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SOURCEBOOK

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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

HERO HIGH



SOURCEBOOK

**"HIGH SCHOOL IS CLOSER TO THE CORE OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
THAN ANYTHING ELSE I CAN THINK OF."**

— KURT VONNEGUT, JR.



**"WELL WE CAN'T SALUTE YA CAN'T FIND A FLAG, IF THAT DON'T SUIT YA THAT'S A DRAG
SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER, SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER, SCHOOL'S BEEN BLOWN TO PIECES"**

— ALICE COOPER, "SCHOOL'S OUT"



HERO HIGH

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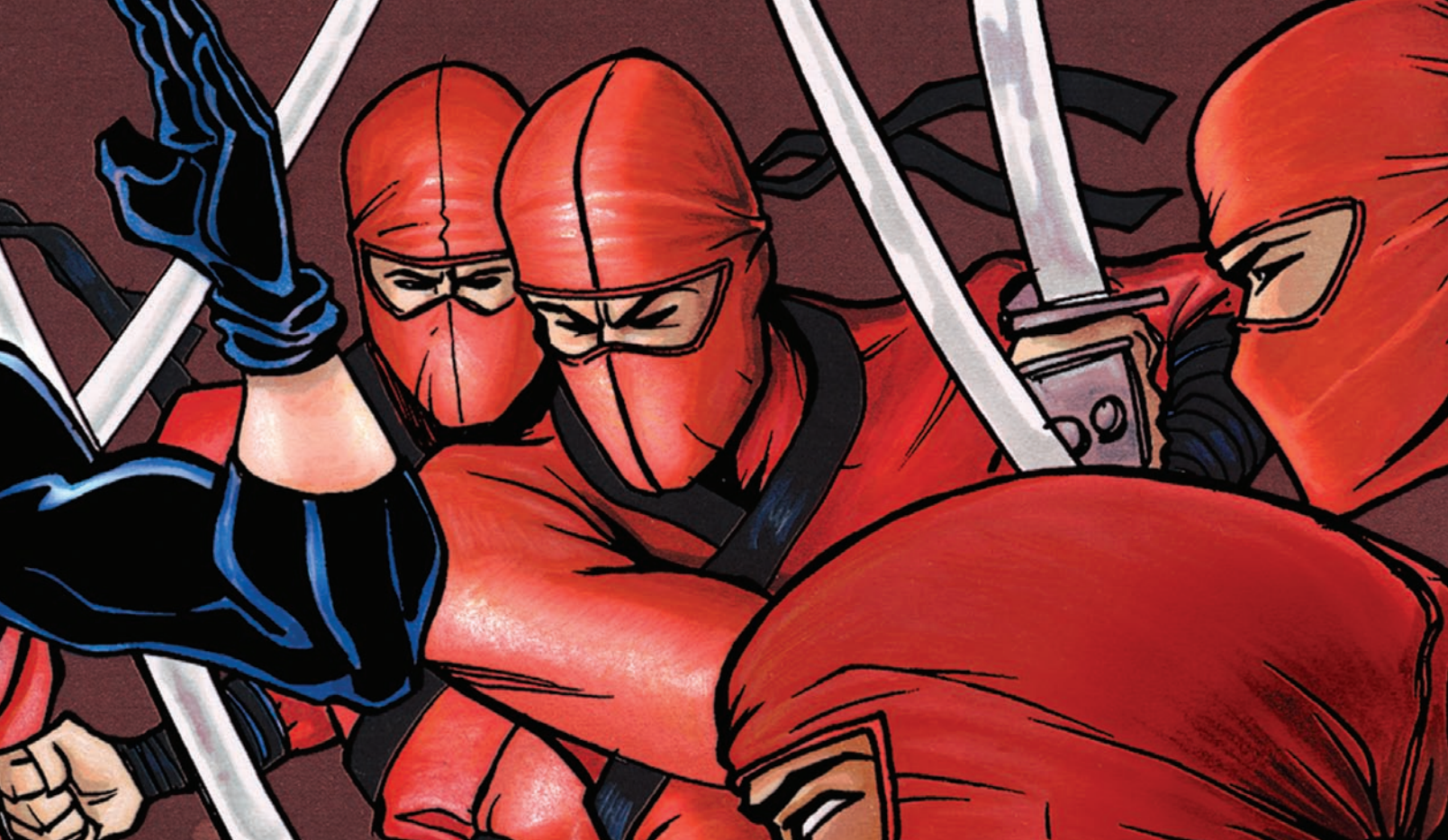
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INTRODUCTION

The beam of darkness struck the red convertible, melting the hard polymers right off the parked car's frame. People screamed and ran for whatever cover was furthest from the jackal-headed villain floating above the city street.

