confused. Men have spoken of their “merciless depths” with something approaching supernatural dread.

Johnson wears the fringed buckskins typical of a mountain man, including knee high moccasins and a specially-made wide leather belt adorned with metal rings for holding scalps. He also wears a huge coat sewn from the skin of a grizzly bear. For weapons he carries a Bowie knife tucked into his belt, a .45 Army Colt revolver, a richly-decorated stone tomahawk, and a .50 Hawkins rifle.

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### Filmography

Jeremiah Johnson  
*The Mountain Men*

# ROBERT JOHNSON



“...then you hear Robert Johnson — some of the rhythms he’s doing and playing and singing at the same time, you think, “This guy must have three brains!””

—Keith Richards

On November 23, 1936 a young and relatively unknown blues musician arrived at the San Antonio, Texas studios of the American Record Company to record his songs for the first time. This first of what later turned out to be two sessions was unceremoniously squeezed between W. Lee O’Daniel & His Hillbilly Boys the day before, and Hermanas Barazacon Guitarras the day after. When he was done, Robert Johnson collected his money and disappeared once again into the wilds of the Mississippi Delta. Yet out of these modest recording sessions came a powerful and unique sound that forever changed music in America.

## ROBERT JOHNSON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll: 12-
16	EGO	18	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	2		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
20	END	0		
25	STUN	5		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 62</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6”/ 12”

## Cost Powers END

51	<i>Overpowering Blues:</i> Mind Control 12d6, Area Of Effect (Voice Range; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (any guitar of opportunity; -½), Gestures (play guitar throughout; -½), Incantations (sings throughout; -½), No Range (-½), Set Effect (limited possible commands, see text; -¼)	0
10	<i>Hard To Hurt:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 25%	0
5	<i>Immortal:</i> Life Support (Longevity: Immortal)	0

## Talents

3	Perfect Pitch
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## Skills

9	KS: The Blues 18-
9	KS: Acoustic Guitars 18-
9	KS: Liquor, Women, And Sin 18-
10	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games) 15-
5	Oratory 15-
12	PS: Play Guitar 21-
12	PS: Singing 21-
5	Seduction 15-
5	Streetwise 15-
9	Stealth 15-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 145**

**Total Cost: 207**

## LOVE IN VAIN

And I followed her to the station  
with a suitcase in my hand  
And I followed her to the station  
with a suitcase in my hand  
Well, it’s hard to tell,  
it’s hard to tell  
when all your love’s in vain  
All my love’s in vain....  
—Robert Johnson

## ME AND THE DEVIL BLUES

Early this mornin’  
when you knocked upon my door  
Early this mornin’, ooh  
when you knocked upon my door  
And I said, “Hello, Satan,  
I believe it’s time to go.”  
Me and the Devil  
was walkin’ side by side...  
—Robert Johnson

OTHER INFAMOUS  
BLUES DEATHS

- Johnny Ace  
Russian roulette during the intermission of a show in Houston
- Juke Boy Bonner  
Cirrhosis of the liver
- Leroy Carr  
Acute alcoholism
- Jazz Gillum  
Shot
- Guitar Slim  
Pneumonia at age 32
- Jimmy Reed  
Alcoholism
- Bessie Smith  
Bled to death in car accident
- Pine Top Smith  
Accidentally shot at age 25 by a stray bullet from a bar-room fight
- Peetie Wheatstraw  
Drunken car crash at age 39

- 75+ Disadvantages**
- 5 Distinctive Features: Has No Soul (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
  - 20 Hunted: hellhounds on his trail 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
  - 5 Physical Limitation: Poor Eyesight (-2 to all Sight PER Rolls)
  - 20 Psychological Limitation: Code Versus Killing (Common, Total)
  - 20 Psychological Limitation: Loves Traveling, Gambling, Women, And Sin (Very Common, Strong)
  - 10 Unluck: 2d6
  - 52 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 207**

**Background/History:** Robert Johnson was the archetypal bluesman and drifter. Born out of wedlock and raised in the harsh environment of southern migrant labor camps, he was destined never to meet his own father nor ever know any permanent home. As he drifted from place to place, sometimes with his mother and sometimes with an aunt, he gained a great love for music, and sometime in the early 1920s he began to play the guitar. Early results were not very promising, but Robert made friends with several popular blues musicians (including the very talented Willie Brown and the famous mulatto bluesman Charlie Patton) who provided him with all the help and inspiration the young man could handle.



Robert was extremely handsome and charismatic, so he had little problem making himself popular with the ladies. Actually, his difficulties were pretty much in the opposite direction — he had a lot of trouble keeping his hands off them, his arms from around them, and himself away from them. At this stage in his life most of his ladyfriends were single, so it wasn't too much of a problem. Later, that would all change... and it would be his downfall.

Eventually, after Robert got his roving eye more firmly planted in his head, he met and married Virginia Travis in February 1929. Settling down for the first time, Robert became a proud expectant father when his wife became pregnant later that year. The young couple moved onto the Klein plantation near Robinsonville, Mississippi. Robert took up farming for a living and, although he continued playing actively in his spare time, he began to consider himself a farmer with a hobby.

This happiness was to be short-lived. In April 1930 both Virginia, still nearly a child herself at age 16, and Robert's baby died during childbirth, completely destroying whatever hopes and dreams he may have had for a family. In his grief, he threw himself into his music but found no solace there. Events were conspiring to bring him to a crossroads, both literally and figuratively.

In June of 1930 Paramount recording artist Son House came to live in Robinsonville at the request of his (and Robert's) friend Willie Brown. House, a bizarre combination of preacher and bluesman, had a raw intensity to him that no other musician in the Delta at the time could match. This was the purest expression of emotion Robert had ever heard. He longed to embrace the power of this style of the blues. There were four "jook joints" in town at the time and he would show up every time his new "hero" played one of them. But one night when it came time for Robert to play, House didn't even want him on stage because he felt the Robert's guitar playing was about the worst he'd ever seen. "Don't do that, Robert," House scolded him. "You drive people nuts. You can't play nothin'."

Heartbroken, Robert disappeared completely for one year. No one knows for certain where he went or what he did with himself. Some say that he and bluesman Ike Zinnerman played the circuit of crude jook joints and migrant work camps that had sprung up as the WPA built a highway across the Delta, sharpening their skills on the rough-edged men who made their living building that highway through the Mississippi swamp. Some say he went to the town of Hazlehurst, got drunk on whisky, and stayed that way for a year. Others say he moved to the lumber town Martinsville to live off of an older woman while he practiced his playing. Still others say that at some point during that lost and desperate year he sold his soul to the Devil down at the crossroads at midnight on a hot Mississippi summer's eve.

For drama's sake, the latter story must be the true one.

One year later a very different Robert returned to Robinsonville. He'd become not only a master of the guitar, but had written a series of songs so powerful and disturbing that House could only stand back and blink in amazement. House realized, and admitted, that he'd been eclipsed in both ability and appeal. Robert then began the wanderings that would occupy the rest of his short life.

He traveled throughout the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta areas, playing for levee camps, road gangs, and in the claptrap jook joints that dotted little southern towns back then. Eventually he even played in Canada and New York. For the most part, though, people simply knew by word of mouth when and where Robert Johnson was going to play. They knew they'd have a good time and hear some fine music if they went where he was.

They were right and, in a small way, Robert became famous. He began to love travel for its own sake. It's been said that awake or asleep, night or day, Robert was ready to go anywhere, even if that was back where he just came from. He moved around the Delta like a haunted man. Because he traveled so much, or so they say, he soon developed an unusual talent. He could hear a piece of music once — *just once* — and play it perfectly forever thereafter. In addition to his own material and all the popular blues tunes of the day, he could play hillbilly tunes, polkas, square dances, and ballads.

As soon as Robert hit a town he'd find the homeliest woman he could lay eyes on. He generally said a few kind words, sang a few songs, and almost always had a place to stay. His reasons were threefold: first, she probably wouldn't have a man; second, no one was likely to be after her or upset if he was after her; and third, just a little attention would generally bring him anything he wanted. It was said that Robert could be the nicest guy in the world to the ugliest witch in town.

While this plan was great in theory, Robert still loved his women and that got him into trouble now and again. He had a bad habit of being overly friendly with other men's wives. More than a few times he found himself in a scrape and, being small and generally not much use in a fight, had to rely on his friends to get him out of trouble. He loved gambling, smoking, and booze as well, though he couldn't really handle his liquor. More than a few times he got drunk, loud, and angry, cursing his Maker and getting his friends into fights. They say often seemed deeply angry about something he wouldn't, or couldn't, talk about.

One fateful night in 1938, Robert and his friend Sonny Boy Williamson were playing at Three Forks, a country roadhouse outside of the town of Greenwood. Robert had previously struck up a lively friendship with a young woman whose husband just happened to be the bartender. As the evening progressed it became more and more obvious that Robert was playing less to the audience at large and more to an audience of one: the bartender's wife.

During a break, someone brought Robert an open bottle of whisky that he quickly knocked back — against the warning of the more obser-

vant Sonny Boy. It was filled with the strychnine, courtesy of the bartender. By the end of the night Robert was vomiting and raving with poison-induced madness. Sonny Boy took him to a friend's home and together they attempted to save the poisoned bluesman... but the following day, Robert Johnson died. His death certificate was filed on August 16, 1938, forever ending his story and silencing his voice.

But for drama's sake, the story doesn't really end there.

Robert Johnson never died; not on that day nor any other. Over time he'd come to realize that his Faustian deal at the crossroads had been a double-cross. He'd become the greatest bluesman the Delta had ever known but he still couldn't find the happiness that he'd once had in his wife's arms. No amount of fame, pleasure, or appreciation could ever bring back to him what he'd lost. Now he simply wanted his soul back. He tried, but the Devil laughed him off. So he faked his own death and disappeared into urban America in search of redemption. He's there still, immortal and unaging, playing for coins on street corners as he looks for some way to reverse his deal with the Devil, get his soul back, and live out his days as a normal man.

But Robert can never stay in one place for too long. The Devil and his minions are always close behind... and old temptations are never far away. He has to keep moving if he's going to be safe. He's got to keep moving if he wants to find the key to his own redemption.

*Got to keep movin'/ I've got to keep movin'/  
blues fallin' down like hail/ blues fallin' down like  
hail/ there's a hellhound on my trail/ hellhound on  
my trail...*

**Personality/Motivation:** Robert Johnson still has all of the same old vices that he's always had, but he's a good deal more careful about them. He'll help the PCs only if he thinks there's a chance that they can help him get his soul back. If not, he tries to get away from them at the first opportunity.

The Devil and his various minions really are after Robert. Part of the Faustian deal between Robert and the Devil involved using music to usher in a new age of decadence and self-indulgence. It could be argued that, with the vast influence Robert Johnson's work has had on popular music through such bands such as the Rolling Stones and Beatles, he succeeded... but apparently the Devil had something more immediate in mind. Old Nick, being devilish and all, is not feeling very forgiving on this front. Robert is incredibly frightened of a confrontation with Lucifer at this point in time (they used to be a bit more intimate), and does his best to avoid one *unless* it somehow helps him get his soul back. If such an opportunity presents itself, he'll do what he has to do.

Robert is a charming, handsome, charismatic fellow with the haunted look of a man who's doomed and knows it. He's bright, capable, and very flawed. He just can't seem to conquer his desire to wander, to chase married women, and to get depressingly drunk. He's wise but seemingly unable

## ROBERT JOHNSON PLOT SEEDS

### Lest Darkness Convene:

Robert isn't the only musician in history to sell his immortal soul to the Devil. Through the occult grapevine, the PCs have learned of a secret concert to be held in the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp in which a panel of demons will judge which cursed entertainer is to get his soul back. Johnson tells them of his plans to attend. Is the event on the level or a trap of some sort?

### Hellhounds On My Trail:

While hitting the bottle one particularly stormy night Robert accidentally unleashes a large pack of canine-shaped devils upon the unfortunate citizens of Vibora Bay. For the PCs the evening quickly becomes a desperate race through the Queen City as local citizens, superheroes, gangbangers, and cops join forces to fight the unholy menace.

### All My Love In Vain:

Bulldozer, the most obnoxious supervillain in the Champions Universe, has fallen madly in love with one of the female PCs. Showing an unusual level of resourcefulness, he kidnaps Robert after learning of his special powers. Now he's out to capture the PC so that he can use his terrified "little buddy" to win her heart.

## INVOCATION TO DEATH

Swiftly speed o'er the  
wastes of time,  
Spirit of Death.  
In manhood's morn, in  
youthful prime,  
I woo thy breath.  
For the glittering hues of  
hope are fled  
Like the dolphin's light;  
And dark are the clouds  
above my head  
As the starless night.  
Oh, vainly the mariner  
signs for the rest  
Of the peaceful haven,  
The pilgrim saint for the  
shrines of the blest,  
The calm of heaven;  
The galley slave for the  
night wind's breath,  
At burning noon;  
But more gladly I'd  
spring to thy arms, O  
Death,  
Come soon, come soon!  
Alexander Keith  
McClung

to practice the wisdom he's acquired over his long, weary life. On the outside he's convinced that his bad habits are caused by his current soulless condition and that the only way for him to change is to reverse his pact with the Devil, thereby retrieving his own soul and regaining his humanity. Deep inside he's terrified that his condition has nothing to do with being soulless and everything to do with just being Robert Johnson.

**Quote:** "I got stones in my passway and my road seem dark at night. I have pains in my heart, they have taken my appetite."

**Powers/Tactics:** Robert really doesn't want to fight anyone. If pressed into combat, he plays certain songs to produce certain moods in his opponents (to put it another way, he can't achieve any effect with his Mind Control that doesn't derive directly from the lyrics or title of one of his songs). For example, *All My Love In Vain* makes opponents want to weep uncontrollably to the exclusion of anything else, *Hellhounds On My Trail* makes them run from unseen (but terrifying) opponents, and *Drunken Hearted Man* sends them off looking for a liquor store. Then he uses his Stealth to get away.

**Campaign Use:** The Robert Johnson presented here is a slight departure from the other characters in this book, in that he has powers (obtained from selling his soul to the Devil) that he never had in real life. This makes him more fun and dramatic, but if his abilities don't fit the tone of your game, just remove them and reduce a few of his Skill rolls to make him a normal (albeit highly-talented) blues musician.

In a *Champions* campaign (or *Dark Champions* campaigns involving a bit of mysticism), Robert could be one of those minor characters the GM uses to make the downtown of a big city just a little more interesting. Have him give the characters a little homespun wisdom about love, life, and loss now and again (your players could probably use it anyhow), then allow them to find out more about him if they care to look. After all, why have a nameless street musician playing Robert Johnson songs when the characters can discover that it's actually *Robert Johnson playing his own songs sixty-odd years after he supposedly died*? Perhaps the heroes are on the trail of some seemingly demonic supervillain, only to stumble into Robert and find out there is nothing "seeming" about the villain being demonic! That way you can use his unique plight as a convenient tool to draw the heroes into the world of demonic magic for the first time.

In a *Horror Hero* campaign, an encounter with Robert could mark the beginning of another one of those long, strange trips into "That Which Man Was Not Meant To Know." Perhaps Robert's now-infamous story of demonic temptation was just the beginning of a massive takeover of the recording industry by the forces of evil from outside Earth! That would certainly explain a few things....

In a *Cyber Hero* campaign Robert could serve as a contrast — a symbolic "last leaf on the tree" from the old America. Maybe he only *thinks* he was tempted by The Devil but really is a mutant or biogenetic of some sort. The whole Faustian pact he remembers is nothing but self-delusion, his subconscious mind's attempt to help him get through a very long, very lonely existence.

In *Pulp Hero*, Robert can be played just as he is: a fascinating bluesman for the PCs to meet, come to admire, and perhaps help out from time to time. If your Pulp heroes don't make it into the Mississippi Delta often, transplant Robert to a speakeasy in Chicago or New York, a nightclub or jazz club in just about any city (or even an out-of-the-way town), or some other venue.

In *Fantasy Hero*, Robert becomes a wandering, melancholy, sinful, but incredibly talented bard (with the magical powers to match, if appropriate to the campaign setting). The Middle Ages were filled with men like him — wandering troubadours whose tales of love and loss filled the halls of kings and the barrelhouses of peasants. His tale of temptation and demonic gifts just makes him all the more interesting.

**Appearance:** During his natural lifetime, Robert Johnson is a hauntingly good-looking young black man in his late twenties or early thirties. What most people notice, however, are his sorrowful eyes that seem to hold all of the weariness of the world within their depths. He usually wears shabby black or grey suits and carries a carpetbag as well as his guitar in its case. He sometimes wears a beaten-up fedora as well.

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# COL. ALEXANDER McCLUNG



“Everyone falsifies history even if it’s only his own personal history. Sometimes the falsification is deliberate, sometimes unconscious; but always the past is altered to suit the needs of the present. The best we can say of any account is not that it’s the real truth at last, but that this is how the story appears now.”

—Joseph Freeman

Colonel Alexander McClung was well known in 1840s America as a duelist of considerable reputation and skill that killed dozens of men in what was then legally sanctioned combat. Yet, he was much more than a simple murderer. A melancholy poet with a passion for women, literature, and history, McClung worked as an editor for a prestigious literary magazine while making his living as an attorney. After an infamous duel involving six members of the same family he went into the military, later becoming a hero of the Mexican War and serving as the American ambassador to Bolivia. Sadly, toward the end of his life his mental health began to deteriorate. Ghosts of his past dueling victims seemed to haunt him in terrifying visions that nearly drove him to suicide, until a chance encounter with the legendary hero Black Mask transformed him into a “villain” and member of that hero’s “rogues’ gallery.” In the end, he died honorably defending the mayor of Boston from an assassin.

## COLONEL ALEXANDER KEITH MCCLUNG

### The Black Knight Of Mississippi

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
18	STR	8	13-	Lift 300 kg; 3½d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
18	CON	16	13-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	4		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	4		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	0		
36	END	0		
40	STUN	4		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 126</b>

**Movement:** Running: 8"/16"

Cost	Powers	END
	<i>Martial Arts: French Method Fencing</i>	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
5	<i>Ballestra</i>	+2 -2 Weapon +4 DC Strike; Half Move Required
4	<i>Ceduto</i>	+0 +0 33 STR to escape Bind
4	<i>Froissement</i>	-1 +1 Disarm; 28 STR to Disarm
5	<i>Slash</i>	-2 +1 Weapon +4DC Strike

### Perks

- 24 Follower: Rob Roy (Light Warhorse; see page 169 of *The HERO System Bestiary*)
- 5 Money: Well Off
- 2 Reputation: infamous duelist (among Southerners) 8-, +2/+2d6

### Skills

- 16 +2 with All Combat
- 4 +2 OCV with Rapiers
- 6 +3 OCV with Dueling Pistols
- 3 Targeting Skill Levels: +2 versus Hit Location Modifiers with Dueling Pistols
- 3 Range Skill Levels: +2 versus Range Modifier with Dueling Pistols
- 3 Acting 12-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 Fast Draw 13-
- 4 Gambling (Card Games, Sports Betting) 13-
- 3 KS: Literature 13-
- 2 KS: The US Military 11-

## ALEXANDER MCCLUNG PLOT SEEDS

**Modern Champions:** The PCs are approached by the current Black Mask (see *Vibora Bay*), who has an odd problem. A strange character calling herself the Black Duchess of Vibora Bay (a descendent of Alexander McClung) has been following her everywhere, ruining investigations and generally making a nuisance of herself. She seems to want to engage the hero in some sort of ritual sword fight that involves all sorts of archaic conditions. Black Mask doesn't want to hurt this woman but she's in the middle of a very important investigation. Could the PCs please figure out who the Black Duchess is, what she wants exactly, and get her to possibly go away?

**Western Hero:** The Black Mask has vanished! It's 1853, and a distraught McClung approaches the PCs. It's been months since Black Mask IV (Matthew Ward) has been spotted on the streets of Boston, and McClung, who's been enemies with Black Mask for years and has vowed to be the man who kills him, is terrified that something has bad happened to the heroic mystery man. He offers to hire the PCs to track down, rescue, and return the missing hero to his beloved city so McClung can then kill him in a fair fight.

**Victorian Hero:** As the War Between the States draws daily nearer the mysterious duelist, diplomat, and adventurer Col. Alexander McClung approaches the PCs with a desperate plan to save their country from bloody civil conflict... by provoking another war with England! Will they go along with his mad plan or will they try to stop him?

DUELING CODES

Although historians consider dueling an archaic and distasteful form of murder, it was widely accepted in its day as a reasonable way for gentlemen to settle their differences. In a simpler, more rustic time when tempers often ran hot, courts were often unavailable, and law enforcement was practically nonexistent many educated people saw the duel as a practical alternative to bloody (and costly) family feuds. The duel itself was an extremely stylized ritual with a widely known and accepted set of rules that defined many of its aspects such as allowable weapons, the role of seconds (or assistants), the sending and receiving of challenges, and the number of shots or wounds required for satisfaction of one's honor.

Like many early American customs, the duel was imported from Europe, where the ideals of "judicial combat" between equals had been practiced since the Middle Ages. In 1777 a group of Irishmen cataloged these practices into a document that they named the *Code Duello*, a list of 26 specific rules designed to codify the practice into unofficial (yet generally accepted) law. This document was so widely read that its release was quickly followed by the publication of a French Code, a Spanish Code, and finally an American code in 1838 that was created by South Carolina Governor John Lyde Wilson. Each of these codes attempted to reconcile the ideals of the duel with the laws and customs of a specific people and time. For example, the American

- 4 KS: Code Duello 14-
- 3 Language: French (fluent conversation, literate; English is Native)
- 3 Language: Spanish (fluent conversation, literate)
- 3 Oratory 12-
- 3 PS: Lawyer 13-
- 2 PS: Poet 11-
- 3 Riding 13-
- 3 WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms, Flintlocks

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 126  
Total Cost: 252

75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Missing Two Fingers (-1 penalty to some DEX Rolls and Agility Skill Rolls) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessive About Dueling (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Psychotic; Sees Vision of Past Dueling Victims (Uncommon, Total)
- 15 Reputation: crazed duelist, 11-
- 117 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 252

**Background/History:** Alexander Keith McClung was born in Fauquier County, Virginia in 1811, the son of an illustrious Southern family that had previously produced a variety of great and noble men. His uncle was John Curtis Marshall, the fourth Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and his grandfather Thomas one of the founders of the Culpepper Minute Men, original bearers of the famous "Don't Tread On Me" flag. Yet as every elm must invariably cast a midday shadow the McClung family tree had found its own dark shade in the person of Alexander, a man destined for infamy rather than fame.