Dauntless was suddenly grateful he'd leapt free of the blast; he wasn't sure his alloy body could withstand the corrosive dark matter. "Dude!" Dauntless shouted, watching the car melt into a puddle. "You've got serious anger management issues!"

"Whelp!" the villain growled, his voice reverberating with the hundred-fold echoes of the dead. "I am Black Anubis. I am the darkness that has devoured a thousand suns."

Relentless appeared out of nowhere, right next to her brother, Dauntless. She shimmered, her outline blurred from her accelerated speed. "Yawn," she said, helping her brother up. "You are seriously high-maintenance for a villain."

A fang-lined scowl tore open across Black Anubis's face. His arm snapped up, fingertips laced in webs of darkness. Before he could fire his lethal bolt, however, a flash of light exploded in his face, followed by an ear-splitting pop. Black Anubis cried out in pain and clutched his eyes, but he did not fall.

Elite flipped down from the building ledge and landed on a nearby car with practiced ease. "Whoop-Ant, where are you?!?"

The insect-sized hero responded on the comm-line. "Under him. I can see up the dude's skirt. Wait...okay, yeah...I'm definitely scarred now."

"Don't let Black Anubis recover!" Elite called out. "Take him down!"

With singular, practiced intent, the AlterniTeens moved into action....

So, you want to play teen heroes? Great! But...why? For starters, all the adult supers are trying to tell you what to do and how to do it. They're older than your parents, and they're wearing tights! How gross is that? And speaking of your parents, they always ground you right before the big alien invasion. You also get blamed when your extra-dimensional pet wreaks havoc at the mall (nobody said feeding it french fries covered in nacho cheese was a bad thing—or maybe they did...you weren't really listening at the time). Oh, and they still give you homework. Shouldn't having powers give you a pass on certain things, like maybe high school?

No?

That's where this book comes in. Don't think of it as a resource guide for super campaigns, so much as a survival guide for teen heroes. Essentially, it's the world's longest FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions for you old timers reading the book).

Between the powers, the hormones, the homework, the rivals, and all the drama, it's bad enough out there without throwing villains into the mix. Unless, of course, beating on the villains is your version of therapy, in which case, they're the one thing in your life that *isn't* complicated.

And beating them down sure does put you in a better frame of mind....

USING THIS BOOK

QUESTION 1: HOW DO I USE THIS BOOK?

First things first...tell your pet alien monkey to put the book down slowly. This book has no nutritional value whatsoever, except maybe for the fiber content. Okay, good.

So, you're interested in the world of teen heroes, and not for the obviously creepy reasons? You're either a teen hero yourself and ready to embark on a life of fighting crime and looking fabulous, or you're trying to help out a group of young heroes (getting them in trouble, most likely) by guiding them through the process. This book is here to help by pointing out the pitfalls and troubles facing the super-powered youth of today. Oh, and the fun too. You're young, and you've got powers—how sweet is that?

This book tries to answer all the questions you might have to either kick-start you into high-gear or help you speed a new team on its way with minimal prep.

THE VOICE OF THE BOOK

QUESTION 2: SO, UH, WHAT'S WITH THE 'TUDE?

Being a teen is all about attitude, hence the tone of this survival guide. How many times have you heard parents or teachers say, "You need to change your attitude," or "You've got a bad attitude?" Anyone can be a

hero or a villain, right? Stick a gerbil in a microwave, nuke it, and let it bite you...voila...you're now Gerbil Man!

Wait, I'm not actually suggesting you put a gerbil in a microwave! Put the family pet down. I'm only illustrating a point. This isn't a book on getting powers; this is a book on being a teen hero.

Like I said, anyone can have powers. It's the way the superhero world seems to work. Powers are easy to come by. What's hard is doing the teen-hero thing in style. And style is, like, 50% attitude, 50% fashion sense, and about 10% common sense (and since you can't have 110%, it means that either 1) common sense is, like, nonexistent, or 2) you suck at math).

Think about it. By growing up, you've gone from being the center of your family's universe to another cog in high school. Society, starting with school, is all about conform and comply. Fit in. Don't rock the boat. Be more like your sibling(s). Listen. Be quiet. Give Grandma a kiss.

The universe is suddenly bigger, and you got much smaller as a result. It is teh suck, as they say. With powers, though, you've got a voice. You can be snarky and up to your armpits in attitude because you can afford to be. You've still got to follow the rules; that's a given. You've always had the gift of self-expression, but now, you can push that expression any which way you want. You're no longer a cog, you're one of the elite—the less than .0000001% that every other kid wishes to be.

Now on some worlds, that's a bad thing if powered people are hunted or distrusted. On hero-positive worlds, though, the paparazzi are putting your face on the cover of *Ultrateen* and *Teen Power*, and major Hollywood hotties are asking for your autograph. You can be nice and sweet, or you can be angry and hostile, but anyway you cut it, the attitude comes with the territory. Not many people can push you around, and you're near the top of the food chain for once in your life.

Essentially, attitude is confidence, and you have confidence to spare. So, this survival guide is all about the 'tude. Live it, breathe it.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

QUESTION 3: SO, WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

It's better if you read this book top to bottom, but knowing you, you'd be reading the Cole's Notes version of *Hero High* if you could, or flipping through for the pretty pictures. C'mon, admit it, you flipped through the book to check out the pics first before ever reading this paragraph, didn't you?

Well, if you're looking for a summary, here it is:

CHAPTER 1: THE TEEN SCENE

Chapter 1: The Teen Scene deals with the teen-hero genre, and includes an overview of the genre, different teen hero concepts, and the history of teen heroes in the comics.

CHAPTER 2: HIGH SCHOOL HEROES

Chapter 2: High School Heroes covers character creation: power level, traits, modifications, and a selection of teen archetypes.

CHAPTER 3: GAMEMASTERING HERO HIGH

Chapter 3: Gamemastering Hero High looks at how to create adventures and campaigns, GM advice, campaign frameworks, and NPC archetypes.

CHAPTER 4: THE CLAREMONT ACADEMY

Chapter 4: The Claremont Academy features an expansion of the Claremont Academy setting from *Freedom City*, character writeups, campaign frameworks, and GM options and secrets.

WHAT THIS BOOK ISN'T

QUESTION 4: WHAT'S NOT IN THIS BOOK?

This book isn't an exploration of the U.S. Board of Education or a dissection of teen thought. There is some of that in here, but folks will model their teen heroes and their schools from what they remember from their teenage years (if you can remember back that far...). This book is about having fun and running games. It's an ideas compendium to help campaigns along and offer teen heroes a wide variety of suggestions.

THE INTERVIEWS

QUESTION 5: SO, WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THE BIG NAMES?

Noticed that, did you? *Hero High* features a number of interviews and insights from comic book professionals, the people who know better than anyone about teen heroes. This isn't an endorsement of *Mutants & Masterminds*, just great comic industry folk supporting this book and the donation its author is making to the Make-a-Wish Foundation. He hopes you will all do the same and donate money to the charities out there that need it.

Frankly, if you've ever dreamed of flying, of saving people with your powers, of being a hero...well, then, what are you waiting for? Donate your time, donate your money, share your compassion. Powers don't make the hero, and real heroes certainly don't wait for destiny.

So, thank you to all who donated their time: Tom Brevoort, Tom DeFalco, Christos Gage, Marc Guggenheim, Allan Heinberg, Paul Jenkins, Robert Kirkman, Craig Kyle, Jeph Loeb, Jim McCann, Sean McKeever, Mike Raicht, Mark Sumerak, Brian K. Vaughan, Chris Yost... and thank you most of all to Stan Lee. How would we know our heroes without you?

HERO HIGH AND FREEDOM CITY

Hero High uses the *Freedom City* campaign setting (also from Green Ronin Publishing) as the primary example for a teen hero series, particularly the characters at the Claremont Academy. *Hero High* also introduces a number of new Claremont characters, including the world-spanning AlterniTeens and several "underclassmen" to go with the more experienced (as teen heroes go) Next-Gen.

As with all elements of the *Freedom City* setting, you're free to use some, all, or none of the new material in this book, and you can take your own series and setting in whatever direction you wish. Perhaps your players' characters replace the existing members of the Next-Gen, the AlterniTeens, or part of Claremont's new class of students. Maybe you want to use some of the new characters in this book as students at a rival "school for young villains," or introduce them as the series goes along rather than right from the start. Whatever the case, the first lesson of *Hero High* should be: do what's the most fun for you and your group!