A moody young man prone to sudden, inexplicable fits of violence, Alexander scorned his kindred's traditional clerical vocation in favor of a legal career, a profession to which he was uniquely unsuited. For though he passed his bar exams by becoming thoroughly familiar with elementary jurisprudence during long drinking bouts with his uncle he never once opened a law book, preferring instead to read works of science, classical literature, and poetry. He moved to Mississippi where his contemporaries commented that McClung's "argumentative powers, when fully brought forth,

were such as to awaken the highest admiration" but that "he never devoted himself arduously to his chosen profession." This may be because of his melancholy preoccupation with gothic poetry, which had inspired him to undertake a second career as the editor of the well-respected *Southern Literary Messenger*. It may also be because Alexander had discovered that he enjoyed killing men more than getting them off the hook.

A naturally gifted sharpshooter and swordsman, McClung was first challenged to a duel by a jealous lover in 1836. He easily killed the man but soon found himself challenged by his opponent's brother, whom he dispatched with a smoothbore pistol at the remarkable distance of 100 feet. An entire series of more and more daring challenges followed, culminating in a remarkable combination duel-and-gambling-opportunity in which he killed a member of the infamously quarrelsome Menifee clan of Kentucky with a long rifle at a distance of 60 yards in full view of a large betting crowd. Soon six more revenge-seeking Menifees followed the first to the grave in a series of six separate duels, earning the well-dressed the McClung the ironic nickname "the Black Knight of Mississippi."

Feeling the heat from this series of well-documented semi-murders, Alexander took a commission in the Army just before the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846. He served with bloodthirsty distinction during the invasion of that country, becoming the first man to climb the ramparts of Monterey. As he ran carrying the American flag in his right hand a shot whizzed by, taking off two of the fingers from his left. After convalescing back in Mississippi, McClung served as the US Charge d' Affairs (a sort of ambassador) to Bolivia from 1849 to 1851. There he contracted a near fatal case of malaria that unbalanced him even further.

Returning home in 1852, Alexander soon found himself caught up in his old routine of killing challengers, writing depressing poetry, and halfheartedly practicing law. Still athletic and vigorous at 39 he became involved with a series of seemingly deliberately-doomed romances with much younger women. "He was the gallantest lover that ever knelt at a lady's feet!" commented the winsome Virginia Clay-Clopton. "I loved him madly while with him, but feared him when away from him." Years of butchering rivals, editing doggerel, and contracting exotic foreign illnesses had clearly driven Alexander mad. Haunted by the ghosts of his victims, McClung would mount his horse Rob Roy and dash to the nearest graveyard where he would throw himself down upon a convenient grave to stare like a lunatic into the sky for hours at

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Charles Moore Dueling Pistol	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	1	8	Carries two
Custom Rapier	+1	—	1d6+1	1d6-1	—	10	AP
Armor							
None							
Gear:	Writing supplies, horse and tack						
Clothing:	See Appearance						

a time. By the following year it seemed certain to all who knew him that melancholy delirium would terminally infuse itself throughout every fiber of his being, driving him to take his own life. They were right: McClung committed suicide in 1853 using one of the very dueling pistols that had taken the lives of so many rivals.

#### Personality/Motivation:

Alexander McClung is, well, a bit touched in the head. He didn't possess the most stable of characters to start with, and his war experiences and bout with malaria contributed to a further deterioration of his faculties. But that doesn't mean he's unintelligent — he's shown himself to be cunningly ingenious on many, many occasions. Rather, his madness has caused his priorities to become distinctly askew without robbing him of any of the intellectual capacity necessary to carry out his plans.

The Black Knight of Mississippi loves the already ethically questionable institution of duel with a fervor unusual even for a Southerner of his day. He adores the ritual of the challenge, the resulting display of martial skill, and finally the bloodthirsty satisfaction of the kill. Yet oddly this ferocity is tempered by the sentimental poet's soul which dwells within his breast, a condition that makes McClung feel increasingly guilty about the lives he's taken. On many occasions he finds himself so bitten by remorse over his murderous deeds that he contemplates suicide as a way of escaping his feelings of guilt.

**Quote:** "Accept my challenge like a gentleman. For the sooner you are dispatched to join the company of heavenly cherubim, the sooner I can get back to my melancholy affairs of self-destruction."

**Powers/Tactics:** Alexander McClung is an entirely formidable and, when he wishes to be, rather dangerous man. A crack shot, master swordsman, and experienced horseman with years of military and



diplomatic experience, he eagerly seeks out tough adversaries whom he considers worthy of his skills. His preferred method of confrontation is to challenge his opponent to a duel. If this challenge is accepted he adheres to the American code duello (which he has completely memorized) down to the finest detail, including allowing his opponent to choose both of their weapons. If an opponent wishes to forgo this ritual in favor of a less restric-

Continued from last page

Code justified itself in an introductory essay on the right to self-defense while the French Code cited the sanction of "twenty-five general officers, eleven peers of France, and fifty officers of rank" in its index.

Although dueling enjoyed wide popularity during the colonial period not all of America's founding fathers approved of it. Benjamin Franklin called duels a "murderous practice... they decide nothing." George Washington once congratulated one of his officers for refusing a challenge, reasonably noting, "there are few military decisions that are not offensive to one party or another." By the beginning of the Civil War dueling was in an irreversible decline. Mocked by such illustrious publications as *Harper's Magazine* as an illustration of the idea that "you have wronged me, therefore kill me," the duel began to be viewed by many people as cold-blooded murder rather than a formal process designed to avoid unnecessary violence. The final blow to the code came in 1874 with the publication of George W. Hooper's widely read satirical novel *Down The River, Or, Practical Lessons Under The Code Duello* which reduced the practice to the level of vicious, antiquated farce.

tive (or potentially lethal) form of combat the Black Knight usually obliges him, though he won't consider the matter a serious one.

In addition to his combat skills Alexander speaks French and Spanish, writes reasonably good poetry, and is an orator of some considerable skill. A member of the Mississippi Bar, he's a somewhat lazy — yet nonetheless effective — attorney with considerable experience manipulating juries. He's also rather handy with the ladies, so to speak.

**Campaign Use:** As presented, McClung makes a fine encounter (probably as a foe) for Western Hero or Victorian Hero characters, and by moving him backwards in time a few decades for Regency Hero PCs as well. If you'd rather take him forward in time, he could become an eccentric Pulp Hero Southerner in the Faulknerian mode, a man in whom the spirit (both good and bad) of the Old South lingers on.

Transplanted into somewhat different settings, a slightly altered McClung becomes a great villain or foil for the PCs. In *Champions* he could have low-level superpowers and face down the PCs with his superhuman dueling skills as a gentleman bandit of sorts. In *Dark Champions* he's much the same, but without the superhuman abilities and probably with more of a cruel, murderous streak to him (or, in *Dark Champions: The Animated Series*, he could become a kind of swashbuckling, roguish adversary for the heroes). In *Cyber Hero* you might replace his dueling abilities with the skills of a hacker, making him a Cybernet enemy the PCs know by his online avatar, which resembles a nineteenth-century duelist.

In a *Fantasy Hero* game you could emphasize McClung's warriors' abilities by giving him more Fencing maneuvers and perhaps making him a fallen member of an order of knights. Alternately, if your world has a counterpart to Renaissance Italy he could be an older, wiser, deadlier sort of street tough who opposes the PCs not only with his dueling skills but in the courtroom as well. In a *Ninja Hero* game he might become a melancholy samurai who's given to writing haiku when not using his katana to slaughter adversaries in duels.

**Appearance:** Alexander Keith McClung is a tall, thin man with a swooping jet-black moustachio that matches his equally dark hair. He has wild, unhinged-looking brown eyes that seem to wander about of their own accord only to snap back to attention at the slightest sign of danger. His hands

## DUELING WEAPONS

Dueling was a stylized, gentlemanly pursuit that called for specialized tools. Thus the *code duello* specified in extreme detail what weapons were considered appropriate for dueling, and the distance each one could be used from.

Dueling swords had to be short-bladed variety to prevent either combatant from gaining an unfair advantage due to reach. Pistols were either matchlock or percussion cap, used black powder (which provided a dramatic amount of smoke), and were smoothbore rather than rifled to prevent excessive accuracy. London-based English gunsmiths such as Charles Moore created the finest dueling pistols, although the French, Spanish, and Italians also made perfectly serviceable ones. They were often engraved with fanciful scenes and elaborate designs and stored in handcrafted wooden boxes with all the necessities (including a mold for making exactly the right size ball). Most gentlemen of quality owned a set — for the sake of appearance if nothing else.

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"A Pistol-Shot At The Duelists." *Harper's Magazine* (March 1856, Volume 12, Issue 70)

are large, steady, and quite strong-looking even though he's missing two fingers from his left one. He wears a gallant-looking black cavalryman's hat festooned with three feathers colored green, red, and white respectively (to symbolize his heroism in the Mexican War). Much of his lean frame is covered by an ankle-length ebony riding cloak worn to conceal the twin smoothbore percussion cap pistols tucked into the velvet sash he wears around his waist... not to mention the wicked-looking rapier he wears on his side. When challenged to a fight he whips this mantle back dramatically to reveal his arsenal before delivering a melodramatic oration of indeterminate length.

# AIMEE SEMPLE McPHERSON



“History consists of a series of accumulated imaginative inventions.”

—Voltaire

Aimee Semple McPherson was the first internationally famous Pentecostal evangelist. During the 1920s her name appeared on the front page of America's leading newspapers as often as three times a week. Using the most advanced technology available at the time (including the automobile and radio broadcasts), she vastly broadened the audience for the fledgling evangelical Christian movement, becoming a true pioneer in the modern American religion. She founded the Foursquare Gospel Church, now a denomination with more than two million members in 30 countries, by building her 5,300 seat Angelus Temple in California. Yet she's best remembered for an infamous kidnapping scandal which the Los Angeles press “revealed” to be a cover for an amorous encounter with one of her parishioners.

## SISTER AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
13	COM	2	12-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
3	ED	0		Total: 3 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
22	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 32</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"

### Cost Powers END

7 *Hands Of Bethesda*: Simplified Healing 1d6; Others Only (-½) 1

### Perks

3 Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank: Minister of a large congregation  
1 Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry  
10 Money: Wealthy

### Talents

20 *Glossolalia*: Universal Translator 12-

### Skills

3 +1 with High Society, Persuasion, and Seduction

3 Acting 13-  
3 Conversation 13-  
3 Cryptography 12-  
3 Disguise 12-  
3 High Society 13-  
4 KS: The Bible 13-  
3 Oratory 13-  
3 Persuasion 13-  
3 PS: Evangelist 13-  
3 Seduction 13-  
1 WF: Handguns  
3 Traveler  
2 1) AK: Canada 12-  
2 2) AK: Hong Kong 12-  
2 3) AK: Rhode Island 12-  
2 4) CK: Los Angeles 12-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 87**

**Total Cost: 119**



fornia. She began preaching in an upstairs room of Victoria Hall in the downtown area. "Sister," a term often used in Pentecostalism to distinguish a female member's newfound ties to the congregation, increasingly became a term used by the public to denote McPherson's religious status.

By 1921 Aimee had gathered enough capital to build her own church. She selected a site on the edge of the city's Echo Park conveniently near trolley lines and main thoroughfares. A huge, white, dome-like structure, the Angelus Temple could accommodate 5,300 worshipers and was topped by a rotating, illuminated cross visible for fifty miles. The Temple also had a huge choir, a brass band, and a pipe organ. A broadcasting station, KFSG, sent the Foursquare Gospel messages beyond the Temple in 1924, and a "Miracle Room" displayed stacks of crutches, wheel chairs, and braces left behind by recipients of her faith healing powers. Two evangelical publications, the monthly *Bible Call* and weekly *Foursquare Crusader*, were published from the premises for distribution to over 400 branch churches throughout the world.

The event that made Aimee Semple McPherson a household name occurred in May 1926, when she disappeared while swimming at the beach in Venice, California. Her congregation fell into a state of extreme panic, with thousands camping on the shore of the beach where they believed she'd drowned. Boats combed the water, divers searched for her body (one even died while doing so), and a distraught follower even drowned herself rather than continue on without her beloved "Sister." Yet no trace of Aimee was found.

Her mother, Minnie Kennedy, received a ransom note demanding \$500,000 for Aimee's return. Convinced her daughter was dead, Minnie discarded the note. Some 32 days later, a bruised and bloody Aimee came stumbling out of the Mexican desert. She described in dramatic detail her kidnapping, torture, and subsequent escape, which involved a 16-hour hike through the Sonora desert. Relieved, her followers prepared a lavish welcome. On June 23, 1926 a crowd of at least 50,000 people gathered for her homecoming, at that time the largest gathering ever to greet anyone arriving in Los Angeles. Yet her critics remained unconvinced, and rumors of a Mexican "love nest" where Aimee had spent a lust-filled month with a missing parishioner (an engineer from her radio station) persisted. In the end these rumors led to an investigation by the District Attorney. Aimee was charged with corruption of public morals, manufacturing evidence, and falsifying police report, but the charges were eventually dropped due to lack of evidence.

Aimee's mysterious disappearance was not the only source of controversy in the final decades of her life. With her health unsteady, battles between her mother and daughter Roberta over control of the church in the 1930s were widely publicized in the press even as Aimee attempted to do her part to combat the Great Depression by sponsoring soup kitchens and free medical clinics. In the end she expelled them both from the church; all three women were not on speaking terms by the end of

her life. As the years passed with unusual physical kindness, rumors of expensive cosmetic surgery (a new and controversial practice) were floated by the press. In the end Aimee was married three times, widowed once, and divorced twice. She was sued total of 55 times over various personal and professional disagreements. But regardless of these controversies, the public continued to come to her Angelus Temple, listen to her radio broadcasts, and attend services at branch Foursquare Gospel churches around the world. As Aimee once said, "I have the passionate devotion of thousands. If the papers tomorrow morning proved that I had committed eleven murders, those thousands would still believe in me."



## AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON PLOT SEEDS

**Crossroads:** At great personal risk and at the cost of the lives of almost a dozen of his parishioners, Reverend Elijah McPherson, the great grandson of Aimee Semple, has stolen Hecate's Key from DEMON. With it he's certain he can unravel the secrets of DEMON's unholy power, destroying the infamous cult once and for all. Now on the run from forces both demonic as well as mundane, Elijah seeks the protection of the PCs. But are they strong enough to face the Inverted Trinity?

**Crystal Skulls:** In 1927 archeologists in Honduras discovered an ancient crystal skull, seeming unconnected to any known pre-Columbian civilization. Now it's 1935 and Aimee Semple McPherson has discovered that this curious artifact, which has just recently been put on display as the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History, is actually an ancient Satanic artifact of unknown power. Desperate to keep it out of the hands of evildoers, she hires a ragtag bank of mercenary PCs to steal the artifact and replace it with a forgery. Unfortunately, just as they are breaking in some cultists show up with their own counterfeit skull....

**Half-Truths:** Aimee Semple McPherson has vanished without a trace. Although Hollywood's gossip columns are going wild with rumors of a love nest in Mexico, infamous lawman J. Edgar Hoover knows the truth: the religious leader has been kidnapped by a DEMON Morbane! With most of the FBI's resources tied up in anti-espionage activities, he turns to the PCs for help.

Aimee Semple McPherson died in a hotel room in 1944, the night after speaking to 10,000 people at the Oakland Coliseum. The city coroner listed the official cause of her death as an "accidental overdose of sleeping pills."

**Personality/Motivation:** Sister McPherson is a complex, paradoxical person with correspondingly enigmatic motivations. A high-minded ascetic moralist, she's guilty of many of the sins committed by modern Hollywood stars: lust, pride, and greed, to name but a few. While her seemingly insane, self-promoting vaudeville-style antics are the stuff of legend in her day; they don't seem to be intentionally hypocritical. She genuinely seems to be "touched" by God — or at least she thinks she has been. Though she may use questionable (or perhaps simply modern) methods, Aimee brings hope to thousands of people during a spiritually-troubled period of American history, and then later brought those same people food, shelter, and medical care during the Great Depression. She is, essentially, the first true Hollywood evangelist, with all of the glamorous, questionable baggage expected from such an unlikely marriage of opposites. While she may be guilty of pettiness from time to time, her basically positive and optimistic nature allows her to land on her feet no matter what trials life brings.

**Quote:** "All at once my hands and arms began to tremble gently at first, then more and more, until my whole body was atremble with the power... almost without my notice my body slipped gently to the floor, and I was lying under the power of God, but felt as though caught up and floating."

**Powers/Tactics:** Sister Aimee's powers lay in her ability to do that which most Pentecostal evangelists only aspire to do, namely heal the sick by laying her hands on them (her Hands of Bethesda power), speak nearly any language (her Glossolalia talent), and hold an audience of thousands enthralled (high PRE and a good Oratory roll). This writeup assumes she actually had those powers, but the exact source and nature of them is up to the GM.

Aimee owns a Marlin .38 center-fire pocked revolver which she usually keeps in a hollowed-out King James Bible. On those rare occasions when she finds herself in a combat situation, Aimee usually tries a Presence Attack to delay her opponents before drawing her revolver.

**Campaign Use:** Aimee Semple McPherson is an interesting, eccentric, and controversial personality who remained famous throughout the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and World War Two. She's extremely suitable as an NPC in any Pulp Era or Golden Age Champions campaign. In games with a horror or occult element, she might be a "ghostbuster," with the power to call upon God to dispel demons and other terrifying spirits. She could also supply the PCs with information, advice, medical care, and of course spiritual counsel.

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<http://www.foursquare.org/index.cfm?cat=about&subcat=history&subsubcat=founder>

### Papers:

"Aimee's Life." Anna Robertson, undergraduate at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, 1999

Beyond the Pulp/Golden Age era, Aimee has lots of uses. It's possible that her descendants inherited her abilities; as well as control of her large and successful church, making them helpful (if eccentric) allies for modern mystical Champions PCs whose careers bring them into conflict with DEMON, the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, The Crowns of Krim, the Devil's Advocates, or other Satanically-oriented villain organizations. (Or perhaps she herself has been granted immortality and ministers on to this day.) With more than two million devout members scattered around the globe, the modern Foursquare Gospel Church might work quietly behind the scenes to thwart Satanic plots. The unconventional Pentecostal congregation could even quietly coordinate with the FBI, UNTIL, and the Vatican to fight otherworldly evil throughout the globe. Make the threats and her powers more low-key and creepier and she works well in *Dark Champions* or *Horror Hero* campaigns of various sorts.

Since there's no reason to believe that either the Foursquare Gospel Church, the McPherson family, or Devil-worshipping cultists will disappear from the Earth in the foreseeable future, *Cyber Hero* and *Star Hero* PCs could find themselves assisted by a McPherson if they chose to tangle with the Satanists of tomorrow. In a *Fantasy Hero* campaign, Aimee McPherson's character sheet will make a fine basic template for a goodly NPC cleric the PCs can turn to for help when injured or facing the devotees of an evil religion.

**Appearance:** Sister Aimee is a handsome, small woman with blond hair, high cheekbones, and a winning smile. Fond of eccentric clothing, she's been photographed dressed as a Palestinian bride, a ship's captain, an angel, a nurse, and an ultra-fashionable movie star. Many of her outfits involve some sort of dramatic, ankle-length cape combined with flowing, Romanesque robes, a sash, and garlands of flowers. Not surprisingly, crosses also figure prominently in her dress.

# MIYAMOTO MUSASHI



“Generally speaking, the Way of the warrior is resolute acceptance of death.”

—Miyamoto Musashi

Renowned Japanese swordmaster Miyamoto Musashi may have been one of the greatest, as well as strangest, warriors to ever live. Though he began his days as a violent, rather brutish young man, his dedication to feudal Japan’s “way of the sword” transformed him into a master of his chosen weapons, the *katana* (or “longsword”) and the *wakizashi* (or “short sword”). In a process that was a much spiritual as martial, Musashi embarked upon a quest to conquer himself by defeating others, thus hoping to become a better man while simultaneously transfiguring himself into a living legend. Unable to settle down into any normal kind of existence, Musashi lived the life of a masterless samurai (or *ronin*) doomed to wander through the violent world of medieval Japan in search of spiritual, as well as physical, perfection. Toward the end of his career as a duelist, Musashi’s abilities had become so great that he preferred to fight using only a single sharpened piece of bamboo, out of fairness to his opponents.

Having more than proved himself with over sixty kills, Musashi retired to a cave in Japan’s wilderness to perfect his art of two-weapon sword-fighting, known as *Nito-Ryu*, before composing his classic *Gorin no Sho*, or *The Book of Five Rings*, an ambitious guide to the principles of craft, skill, timing, tradition, and spirit.

## MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 800 kg; 4d6 [2]
22	DEX	36	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
10	PD	6		Total: 16 PD (6 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 11 ED (6 rED)
5	SPD	18		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	4		
40	END	0		
50	STUN	10		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 158</b>

**Movement:** Running: 10"/20"  
Swimming: 4"/8"

### Cost Powers

### END

*Martial Arts: Nito-Ryu Kenjutsu*

Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4 Bind	+2	+0	Bind, 55 STR
4 Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4 Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 55 STR
4 Evade	—	+5	Disarm roll Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4 Lightning Stroke	+2	+0	Weapon +6 DC Strike
5 Running Stroke	+1	+0	Weapon +4 DC +v/5; FMove
5 Slashing Stroke	-2	+1	Weapon +8 DC Strike
16 +4 Damage Classes (already added in)			
1 Use Art Barehanded (Bind, Block, Disarm, and Evade only)			
15 Sheer Toughness: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%			0
12 Fleet Footed: Running +4" (10" total)			1
4 Strong Swimmer: Swimming +2" (4" total)			1

### Talents

9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)
12	Combat Luck (6 PD/ 6 ED)

### Perks

9	Reputation: greatest warrior in Japan (among the Japanese) 14-, +3/+3d6
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## ZEN AND THE ARTS OF BUSHIDO

There were several good reasons why the samurai class became devoted to Zen Buddhism. Its principles of directness, simplicity, and effectiveness are particularly useful to a soldier during combat, while its accent on detachment from the cycle of life and death makes him more determined and fearless when facing a dangerous opponent. Zen’s emphasis on intuition and experience, and its disinterest in abstract speculation, also serve him well. Meditation provides him not only with much needed relaxation, but also invigorates his mind while improving his ability to act intuitively.