CHAPTER 1: THE TEEN SCENE

The alarm shrieked, and throughout the SHADOW base, more claxons joined the chorus. Elite turned and faced Dauntless, his eyebrows caught in a knot; Elite spoke through clenched teeth.

"Dauntless," Elite said. "What did Dr. Metropolis tell us about pushing big red buttons?"

"Uhm...don't?" the alloy-sheathed Dauntless said, wincing like he was expecting to get punched.

"And what happened the last time you did?"

"Star Knight took me over her knee and spanked me?"

"On the other hand," Whoop-Ant said, "your butt looked totally polished for, like, a week."

Whoop-Ant shrank fast to avoid Dauntless's backhand.

TEEN HEROES

QUESTION 6: WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT HISTORY? ISN'T THAT, LIKE, IN THE PAST?

Brilliant observation...Seriously, if you want the big guns to take you seriously, you might want to pay attention.

Now, the first thing you've got to realize is that there's a *ton* of alternate realities out there, and what might be a comic-book hero in your world is somewhere out there on a parallel dimension...a living, breathing dude or grrl with physics-bending powers. So, pay attention. It pays to know who they are and where they came from, just in case you end up in their world or they come to yours. And, frankly, it will happen. Sooner or later, it always does.

Now...instead of rattling off dates and talking about who popped up when, and what they did when they appeared, we're going to take a different route.

Let's meet Tom Brevoort.

TOM BREVOORT

Hero High: First off, let's thank Marvel's Executive Editor Extraordinaire, the big triple-E himself, Tom Brevoort for agreeing to this interview. Tom, welcome! Tell us about yourself.

Tom: I'm an Executive Editor at Marvel Comics, where I directly or indirectly put out in excess of twenty comic book titles a month.

Hero High: Some of those titles being *Fantastic Four*, *Civil War*, and *New Avengers*. Tom has been with the biz for quite some time...over 20 years at Marvel.

Tom: It's been a ride.

Hero High: In your mind, what's the allure of young heroes? Why the fascination?

Tom: Young heroes, in theory, are closer in age to the average reader (at least when they start reading the books), so there's automatically a greater ease to identification. Atop that, as Steve Ditko pointed

out, young heroes can screw up and still be credible, which allows you to put them into many more interesting situations. They're still finding their way in some respect.

Hero High: Who was the first young superhero? Or at least, the first one you think embodied the quality that inspired all the others?

Tom: Robin, in comics at least. He was the first of the "laughing young sidekick" superheroes and directly influenced just about every kid hero for the next two decades.

Hero High: We have Captain Marvel's Billy Batson appearing in *Whiz Comics* #2 and the Robin's introduction in *Detective Comics* #38. Did these two characters change the face of comics? Or were they merely inevitable characters?

Tom: I don't think either was inevitable, but I think Robin changed the face of comics more than Captain Marvel. What made Captain Marvel great in the '40s and the '50s was the style of the strip, the tone and the types of stories that were being told, and Billy Batson was a big part of that. However, as a style and an approach, it didn't really bleed out from the Captain Marvel strip into other series (and these days, isn't even being used on Captain Marvel). Whereas soon after Robin debuted, it became *de rigueur* for most superheroes to have a kid sidekick of some kind, usually with a single, short, punchy name like Rusty, Bucky, Davey, Speedy, and the like. That was the influence of Robin in a nutshell.

Hero High: And where powered teens roamed, there later came the super-pets...Krypto, Hoppy the Marvel Bunny, Beppo, Comet, Streaky, Whizzy, Lockheed, and Jimmy Olson. Is the era of the super-pets over, or did it merely transform into shows like *Pokemon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh*?

Tom: In general, the era of the "super-pets" was a time in which comics in general were gentler and more kid-friendly and kid-focused, due in no small part to the hammerlock the Comics Code had on the industry at that point. So, people were trying very hard to come up

with ideas that would appeal to children and get them in the door in a non-offensive manner. But as comics evolved, the tastes of the audience changed and grew more pseudo-adult, such concepts generally got tagged as infantile or stupid or childish and were largely abandoned.

Hero High: Young teams began making their appearance with Jack Kirby's and Joe Simon's *Newsboy Legion*, while others like the *Boy Commandos* earned their own comic. Did the industry recognize the value of having young heroes star in their own books? Or was this something too far ahead of its time?

Tom: Actually, the first kid-strip was *Young Allies*, also by Simon and Kirby, which debuted in its own series as well. And it, as well as *Newsboy Legion* and *Boy Commandos*, was an outgrowth of the "Our Gang" comedies, and tended to follow a very rigid formula—one kid of each of a specific number of "types," often with an adult mentor. But as a whole, there wasn't any particular importance attributed to kid groups—they were just the "fad-of-the-moment" as publishers raced to find the next big thing that would attract and keep audiences.

Hero High: At one point, the Batman/Robin dynamic was...(ahem) "questioned" by Dr. Frederick Wertham (*The Seduction of the Innocent*). Did this ever affect mentor/sidekick phenomenon in comics?

Tom: Yes in general, in that it led to the formation of the Comics Code and the restrictions that comics operated under for many years thereafter.

Hero High: How was the death of Bucky, Captain America's sidekick, received? Was it the first tragedy to befall a young hero in comics?

Tom: Bucky's death was told about in *Avengers* #4, and it was almost a throwaway—certainly most of the readers who were following *Avengers* at that point had no knowledge of Bucky before that, had never read a story with him in it. So it was received as a plot point and a point of characterization for Cap, rather than having much to do with Bucky himself—Cap would torture himself about the death of his partner, and that angst would be one of his main motivators for a decade's worth of stories. So, Bucky's death took on a larger significance than the character.

Hero High: At what point did powered teens go from sidekick to accepted heroes in their own right? Was there a reason for the shift?

Tom: It all goes back to Spider-Man, the modern day progenitor of the young hero. Spidey was the first teenaged superhero to be a headliner in his own right, and to express the sort of adolescent angst that was then being experienced by his readers. Up till that point, most other kid sidekicks were barely characters at all—they had a few simple traits, but they weren't very complex, and not at all deep. They all felt like they stepped out of a teen comedy from the thirties or something. Spider-Man was the first teenaged character who was relevant to his readership.

Hero High: In 1984, there was a one-shot issue of Spiderman and Power Pack educating children about child abuse, which was done in conjunction with the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA). Was this a seminal point for comics? Did it signify a transition in the real-world influence of comic heroes?

Tom: Honestly, no. This was one of any number of "custom comics" that were done during that decade, publications prepared in conjunction with a sponsor for the purpose of advocating a particular cause or product or point of view. In this case, the "product" was awareness of child abuse and the dangers inherent, but it could as easily been AIM toothpaste. The fact that comic book superheroes could address real-world issues went back decades at that point.

Hero High: Was there any backlash to having gay teens like Hulkling & Wiccan (in *Young Avengers*) or Colossus & Northstar (in *Ultimate X-Men*)? Have the fans been supportive of these moves?

Tom: There was the expected backlash, which is to say that some readers liked it and responded to it, and others were turned off by it and alienated by it—having to do entirely with that reader's views on life and homosexuality.

Hero High: Has television, and even anime, influenced not only the medium of comics but how young heroes are perceived?

Tom: Yes, in a general way. Anything that enters into the popular culture has an influence, even if only an indirect one. So, the impact of manga and anime as it becomes more and more ubiquitous in the North American landscape has only grown—not only in terms of how they approach young protagonists, but also in terms of the way stories are told, and the kinds of themes that are tackled.

Hero High: Here we're hitting the homestretch of the interview, so I figured I'd make things easier for you. Who is your favorite young hero or heroine?

Tom: He's not really all that "young" anymore, but Spider-Man, particularly as originally depicted by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko.

Hero High: And, finally, what does the future hold for young heroes, especially in today's geo-political climate?

Tom: Can't speak towards geo-political, but with the continuing popularity of such youth-based comics as X-Men and the dominance of youth-culture worldwide, I think you're likely to see a continued and growing emphasis on young heroes in comics as a whole.

Hero High: Thank you very much!

CAMPAIGN STYLES

QUESTION 7: HOW MANY TEEN HERO WORLDS ARE THERE?

Tons....

The problem is there's about as many worlds as there are grains of sand on all the world's beaches. Probably more. Stop trying to count them. No, really. Some only have some really minor differences from your world, meaning you could live there for centuries and never know the difference. We're talking stuff like the Elvis of one dimension might have liked hotdogs dipped in honey instead peanut butter & banana sandwiches. Other worlds might have a female Elvis, an Elvis with blond hair, or Super-Power-Giant-Robo Elvis who brought peace to the known universe; it's a Japanese thing.

Point is, you never know, but the cool thing is, if you can dream it, it's probably out there. So, rather than tell you about all the different worlds out there, let me tell you about the more interesting ones for teen heroes. And by interesting, I mean cool, funky, and *really* dangerous. Yeah...thought that would grab your attention.