Not surprisingly, many of the popular martial arts of today (such as Jujitsu, Kendo, Judo, and Karate) are in some part derived from these principles.

MIYAMOTO  
MUSASHI PLOT  
SEEDS

**When Warriors Meet In Battle:** Musashi decides the egotistical martial arts villain Green Dragon will be his next opponent. To draw Green Dragon's attention he embarks on a very public, very violent career of crimefighting in the PCs' home city, and he repeatedly dares Green Dragon to face him while speaking to reporters. Can the PCs prevent the two high-powered Asian warriors from turning downtown into a war zone?

**Overmatched:** Musashi decides the ultra-powerful alien gladiator Firewing will be his next opponent, so he publicly challenges him to a duel — a challenge the bored Ariax Thone is more than happy to accept. Unfortunately the master swordsman is way out of his league this time (though he refuses to admit it) and, *even more* unfortunately, the two have agreed to use Millennium City's Cultural Center as their battleground. Can the PCs put a stop to this madness before havoc results?

**You Know Nothing!:** One of the PCs has a problem: no matter where he goes, no matter what he does, some weirdo samurai keeps following him, lecturing him on the inferiority of his fighting skills. He continually admonishes the PC with cryptic sayings, urging him to "become the opponent" and "attain the principle so you can detach from the principle." Is there some way to make Musashi go away, or would it simply be better for the PC to accept him as a teacher?

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT							
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Katana	+1	—	1½d6	1d6-1	—	12	
Wakizashi	+0	—	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	
<b>Armor</b>							
None							
<b>Gear:</b> Writing materials, rations							
<b>Clothing:</b> See Appearance							

Skills	
16	+2 with All Combat
9	+3 with Nito-Ryu Kenjutsu
15	+3 DCV
7	Acrobatics 15-
3	Analyze Style 13-
7	Breakfall 15-
5	Climbing 14-
10	Defense Maneuver IV
5	Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 14-
3	High Society 13-
3	Language: Mandarin Chinese (fluent conversation, literate; Japanese is Native)
3	KS: Calligraphy 13-
3	KS: Painting 13-
3	KS: Siege Warfare 13-
3	PS: Teacher 13-
5	Rapid Attack (HTH)
5	Survival (Marine Surface, Temperate/Sub-tropical, Urban) 13-
10	Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
9	Tactics 16-
2	Weaponsmith (Muscle-Powered HTH) 13-
7	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Common Martial Arts Weapons, Off Hand

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 241**  
**Total Cost: 399**

75+ Disadvantages	
10	Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
15	Distinctive Features: disfiguring skin condition; never bathes, changes clothes, or combs hair (Concealable With Effort; Causes Major Reaction [disgust])
10	Distinctive Features: Samurai Bearing (Concealable With Effort; Noticed And Recognizable)
10	Money: Destitute
20	Psychological Limitation: Code of The Bushi (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Code of Vengeance; Must Avenge All Insults To Self And Lord (Common, Total)
20	Reputation: most dangerous person in Japan, 14-
10	Social Limitation: Ronin (Frequently, Minor)
209	Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 399**

**Background/History:** Shinmen Musashi No Kami Fujiwara No Genshin, better known as Miyamoto Musashi, was born in 1584 during the twelfth year of the reign of the Emperor Tensho. His father, Shinmen Munisai, a low ranking samurai and swordsmen, served the noble Shinmen family as a personal bodyguard while also providing training to their household forces. His mother Omasa died shortly after his birth, leaving him in the care of his stepmother Yoshiko, who raised him as her own son. Musashi was not destined to have an easy childhood, however. While he was still very young his father divorced Yoshiko, and she returned to her family home in Harima Province, taking her young stepson with her. It was there that Musashi and his older sister Ogin were raised with only infrequent visits from their father.

Shinmen Munisai was, by all accounts, an extremely strict man who showed his son little affection. But during his occasional visits he took it upon himself to teach his son both the "way of the sword" as well as *Bushido*, the code of the *Bushi* warrior class to which all samurai belong. Rather than recoiling from his father's harshness, Musashi excelled at this martial training (though his relations with his father were always strained). At the tender age of 13 Musashi fought his first duel. His opponent was one Arima Kibeï, an exponent of the *Shintouryo* school of *kenjutsu* (swordsmanship). On the day before the match Musashi had been walking through the streets of Harima Town when he passed a sign that read, "Whoever wants to challenge me shall be accepted. Arima Kibeï." To this Musashi added a note that read "I will challenge you tomorrow," along with his name and address. That evening a message arrived from Kibeï, both accepting the challenge as well as setting the site of the duel. The next morning young Musashi set out, sword in hand, quickly defeating (that is, killing) Kibeï and becoming a minor sensation in the area. Three years later, at 16, he fought again, this time defeating an opponent from Tijima.

Even though he'd become a widely respected (and feared) young man in his hometown, Musashi felt he hadn't really tested himself. In 1605 he struck out toward Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, on a *Musha-Shugyo*, or warrior pilgrimage, to make a name for himself as a swordsman. One of his first opponents was Yoshioka Genzaemon, the head of a family of prestigious warriors who served the Ashikaga Shogunate as military instructors. Though it would have been no loss of face for Genzaemon to refuse a match with an unknown *ronin* (masterless samurai) such as Musashi, he accepted, setting the match

for the very next day. As the two men entered combat Genzaemon showed signs of anger and impatience, while Musashi appeared relaxed and indifferent. Within a few moments the contest ended with Genzaemon lying unconscious on the ground.

Musashi's fight with the Yoshioka clan was far from over. Genzaemon's younger brother, Den-shochiro, attempted to restore his family's honor by challenging his sibling's tormentor; but Musashi killed him in the subsequent duel. The Yoshioka family began to get desperate. This time it was Genzaemon's son, Matashihiro, who challenged Musashi; only this fight was to be very different from the first two. Matashihiro's challenge was a ruse. His real plan was to ambush Musashi with a group of his followers, ending his family's disgrace by finishing the young ronin once and for all.

Unfortunately for his would-be murders, Musashi arrived at the match site early. Concealing himself in the underbrush, he watched as the small party of warriors assembled in the glen. Seizing the initiative, Musashi attacked all of them at once in a preemptive strike. He leaped from his cover, issued a challenge while in midair, and began killing Yoshioka retainers before they even knew what had befallen them. Having slain half a dozen men (including the duplicitous Matashihiro), he fled into the woods with some 80 samurai in hot pursuit. They never caught him.

Feeling more confident than ever, Musashi spent the next eight years wandering the roads of Japan, dueling any opponent willing to face him. Having developed his own two-weapon fighting style known as *Nito-Ryu*, he freely indulged in *Taryu-Jiai* contests — matches in which he pitted himself against the practitioners of other martial schools. He fought over 60 duels during this period without suffering a single defeat, learning from each combat so he could improve his own style. Occasionally he would settle down for a



short period of time, usually staying with a powerful *daimyo* (warlord) or a high-ranking samurai who wished to learn *Nito-Ryu*; but before too long he'd return to his wanderings. His quest for self-improvement remained paramount.

This period of Musashi's life culminated with the final, most famous battle of his dueling career. On April 14, 1612, he was rowed out to a small island to face Sasaki Ganryu Kojiro, one of history's great swordsmen as well as the infamous master of a fighting technique known as the "swallow cut." Kojiro wielded an incredibly long, specially-constructed *katana* with such speed it was said that he could cut a swooping bird out of the air in mid-flight. Unfortunately for Kojiro, Musashi had an opportunity to examine this weapon sometime before their match. To combat its inordinate reach, he carved one of the boat's long oars into a crude wooden sword on his way to meet Kojiro. As soon as his vessel hit sand Musashi leapt from the boat,

Continued from last page

#### To War Upon The Warlord:

Somehow Musashi has obtained a device that allows him to locate the Flying Fortress, home of the master villain the Warlord. Enraged by a recent attack upon Tokyo by the War Machine and the Shadow Army, he plans to infiltrate their base so he can put an end to their world dominating plans — forever. Will the PCs help him?

## DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF MEDIEVAL JAPAN

**Bakufu:** literally “tent government,” the military paragovernment of the Shogun who actually ran Japan, as opposed to the Imperial Government which was largely for show.

**Bushido:** a code of conduct specific to the armed gentry class known as *bushi*. Most samurai referred to themselves by using this term.

**Musha-Shugyo:** the “warrior pilgrimage” in which a samurai sets out on the road, traveling more or less randomly while seeking out opponents to fight in order to prove his martial prowess.

**Ronin:** a “wanderer,” an unemployed nomadic samurai available for hire by a baron or clan. During the third *Bakufu* known as the Edo period, the entire *bushi* class was disenfranchised from their ancestral land. Japan was then divided into some 200 baronies, which were only allowed to retain a limited number of warriors. This resulted in a large number of *ronin* roaming the countryside.

**Samurai:** derived from the Japanese verb *saurau*, which means “to serve as an attendant.” This word was used by other social classes to refer to lower-ranking warrior-nobles.

**Shin-ken:** literally “real sword,” but commonly used to mean “to do something with complete earnestness.” Could also be translated as “deadly serious.”

**Taryu-Jiai:** a contest in which practitioners of different schools or styles of martial arts fight to improve their abilities as well as demonstrate the superiority of one style over another.

## WARRIOR’S WISDOM

I have set my mind on the science of martial arts since my youth long ago. I was thirteen years old when I had my first duel. On that occasion I won over my opponent, a martial artist named Arima Kihei of the New School of Accuracy. At sixteen years of age I beat a powerful martial artist called Akiyama of Tijima province. When I was twenty-one, I went to the capital city and met martial artists from all over the country. Although I engaged in numerous duels, never did I fail to attain victory.

After that, I traveled from province to province, meeting martial artists of the various schools. Although I dueled more than sixty times, never once did I lose. That all took place between the time I was thirteen years old and the time I was twenty-nine.

When I had passed the age of thirty and reflected on my experiences, I realized that I had not been victorious because of consummate attainment of martial arts. Perhaps it was because I had an inherent skill for the science and had not deviated from natural principles. It may also have been due to the shortcomings in the martial arts of other schools. In any case, I subsequently practiced day and night in order to attain an even deeper principle, and spontaneously came upon the science of martial arts. I was fifty years old at that time.

Since then I have passed the time with no science into which to inquire. Trusting in the advantage of military science, as I turn it into the science of all arts and skills, I have no teacher in anything.

—Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*

sprung over one of Kojiro’s lightning-fast low cuts, and brained him on the head. With his opponent stunned and dying on the sand Musashi leapt back into the boat. He was back out to sea before Kojiro’s seconds even realized what had happened.

With his reputation as Japan’s premier warrior firmly established, Musashi elected to give up dueling so he could focus on the refinement of *Taryu-Jiai*. One again he wandered the land, but this time as a teacher. He established schools and occasionally worked as a general for various warlords and shoguns. Actively refusing challenges from would-be rivals, Musashi adopted and raised two sons, Mikinosuke and Iori. He also found the time to take up painting, producing a variety of beautiful landscapes and portraits that are still in existence today.

In 1644 Musashi entered the service of warlord Hosokawa Tadatoshi, the head of the powerful Kumamoto clan and a personal friend. Given a sizable stipend and a variety of upper-class privileges (such as the right to go hawking), Musashi eagerly looked forward to having an opportunity to transform his philosophies into actual government policy. Unfortunately he never had a chance to realize this ambition; Lord Tadatoshi died a year after Musashi joined the Hosokawa clan, thus ending his dream. The warlord’s death was a terrible blow to Musashi. Seized by depression, he left Hosokawa castle and scaled a mountain range to the ancient

Buddhist shrine of Reigan-Do, which is located in an isolated cave. There he spent 18 months meditating while writing his now legendary work the *Gorin no Sho*, or Book of Five Rings. One week after he finished the book he died peacefully in his sleep at the age of 61.

**Personality/Motivation:** It would be easy to categorize Miyamoto Musashi as a man who dedicated his life to perfecting the art of killing others with a sharpened blade. But that would be an overly simple conclusion, for in the great Japanese tradition of Bushido Musashi’s life is also a quest to conquer himself, to become a better man. From almost the first moment the great Buddhist evangelist Eisai first introduced Rinzaï Zen to Japan, monks attempted to temper the warlike nature of the nation’s samurai class with pacifistic teachings. But the resulting philosophy merely added a spiritual dimension to the bloody undertaking of warfare and killing. It’s this aspect of combat that consumes Musashi, generally to the detriment of any who dare attach themselves to or oppose him.

A complex, intelligent man deeply concerned with the unseen world of the spirit as well as the dangerous world of the flesh, Musashi is a study in cryptic opposites: an intellectual prone to flights of wild violence, a quietist obsessed with killing, a non-materialist determined to prove himself in the eyes of others. Perhaps he can best be understood emotionally as a small boy looking to prove himself to an unreachable father. On the other hand, one could view Musashi as a compulsive man of action in search of inner peace. In any case, he was a man who spoke using only a few, well-chosen words, fought using only a few, well-chosen moves, and lived in pursuit of only a few, well-chosen goals.

**Quote:** “The first of these basic principles is keeping inwardly calm and clear even in the midst of violent chaos; the second is not forgetting about the possibility of disorder in times of order.”

**Powers/Tactics:** Musashi is one of history’s great swordsmen, a killing machine able to visit unbelievable violence upon his opponents, whether confronted singularly or in groups. Fully ambidextrous and consummately skilled at wielding two weapons at once, he often uses Sweeps to attack one opponent twice in a Phase (or two opponents once each). A favorite tactic is to perform a Disarm with his wakizashi followed by a Lightning Strike with his katana. Thanks to his phenomenal reaction speed (i.e., his high DEX and SPD), in most fights this direct, often brutal method settles matters before an enemy can even react, let alone strike back. When fighting against two or more enemies, however, Musashi uses his tactical abilities to determine which opponent is most dangerous, then attacks him with the katana while selecting a secondary adversary to strike with his wakizashi. Musashi always strikes to kill.

Although terrible to behold in battle, Musashi’s fighting style relies on having willing opponents

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(trans. Charles S. Terry), Kodansha International, 1995

who actively seek to close with him. Against an unwilling opponent with a greater movement rate, or a foe who attacks from a distance, he's at a something of a disadvantage.

**Campaign Use:** Musashi is a real-life example of the much-beloved “brooding lone warrior” figure — a man who wanders from town to town fighting evil while searching for his own place in the world. This archetype is a universal one, not just a treasured part of Japanese medieval mythology but a collective kind of hero known to nearly every culture at nearly every point in history. Fictional examples include Clint Eastwood's popular “spaghetti western” adventurer The Man With No Name, Marvel Comic's the Incredible Hulk, Sir Gawain of the Arthurian legends of England, Severian the Torturer from Gene Wolfe's Books Of The New Sun, and even the character of Motorcycle Boy (Mickey Rourke) from Francis Ford Coppola's film Rumble Fish. All of these characters are Musashi-like in their own ways.

While naturally suited for a *Ninja Hero* campaign set in the seventeenth century Edo period of Japanese history (or, with a few adaptations, to nearly any martial arts campaign), a transplanted or immortal Musashi works well in many other settings. He's tough and deadly enough to hold his own against many of the heroes and villains of *Champions*, particularly in lower-powered settings like Vibora Bay. In *Dark Champions* he'd make a tough opponent for characters taking on the yakuza... or perhaps a powerful ally, if for some reason Musashi opposes Japanese organized crime. He could even be found wandering the Old West like Toshiro Mifune's character in the movie *Red Sun*, fighting outlaws alongside more traditional *Western Hero* characters.

Inserting Musashi into a *Fantasy Hero* campaign requires very little effort — the GM can simply assert that he comes from the campaign world's mysterious “Eastern Regions.” As a *Pulp Hero* character he could be one of the last of the traditional samurai, a member of a small community living secretly on one of the northern Kuril Islands even as Japan modernizes and militarizes around them. (Alternately, he might become a special agent for the Imperial Japanese government, and thus an enemy of the heroes.) A futuristic or immortal Musashi might settle onto the traditionally Japanese colony world of Tetsuo (see *Worlds Of Empire*) where he could lead the planet's people in resistance against the Xenovore Invasion and, 150 years later, against the Thorgons in the Galactic War. He may even live long enough to mentor one the heroes of the far distant future setting of *Galactic Champions*.

**Appearance:** Musashi is quite an odd looking samurai by the standards of the seventeenth century. During his infancy he contracted the skin disease eczema, a condition that permanently covered his body in scars. Because of this Musashi cannot shave his hair into a proper sakayaki (or topknot), preventing him from wearing the hairstyle that would normally have distinguished him as a member of the samurai class. To compensate for this he wears his hair in a wild, tangled ponytail that falls between his shoulder blades. Physically Musashi is a giant among men, over six feet tall at a time when the average Japanese man stands well under five. Although he wears the elaborate kimono of a warrior, his clothing is cut from simple burlap rather than silk. It's soiled and worn from hard, continual use.

Though it's been written in many modern accounts that Musashi has an aversion to personal cleanliness, it's far more likely that he simply practices the aesthetic Zen ritual of taking cold, pre-dawn immersions, called *mizugori*, rather than the hot, soothing baths commonly taken by his peers.

## THE WISDOM OF MUSASHI

If you practice day and night in the [following]... strategy, your spirit will naturally broaden. Thus is large scale strategy and the strategy of hand to hand combat propagated in the world. This is recorded for the first time in the five books of Ground, Water, Fire, Tradition (Wind), and Void. This is the Way for men who want to learn my strategy:

- 1) Do not think dishonestly.
- 2) The way is in training.
- 3) Become acquainted with every art.
- 4) Know the Way of all professions.
- 5) Distinguish between gain and loss in worldly matters.
- 6) Develop intuitive judgment and understanding for everything.
- 7) Perceive those things which cannot be seen.
- 8) Pay attention even to trifles.
- 9) Do nothing which is of no use.

# MUNGO PARK



“Though all the Europeans who are with me should die, and though I were myself half dead, I would still persevere, and if I could not succeed in the object of my journey, I would at least die on the Niger.”

—Mungo Park

Mungo Park was a Scottish surgeon and explorer who was selected by the Association For Promoting The Discovery Of The Interior Parts Of Africa to head an expedition in search of the source of the mysterious Niger River and the fabled city of Timbuktu. After a series of early disasters that cost him most of his equipment as well as all of his fellow European adventurers, he embarked unaccompanied (save for his luckless native guide Johnson) on his quest. He endured tremendous hardships during his journey into the heart of West Africa: he was repeatedly robbed; spent several months imprisoned by the Moorish Emir Ali Ibn Fatoudi; and came close to dying of starvation and thirst while finishing his journey alone. Without much of an idea of where he was going he relied entirely on the surprising generosity of local tribesmen for food, shelter, and directions throughout his eventful eighteen month journey. He eventually reached the River Niger, traveling along part of its course before returning to the coast. Upon his return to Europe he authored a book entitled *Travels In The Interior Districts Of Africa*. Published in 1799, it influenced generations of subsequent adventure writers including Melville, Conrad, and Hemingway.

MUNGO PARK				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
14	STR	4	12-	Lift 175 kg; 2½d6 [1]
11	DEX	3	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
6	PD	2		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	9		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	2		
40	STUN	8	Total Characteristic Cost: 66	
Movement:		Running: 6"/14"		
Cost	Powers			END
7	Manly Art Of Fisticuffs: HA +2d6 (4½d6 with STR); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)			1
10	Manly Toughness: Physical Damage Reduction, Normal, 25%			0
Perks				
12	Contact: Association For Promoting The Discovery Of The Interior Parts Of Africa (useful Skills or resources, good relationship, Organization) 11-			
1	Fringe Benefit: License To Practice Medicine			
5	Follower: Johnson (Katunga Oyo) (built on 25 Base Points)			
6	Reputation: great African explorer (in Europe) 11-, +3/+3d6			
Talents				
3	Bump Of Direction			
Skills				
2	+1 OCV with Fists			
2	+1 OCV with Rifle			
3	AK: West Africa 12-			
3	KS: West African Tribes 12-			
1	Language: Arabic (basic conversation; English is Native)			
2	Navigation (Land) 12-			
3	Paramedics 12-			
3	PS: Writer 12-			
3	PS: Physician 12-			
4	Survival (Tropical, Desert) 12-			
3	TF: Riding Animals, Small Rowed Boats			
2	WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms			

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 75

Total Cost: 141

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Distinctive Features: European in eighteenth-century Africa (Not Concealable; Causes Major Reaction (curiosity or fear); Not Distinctive In Some Cultures)
- 10 Hunted: Arab Slavers 8- (Mo Pow, Limited Geographical Area, Harsh)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Fanatical Explorer (Common, Total)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (other African explorers)
- 10 Social Limitation: Unable to Fit Back Into European Society (Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Unluck: 3d6

**Total Disadvantage Points: 145**

**Background/History:** Mungo Park was born in Selkirkshire, Scotland on September 20, 1771, the seventh in a family of thirteen children. The son of a well-to-do farmer with a passion for education, he was apprenticed to a surgeon named Thomas Anderson before attending the university of Edinburgh for three sessions. After receiving his diploma in 1791 he set out for London to seek his fortune. Through his brother-in-law William Dickson, a botanist of no small repute, he became acquainted with Sir Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society and a famed explorer who'd circumnavigated the globe with Captain James Cook. With Sir Joseph's assistance Park obtained the position of assistant-surgeon onboard the East Indiaman Worcester. In 1792 he made the journey to Benkulen in Sumatra, returning the following year to present descriptions of eight new species of fish to the British Linnaean Society.