YOUNG GODS

On this Earth, the legacy of teen heroes goes back to the dawn of time, only you remember the heroes as members of different pantheons. Odin, Loki, Osiris, Raven, Thor, Hercules, Ares...all of them teen heroes who got powers and eventually got all wrinkly.

The good news is if you're in this dimension, then you're the newest star in the pantheon of the 21st Century. And you're God of whatever sensibilities apply to the modern age; God of Cool, God of the Quip, God of Television, whatever has a following. The bad news...not all of the old gods are gone, and those still around are probably going to put you through your paces before they welcome you into the club...if they welcome you at all. Think of the movie *Bring It On* with all the attitude but with gods and super-powers instead of bendy cheerleaders.

MARTIAL LAW

Not a good place to be. Think being grounded...forever. In this dimension of teen heroes, the government has pretty much outlawed genetic aberrants. Who are genetic aberrants? Well, if you can fly, teleport, shoot energy, crawl on walls, or do other super-powered things, then you're on the short-list for extinction.

On this world, teen heroes are members of the resistance movement fighting whatever the government throws your way. The good news is that you're fighting to change the world for the better; the bad news is you may get killed along the way. Killed as in killed *dead*.

TRANSIENTS

No...not homeless people, well, not exactly. Transients are teen heroes currently dimension-hopping for whatever reason. (And if you can dimension hop, there's *always* a good reason.)

The top reasons for jumping from one dimension to another are: booted from one's home dimension, trying to find someone or something in the various worlds, trying to save your dimension from the big bad, or just shopping. Trust me...shopping's big.

The AlterniTeens at Claremont Academy are an example of a transient teen hero group. See **Chapter 4** for more about them.

SIDEKICK HIGH

On this world, the only way to be a teen hero is to be someone's sidekick. Some older hero invited you to wear skin-tight costumes and go out waaay after curfew (and asked you not to tell your parents). Most folks would have called 911 at that point, but not you. You're either way too trusting or in a world that never made it past the 1980s. Instead, you're fighting alongside legends and might one day take up the mantle of your mentor.

The plus side to this world is you've got an older brother or sister of sorts training you. On the minus, the sidekick club rules state you gotta pick a name that starts or ends with "Kid," "Teen," "Young," "Girl," or "Boy." Or your name is part of your dynamic duo theme with your mentor. He's "The Ingrown Toenail," and you're suddenly "Pinky." You're Bumblebee to his Prime, Redbreast to his Vampire, Something-Boy to his Something-Man.

Wait...that last one didn't sound too cool. Nevermind.

RESPONSIBLE KIDS

Every teen hero's dream is to end up on this world. Young heroes don't seem to answer to any parental figures, they have enough money to open up a killer base, and nobody's chasing after them to go to school. It's not that school, parents, or money don't exist on this world, it's just they aren't as complicated or as important as stopping the Termanites, the Intergalactic Termite-Man Empire, from chowing down on Earth's forests.

OTHER CREATORS ON TEEN HEROES

PAUL JENKINS (WRITER)

Notables: *Hellblazer, The Darkness, The Incredible Hulk, The Spectacular Spider-Man, Wolverine*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. We've all been there—these people are by and large doing what we all wish we had done (or could do). That's the great hook—it's all about wish fulfillment. Been a while since I was in my teens but I remember it being kind of up and down. Looking back, if I'd had some cause to rally around—something to focus on—everything around me would have made a lot more sense.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. I'd have to look at the early days of Spidey, which I have written about on a number of occasions. To me, that was not so much a story of a guy getting powers as it was a story of a guy making sense of the way things were changing for him. His greatest enemy—Flash Thompson—hero worshipped Peter Parker's alter ego. Everything was confusing and difficult, be it in his fights against these mad villains or his relationships with his girlfriend. And to cap it all, the poor guy always had to make it home in time for dinner so that no one would suspect what he was really up to. Sheer genius as a metaphor.

ROBERT KIRKMAN (WRITER)

Notables: *Invincible, Marvel Zombies, The Walking Dead, Ultimate X-Men*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. When I was a teenager reading comics, the teen heroes were always my favorite. It was pure escapism, I was a teenager hating high school and then there were these characters, who also hated high school—but they were superheroes. I related to them completely and wished I had super powers or whatever—then I'd be able to ask a girl out or whatever.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. When I was younger, Robin kinda stopped being Batman's sidekick and went out to be his own hero. DC was publishing these mini-series about his solo adventures—I loved those things. Those were almost the only DC comics I read back then—to Robin. He didn't have the goofy bare legs at that time—and he had a cool staff, like Donatello from The Ninja Turtles. Cools stuff when you're 13.