At the time of Park's return to England, two important questions had begun to dominate the discussions held in the prestigious Association For Promoting The Discovery Of The Interior Parts Of Africa: where was the exact location of the semi-mythical city of Timbuktu, and what was the course of the River Niger? The Association knew the mighty river flowed west to east, but its members were curious to know where it emerged. Three theories had been formed to explain its flow: it emptied into Lake Chad; it

curved around to join the Zaire; or it reached the coast at the Oil Rivers.

The Association had launched a previous expedition to the Niger lead by Major Daniel Houghton, but it perished in the vast Sahara Desert. It was eager to try again. Supported by Sir Joseph, Park applied to the Association to lead its next (potentially suicidal) expedition to explore West Africa. When it agreed to back him, he set out for West Africa in 1795, arriving at the mouth of the Gambia River in June. From there he ascended 200 miles upstream to the British trading station of Pisania where he met with his contact Dr. Laidley, who provided him with equipment, advice, and a skilled guide and interpreter named Johnson. Dressed in European clothing, including a tall hat he used as a container to store his notes in, Park started his hike into the unknown interior accompanied by Johnson and a slave named Demba, who'd been promised his freedom upon completion of their journey.

The three traveled across the upper Senegal basin, then through the desert region of Kaarta. Along the way they were robbed by Bondou tribesmen, who stole all of their equipment save for Park's tall hat and his compass. Upon reaching the Muslim settlement of Ludamar the three men were imprisoned by the local Moorish Emir Ali Ibn Fatoudi. Demba was taken away and sold but Johnson, who was considered too old to be of any value,



MUNGO PARK  
PLOT SEEDS

**For King And Country:** With France poised to ravage Europe under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte, a desperate English sovereign dispatches a crack team of explorers, soldiers, and scientists to Africa in search of gold and silver. Lead by the famed (if slightly mad) Captain Mungo Park they must fight their way past hostile natives, dangerous animals, and Muslim slavers if they're to reach the legendary mines of Timbuktu.

**Revenge!** The year is 1820. Almost forgotten by the modern world a 50 year-old Mungo Park has at long last emerged from the impenetrable jungles of the Congo with tales of an unspeakable hoard of treasure guarded by an ancient snake cult. He approaches with PCs with an offer: equal shares of the treasure if they'll accompany him back to the hidden temple of Nama. Are these tales the insane ranting of a malarial lunatic or is there really uncountable wealth hidden in the heart of the Dark Continent?

**Rescue:** Desperate to discover the fate of her lost husband Alice Park hires the PCs to follow his footsteps along the Niger River basin in the hope they'll locate and rescue him. Can they succeed where every other European has failed?

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT							
Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Enfield Rifle	+0	+1	2d6-1	1d6	1	12	Blackpowder weapon, takes two Full Phases to reload between shots
Machete	+0	—	1d6	1d6-1	—	8	
Armor							
None							
Gear: Camping gear, mapping and writing gear, rations, ammunition							
Clothing: See Appearance							

was allowed to stay with his English employer. After four months of beatings and torture Park escaped with Johnson's help. Back in the jungle the two men parted ways, Johnson heading back to Pisanian while Park continued on alone with no equipment save for his hat and compass. Relying on the kindness of African villagers he continued his dogged search for the River Niger. He finally reached Segu on July 21, 1796, where he became the first European to gaze upon the Niger's waters. He followed the river 80 miles to Silla, where he was obliged to turn back due to exhaustion. On his return journey he took a southern route to Bamako, traveling all told some 300 miles along the river's length. After recovering from a bout of malaria at Kamalia he returned to England by way of the United States.

Park was greeted as a hero upon his return to his native land. His descriptions of the lands and peoples along the River Niger were met with great enthusiasm throughout the West. Bryan Edwards authored an account of his journey for the African Association before a more detailed narrative from Park's own pen, *Travels In The Interior Districts Of Africa*, was published in 1799. This engaging book is so rich in its natural detail, unflinching in its portrayal of local people, and presented in such an unaffected style that it quickly became extremely popular. Even in the twenty-first century it's still considered a classic of safari literature.

With the help of a generous royalty check from the sales of his book Park settled in Selkirk and opened a medical practice. He married the lovely young Alice Anderson, daughter of the surgeon he apprenticed with. But before very long this settled life became too boring and repetitive for Park to bear. He began looking for a new expedition, but this time he wanted one that would pay him well for the hardships he was certain to endure. He turned down an offer by the Royal Society to lead a meagerly-funded expedition into the Australian Outback. In the autumn of 1803 he accepted an offer by the British government to lead a well-funded expedition back to the Niger River basin, but the start of the expedition was delayed. Determined not to repeat his earlier mistakes Park hired an Arabic language teacher named Sidi Ambak Bubi, who moved from London to Selkirk to give him lessons (much to the shock and bemusement of the local villagers). He also developed a warm friendship with novelist and intellectual Sir Walter Scott, who provided a variety of tips on how to more effectively interact with Muslim cultures.

In September 1804 Park journeyed to London, where he was given a captain's commission in the British army. He was then joined by four boatbuilders from Portsmouth who'd been commissioned to construct a forty-foot vessel when the expedition reached the banks of the Niger River. The expedition, including second in command Lt. Alexander Anderson (his brother-in-law) and draughtsman George Scott, set out for Africa, where it was joined by a Lt. Martyn, 35 privates, and two seamen at Goree. Against all logic and advice the group set off from Gambia in the rainy season. Within ten days Park's men were succumbing to dysentery. After five weeks one man was dead from disease, seven mules had been lost, and most of their equipment had been destroyed in a forest fire. By the time the expedition reached the Niger only eleven of the original 40 European adventurers were still alive. But Park persevered, constructing a new boat out of two old canoes with the help of the only soldier not too sick to move. They christened this new vessel the *H.M. Joliba* after the native name for the river. Then they rested for two months, but the death toll continued to rise. By November only five of them remained alive.

Park remained determined to prove his pet theory: the Niger and the Congo were a single river (which, unfortunately, they aren't). He sent one of his native guides back to Gambia with his journals, a letter to the Colonial Office, and a letter to his wife before setting off down the Niger with Lt. Martyn (who'd become addicted to a native beverage called "shake-shake"), a guide, three slaves, and the three remaining soldiers (one of whom had gone mad from malaria). Well-equipped with firearms and ammunition but little else, they opted for a policy of minimal contact with natives along the shoreline to avoid Muslim slavers. They traveled a thousand miles down the river and reached Timbuktu, repulsing a variety of attacks from natives in canoes as they went. Then at the Bussa rapids their craft became stuck fast upon the rocks in the center of the river. In one of history's great ironies the men were mistaken for Muslim slavers by the natives along the shoreline, who began to pepper them with arrows and spears. Realizing their position was untenable, Park, Martyn, and the two remaining soldiers sprang into the river where they were quickly drowned.

The sole survivor of Park's second expedition was one of the slaves, who gave the details of the expedition's demise to a subsequent group of adventurers lead by Richard Lander. Although

Lander retrieved some of Park's personal effects such as his cartridge belt, the explorer's personal journal was never recovered nor was any physical trace of his remains ever discovered. In 1827 a rumor that Mungo Park still lived in Muslim captivity reached his son Thomas, who quickly organized an expedition. Landing on the Guinea coast that year the younger Park intended to make his way inward to Bussa, where his father was supposedly being held. Sadly, Thomas died from a mysterious illness before he could make it more than a few days into the interior, leaving the rumor of Park's survival forever uninvestigated.

By fulfilling his mission to find the Niger River and documenting its potential as an inland waterway for trade and commerce, Park played a significant (if unintentional) role in opening Africa to European economic interests. His modest, low-key heroism made it possible for the British public to perceive themselves as a civilizing force in Africa, ushering in an era of colonial expansion and missionary work. His descriptions of West Africa's native peoples and wildlife inspired numerous subsequent explorers to penetrate the interior of the Dark Continent in search of that peculiar variety of scientific immortality which seems to haunt the souls of British naturalists.

**Personality/Motivation:** While Mungo Park has some shortcomings (like insatiable wanderlust) he's above all else an explorer, an adventurer who dedicates his life to the investigation of strange new places as well as the flora, fauna, and people in them. Once he embarks on one of his quests he's unbending and insensitive; he'll sacrifice men, beasts, material, and even his own life in his singleminded determination to achieve his goals. Although he's in no way egotistical or a megalomaniac Park is so focused on his explorations that signing on with one of his expeditions is nothing short of suicidal.

For many explorers, it's impossible to fully return from Africa. Park is one of those who found his life back home unforgivably bland and spiritually empty when compared to his African experience. Like Tom Rath in Sloan Wilson's movie *The Man In The Gray Flannel Suit*, he can no longer effectively communicate with his fellow countrymen because the language he conceptualizes his ideas in has completely changed. He has changed from Englishman to Other. (In game terms, he suffers a -2 penalty on all Interaction Skill rolls when dealing with Europeans or Americans.)

**Quote:** "Whatever way I turned, nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. I mention this to show from what trifling

circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves, and capsule, without admiration.

Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not. I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand, and I was not disappointed."

**Powers/Tactics:** Mungo Park is an explorer completely possessed by the desire to explore West Africa. To this end he's learned a variety of appropriate Skills including Survival, Navigation (Land), and AK: West Africa. He's also a trained surgeon and physician able to practice medicine as well as any other doctor of his time, which is to say not all that well (although he can splint bones, remove bullets, and sew up wounds with the best of them). He's a skilled author, speaks a little Arabic, and is equally handy with both his fists and his rifle depending on what the situation requires. His sense of direction is nothing short of miraculous, although he's made mistakes on occasion.

Park has an extremely good working relationship with the Association For Promoting The Discovery Of The Interior Parts Of Africa, a quasi-governmental organization comprised of members of the esteemed Royal Society who are interested in such things. They can be relied upon for information and legal support if not always for financial succor. As the first internationally famous African explorer Park is recognized and generally welcomed all over Europe.

**Campaign Use:** Mungo Park is the kind of NPC who gets PCs into trouble. Eager to sign them up on an adventure into the insanely dangerous interior of pre-colonial Africa yet largely indifferent to their subsequent welfare, he's the very picture of a deranged English explorer of the Dark Continent because he was the original Deranged English Explorer of the Dark Continent. He's also a beloved public figure, so PCs could just as easily find themselves asked to go in search of the explorer should he disappear. If they're lucky enough to encounter him in England, this early explorer will cheerfully serve as a useful source of information on the African landscape, its curious animals, and its dangerous inhabitants.

Since he was more or less the first of his kind Park became the archetype many subsequent African explorers modeled themselves upon. His book had a great deal to do with this, literally causing generations of doomed Europeans and Americans to don the pith helmet and machete of African exploration. Famous French explorer Callie (who visited Timbuktu), German missionary and diarist Johann Rebmann, Scottish traveler David

## JOHNSON (KATUNGA OYO)

10	STR	11	DEX
14	CON	12	BODY
13	INT		
10	EGO	10	PRE
10	COM	6	PD
4	ED		
2	SPD	5	REC
28	END	25	STUN

**Abilities:** +1 HTH; AK: Niger River Basin 12-; CuK: West African Tribes 12-; Languages (English, Igbo, Mandingo, Swahili, Yoruba; all fluent conversation); Navigation (Land) 12-; Persuasion 11-; WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms; Linguist

**25+ Disadvantages:**  
None

**Notes:** The good-natured and optimistic Johnson (real name: Katunga Oyo) is Mungo Park's guide, interpreter, and companion. Kidnapped and sold into slavery as a young man, Johnson was shipped to a plantation in South Carolina where he learned to read and write. Later his master took him to England where he became involved in an unfortunate duel with a nobleman's servant that resulted in that man's death. With his former master's help Johnson fled back to his West African home to melt back into the jungle, thus escaping a charge of murder.

Livingston, and infamous romantic adventurer, author, and translator Richard Burton were all inspired by Mungo Park's example. You could use his character sheet as a template for any of these historical characters into a *Regency Hero* or *Victorian Hero* campaign, or an inspiration for to creating an imaginary explorer for some other purpose. His writings and example motivated a lot of capable people to go to Africa in Victorian times where, in all honesty, most got themselves killed. Others discovered such wonders as Great Zimbabwe, the mountain gorilla, and the source of the Nile.

Beyond the realms of Regency and/or Victorian roleplaying, you can adapt Mungo Park for various other settings and times. Although he (presumably) died a hundred years before the advent of the Pulp Era, Park works well in a *Pulp Hero* campaign because he's one of the chief inspirations for a popular Pulp archetype: the African explorer. He was dodging real native spears long before Doc Savage, Indiana Jones, or Allan Quatermain started dodging fictional ones.

In a *Fantasy Hero* game, Park might be a minor alchemist or wizard who devotes his life to exploring strange, dangerous jungles (possibly in search of new ingredients for potions, the lost artifacts of ancient civilizations, or just new trade routes). In *Star Hero* he could be a scout or explorer specializing in jungle planets and similar environments — perhaps the PCs find themselves called upon to rescue him from some far-flung green hell-planet on the edge of known space. *Ninja Hero* characters might stumble across him as he explores the seemingly impregnable, rebel-filled jungles of Southeast Asia in search of archaeological treasures.

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Mungo Park fits less well into modern-day games, but it's still possible to use him. *Dark Champions* characters who get involved in warfare in West Africa or Central Africa might hire Park, an expatriate Brit who's lived in Africa for decades, as a guide and advisor. In the Champions Universe he might be an opponent of, held prisoner by, or advisor to Joseph Otanga, the superhuman ruler of Lugendu (see *Champions Worldwide*).

**Appearance:** Mungo Park is a young, slender, fair-haired man with the charming mannerisms of an upper-class Englishman. His eyes, however, betray a certain aging beyond his years as well as the telltale yellowing signs of hepatitis, a disease contracted during his travels. Odds are good that, should the PCs encounter him in Africa, he'll be emaciated, sunburned, feverish, and clad in the tattered remains of his safari clothing. He wears a large sturdy hat with a secret compartment in the top wherever he goes, be it in England or Africa, and usually has a rifle slung over his shoulder.

# WILLIAM POOLE

## BILL THE BUTCHER



“There is a heroism in crime as well as in virtue. Vice and infamy have their altars and their religion.”

—William Hazlitt

Controversial writer, newspaperman, and war hero Herbert Asbury penned *The Gangs Of New York: An Informal History of the Underworld* back in the 1930s. A lurid tour through a now-unrecognizable New York of abysmal poverty, habitual violence, and seething corruption, it's cobbled together from urban legend, fading memories, police records, the self-aggrandizing statements of aging crooks, yellow journalism, and the odd bit solid historical research. Although it's generally regarded as both sensationalist and unreliable, *Gangs Of New York* makes for entertaining reading and was used as the basis for a Martin Scorsese 2002 movie of the same name.

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

### WILLIAM POOLE (BILL THE BUTCHER)

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
17	BODY	14	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll: 12-
13	EGO	6	12-	ECV: 4
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
16	COM	3	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 6 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	6		
40	END	0		
42	STUN	7		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 121</b>

**Movement:** Running: 8”/16”  
Swimming: 4”/8”

Cost	Powers	END			
	<i>Martial Art: Five Points Fisticuffs</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes	
4	Backhand	+0	+2	5d6 Strike	
4	Eye Gouge	-1	-1	Sight Group Flash 2d6	
4	Kidney Blow	-2	+0	HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 w/ STR)	
5	Roundhouse	-2	+1	7d6 Strike	
	<i>Martial Art: The Butcher's Art</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Rng	Notes
4	Basic Throw	+0	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC
4	Deadly Throw	-1	-1	+0	Weapon +4 DC
3	Def. Throw	-1	+2	+0	Weapon Strike
4	Quick Throw	+1	+0	+0	Weapon +2 DC
4	<i>Fast Runner: Running +2" (8" total)</i>				1
2	<i>Fast Swimmer: Swimming +2" (4" total)</i>				1
	<b>Perks</b>				
4	Fringe Benefit: Membership (leader of the True Blue Americans gang)				
	<b>Skills</b>				
9	+3 with The Butcher's Art				
6	+2 with Five Points Fisticuffs				
2	+1 OCV with Barking Irons				
3	Breakfall 13-				
3	Bribery 13-				
5	Conversation 14-				

### THE GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY

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

## EVEN DICKENS THOUGHT IT WAS BAD

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

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

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- 5 Defense Maneuver II
- 7 Fast Draw 15-
- 5 Gambling (Craps, Faro, Cock Fighting, Dog Fighting) 13-
- 5 AK: New York City 14-
- 5 KS: Gangs Of New York 14-
- 5 Oratory 14-
- 3 Persuasion 13-
- 3 Streetwise 13-
- 3 Seduction 13-
- 3 WF: Blades, Early Percussion Firearms, Thrown Axes/Knives/Darts

**Total Powers and Skills Cost: 109**

**Total Character Cost: 230**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 15 DNPC: Charles Poole (son) 8- (Incompetent)
- 15 Enraged: when insulted (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 14-
- 25 Hunted: Dead Rabbits 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, PC is very easy to find)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Gangster's Code Of Honor (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Racist (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: violent racist and gangster, 11- (Extreme)
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (with John Morrissey)
- 45 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 230**

**Background/History:** William Poole was born in 1821 to respectable New Jersey parents of English descent. Seeking greater opportunity, the Poole family moved to New York City in 1832 where William's father, a butcher by trade, opened a shop in Washington Market. The family soon became established in the community and was well thought of by the neighbors. William followed in his father's footsteps and opened a butcher shop in the same market. Bill took pride in his skills as a butcher, enjoying a loyal following among both his rich and poor clientele. He married well, purchased a pleasant brick home on Christopher Street, and was gifted with a much-loved son named Charles.

Yet simple work and simple virtue were never enough for “Bill the Butcher” Poole. A man of singular ambition and innately criminal instincts, he became a member of the Red Rover “Volunteer” Fire Engine Company No. 34, at Hudson and Christopher Streets. Before too long he was its chief. A far cry from the valiant NYFD of today,

the New York fire departments of the time were private mercenary “companies,” often demanding cash up front from a burning building's owners to save it from the flames. Thus, the Red Rovers was little more than a gang with a fancy label, and frequently engaged in skirmishes with the North River Engine Company No. 27 over territory (and often at the scene of fires). This ongoing quarrel began in earnest when the Red Rovers, attending to a fire, pumped so much water into a competing North River fire engine that the expensive machine was badly damaged. “Washing” another fire company's engine was considered the ultimate insult a fireman could inflict, so these contests quickly turned from pumped water to knives, bats, and revolvers. Often the two groups would simply ignore the fire they'd arrived to put out so they could engage in running street battles with one another.

Inexplicably, Bill the Butcher thrived in this sort of profitable criminal environment despite his respectable middle-class upbringing. It was probably only a matter of time before he became active in one or the other of the prominent New York gangs. Although there were several different criminal neighborhoods in Manhattan at the time, including the Bowery and the Waterfront, the most infamous was Five Points. One of the worst slums in American history, Five Points was an unspeakably rough, largely immigrant neighborhood formed by the intersection of Cross (now Park), Anthony (now Worth), and Orange (now Baxter) streets. The families who lived there were lucky to have one room to themselves. Buildings like the Old Brewery, Jacob's Ladder, Gates of Hell, and Cow Bay were visions of the most abject filth, vice, and misery humans are capable of. Crime and harlotry were frequently the only way the inhabitants of Five Points could survive. The gangs there “earned” their money through many of the same activities favored by modern criminals: gambling, prostitution, political fixing, extortion, robbery, and more. The city's major political power, the mighty and long-lived Democratic Party stronghold of Tammany Hall, employed the Five Points gangs at election time, bailing out their leaders whenever they were arrested. The various Five Point gangs, with a collective membership of around fifteen hundred men, controlled the area between Broadway and the Bowery, and Fourteenth street and City Hall Park.

Poole's family were members of the conservative Whig political faction that was experiencing a sharp decline in America by the late 1840s. The crumbling of this major party left a vacuum

### SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Barking Iron	+1	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	6	10	Carries two
Straight Razor	-1	—	½d6	1d6-1	—	4	
Bowie Knife	+0	RBS	1d6	1d6-1	—	7	Can Be Thrown, carries two
Meat Cleaver	+1	-1	1d6	1d6-1	—	6	Can Be Thrown

#### Armor

None

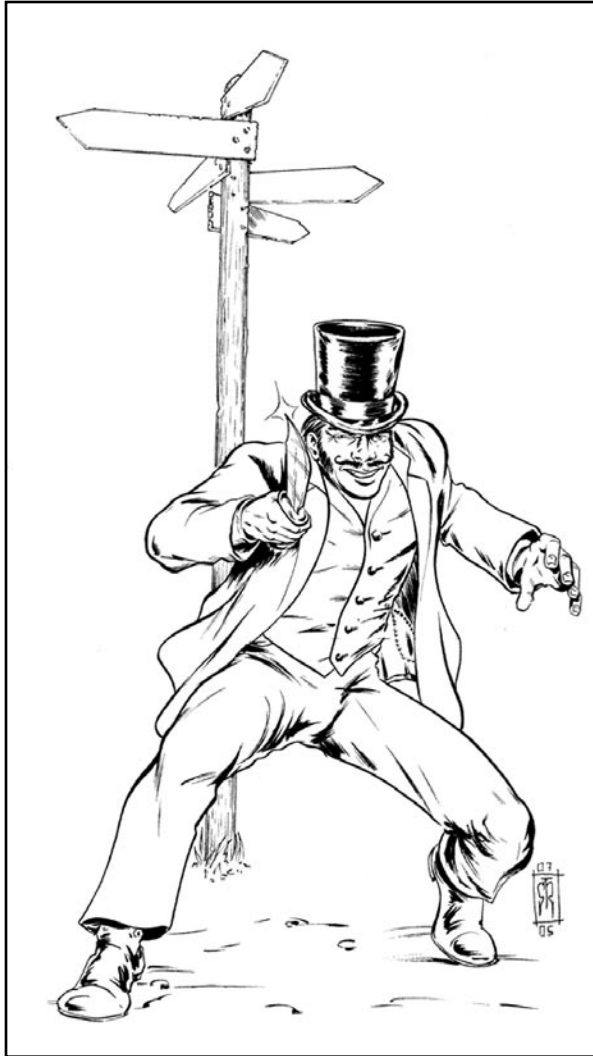
**Gear:** None notable

**Clothing:** See Appearance

that was quickly filled by a growing anti-immigrant movement known as the Know-Nothing party, the Native Americans, or the American Party. The Know-Nothings became popular in New York among the native-born populace due to the huge number of immigrants flooding into a city that had become, in effect, America's front door. Bill switched his membership to the Native Americans around 1851. Soon his Washington Street gang had been renamed the True Blue Americans, serving as "shoulder-hitters" for the Native American party. A shoulder-hitter enforced the will of a political boss (in this case Poole) by

using threats or violence to "persuade" voters to choose their candidate at the polls... often more than once! It was this rough-and-tumble political process that led Poole into a series of conflicts with John Morrissey, an Irishman working as a "slugger" for Tammany Hall, that ultimately resulted in his death in 1855.

Bill humiliated Morrissey, a noted prize-fighter, by beating him in a fight in July 1854. Both men agreed to the terms of the fight and met at Amos Dock in the Waterfront District. According to newspaper reports, Morrissey swung the first punch, but the far more agile Poole ducked, grabbed Morrissey, and threw him to the ground. Poole then leapt on top of him, mercilessly beating Morrissey for about five minutes until he surrendered. After the fight, Morrissey and his friends set out to murder Bill. On the foggy evening of February 25, 1855, they succeeded: Bill was shot through the heart by Louis Baker, one of Morrissey's friends, while he was drinking, gambling, and womanizing at the True Blue American's hangout at Stanwix Hall. True to form, Bill the Butcher lived for fourteen painful days after the shooting. With his last breath Bill gasped, "Good-bye, boys — I die a true American!"



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

#### Personality/

**Motivation:** William Poole is a man of unchanging, sometimes violent conviction in a rapidly changing world. Both fiercely patriotic and fervently smallminded, he perceives the waves of immigration that rock New York in the wake of the Irish

Potato Famine of the 1830s as a direct threat to the American way of life. His unique worldview, when combined with his own loose character as well as the volatile, opportunistic disposition of the time in which he lives, transforms him from an ambitious middle-class businessman into a violent gang leader with political aspirations. He quickly develops a reputation as a rough and tumble fighter who often inflicts horrendous wounds upon his adversaries (although there are no newspaper or crime reports that indicate he ever murdered anyone).

When Bill isn't working at his butcher shop, he's generally involved either in his Washington Street gang activities, hanging out at the Red Rover volunteer fire department, or working for the Native American political party. Generally Poole's turf is in the Christopher Street District, over by the West Village piers, a very long way from the Five Points — but he's been known to go over to the predominantly Irish neighborhood for "political" reasons. These included gambling on "bull-baiting" (a sport in which specially-trained dogs battled a wounded bull in a pit), "turning out" young Irish women (converting them into prostitutes), and beating the daylights out of rival gang members like John Morrissey. Bill the Butcher isn't the best-

## WILLIAM POOLE PLOT SEEDS

**Deadwood:** With things heating up for gangsters in Manhattan, William Poole moves his butcher shop (and mob) to the wild gold rush town of Deadwood in the Dakota Territories. With the town already in a state of near anarchy, The Butcher plunges it into a three-way gang war between himself, saloon owner Al Swearingen, and brothel keeper Cy Tolliver. Caught in the crossfire, the other townspeople turn to the PCs for help

**Shanghai:** In 1844 rumors reach New York of a fantastic new city recently built by Westerners on the eastern coast of China: Shanghai, where life is cheap and a white man can become a millionaire overnight. Bill The Butcher is tired of just being one mob boss among dozens. So he packs his carpetbag and heads for Far Cathay, where he can put his criminal skills to good use....

**Hudson City:** The PCs have learned from the terrified whispers of their snitches that a new mob boss has come to town. Dressed in archaic Victorian clothing and wielding an arsenal of cleavers with incredible accuracy, the man known as “Bill the Butcher” has cut a bloody swath through the underworld of the Riverside Hills district. The PCs have to take him down now before his organization can grow any bigger.

loved visitor to Five Points, though he may be one of the most feared.

Although he’s a great proponent of the family life, Bill generally keeps one or two girlfriends on the side. He’s an extremely jealous man, prone to incredible fits of rage when he feels his “territory” is being trespassed upon. Yet he also has a reputation for polite, even honorable behavior when it suits him — for example, he gives out choice cuts of meat to neighborhood widows and sometimes donates to charity.

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

**Quote:** “A damned Irishman will do work for a nickel that a colored man will do for a dime — or a native white man for a quarter!”

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

A capable hand-to-hand combatant, Poole employs a ruthless urban fighting style known as *Five Points Fisticuffs* that combines vicious kidney blows and eye gouges with powerful roundhouse blows. The point of this crude street fighting method is to disable, then publicly humiliate, opponents during bar fights for the entertainment of one’s friends. Bill is a well-known practitioner of this style, using it to great effect against larger, stronger opponents like John Morrissey. He also carries a couple of Paterson Revolver “barking irons” under his vest as backup weapons.

**Campaign Use:** Bill “The Butcher” Poole is a creature of his time, easily dropped into any Victorian Hero or Western Hero adventure taking place in or around New York City. As crooked, violent, and world-weary as the place that spawned him, Poole is an archetypal but not two-dimensional villain who can be depicted as simultaneously despicable and honorable (in an odd sort of way). In the frenzied, morally ambiguous world in which he lived Bill the Butcher might not even be considered a total villain. He would very likely help heroic PCs who were combating a menace that truly threatened his beloved city.

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

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

Early Victorian New York would be a wonderful setting for a group of *Dark Champions* costumed crimefighters. The common people of New York lived their lives almost completely at the mercy of corrupt police, murderous gangs, battling political factions, and unchecked vicious criminals — they could have used the protection of a masked avenger or two. To this nasty stew of crime add Confederate spies, scheming foreign diplomats (English, French, Russian...), mad Victorian scientists, evil cultists, plus any other sort of steampunk madness a GM can contrive from his darkest musings to create a fascinating setting for heroic tales of daring-do. All it takes is a little imagination combined with a dollop of audacity,

## GANGSTA TALK FROM 1852

Mid-nineteenth century New York gangsters spoke their own particular *patois* that sometimes makes it difficult for characters without Streetwise to understand them. Here's an example of it in use:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

liberally mixed with the sort of poor, confused understanding of history found in this book.

Taking Bill out of his familiar territory and dropping him into another setting or time period should pose few difficulties. It's easy to imagine him as the leader of a modern gang or organized crime group in Hudson City, or as the Head Thief of a thieves' guild in many *Fantasy Hero* cities (such as Aarn in *The Turanian Age* or Elweir in *The Valdorian Age*). Give him some superpowers — superhuman speed and accuracy with his knives, plenty of Damage Resistance, and so on — and he becomes a fiendish adversary for your *Champions* superheroes. You can drop him into *Pulp Hero* New York or Chicago simply by converting him into an Italian or Jewish mobster (or, for a little more variety, make him a Chinese gangster in Shanghai). His brawling and knifefighting skills make him a viable opponent for some *Ninja Hero* PCs. In a *Star Hero* or *Cyber Hero* campaign, Bill could lead a gang in a future megalopolis, be the captain of a band of ruthless but patriotic pirates that competes with other pirates, or a violent political boss on a colony world.

**Appearance:** Bill the Butcher's peers described him as tall, handsome, and dark-haired with an extraordinarily large mustache. Broad-shouldered with a muscular physique, he towered over his fellow New Yorkers at (for the time) an astounding 6'5". To accentuate his height he wore a tall black "top-hat," shoes with pronounced heels, and "high pocket" trousers that ended halfway up the torso. Bill generally wore a specially designed coat which contained hidden pockets for roughly a half dozen knives and a gentlemen's vest, or talma, which he used to conceal a couple of revolvers.

## "BOSS TWEED" AND THE TAMMANY HALL MACHINE

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



“Any fool can make history, but it takes a genius to write it.”  
—Oscar Wilde

The ancient Greeks believed in a semi-mythical northern people whom they called *Hyperboreans*. This race was believed to live beyond the realm of *Boreas*, god of the North Wind. A happy people, the Hyperboreans were immune to disease, famine, and even mortality. “With shining laurel wreaths about their locks of hair,” wrote the ancient poet Pindar, “they hold feasts out of sheer joy. Illness cannot touch them, nor is death foreordained for this exalted race.” But at least one man wasn’t content to sit by the fire listening to tall tales of the far north. The geographer, explorer, and merchant Pytheas decided to gain more tangible knowledge of the region by organizing an expedition. In 350 BC he left his home city of Massalia (now Marseille), slipped past the Phoenician blockade on the Straits of Gibraltar, and headed north along the western coast of what is now France. Stopping along the way to learn Gaulish from the people he encountered, he then continued on to Wales, Scotland, Scandinavia, Germany, and possibly Iceland. He recorded his many of his astute observations on the weather, people, animals, and navigational problems he encountered along the way in a now-lost work entitled *On The Ocean*.

PYTHEAS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	Lift 150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
18	CON	16	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	2		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	0		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
7	REC	0		
40	END	2		
35	STUN	4		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 76</b>

**Movement:** Running: 7”/14”  
Swimming: 3”/6”

Cost	Powers	END
2	<i>Strong Runner:</i> Running +1” (7” total)	1
1	<i>Strong Swimmer:</i> Swimming +1” (3” total)	1

**Perks**  
6 Vehicle: The *Kyrenia* (a ship built on 32 Character Points; see separate character sheet)

**Talents**  
3 Bump Of Direction

- Skills**
- 2 +1 OCV with Composite Bow
  - 2 +1 OCV with Kamax
  - 2 +1 OCV with Xiphos
  - 3 Conversation 12-
  - 3 Deduction 13-
  - 3 High Society 12-
  - 5 Navigation (Land, Marine) 14-
  - 3 Persuasion 12-
  - 2 PS: Sailor 11-
  - 4 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Marine) 13-
  - 3 Trading 12-
  - 2 TF: Small Rowed Boats, Small Wind-Powered Boats
  - 3 WF: Blades, Bows, Polearms and Spears
  - 3 Linguist
    - 1 1) Language: Celtic (fluent conversation; Greek is Native)
    - 4 2) Language: Gaulish (idiomatic, literate)
    - 1 3) Language: Literacy with Greek
    - 1 4) Language: Phoenician (fluent conversation)
    - 1 5) Language: Scandinavian (fluent conversation)

- 3 Scientist  
 2 1) SS: Astronomy 13-  
 3 2) SS: Geography 14-  
 2 3) SS: Natural Science 13-  
 3 Traveler  
 2 1) AK: British Coastline 13-  
 2 2) AK: Iberian Peninsula 13-  
 2 3) AK: Massalia (Marseille) 13-  
 2 4) AK: Mysterious Thule 13-  
 2 5) AK: Western Europe 13-

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 83**

**Total Cost: 159**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: The Phoenicians 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Area, Mild)  
 5 Money: Poor  
 15 Psychological Limitation: Obsessively Curious (Common, Strong)  
 10 Reputation: crazy, unreliable explorer, 11-  
 44 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 160**

### THE KYRENIA

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
6	Size	30	4"x 2"; -6 KB; -4 DCV
40	STR	0	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6
10	DEX	0	OCV: 3/ DCV: 3
16	BODY	0	
3	DEF	2	Does Not Protect Some Occupants (-¼)
3	SPD	10	Phases: 4, 8, 12
<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 42</b>			

**Movement:** Ground: 0"/0"  
 Swimming (sailed): 5"/10"  
 Swimming (rowed): 4"/8"

### Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
1	<i>Sailed Watercraft:</i> Swimming +3" (5" total); OAF (sails; -1), Surface Only (-1), Sailed (-1), Limited Maneuverability (-¼), Cannot Move Backwards (-¼)	0
1	<i>Rowed Watercraft:</i> Swimming +2" (4" total); Surface Only (-1), OAF (oars; -1), Costs Endurance (rowers' END; -½), Increased Endurance (x3 END; -1), Limited Maneuverability (-¼)	3
-12	<i>Water Vehicle:</i> Ground Movement -6" (0" Total)	

**Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: -10**

**Total Vehicle Cost: 32**

### Value Disadvantages

None

**Total Disadvantage Points: 0**

**Total Cost: 32/5 = 6**

**Description:** The *Kyrenia* is a narrow-beamed, single-masted trading vessel some 50 feet long. It's single square sail measures some 64 square yards and hangs from a single beam attached to the top of the mast. Although the shallow-keeled vessel isn't made to withstand serious Atlantic storms, it does well enough in calm weather or mild squalls. Since the ship lacks any sort of cabin, passengers and crew sleep under a long tent that's stretched from stem to stern at night or in foul weather. In still weather or when in port the crew can deploy six oars to row the ship. It's steered by a stern-mounted rudder that must be manned by a sailor at all times. It has a crew of a dozen men.

**Background/History:** Pytheas was born in 380 BC in the Greek colony of Massalia (today the French city of Marseille). A geographer of some repute, he longed to test several of his scientific theories by traveling to the world's most northern regions. Very much aware that the Earth was round, Pytheas hypothesized that when the sun follows its northern path the days become longer because the Earth tapers close to the poles. Using the Pole Star to fix latitude, he made calculations that indicated the sun would not set at certain times of the year if one were standing very close to one of those poles. According to the ancient historian Posidonius, Pytheas developed a (completely accurate) theory that the tides had a relationship with the phases of the moon by studying the beaches in northern Spain. He was also the first man to calculate the latitude of Massalia, which he determined to be 43°11' North (very close to the correct figure of 43°18' North).

Of course people had been sailing between the Mediterranean and the Kassiterides Islands (Great Britain) for several centuries. Trade between northern Gaul and Britain was routine and Gaulish fishermen plied the waters of the North Sea with regularity. Modern scholars know from the writings of the ancient historian Herodotus that for generations the lucrative trade between the Mediterranean peoples and the rest of the ancient world was tightly controlled by the Phoenician colony of Carthage, which maintained a tight blockade of the Pillars of Hercules (the Straits of Gibraltar) to keep out competition. The Kassiterides Islands were the ancient world's principle source of tin (*kassiteros* in Greek) which was blended with copper to create bronze. Ancient peoples used bronze to make many types of tools, coins, and ornaments, but they especially prized it for swords, spears, and armor. So, in essence, the ancient Phoenicians were practicing a form of arms control by depriving the competing Greeks and other ancient civilizations of independent access to the raw materials of war.

Polybius, a historian writing a century after Pytheas's death, says the astronomer, not a rich man, had acquired the patronage of a wealthy Greek merchant interested in establishing independent access to Welsh and Cornish tin mines. Pytheas used this wealthy man's resources to acquire, outfit, and provision a small ship known as the *Kyrenia*. While ostensibly his purpose was

## ANCIENT GREEK WEAPONS AND ARMOR

**Composite Bow:** The ancient Greeks took great pride in their bows, which they carried in special combination holsters on their sides that also held their arrows. They were made of three distinct materials. The bow's core consists of five pieces of laminated wood: a central grip, two arms, and two tips with nocks for bowstrings. Once the pieces were glued together a timber skeleton was steamed into the bow's curve. Finally, strips of compressible horn were glued to the belly of the bow. A typical bow of this type could take up to six months to complete.

**Hoplite:** A large oblong bronze-faced shield with an armband rather than a handgrip (although a cord was looped round the inside of the shield for grasping purposes). It protected a warrior's body from his nose to his knee and fitted around the body in a concave shape.

**Kamax:** This five foot-long spear can be used either one- or two-handed. Its leaf-shaped, unbarbed bronze head was mounted on a sturdy ash shaft that ended in a "butt spike" so it could be planted in the ground to receive a cavalry charge.

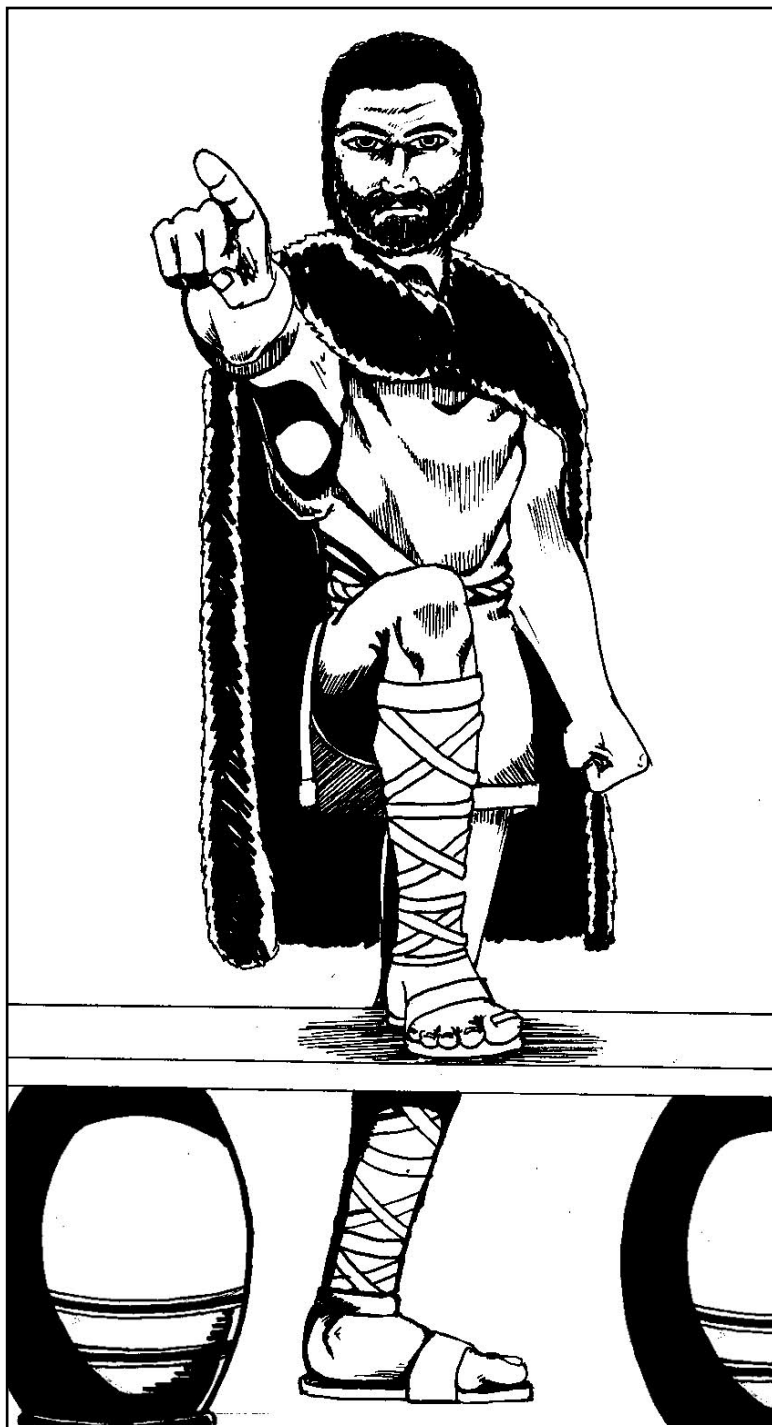
**Xiphos:** A slashing weapon worn slung from a baldric over the right shoulder, this weapons was more generally known as a "hoplite sword" after the heavily armored soldiers that favored them (*hopla* means heavy defensive armor). It had a long straight blade that tapered slightly from the hilt to the point. Xiphos were made from high quality, twice tempered polished carbon steel and carried in ornately decorated scabbards.

## PYTHEAS PLOT SEEDS

**An Age of Heroes:** With the civilization of the Greeks threatened not only by Phoenician militancy from without but the dark minions of Ares from within, Emperor Alexander the Great summons the best warriors, philosophers, and magi of his age (*i.e.*, the PCs) from the four corners of his domain. Their mission: to travel to Ultima Thule at the edge of the world and seize the hammer of the Norse god Thor, the only weapon mighty enough to save Greek civilization from its enemies. Their leader: the elderly, eccentric, and possibly insane explorer Pytheas, the only man to have ever been there....

**On The Shores Of Hibernia:** The inhabitants of the legendary island of Hibernia are a fabled race of warrior-poets, fiercely loyal to their clan leaders and highly suspicious of outsiders. How do these proud but isolationist people react when strange-looking men in a bizarre boat land on their shores, asking questions about the mysterious land of Thule? The PCs are shepherd-warrior-bards of the Tuatha de Danann tribe tasked by tribal elders to accompany Pytheas the Greek and the crew of the *Kyrenia* on their quest to the northern lands.

**Operation Tin Hat:** For generations the Picts of Cornwall have fought the twin menaces of Phoenician raiders on their shores and the dark races of under-creatures that invade their tin mines from below. Now with their numbers dwindling



to bring back a shipment of tin for profit, it's not unreasonable to assume the geographer's primary goal was exploration and scientific experimentation. Because of his training as a mathematician and astronomer, Pytheas had the important habit of recording all of his observations. As ship's pilot he'd mastered the use of an ancient navigational device known as the *gnomon*, a specialized sundial that helps to locate true north or true south depending on the time of year. To avoid the blockading Phoenicians, Pytheas slowly and carefully guided his vessel along the coastline at night for five full days before slipping through the Pillars of Hercules, a journey of about 600 nautical miles. He then turned his ship north along the Iberian

seaboard and onto what is now the western coast of France. He stopped at many points along this journey to explore inland for fresh water and provisions, taking notes on geography and recording his impressions of the local inhabitants as the *Kyrenia* traveled northward.

Finally Pytheas and his men crossed the English Channel. They landed in Cornwall, where he studied the production and processing of tin ore by the local people. He recorded the Celtic name for the islands in Greek as being *Prettankike* or "land of the painted people." The historian Diodorus later translated this into Latin as *Pretannia*, from which was later derived the modern Britannia or Britain. This is also the origin of the Latin word *Picti* from which comes the modern term for those most ancient British peoples: the Picts.