STAN LEE (WRITER, VISIONARY)

Notables: *Daredevil, Doctor Strange, Fantastic Four, The Incredible Hulk, Iron Man, The Mighty Thor, Spider-Man, X-Men*

A. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

Q. A teen hero is easier for the young readers to relate to. It's also possible to inject more humor in stories featuring teen sidekicks or heroes. That, plus the fact that a teenager is always more vulnerable than an adult, gives such stories a slight edge.

A. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

Q. At the risk of sounding self-serving, my own favorite teen hero was Peter Parker. He was the only superhero I knew of who had to worry about his school work, his sick aunt, his lack of money, his problem with girl friends, etc. I thought he was a very empathetic character—and those are usually the best kind.

CHRISTOS GAGE (WRITER)

Notables: *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight, Deadshot Mini-Series, Paradox Mini-Series, Spider-Man Unlimited, Numb3rs* (TV)

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. When I was younger, I enjoyed seeing someone my own age who had grand adventures, but still struggled with the issues all young people face. That's still the appeal as an adult; we all remember the exciting but often tumultuous process of growing up and finding our identity, so it's something everyone can relate to.

A. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

Q. There was a story where Spider-Man had to run away from a fight, because his

aunt was sick and if he was hurt or killed there'd be no one to take care of her. His motto is "with great power comes great responsibility," but in this case he was conflicted over what his primary responsibility should be, and that was a compelling dilemma to me.

MARC GUGGENHEIM (WRITER)

Notables: *Blade, Wolverine, C.S.I. (TV), Law & Order (TV), The Practice (TV)*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. Most of us discovered comics when we were kids, so there's a huge element of wish-fulfillment involved in teen-heroes. What kid hasn't wished he or she could fly or turn invisible or have super-strength?

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. I'm a huge fan of Fabian Nicieza and Mark Bagley's run on Marvel's *New Warriors*, and Marv Wolfman and George Perez' *New Teen Titans* is a classic that will stand the test of time.

ALLAN HEINBERG (WRITER)

Notables: *JLA, Wonder Woman, Young Avengers, Gilmore Girls* (TV), *Grey's Anatomy* (TV), *The O.C.* (TV), *Party of Five* (TV), *Sex & the City* (TV)

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. I love writing teenage characters. Probably because I never got over being a teenager myself. I don't know if anyone does. It's such a tumultuous, deeply felt period in a person's life: you're struggling to define yourself in relation to your family and friends; you're expected to behave like an adult, but you're not permitted to enjoy any of the rights and privileges that most adults take for granted; and you're falling in love for the first time. There's so much about being a teenager that goes unsaid and so many wounds that never heal. It's an incredibly rich experience to be able to write about. And as a teen who grew up reading comics, I always loved teenage characters. The X-Men, the Titans, the Legion—these were my favorite characters growing up. And I still love those characters.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. At present, I think there's no better young champion than Peter Parker in Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Bagley's *ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN*.

JEPH LOEB (WRITER)

Notables: *Batman, Catwoman, Superman, Daredevil, Spider-Man, Hulk, Teen Wolf* (Movis), *Commando* (Movie), *Smallville* (TV), *Heroes* (TV)

A. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

Q. Nothing in life is as hyper-real as in High School. It has all the problems of an adult world and at the same time, it is the great equalizer. You are ALL students—and while there are cliques—the world hasn't been divided into jobs/cities/ loves... yet. So in that cauldron of just learning about being a young adult, when you imbue that character with power it's just so CHARGED. He or she will be learning to accept, adapt, reject, win, fail—all those things that seem so IMPORTANT in High School are echoed in our young heroes!

A. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

Q. Gotta go with Spidey. He's still the coolest. But, everything that Allan Heinberg is doing in *Young Avengers* is spot on PERFECT too!

TOM DEFALCO (WRITER)

Notables: *Archie, The Amazing Spider-Man, Thor, The New Warriors, Fantastic Four, The Spectacular Spider-Man, Spider-Girl*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. We all have a different golden age of comics. It's the point when we first fall in love this wonderful medium. I was a preteen when I discovered the magic of comics and reveled in them during my teen years. I'm just trying to give others the same excitement and joy that I experienced.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. My favorite teen hero is, of course, the always-stunning Spider-Girl!