The *Kyrenia* sailed onward to northern Scotland where the local people told Pytheas several very interesting stories about yet another land farther to their north known as *Thule* (later recorded by Latin historians as *Ultima Thule* or "farthest Thule"). According to these hardy hill folk, in this land there were only two or three hours of night during certain times of the year. If one were to travel even further north, one would find that the sun shone all night long at these same times. Naturally, this

greatly excited Pytheas. He and his men set sail to the northwest, arriving six days later at a distant island that was indeed referred to as Thule by its inhabitants. Probably "Thule" was a portion of the Norwegian coastline, although it might also have been Iceland, the Shetland Islands, or the Faroe Islands. The citizens of Thule had many habits the Mediterranean explorer found bizarre. They were an agricultural people who lived in log and clay houses, brewed alcoholic beverages out of wheat and honey (beer and mead respectively), and stored their grain underground because of the cold. They threshed this grain in barns rather than in the open fields (as was common in lands far to the south).

Continued on next page

**SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Kamax	+0	—	1½d6	1d6-1	—	10	
Xiphos	+0	—	1d6+1	1d6-1	—	12	
Composite	+0	+0	1½d6	1d6-1	10 RC	9	

**Armor**

Hoplion (tower shield; +4 DCV)

**Gear:** Writing materials

**Clothing:** See Appearance

Although these practices are common knowledge today Pytheas's contemporaries considered tales of them fantastic fiction.

Still the Greek explorer wanted to see more. The *Kyrenia* sailed yet further north, where it first encountered gigantic boat-sized fish that swam lazily on the surface of the ocean, loudly bowing out sprays of water from their foreheads. Pytheas and his men were astounded; they had never seen or even heard of whales before. Sometime thereafter they encountered a dense, thick fog that was so eerily quiet the explorers seemed to be suspended in a void. The sea began to “congeal” and, as the historian Strabo reported that:

*Pytheas also speaks of the waters around Thule and of those places where land properly speaking no longer exists, nor sea nor air, but a mixture of these things, like a “marine lung” (ancient Greek for jellyfish), in which it's said that earth and water and all things are in suspension as if this something was a link between all these elements, on which one can neither walk nor sail.*

Many modern scientists believe Pytheas was attempting to describe “ice cakes,” a natural phenomenon that occurs at the edge of drift ice. Although the explorers had to turn back at this point, it's entirely possible that if mythical Thule were modern Iceland rather than Scandinavia (a distinct possibility as the island is only 500 nautical miles from Britain) Pytheas and his men had gotten close to the shores of Greenland (and thus North America) before the fog and slush forced them to retreat. It would not be until the twentieth century that Arctic explorers like Fridtjof Nansen and Vilhjalmur Stefansson were able to confirm the ancient scientist's descriptions of the bizarre mixture of fog, ice, and water in those wild, frigid seas that forced Pytheas and his crew southward once more. It is therefore tantalizingly possible that this ancient voyager came close to the edge of the New World during the time of Alexander the Great, a thousand years before the Norseman Leif Erickson and fifteen hundred years before Christopher Columbus.

The *Kyrenia* returned to Britain to complete its survey, then traveled south to the shallow waters along the northern German coast. It landed on the island of Helgoland (one of the ancient world's primary sources of amber) then continued on down the Rhine and Rhone rivers. Pytheas and his men completed their journey overland, returning to Massalia a year later with a profitable load of tin as well as the detailed record of his scientific observations. The explorer con-

solidated his notes into a single volume entitled *On The Ocean*, a book which has unfortunately been lost to modern history (although fragments remain). His contemporaries greeted his work with disbelief and scorn. Ancient writers and historians were convinced that it was impossible to travel north from Scotland, as the ocean must certainly turn to ice. Fortunately, although he was thought of as a liar and scoundrel by many ancient commentators (sadly including the historian Strabo), later writers considered his book an important source of information. References to *On The Ocean* are found in the works of the astronomer Geminus of Rhodes, the scholiast Apollonius of Rhodes, the historian Diodorus of Sicily, and the encyclopediast Pliny the Elder.

**Personality/Motivation:** Pytheas is a man motivated by scientific curiosity in a time when most people are more than content to stay at home and tell one another amusing fictions by the warmth of a fire. He's also smart enough to bend his thirst for knowledge to a practical commercial venture that allows him to conduct pure scientific research while also turning a profit for his backers. While he craves most of the same pleasures all men desire — wealth, respect, popular acclaim — he's far more motivated by his curiosity than any base desire for temporal gain. He's meticulous and thorough in his observations; recording everything of interest in his travels on papyrus scrolls that are stored in special waterproof bone cases.

**Quote:** “No, I am not lying to you, Diodorous. We were two days out of the Kassiterides Islands when we encountered them: massive fish the size of huge boats. They were swimming lazily on the surface of the ocean, blowing out enormous geysers of water from their heads like... no, no I am not pulling your leg!”

**Powers/Tactics:** Pytheas is a daring adventurer, admittedly of a peculiar sort. While he's more than willing to take risks other Greeks barely even conceive of, let alone contemplate, he has no particular interest in violence or conquest. He'd much rather peacefully interact with the native people he encounters on his voyages than fight with them. That said, Pytheas and his men would not hesitate to defend themselves if violently attacked. Although they don't wear the heavy armor of a hoplite soldier (too risky on the water), the men of the *Kyrenia* carry powerful composite bows, kamaxis (spears), and the

a group of saviors from far Massalia have arrived to rescue their beleaguered race. Will Pytheas and the men of the *Kyrenia* (the PCs) teach the primitive Picts the greatest military secret known to modern man: the creation of bronze weapons? Can they teach them how to use the greatest tactic known to modern man: the phalanx? Only the great goddess Sulis knows for certain.

## PYTHEAS QUOTATIONS

“The name of the enterprising sailor, Pytheas, has come down to us. He appears to the imagination, a solitary figure framed in light, as if a gate had swung open between the Pillars of Hercules toward the western world.”

—Isabel Paterson, *The God Of The Machine*

“Having come to her barbaric shores from civilized lands, having traveled all over her on foot, it's fair to say that he indeed was the true discoverer of Britain.”

—Sir Clement Markham, *Pytheas, Discoverer Of Britain*

“Most people argue that it was the Norseman, Leif Erickson, or the Genoese, Christopher Columbus, who should be given credit for first probing the shores of the “new world.” But perhaps it was a much earlier explorer — many, many centuries earlier — named Pytheas who deserves the honor. We do not know. But we do know, categorically, that Pytheas, the intrepid Greek sailor and navigator from Massalia, deserves to join the ranks of Columbus, Erickson and the other great explorers of history. As for many of us, we are convinced that Pytheas traveled to the edge of the “new world” during the time of Alexander the Great!”

—Barry Cunliffe, *The Extraordinary Voyage Of Pytheas The Greek*

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razor-sharp military sword known as the xiphos. For personal protection they have large shields known as hoplon that cover most of their bodies.

Although he's a capable enough fighter, Pytheas's strengths lie more in his abilities as a multitasking explorer, scientist, and trader. He possesses an uncanny natural sense of direction and a good command of languages. He's amazingly physically healthy and an able seaman and experienced hiker able to make his way by the stars. As a scientist he's a capable if intuitive master of astronomy, geography, and what our ancestors referred to as “natural science,” essentially the study of the physical, non-human aspects of the Earth. As a trader and businessman he's persuasive, canny, and able to convince others to back his dubious commercial schemes.

**Campaign Use:** Pytheas is an example of what a force for good an explorer could be (but seldom is) in a roleplaying game. While most Fantasy Hero adventurers are motivated to various extents by a grim combination of bloodlust, greed, fatalism, or factionalism, Pytheas simply wants to explore out of a deep sense of personal curiosity. Although he's definitely motivated by a desire to turn a profit while conducting his explorations, Pytheas interacts rather than conquers, trades fairly rather than stealing, and seldom if ever resorts to force. Players in a Fantasy Hero campaign who are particularly prone to committing grisly acts of violence in the lawless wilderness might find themselves confronted with a considerably nobler (but not necessarily weaker!) group of adventures in the person of Pytheas and the men of the Kryenia. Conversely, players who are tired of constant hack-and-slash might embark on a more worthy quest of trade and exploration backed by a powerful merchant or noble who sends Pytheas (or someone very much like him) along to assist them.

In an “Ancient World Hero” historical campaign that takes place in the age of Alexander the Great (not an unexciting prospect), the PCs might hire on as Pytheas's sailors. If so, they'll find themselves confronted with angry Phoenicians, warlike Picts, aggressive “sea monsters,” and mysterious Thulians on a journey that takes them to the very Edge of the World... which Pytheas will continually argue does not exist, much to their amusement.

Aside from Low Fantasy or Swords And Sorcery *Fantasy Hero* campaigns, Pytheas could appear in a High Fantasy or Epic Fantasy setting as an eccentric (if not quixotic) merchant-mage who explores the hidden nooks and crannies of the world. By changing the year and tech level you can make him a *Star Hero* freelance explorer or trader who traverses the Galaxy in search of new planets and better trade routes to exploit (in the *Terran Empire* setting, he might belong to the Terran Exploration Service instead of being out there on his own — Drago's Reach and the Vorxan Expanse are calling!).

Although hardly cut out for superheroics or vigilante crime fighting, a modern Pytheas could still further science in a *Champions* or *Dark Champions* campaign by captaining an oceanic research vessel, exploring the depths of the seas with surprising results that require the PCs' attentions. (In *Champions* he could also be a dimensional explorer expanding Humanity's knowledge of the Multiverse.) A *Victorian Hero* or *Pulp Hero* Pytheas might stumble upon ancient horrors or lost civilizations while tramping through Africa or charting the coastline of Antarctica. A Pytheas who captains a tramp steamer in the China Seas might serve as a positive example of a Westerner in a *Ninja Hero* campaign.

**Appearance:** Pytheas is a compact, olive skinned man with wild brown hair that falls down to his shoulders in wavy locks. Like most ancient Greek men he wears a bushy beard that covers much of his face, which is otherwise dominated by a pair of extremely intelligent, curious eyes that peer over an aquiline nose. When he's in his native temperate climate he dresses in the woolen togas commonly worn by his people, but when he's on his voyage to the far north he typically wears a massive bearskin cloak to keep warm. He usually goes about unarmed.

# JIM SAVAGE

## THE KING OF TULARES



“We are rough men and used to rough ways.”  
—Cowboy Bob Younger

There's no other way to say it: Jim Savage was the toughest frontiersman in old California. Arriving brokenhearted in the Golden State following the death of his family, Savage promptly went “renegade.” He was taken in by the native inhabitants of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, taught their ways, and rose through a combination of trickery, martial prowess, and business savvy to become the chief of five separate tribes. Dubbed “The King of the Tulares” by San Francisco's newspapers, Savage walked a fine line between two worlds in a desperate attempt to prevent conflict between his newfound “subjects” and the flood of whites drawn in by the great Gold Rush of '49. In the end it cost him his life

### JIM SAVAGE

#### King Of The Tulares

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	10	12-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 8 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	17		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
41	STUN	10		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 80</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
7	<i>Rough and Tumble Fighting:</i> HA +2d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	1
10	<i>Bullet Catching Trick:</i> Missile Deflection (any physical projectile); Only Works On Missiles No Faster Than Blackpowder Bullets (-0), Restrained (-½)	0

#### Perks

4	Fringe Benefit: Government Rank: Chief of the Tulares
6	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank: California Militia Major
3	Reputation: King of the Tulares (among Californians) 11-, +3/+3d6

#### Skills

2	+1 OCV with Knives
2	+1 OCV with Pistols
2	+1 OCV with Rough and Tumble Fighting
3	Persuasion 12-
3	PS: Farming 12-
3	PS: Mining 12-
3	PS: Trader 12-
5	Survival (Desert, Mountain, Temperate/Subtropical Forests) 12-
7	Tracking 14-
4	WF: Blades, Bows, Early Percussion Firearms, Thrown Axes/Knives/Darts

## JIM SAVAGE: HERO OR VILLAIN?

Jim Savage is an enigmatic figure whose very existence provides a unique set of problems for modern historians, especially those who view the past through the darkly colored lenses of their individual prejudices. The facts of his life have become distorted with time, and modern misunderstanding has worsened those distortions. Here are some examples:

“An American businessman named Jim Savage succeeded through duplicity to temporarily pacify the Miwok town near the gold field. In recent months, however, Savage had shown himself incapable, or unwilling to constrain the abusive miners. The most militant Miwok, now under the leadership of Governor Teneiya, had withdrawn for defense into the Yosemite Valley. The Miwok reached the limits of their patience and were persuaded by their Yokut neighbors to join them in an attack on the foreign mining camps. They knew by now that even though Savage was a relative, he was keeping most of the gold wealth for his personal fortune.”

—Dr. John M. Anderson, author and militant Idaho hermit

“The records show that one early resident of the area, Jim Savage, employed Chinese to work the San Joaquin River for him. At first, Jim was involved in fighting the Indians, but as the area became more populated, he made friends with them, even to the extent of marrying at least five Indian girls, one from each tribe. He’s given

- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Language: French (fluent conversation)
- 1 2) Language: German (fluent conversation)
- 1 3) Language: Miwok (fluent conversation)
- 1 4) Language: Spanish (fluent conversation)
- 1 5) Language: Tejon (fluent conversation)
- 1 6) Language: Tulare (fluent conversation)
- 1 7) Language: Yokut (fluent conversation)
- 1 8) Language: Yosemite (fluent conversation)

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 75**

**Total Cost: 155**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 15 DNPCs: five Indian wives 8- (Useful Position or Skills; Group DNPC x4)
- 20 Enraged: when his tribes are threatened by outsiders (Common), go 8-, recover 8-
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Greedy (Common, Moderate)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Short-Tempered (Frequently, Minor)
- 10 Reputation: King of the Tules, 11-
- 5 Social Limitation: Renegade White (Occasionally, Major, Not Limiting In Some Cultures)
- 10 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 155**

**Background/History:** Not much is known about Jim Savage’s early years. It’s reasonable to assume he began his life as a particularly well-educated Midwestern farmer who, like many other nameless thousands of young men, was lured west by an irresistible combination of gold fever, adventure, and free land. What is known is that the trip west from Illinois cost him the lives of his young family: both his wife and baby daughter perished on the long journey to California. Arriving heartbroken and destitute on the West Coast in 1846, Savage was befriended by several Indian scouts who taught him the language and culture of the Tulare tribes.

Jim went native, becoming what other white settlers often referred to as a “renegade.” He grew his hair long, dressed in buckskins and wolf’s fur, and practiced the religion of the local tribes. Impressed by his strange ways and physical prowess, five separate tribes took the remarkable step of naming the 25 year-old mountain man their chief. To seal the bargain he took a wife from the royalty of each tribe, formally making himself a relative of their clan leaders. To the Tulare Nation Jim Savage became a leader of sorts; a combination sorcerer/ambassador whom they hoped would help them

navigate their way in the confusing world of white men. But to the American and Mexican settlers of the San Joaquin Valley he was known simply as *El Rey Tulares*: the King of the Tules.

Industrious and ambitious, Jim then set out to enrich himself with the help of his newfound followers and family. He built three trading posts along the Los Angeles to Stockton miner’s trail through the valley. After discovering several gold veins of his own Savage put his new wives’ brothers and fathers to work in the mines, raking in thousands of dollars of precious ore in exchange for rifles, ammunition, food, and various trinkets. But his role as a fierce Indian protector wasn’t entirely self-serving. Jim provided plows, seeds, and various other agricultural implements to tribes that had been forced off their land and taught them the ways of farming. He worked hard at building friendly ties with every tribe within 100 miles of each of his trading posts, often interceding on their behalf when land-crazed white settlers threatened to drive them from their traditional hunting grounds. He wasn’t opposed to using violence against his fellow whites to defend the five tribes who had made him their king, either. By the time Jim Savage was 31 he was one of the most hated, feared, and respected men in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Unfortunately, this period of relative happiness and prosperity for both Savage and his followers was not to last. The increasing strain placed upon native populations by the influx of white settlers was slowly but surely becoming intolerable. The number of armed confrontations between Indian braves and farmers began to steadily increase until it came to a head in 1850 in an incident known as the Woods Massacre, a dispute in which 15 ranchers were tortured and murdered by renegade members of the Yokut Nation. In the wake of this episode California Governor John McDougall ordered the creation of a special brigade to put down what had become an all-out Indian rebellion and broker a series of peace agreements. Known as the Mariposa Battalion, this small army was to be commanded by the two men the Governor felt inspired the maximum possible fear and respect in the Indians: infamous local judge and gunfighter Walter Harvey; and Jim Savage, who seems to have felt he could somehow salvage the entire situation. Because of his mastery of native tongues and backwoods trails Savage was made the battalion’s major, while Judge Harvey was relegated to the position of second in command.

### SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Revolver	+0	+0	2d6-1	1d6	6	10	
“Coach” Shotgun	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	2	12	
Dagger	+0	RBS	1d6-1	1d6-1	—	6	Can Be Thrown
Tomahawk	+0	-1	1d6	1d6-1	—	7	Can Be Thrown

### Armor

Buckskins and wolf hides (DEF 2)

**Gear:** Camping gear, rations

**Clothing:** See Appearance

Continued from last page

Over the next three months the 75 men of the Mariposa Battalion traveled through blinding snow over trails known to no other white man besides Major Savage in search of renegade Indian tribes. They became the first whites to explore the sheer granite domes and towering waterfalls of Yosemite. Killing scores of natives as they went yet leaving many villages in peace, these men encountered some 120 bands of Indians and returned home with 19 signed treaties. It was (at least on paper) a remarkable achievement. The treaties were quite fair by the standards of the time, giving the Indians some 7% of California's territory including hundreds of thousands of acres in the fertile Tulare Lake basin. They were also unenforceable. New settlers broke the agreements literally before the ink was dry.

Although he'd struggled mightily, Savage failed in his efforts to reconcile the two worlds in which he lived. To add insult to injury Judge Harvey, who never forgave Jim for beating him out as leader of the Mariposa Battalion, organized a posse to raid Savage's rancheria for renegade Indians. Upon finding a group of Yokuts armed only with bows and arrows camped out there, Harvey's men fired several volleys at the terrified Indians, killing nine and wounding scores of others. Enraged beyond reason, Savage began hunting Judge Harvey down, finally cornering him at a trading post along the King's River. The two men exchanged heated words that ended with Savage knocking the judge to the ground. Although bystanders tried to restrain him Jim continued to punch and kick his opponent — who promptly drew a revolver and shot him through the heart. Although Savage fell dead without a word his reputation was so great that Harvey continued to shoot his lifeless body just to be sure.

The Yokuts buried their strange chief on his rancheria before beginning his wake, a ceremony that involved death chants and ritual dancing. "I have never seen such profound manifestations of grief," wrote one observer. "The very blood within one curdled at the scene."

**Personality/Motivation:** Jim Savage is a man living on the thin edge of the wedge. Being an exploiter and a protector and a liberator and an oppressor to the Tulare Indian Nation all at once requires a certain sort of protean personality generally only found in famous politicians, notorious villains, and



religious leaders. It's hard to say whether Savage is a hero with several severe personality flaws (including avarice, bloodlust, and a tendency toward double-dealing) or a villain with a conscience. One thing's certain, though — providence in her eternal wisdom has cursed Jim Savage with an impossible task. To an aggressive nation hungry for the gold fields and farmland of California the Indians are little more than a curious inconvenience to be swept aside as quickly as possible. For a white man of the period to go "renegade" is almost unheard of. To actually become an Indian leader or act as their protector, even a flawed one, is not just to swim against the tide of historical inevitability. It was actually insane.

Perhaps the loss of his wife and infant daughter on that hard road west actually drove this uniquely passionate man mad with grief; but more likely he was none too stable in the first place. In conversations Savage is bellowing, passionate, opinionated, and possessed of a marvelously overbearing physical presence. Yet he's a mass of contradictions. While capable of extreme acts of violence he's

credit for the discovery of Yosemite Valley on March 27, 1851, and named it after the tribe which inhabited it."

—Madera County Historical Society

"Jim Savage took up the Adobe Ranch and started a store out near where Doc Leach formerly had one. I remember one time I happened to be in the store when a squaw came in and asked for some raisins. Savage put the scales on the counter and told her to put what gold she had in one of the pans, and then he balanced the other side in raisins. I asked him if the raisins were worth their weight in gold. He said, "Oh, she doesn't want gold. What she wants now is raisins.""

—Joe Kinsman, last surviving California mountain man

## JIM SAVAGE PLOT SEEDS

**Western Hero:** Bandits have kidnapped a Paiute Indian princess and taken her into the largely unexplored mountains to the east of Reno. The PCs, who are friends with the Paiute chief, have agreed to go after her but they desperately need the services of the best guide money can buy. Fortunately Jim Savage is available... for a price.

**Fantasy Hero:** They say the legendary dwarven mine of Delvingholm is filled with riches beyond the imaginings of mortal men. Unfortunately the mine is located in the heart of the Blood Tusk Mountains, a nearly impassable range of ragged peaks filled with terrifying monsters. The PCs need the help of renegade human warrior Bossman Savage if they hope to make it to the mine alive.

**Star Hero:** The PCs are soldiers who've been dispatched to a colony planet to help put down a native rebellion. When they arrive they encounter a humane settler named Savage who patiently explains that things are not exactly what they seem....

more given to negotiation and discussion in times of crisis. Notoriously greedy and opportunistic, he's also generous and honorable. He's an oddly worldly man with a gift for languages and a keen understanding of human behavior.

**Quote:** "There's a good horse, bridle, spurs and leggings which belong to me. I fetched them for the purpose of letting you have them to leave the country with. For leave you shall, whether it be to Nevada or the Promised Land."

**Powers/Tactics:** A contemporary once said of Jim Savage "No dog can follow a trail like he can. No horse can endure half a much." An archetypal mountain man, he's tougher, stronger, and faster than the human norm. From his Indian followers he not only learned five native languages (Miwok, Tejon, Tulare, Yokut, and Yosemite) but also extensive tracking and wilderness survival skills. Savage also speaks four European languages: English, French, Spanish, and German. He's a highly persuasive businessman who's also dabbled in mining and farming. He holds the rank of Major in the California state militia and is the recognized chief of five separate Indian nations. A doughty warrior, he's equally comfortable stabbing, chopping, shooting, or simply pummeling his opponent to death using his bare knuckled Rough And Tumble fighting skills.

Curiously, Savage's reputation as a sorcerer springs from this careful and selective use of a parlor trick taught to him by a circus performer. He can actually snatch bullets and arrows out of the air, provided his hands are free and the projectiles are moving at a relatively slow "black powder" velocity. It was the use of this trick that allowed him to assume leadership of the Tulare Nation. After that his reputation alone proved sufficient enough to convince other tribes to elect him their leader.

**Campaign Use:** Jim Savage is just the sort of character one finds out on a frontier. Dynamic, self-reliant, and not a little greedy, he fits easily into the lawless environment that is typical of any newly settled wilderness. Able and willing to function in half a dozen different capacities, he can enter the PCs' life as the owner of a convenient trading post, a mercenary fighter, an Indian chief, or a guide through some uncharted badlands they simply must cross. Should the PCs exhibit the regrettable tendency to slaughter all of the primitive tribesmen they stumble upon they could conceivably encounter the King of the Tulares in a significantly less pleasant capacity as he endeavors to vengefully hunt them down.

Wherever you find inhabited frontiers you will find men like Jim Savage. While his role in a *Western Hero* campaign is obvious, he's equally suitable for use in most *Fantasy Hero* settings. Simply replace his shotgun and pistol with a crossbow and a sword, his Indian followers with orcs (or their equivalent), and his language skills with things like "Orc" and "Hill Giant" to create Bossman, Savage

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[www.madera-county.com](http://www.madera-county.com)

King of the Blood Tusk Mountains, bane of the settlers living near that keep out on the borderlands. You can relocate him to a *Star Hero* setting by turning his Indian followers into alien natives, updating his weapons and fighting skills, and modifying his Languages as is appropriate.

A *Ninja Hero* Jim Savage could be a lot like the character of ambiguously evil Colonel Kurtz in the film *Apocalypse Now* — living in an abandoned French jungle plantation with a private army of ninjas and a harem of native women, ready to use his martial arts skills and those of his followers to defend his tiny jungle kingdom against all interlopers (such as the PCs). Much as that film was similar to Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart Of Darkness*, a *Pulp Hero* Savage could have a similar set-up in the fevered depths of the Belgian Congo. In either case the heroic NPCs would have the unpleasant task of bringing him back to civilization under arrest.

You can use Savage's character sheet as the basis for a "country" themed Dark Champions vigilante very similar to those in those that inhabit the underrated hillbilly-versus-mobsters movie *Next Of Kin*. To convert him into a Champions "redneck" supervillain give him the power *Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%* and a Vari-Blaster from page 17 of *Gadgets And Gear*.

**Appearance:** Jim Savage is a large, barrel-chested man with a booming voice that intimidates people. A long golden mane of hair flows down his back almost to his waste like the adorning fur of a predatory lion. An equally impressive blonde beard cascades like a follicular waterfall from every square inch of his face below his eyes. His arms are long and heavily muscled to the point that they almost explode from his shirts when he lifts things. His eyes are unnerving to look directly into — a shocking, deeply intrusive blue.

*El Rey Tulares* dresses in the distinctive fringed buckskin, moccasin, and chaps of a Tulare tribal warrior with a distinctive wide-brimmed "mule-skinners" felt hat pulled down low over his brow. When the winter months set in he dons an enormous flowing coat sewn together from the skins of a dozen vicious mountain wolves trapped by his wives in the highlands of the Tulare river basin. Daily violence is a way of life in the pre-Civil War California, even for those without enemies. Correspondingly Jim, who has a considerable number of them, is a walking arsenal of weaponry. He keeps a short, double-barreled shotgun slung over his left shoulder, a Walker revolver and two tomahawks tucked into his belt, and a huge "Arkansas toothpick" dagger tucked into his boot at all times.

# TOMÁS DE TORQUEMADA



“All our knowledge — past, present, and future — is nothing compared to what we will never know.”

—Tsiolkovsky

Tomás de Torquemada, the first Grand Inquisitor of Spain, is an infamous figure long associated with religious intolerance, torture, and genocide. But the historical truth behind his fabled evil figure does not entirely mesh with the “Black Legend” that has formed around his life. Far from being the notoriously one-dimensional, sadistic villain portrayed in fiction, Torquemada was a dedicated Spanish patriot whose legacy included the birth of the first long-lasting European superpower since the Roman Empire fell to barbarian tribesmen. A true Renaissance politician, his singular vision of a unified Spain rising from the ashes of nearly a thousand years of Islamic conquest was to have long-lasting repercussions that would span several continents and hundreds of years. If only he could have gotten his... appetite... for orthodox religion under control, he might today be remembered as one of the great statesmen of his age.

## TOMÁS DE TORQUEMADA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
13	STR	3	12-	150 kg; 2½d6 [1]
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll: 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
5	PD	3		Total: 5 (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 (0 rED)
3	SPD	10		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
26	END	0		
30	STUN	6		<b>Total Characteristics Cost: 65</b>

**Movement:** Running: 6"/12"

### Cost Perks

- 7 Contact: Pope Sixtus IV 11- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, significant Contacts, limited by identity)
- 9 Contact: Queen Isabella 11- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, significant Contacts, limited by identity, very good relationship)
- 30 Contact: Roman Catholic Church 13- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, significant Contacts, good relationship, Organization)
- 30 Contact: The Spanish Empire 13- (access to major institutions, extremely useful Skills or resources, significant Contacts, good relationship, Organization)
- 3 Fringe Benefit: Low Justice
- 7 Fringe Benefit: Religious Rank: Grand Inquisitor of Spain
- 1 Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry
- 10 Money: Wealthy
- 6 Reputation: Grand Inquisitor of Spain (throughout Spain) 11-, +3/+3d6

### Talents

- 5 Eidetic Memory
- 3 Lightsleep
- 5 *Immovable*: Resistance (5 points versus Persuasion)

### Skills

- 5 Bureaucratics 14-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 3 High Society 13-
- 3 Interrogation 13-

## TOMÁS DE TORQUEMADA PLOT SEEDS

**Last Days of Andalucia:** It's January 1492 in the newly conquered city of Grenada. With the final Iberian stronghold of Islam firmly in the hands of the Roman Catholic monarchs Ferdinand II and Isabella I, it's up to the Moorish PCs to rescue their lord Muhammad V from his prison cell in the Alhambra so the can smuggle him across the straits of Gibraltar to Morocco. Unfortunately, Tomás de Torquemada and his Inquisition are watching for just such an attempt!

**The Expulsion:** It's 1492 in the newly unified Iberian Peninsula. Under the strong guidance of Grand Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada the Spanish crown has called for the forcible expulsion of 200,000 Jewish citizens from the realm. The penalty for remaining is death. So desperate are the Jewish PCs to escape their homeland that they sign onto the seemingly doomed voyage of a mad ship's captain from Genoa. His name: Christopher Columbus.

**Auto-De-Fe:** As Tomás de Torquemada's Inquisition spreads fear throughout the land a small group of renegade Jews, occultists, and heretical Christians lay a careful plan to assassinate the great and terrible man. What better time to spring their trap than during one of his grotesque spectacles: the *auto-de-fe*?

- 3 AK: Rome 13-
- 3 AK: Spain 13-
- 3 KS: Religion 13-
- 4 KS: Torture 14-
- 3 PS: Priest 13-
- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Language: Arabic (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native)
- 1 2) Language: Basque (fluent conversation)
- 2 3) Language: French (completely fluent, literate)
- 2 4) Language: Hebrew (completely fluent, literate)
- 1 5) Language: Italian (fluent conversation, literate)
- 2 6) Language: Latin (completely fluent, literate)

**Total Powers & Skills Cost: 161**

**Total Cost: 226**

### 75+ Disadvantages

- 10 Enraged: when confronted with heresy (Common), go 8-, recover 14-
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Jews (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Muslims (Uncommon, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Insensitive (Very Common, Moderate)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Narrow-minded (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Famous (Frequently, Major)
- 10 Social Limitation: Subject to Orders (Frequently, Major)
- 71 Experience Points

**Total Disadvantage Points: 226**

**Background/History:** Tomás de Torquemada, the first Grand Inquisitor of Spain, was born in the Castilian providence of Valladolid in 1420. A nephew of the celebrated Catholic theologian and cardinal Juan de Torquemada, he entered the Dominican (meaning "Dogs of The Lord" or Domini Canes in Latin) monastic order while still little more than a child. From the beginning of his church career he was known as a very earnest, austere, and humble monk, often pointed to by his superiors as a recognized example of the virtues of the Dominican lifestyle. Valladolid was then the capital of Kingdom of Castile, so in due course eminent dignities were offered to him by the church authorities — but Torquemada remained determined to lead the simple life of a friar. In the monastery his modesty was so great that he refused to accept a doctor's degree in theology, which is the most prized honor in the Dominican order. His superiors, however, obliged him to take the priorship of the convent of Santa Cruz in Segovia, where he ruled for 22 years.

The royal family, especially the Queen and the Infanta (or princess) Isabella, often stayed at Segovia, and Torquemada became the confessor to Isabella, who was then quite young. He trained her to

look on her future sovereignty as an opportunity to unite the then-divided Iberian Peninsula not only politically, but spiritually and ethnically as well. According to legend, he made her promise in particular to rid the region of Jews, who were at that point both a large and influential minority group. He also began to explain to her the political advantages of religion, paving the way for the creation of that tremendous "spiritual" engine in the hands of the state, the Inquisition. It was under this influence that the later Queen Isabella would utter her now famous (and prophetic) statement, "One Country, One Ruler, One Faith."

When Isabella succeeded to the throne of Castile upon Henry IV's death in 1474, Torquemada quickly became one of her most trusted and influential councilors. He urged her to unite Spain by marrying King Ferdinand of Aragon shortly thereafter, putting the capstone upon some seven hundred years of *La Reconquista* (the re-conquest) during which Christian Europe slowly forced the descendants of Iberia's Muslim Moorish conquerors back across the Straits of Gibraltar into North Africa. The vigorous new nations of Spain and Portugal were formed from this brutal grinding conflict, conglomerations of much smaller feudal kingdoms carved out of Muslim territory over the centuries by noblemen and military adventurers. By 1478 the Muslims (or Saracens, as they were then known) were reduced to ruling a tiny area around the southern port city of Granada.

Because the Peninsula's previous Islamic rulers were far more tolerant than their Christian counterparts, these new countries were extremely religiously diverse. Jews, Muslims, heretical Gnostic Christians known as Cathars, practitioners of the "old religion" (pagans), "Marranos" (recently converted Jews), and "Moriscos" (recently converted Muslims) mingled freely with "real" Catholic Christians throughout the land. Torquemada was extremely concerned by this multicultural population, which he saw as a barrier to the total political unification of Spain. He understood that Spain was well on its way to becoming one of the wealthiest nations of the period (in no small part due to the efforts of her Jewish citizens) and he wanted control of that wealth placed firmly in the hands of the crown. After some consideration, Torquemada hit upon the perfect vehicle to both rid Spain of potentially divisive minorities while transferring material wealth directly into the royal coffers. He seized control of the Inquisition.

In truth, the Inquisition had been more or less a going concern since the Albigensian Crusades of the thirteenth century. Medieval and Renaissance Europe believed no society could exist without religious uniformity — that, to use a celebrated statement of another era, "a house divided against itself surely cannot stand." Here was a conviction fully appreciated at a later date by the likes of Protestant Elizabeth I and the Dutch Calvinists. They gave it full rein in their own persecution of Catholics. But the earlier Inquisition was ineffective, decentralized, and answerable more or less directly to

various popes, many of who had the unfortunate habit of being both pacifistic and tolerant.

In 1473, Torquemada and Gonzalez de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo, approached their sovereigns with a well-thought out plan for reforming, centralizing, and streamlining the Inquisition within Spain. Isabella and Ferdinand saw in this proposal a means for overcoming the independence of their unruly nobility, rebellious clergy, and powerful minority groups — all of whom were busily obstructing the growing power of a centralized Spain. With heavy royal sanction, Torquemada addressed a petition to Pope Sixtus IV for the establishment of this new form of Inquisition and, after some considerable political intrigue, in 1479 a papal bull authorized the appointment by the Spanish sovereigns of two inquisitors at Seville, under whom the Dominican inquisitions already established elsewhere would serve. Commissaries of the Holy Office were sent into different provinces, and ministers of the faith were established in the various cities to actively persecute the crimes of heresy, apostasy, sorcery, sodomy, and polygamy (the three last being considered to be implicit heresy). The regular tribunals of the bishops, who much resented the innovation, were reduced in power to a mockery of their former selves. The new Grand Inquisitor (Torquemada) had the power of Renaissance Europe's first centralized state at his back.

Thus began a period of Spain's history that has come to be known as the "Black Legend." During this time perhaps some 2,000 people were burned as heretics by Torquemada's new Inquisition. The burnings were held as a portion of a rather popular public spectacle known as an *auto-de-fe* (or "act of faith"). These were public courts which more or less followed models already established by secular tribunals of the times, which had their good and bad points from the modern prospective. While defendants were considered guilty until proven innocent, and their accuser's identity remained secret, the accused were generally provided with a lawyer and given a 30-day grace period to prepare a



defense. Witnesses who were proven false suffered harsh penalties. Although torture short of permanent physical damage was considered appropriate for extracting a confession, examinations of the accused could not be carried out without the presence of two disinterested members of the clergy. Property of the accused, while subject to confiscation by the Spanish government at the beginning of the trial, was generally returned if the accused were found innocent. Of course, the wealthier the accused was, the less likely he was to be found innocent....

The two forms of torture Torquemada personally favored were the *strappado*, or pulley torment, and the *aselli*, or water torment. While quite painful, neither of these tortures was fatal or disfiguring if performed by an expert... but unfortunately, experts were sometimes a little thin on the ground in Spain. If the condemned recanted his heresy after a session of *strappado* or *aselli* and kissed the cross, he was mercifully garroted before his execution pyre was lit. If he recanted only, he was burned with seasoned, quick-burning wood. If he refused to do either, he was burned with slow, smoldering

## TORQUEMADA QUOTATIONS

“If you interrogate them, nothing can be more Christian; as to their conversation, nothing can be less reprehensible, and what they speak they prove by deeds. As for the morals of the heretic, he cheats no one, he oppresses no one, he strikes no one; his cheeks are pale with fasting, he eats not the bread of idleness, his hands labor for his livelihood.”

—St. Bernard, *The Arrogance Of Faith*

“Preachers do not dare preach, and those who preach do not dare touch on contentious matters, for their lives and honor are in the mouths of ignoramuses, and nobody in this life is without his policeman. Bit by bit, many rich people leave the country for foreign realms, in order not to live all their lives in fear and trembling every time an officer of the Inquisition enters their house; for continual fear is a worse death than a sudden demise.”

—An observant citizen of Toledo, 1538

“People were deprived of the liberty to hear and talk freely, since in all cities, towns, and villages, there were persons placed to give information of what went on. This was considered by some the most wretched slavery and equal to death.”

—Juan de Mariana, 1490

“On three Sundays the penitent is to be stripped to the waist and scourged by the priest from the entrance of the town... to the church door. His is to abstain forever from meat and eggs and cheese, except

green wood. Most victims chose to kiss the cross.

Although many irresponsible or politically-motivated historians have set the number of executed heretics as high as 200,000 people, actual court records that have survived from the period show this number to be a distortion. The Spanish Inquisition was an undeniably cruel institution, but its goals were primarily financial and political rather than sadistic. Torquemada was far more interested in gathering wealth, breaking the power of Spain's wealthiest minority, and inspiring a fear of the central government in the population of his new country than he was sadism. Despite what many “New Age” “witches” now claim, almost every person executed during the Spanish Inquisition was a *converso*, or “new” Christian freshly converted from Judaism, convicted of practicing his former religion. Jews formed a powerful, wealthy minority within the Iberian Peninsula's political, economic, and social scenes, and both Isabella and Torquemada were deeply interested in destroying them. While this persecution contributed another regrettable chapter to the already sad history of anti-Semitism, it was motivated more by greed and political and religious expediency than by racial hatred.

With Spain's Christian population effectively terrified into religious orthodoxy, Torquemada set his sights upon the nation's non-Christian citizens. Ironically, the Inquisition, which was after all a church institution, had no jurisdiction over the nation's Jews and Muslims. With Muslims for the most part killed or voluntarily fleeing the peninsula after the collapse of their last stronghold in Granada in 1492, Spain was left with an estimated population of some 200,000 Jews. Torquemada petitioned the crown to compel all remaining Jews to either convert to Christianity or be expelled. While Isabella was more than willing, the usually compliant Ferdinand balked at the idea of expelling so many of his subjects. His hesitation was compounded by an offer from the Jewish community of some 30,000 ducats (about 40 million dollars in today's currency) if they were left unmolested. Just as he was about to decide in favor of the Jewish population, Torquemada appeared in his chambers bearing a crucifix and exclaimed “Judas Iscariot sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver; Your Highness is about to sell him for 30,000 ducats. Here He is, take Him and sell Him.” He then set the crucifix on a table in front of Ferdinand before leaving the room.

All unconverted Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. In July of that year, 160,000 Jewish people left Spain; the majority went to Portugal, but about 50,000 went to the Levant with the intention of going to Africa or the Holy Land. Many ended up settling into small communities inside of what was then the Ottoman Empire, either in Palestine or present-day Bosnia.

With their newfound wealth, Isabella and Ferdinand sponsored a series of successful conquests, both in the recently discovered New World and in Europe. These conquests transformed Spain into the richest and most powerful country of its day. But Torquemada personally enjoyed little of the success that he helped to engender. His constant harassment of Spain's minorities and minor nobil-

ity made him powerful enemies throughout the land. Threats were consistently uttered against him and he was always in fear of his life. After the expulsion, he never went outside without an escort of forty soldiers. Increasingly paranoid with age, he retired to the monastery of St. Tomás in Avila, which he'd designed himself. In his last years, convinced that he would eventually be poisoned, he kept a unicorn's horn by his dinner plate as an antidote. Perhaps thanks to the horn, he died a natural death in 1498.

**Personality/Motivation:** Torquemada is a surprisingly polite and soft-spoken man with an exceptional education. Like many learned people of his time, he can both read and write over a half-dozen languages, has traveled extensively throughout Southern Europe, and is familiar with many of the political and economic theories of the day. Nevertheless, you can take the boy out of the monastery, but you can't take the monastery out of the boy. Torquemada was cloistered at a very early age and raised by one of the strictest monastic orders in all of Catholicism, so his worldview is rather narrow compared with those of some of his contemporaries. From his perspective, what's good for the church is good for the state, what's good for the state is good for its people, and what's good for the people is what's good for the church.

Torquemada's primary motivation is actually a fairly simple one: he's a religious patriot. If one looks at his actions, one can discern a repeated pattern of using the Spanish church to further the goals of the Spanish state while using the Spanish state to reinforce the authority of the Spanish church. Of course, to a man of his time this would have been part and parcel, as the idea of “separation of church and state” hadn't been conceived yet. But Torquemada takes this holy — or if you prefer unholy — matrimony to a new level, using the secular Spanish authorities to actually perform his dirty work (torture and execution) while turning over sizable portions of property seized by the church (with the help of Spanish soldiers) to the Crown. This cozy setup propelled made Spain a world power while her people were all firmly, permanently, and undeniably Catholic. In fact, the marriage of Spanish Inquisition and Spanish royal power proved so successful that it remained active until 1803, long after heretic killing had gone out of style in the rest of the world.

Though hardly a comedian, Torquemada possesses an offbeat, spooky sense of humor that he uses primarily to frighten his victims into speaking truthfully. Torquemada isn't so much sadistic or wildly anti-Semitic as he is amoral and insensitive. Although he personally doesn't revel in hatred and cruelty, he's not above using racism and torture to further his nationalistic ends. In his personal life, Torquemada is unassuming (even humble), charitable, and seemingly has few of the vices normally associated with historical villains of his caliber. But that didn't keep him from sending two thousand innocent people to their deaths.

**Quote:** “Do you think we should put her to the test

of faith, St. Swiven? No? How about we place her upon a slow burning fire of green, green wood until she renounces her apostasy? No? Well, what then, my pretty, pretty beads? Oh, something special... Oh, no, surely she doesn't deserve that!"

**Powers/Tactics:** Tomás de Torquemada's combat tactic is to have about fifty heavily armored Castilian hidalgos in breast-and-back plate mail with halberds, arquebuses, and longswords surround his opponents before charging them with heresy and subversion, then having them tortured until they agree to their own execution. It's proven to be a remarkably effective strategy.

Torquemada manipulates the entire power structure of church and state to accomplish his long reaching, well thought out goals. His "powers" lie in his close association to those institutions, as well as his considerable intellectual, social, and deductive abilities. He's also one hell of an accomplished torturer.

**Campaign Use:** Though boring old factual research reveals that Tomás de Torquemada wasn't actually as cool a villain as the Vincent Price character from Roger Corman's *The Pit And The Pendulum* or Dostoevsky's Christ-murdering inquisitor from *The Brothers Karamazov*, you don't have to tell your players that. Heck, they probably don't even want to know that he wasn't the mustache-twirling, naked-virgin-torturing, witch-burning, Bible-thumping arch-villain of film and fiction they know and hate. You should use the actual character to surprise the players, as his goals are far more ambitious and long reaching than merely being a sadistic lunatic. Of course, Torquemada has nothing against using violence, torture, and heavy-handed political maneuvering to achieve his ends, so he'll probably seem like a sadistic lunatic, regardless. One simply shouldn't confuse the ends with the means.

The list of possibilities for using the Grand Inquisitor in a Hero game is nearly infinite. What fun is a *Fantasy Hero* world without an Inquisition going on somewhere on behalf of a religion of some kind? The twisting of a good religion into an evil one makes for compelling drama. For that matter, what good is a science fiction universe without a spooky fanatical religion? Pierce Anthony's *God's Fires*, Dan Simon's epic four-part *Hyperion* series, Eric Flint's *1632*, and Dan Abnet's *Warhammer 40,000: Inquisitor* books all have an Inquisition (or at least an inquisitor-like character) in them; so does the television show *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* in the person of Kai Winn. No reason that space-going, pointy-hatted torturers couldn't chase your *Star Hero* characters around for years!

For *Champions* campaigns fictional examples of diabolical pseudo- and semi-Torquemadas abound. The world of DC Comics in particular teems with them. The scheming character Desaad serves the deity-level master villain Darkseid as his chief torture, while training new minions by brainwashing them so that their minds are filled with fear, despair, and total obedience. The *Teen Titans*'s master villain and all-around wicked religious leader Brother Blood is kind of like an icky combination of Torquemada, the prophet

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Mohammed, and actor Vin Diesel. The *Green Lantern Corps* even had a *good guy* named Torquemada who was drawn like the frightening love child of Solomon Grundy and David Johansen. To convert Tomás de Torquemada into a more *Champions*-compatible villain, equip him with a Psionic Feedback Inducer and a "strong" Force Field Harness from *Gadgets And Gear*.

Sinister cult leaders are an important part of the pantheon of *Pulp Hero* villainy. Although the real life Tomas de Torquemada was more of an evil politician than an evil religious leader (if there can be said to be a difference), his character sheet should work admirably as the template for an exceptionally well-connected, behind-the-scenes cult leader. He can easily serve in a similar capacity in a *Dark Champions* or *Ninja Hero* game if he's equipped with some martial arts skills, the power *Physical Damage Reduction*, *Resistant*, 50%, some Combat Skill Levels, and an additional point of SPD.

**Appearance:** Torquemada is a thin, rather dapper-looking man with an angular mustache and large brown eyes. He's unusually tall for his day, with the disturbing habit of looming over those to whom he's speaking. When in his monastery or advising Queen Isabella, he wears the traditional garb of a Dominican brother: a plain brown robe with a white prayer shawl. When he's acting as Grand Inquisitor, Torquemada dresses in long robes of red or white silk with exaggerated, pointy hats that help to make him look even taller and more intimidating. These robes are adorned with various forms of the crucifix such as the Inaugural Cross, the Cross of St. Peter, and the Cross of Christ, which are sewn into the fabric with golden thread.

Additionally, Torquemada has a selection of fine antique rosaries previously owned by various Catholic saints, which he likes to wear on special occasions (like an *Auto-de-Fe*). He sometimes speaks to them softly in public, then turns his head slightly as if to listen to a response. His reactions to the rosaries' "responses" vary, but a solemn nod or a sinister chuckle is quite common. This is all an affectation, of course — a deliberate put-on of holy madness by the Grand Inquisitor — but it's both creepy and intimidating.

Continued from last page

on Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, when he is to eat them as sign of his abnegation of his Manichean errors. For two score days, twice a year, he's to forgo the use of fish, and for three days in each week that of fish, wine, and oil, fasting, if his health and labors will permit. He is to wear monastic vestments, with a small cross sewed on each breast. If possible, he is to hear mass daily and on feast-days to attend church at vespers. Seven times a day he is to recite the canonical hours, and, in addition to the Paternoster ten times each day and twenty times each night. He is to observe the strictest chastity. Every month he is to show this paper to the priest, who is to watch his observances closely, and this mode of life is to be maintained until the legate shall see fit to alter it, while for infraction of the penance he is to be held as a perjurer and a heretic, and to be segregated from the society of the faithful."

—Henry Charles Lea,  
*The Inquisition Of The Middle Ages*

# HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC



## FUN FACTS ABOUT ABSINTHE

Noteworthy for having driven more Parisian artists and writers mad than any other substance known to man, absinthe is a strong herbal liqueur distilled with wormwood and anise. It typically contains other aromatic herbs such as fennel, licorice, hyssop, veronica, lemon balm, angelica root, dittany, coriander, juniper, and nutmeg. Its predominant flavor is licorice. Traditionally, absinthe's prepared by slowly pouring iced water over a cube of sugar resting on a slotted spoon. The cold water dissolves the sugar and this solution trickles into the glass, diluting the green absinthe and turning it a richer, lighter color. This process is typically known as the "French Method."

Absinthe is a very strong alcoholic beverage that also has hallucinogenic properties (wormwood and anise are mild poisons). Its effect has been described as a clear, full-body high. Chemist and absinthe expert T.A. Breaux describes it as a push-me, pull-you effect of the various herbs — some have a heightening effect while others have a lowering effect. All the same, it basically killed Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (okay, Henri killed Henri, but you know what we mean), encouraged Van Gogh to cut his ear off, and helped drive Oscar Wilde to a life of... errr, being Oscar Wilde.

"Love is when the desire to be desired takes you so badly that you feel you could die of it."

—Toulouse-Lautrec

Many important painters lived in Paris at the close of the nineteenth century. Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Renoir all made the City Of Lights their home, as did countless authors, poets, playwrights, actors, philosophers, and adventurers of all sorts. Yet it was a small, crippled aristocrat named Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec who best captured the *zeitgeist* of the Parisian nightlife of the period through his vivid Japanese-inspired illustrations. Today we remember him as the quintessential bohemian artist of the *belle époque* ("beautiful era") in Paris at the close of the Victorian Age. At the time, however, he was a controversial figure — a fallen, malformed nobleman more at home in the nightclubs and brothels of the Monmartre District than the drawing rooms of France's upper class. Yet Toulouse-Lautrec captured the spirit of his era in his posters, portraits, and sketches. A dabbler in numerous techniques, he was influenced at one time or another by Japanese woodblock art, Pointillism, the Impressionists, and the Italian masters. This is reflected in the prodigious amount of work he produced in just 16 years of effort — over 730 oil paintings, 275 lithography prints, and 5,000 sketches.

## HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
8	CON	-4	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
14	PRE	4	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
9	COM	0	11-	
2	PD	0		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
2	SPD	0		Phases: 6, 12
4	REC	0		
16	END	0		
19	STUN	0		<b>Total Characteristic Cost: 20</b>

**Movement:** Running: 4"/8"  
Leaping: 1"/2"

## Cost Perks

- 6 Contact: Powerful Underworld Figure (significant Contacts of his own, useful Skills or resources, good relationship) 12-
- 1 Favor: Beautiful Prostitute
- 1 Favor: Chief of Police
- 1 Favor: Crime Boss
- 1 Favor: Mysterious Vigilante
- 1 Favor: Nightclub Owner
- 1 Favor: Nefarious Smuggler
- 1 Favor: Popular Musician
- 1 Favor: Wealthy Nobleman
- 6 Fringe Benefit: Nobleman (son of the Count Alphonse-Charles de Toulouse)
- 10 Money: Wealthy
- 3 Reputation: popular artist and illustrator (among Parisians) 11-, +3/+3d6

## Skills

- 3 Bribery 12-
- 3 Conversation 12-
- 8 Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Dog Racing, Horse Racing, Roulette) 13-
- 3 High Society 12-
- 3 AK: Monmartre Section Of Paris 13-
- 4 KS: Art History 14-
- 4 KS: Painting And Illustrating 14-
- 3 KS: The Paris Underworld 13-
- 6 PS: Artist/Illustrator 15-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 12-
- 9 Streetwise 15-
- 2 Survival (Urban) 13-

**Total Powers & Skill Cost: 84**

**Total Cost: 104**

**75+ Disadvantages**

- 10 Dependence: Addiction to alcohol, must drink every Hour or suffer Incompetence (Very Common)
- 15 Distinctive Features: normal-sized man with abnormally short legs (Not Concealable)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Short, Crippled Legs (can only Leap 1") (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Insecure About His Height (Very Common, Moderate)

**Total Disadvantage Points: 120**

**Background/History:** Henri Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa was born into a rich aristocratic family that had lived in the Languedoc region in southern France for nearly a thousand years. His father, the eccentric Comte Alphonse-Charles de Toulouse, was a direct descendent of the counts of Toulouse. His mother, Countess Adele Tapie de Celeyran, came from the Aude area of France. As a young boy Henri enjoyed the privileged life of a French nobleman's son. He lived surrounded by uncles, aunts, and cousins as well as a small army of servants who attended to his every need. A curious, vigorous, and often boisterous

child, he divided his time between hunting and horseback riding.

At the age of eight Henri became seriously ill. Afflicted with fevers and severe headaches, he was bedridden for a long time. By the time he recovered he was afflicted with a permanent condition that prevented his bones from healing properly. Tragically, at age twelve, he broke his left leg. The next year he broke his right one. Thereafter both legs ceased to grow while the rest of his body continued to grow normally. He reached maturity with a body trunk of normal size but with abnormally short legs, so he stood about 4'6" tall.

Deprived of the physical life a normal body would have permitted, Toulouse-Lautrec began to live completely for his art. His father introduced him to the deaf-mute painter Rene Princeteau, who was so impressed with Henri's ability that he quickly enrolled him in the studio of the well-known French Impressionist master Bonnat. At the age of 17 Henri left home to live with Bonnat. Unfortunately the irascible painter developed an intense (and completely mutual) dislike for the young aristocrat. At odds with his teacher, Toulouse-

**TOULOUSE-LAUTREC QUOTATIONS**

"These people annoy me. They want me to finish things. But I see them in such a way and paint them accordingly. Look, it's so easy to finish things. I can easily paint you a Bastien-Lepage... Nothing is simpler than to complete pictures in a superficial sense. Never does one lie so cleverly as then."

"In our time there are many artists who do something because it's new; they see their value and their justification in this newness. They are deceiving themselves; novelty is seldom the essential. This has to do with one thing only; making a subject better from its intrinsic nature."

"You only find God when you are drunk, laying in a whore's bed."

"I paint the dance girls because they are the ingenious soul of Paris."



## TOULOUSE-LAUTREC PLOT SEEDS

**Murder In The Montmartre:** A mysterious masked murderer has been stalking the City's prostitutes, killing them in various sinister ways. The police are stumped due to the lack of solid evidence, so several female PCs agree to disguise themselves as streetwalkers in an attempt to draw the killer out. Henri agrees to help by introducing the undercover PCs to the City's *demimonde*.

**The Pentacle:** Things have turned violent between three rival factions of drug dealers, resulting in a street war. Several innocent bystanders have already been killed in the cross-fire. The PCs approach Toulouse-Lautrec for assistance in the hopes that the feuding gangs can be brought together for a "peace conference" at a neutral location. Unbeknownst to Henri, several of the PCs feel that this will be an excellent opportunity to "take care" of the City's drug problem once and for all. Unfortunately, the Russian Mafia has also gotten wind of the meeting as well as the renegade PC's plans....

**Kidnapped!:** Someone has kidnapped Henri, breaking the unwritten law of the City's criminal class that he's to be left alone. With the help of several powerful NPC gangsters the PCs must find and rescue the little artist from his tormentors... before it's too late.

Lautrec left to enroll with a competing master painter named Ferdinand Cormon, the man who would later become Vincent Van Gogh's mentor. Henri thrived under his new instructor. He visited dozens of galleries to study the techniques of other painters, especially Impressionists and Japanese woodblock artists. Meanwhile Cormon made sure Henri acquired a solid foundation in traditional painting.

By the time he was 20 the young nobleman was beginning to look for his own artistic direction. Seeking inspiration, Henri moved to the infamous Montmartre district of Paris in 1887. The bohemian center of the City Of Light's nightclub scene, Montmartre was also home to large numbers of manual laborers, tradesmen, hoodlums, pimps, prostitutes, and quirky artists of various sorts. It was also where the city's brothels, cabarets, dance halls, and race-tracks were located. Popular locations such as the *Le Chat Noir* (The Black Cat), *Le Lapin Agile* (The Nimble Rabbit), and the notorious *Le Moulin Rouge* (The Red Mill) buzzed with life as the most reputable of Parisians debauched themselves alongside the city's shadiest denizens. From his studio behind the Rue Ganneron cemetery Toulouse-Lautrec documented the swirling, desperate life around him. He prowled the streets, alleyways, bars, and brothels of the district in search of new subjects for his art. Very much an active participant in the nightlife around him, Henri spent his evenings at crowded nightclub tables drinking and laughing while at the same time making quick sketches of what went on around him. Back in his studio the following morning he transformed the rough sketches into lithographs or brightly-colored paintings.

As he worked Toulouse-Lautrec was developing his own distinctive artistic style, one uniquely suited to the emerging Parisian *belle epoque* culture of the late nineteenth century. Like many Impressionists Henri collected Japanese art, especially examples from the Ukiyo-e school of woodblock prints. He lived in almost the same environment in which these great works of art were created: a world of pleasure districts, restaurants, actresses, theaters, and brothels. Both were to have a very pervasive influence on his style. For Henri movement and forms within his art were very important, as was the desire to produce eye-catching figures. In his work asymmetric composition and the use of large, flat areas of color are undoubtedly inspired by Japanese prints. Other aspects of his art were dictated by its commercial nature — much like the Ukiyo-e artist, Henri's work was paid for by commissions, such as prints and posters created as advertisements for plays, eating establishments, and taverns. Through his work he propelled into art history many of his friends, such as Moulin Rouge dancers Louise Weber (also known as *La Goulue*) and the combative singer, businessman, and poet Aristide Bruant.

Yet in the end Henri's constitution was simply too frail to sustain his lifestyle — fast women, rich

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### Films

Moulin Rouge (2001)  
Moulin Rouge (1952)

food, and constant alcohol abuse (especially consumption of the hallucinogenic liquor absinthe) all took their toll on his health. By 1897 he was spending far more time in Montmartre's bars than he was in his studio, resulting in a (largely physical) nervous breakdown in 1899. Persuaded by his family to seek treatment for his alcoholism, Toulouse-Lautrec tried to recover his strength at a seaside resort in Normandy, but it was no use; his health was completely ruined. After suffering a stroke that resulted in partial paralysis of his body, Henri was taken to his mother's castle on August 20, where he died in her arms a few days later. He last words were "You mother, none other but you."

**Personality/Motivation:** Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is a man caught in the grips of physical, emotional, and spiritual torment. Possessed of a larger-than-life personality with massive appetites for liquor, women, companionship, music, and art, he's trapped in the sickly, malformed body of a semi-dwarf. He's haunted by the memories of his robust and athletic youth, recollections he drowns in massive amounts of alcohol, especially absinthe. Henri is likely to be intoxicated at any time the PCs may encounter him, even early in the morning.

That said, Henri isn't outwardly a particularly melancholy person. A skilled conversationalist, he can make polite, flattering small talk for hours if necessary. He has no particular desire to inflict his problems on others or to spread his misery around. He also works very hard at his chosen vocation as the painter-documenter of his beloved city's bohemian nightlife, sketching all night as he carouses with his friends, then waking up in the morning to flesh them out with paint. For all his desperate whoremongering, art and alcohol are Toulouse-Lautrec's only real mistresses — the lovers to whom he devotes nearly all of his time and energy.

To be truly devoted to the subjects of his art Henri feels he must really *know* them, not just observe them from a distance. Thus he has developed a bizarre symbiotic relationship with Paris's underworld — its prostitutes, crimelords, poverty-stricken writers, political radicals, pickpockets,

musicians, and nightclub devotees. Because of his artistic talent and unassuming nature they accept him as a normal part of their world, giving him free pass to travel among them like a cloud's shadow passing over a spring field. It is this access to the Parisian *demimonde* that's most likely to draw the PCs to make contact with him.

**Quote:** "I had placed my stick on the table, as I do every evening. It had been specially made to suit my height, to enable me to walk without too much difficulty. As I was standing up, a customer called to me: "Monsieur, don't forget your pencil." It was very unkind, but most funny."

**Powers/Tactics:** Toulouse-Lautrec obviously has no combat value; indeed, he's more or less helpless in the face of violence. His only defense against physical aggression is the loyalty of his numerous friends, many of whom are dangerous, well-connected, well-armed, or otherwise capable NPCs in their own right. Toulouse-Lautrec is well thought of by nearly everyone in the Monmartre section of Paris, including its many less-than-totally-respectable citizens. Though he's known to be the son of a Count, the district's muggers, pickpockets, and kidnappers all either avoid him or are acquaintances of his — he paints the portraits of wealthy crimelords, lowly hoodlums, policemen, disreputable musicians, and prostitutes with equal skill and enthusiasm.

As an accepted member (indeed chronicler) of the Monmartre bohemian *demimonde*, Toulouse-Lautrec is something of an expert on the Paris underworld. He can and does move through criminal circles with relative ease, protected by mob bosses and powerful madams who have come to accept the little crippled artist as an important part of their social scene. It's also worth mentioning that Toulouse-Lautrec is no saint. Besides his artistic abilities he has considerable skills in the areas of bribery, gambling, urban survival, petty theft, and the black market... when he chooses to use them. He also has a healthy appetite for prostitutes, alcohol, and drugs that he indulges at every possible opportunity.

With all that said it's easy to forget that Toulouse-Lautrec, with his low tastes and bohemian ways, was originally a child of privilege raised to be a high-ranking nobleman. It's not as though he's forgotten how to interact with French high society if he has to. He's classically educated, eloquent, and can be quite charming in a dry, urbane sort of way when he chooses to be. He's also quite affluent, although it would be hard to guess it from his appearance. It's also fairly safe to say that Toulouse-Lautrec rather have his legs broken all over again than be a part of the world that so thoroughly scorned him.

**Campaign Use:** Although he's considered by most art historians to be one of the quintessential turn-of-the-century post-Impressionist French bohemian artists, Toulouse-Lautrec best serves a GM as a helpful background character for an urban Dark Champions campaign set in any era. Forget Victorian Paris for the moment. Assume many powerful and infamous people in your campaign's primary city owe Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec useful favors, ones he'd probably be willing to sacrifice for a good cause such as saving a kidnapped woman or preventing harm from coming to his city. He also possesses a great deal of information about the city's criminal element that he'd probably be willing to share with the PCs for, again, extraordinarily good reasons. Telling him that they want to "stop the drug dealers" or "put an end to prostitution" won't particularly impress him because he's a libertine who approves of such activities. Telling him that Black Paladin plans to destroy Greenwich Village is an entirely different matter, however, and he'll gladly act as a spy or agent for the PCs under those circumstances (as will a lot of underworld types, actually). Just change the locale as appropriate — Hudson City, Vibora Bay, Pulp-era New York or Shanghai, Aarn, the resorts of pleasure-planets like Trovatore or Halcyon, the goth scene in modern San Francisco, Venwordien IV... — and he fits into any campaign.

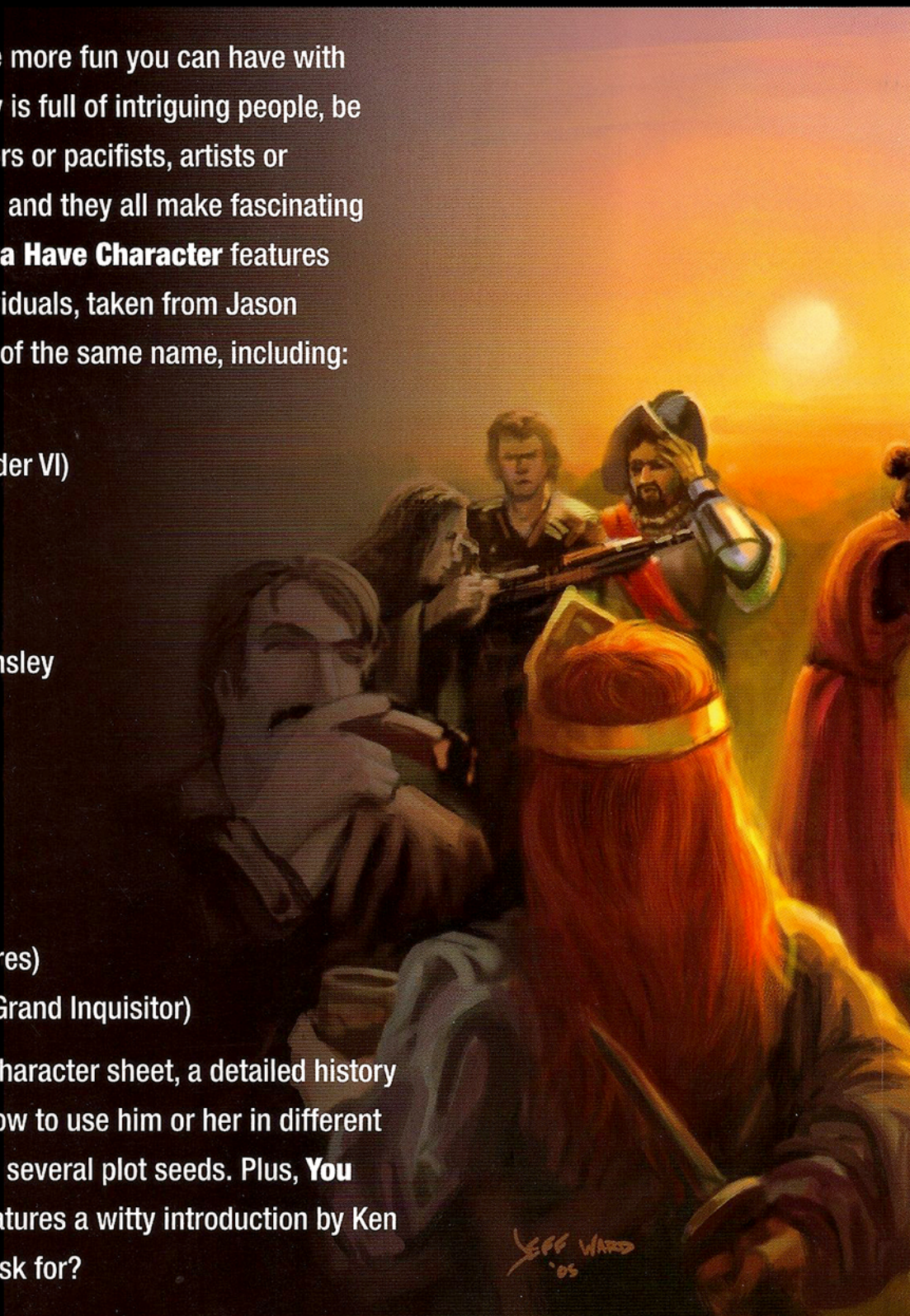
**Appearance:** The victim of several crippling childhood accidents, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec is an extraordinarily short man. Standing at just a little over four and a half feet tall, he walks with a cane in his left hand to help compensate for the fact that one of his legs is even shorter than the other. Henri wears expensive, specially-tailored "high pocket" suits to help conceal this odd physique. This attire, when combined with his "Amish"-style artist's beard, thick intellectual's glasses, and overall drunken seediness, publicly mark Toulouse-Lautrec as a Parisian of the most eccentric type.

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