SEAN MCKEEVER (WRITER)

Notables: *Gravity*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Inhumans*, *Sentinel*, *Mary Jane*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. Dealing with all the usual hero issues—identity, morality, certainty, courage—are fascinating topics to write on their own, but when you plug them into a teenaged character it all goes into overdrive, since these are the exact sorts of issues we all deal with in those oh-so-important years leading up to adulthood.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. Obviously, I have a soft spot for *Gravity*, the teen hero Mike Norton and I created for Marvel. But I'd say my favorite teen hero is Spider-Man. Sure, he's hardly a teen in the modern comics, but teen Spidey is the template on which teen heroes are made—Gravity included.

MIKE RAICHT (WRITERS)

Notables: *Zombie*, *X-Men Unlimited*, *Marvel Adventures Spider-Man*, *Hulk*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. When I was younger, I started reading comics around 8 or 9, I concentrated on the X-Men. It was mostly about seeing cool things happen to superheroes because except for Kitty and Colossus most of the X-Men were adults. Then I discovered The New Mutants and the Teen Titans, these heroes were kids like me. When they didn't have their masks on fighting insane supervillains they were dealing with things that I could relate to—family, friends, school. And, honestly, as a kid who doesn't wish they had superpowers sometimes.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. Since I started out reading X-Men, I thought Kitty Pryde and Colossus were pretty cool. They were kids dealing with pretty intense situations and trying to be kids at the same time. I've got a soft spot in my heart for Cannonball as well. He's one of the few heroes who actually feels as if he has progressed beyond what he started as. He's moved up through the ranks from the New Mutants to X-Force to the X-Men and really come into his own. I also got into Teen Titans right around the time of Terra joining the group and the whole Judas Contract storyline. I kept hoping she was going to make the right choice, and not betray the Titans. But it didn't happen. It was a bummer and my first real taste of the good guys winning but losing at the same time. Very bittersweet.

CRAIG KYLE (WRITER)

Notables: *New X-Men*, *Fantastic Four* (TV), *X-Men: Evolution* (TV)

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. Teen books take me back to when I first started collecting as a kid. I began collecting *Uncanny X-Men* at issue #181 BUT then *New Mutants* came along. I loved the X-Men but the New Mutants were more like me back then. I was only 12 at the time and always imagined if I could be a super hero right now, today, I'd be a New Mutant. I liked that these characters were young, unpolished and far from perfect. These were the heroes that made mistakes and we more relatable because of it. Our teen and college years are some of the best we'll ever have in life...They're also some of the worst. In those years we are given all of our adult emotions, which we can't handle, more freedom, which we can't handle and so many of our first strong emotional situations, most of them in love, which of course, we can't handle. This is the time in our lives, where we live our richest emotional existence. A time before being scorned by our partners in relationships, which allows us to love deep and truly. You know, the kind of love that as adults we will only ever see again in movies and TV. As a teen, our friendships mean everything to us and of course our parents are the enemy. A car equals absolute freedom and homework is the poison that ruins every weeknight and weekend. While some teens struggle just to be themselves, others are forced to be the person their parents failed to be, and still others long for any family or structure at all. No two children, not even those who live under the same roof live the same life nor have the same life experience. Every child is unique, as is their journey. These years provide the best characters in stories because teens come with all the deep beautiful emotional toys that adults have dulled and broken by the time they reach adulthood. If you can't write a good comic with teenagers, you can't write a good comic at all.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. *New Mutants* is the book I look back at with very fond memories but to pick one storyline from the run would be too difficult. I just loved the series and the struggles those kids went through. Sorry this answer is so short, hopefully my blabbing before makes up for it.

CHRIS YOST (WRITER)

Notables: *New X-Men*, *Fantastic Four* (TV), *X-Men: Evolution* (TV), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (TV), *The Batman* (TV)

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. I think the appeal of teen-hero comics is that they're so relatable. When I was a teen reading about Spider-Man and the New Mutants, I wanted to BE those kids because of course they had cool superpowers and exciting things happened to them all the time. But they had the same problems that normal teens had—relationships, school, adults keeping them down, all with the added bonus of costumes, bad guys and powers. And as a bonus, when the kids are up against adults, they're instantly the underdog. Young Spider-Man versus the Sinister Six, or the New Mutants versus Sentinels...there's no way they can win. But when they do, the crowd goes wild. It's like putting yourself in the story.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. *Ultimate Spider-Man* has been an incredible run these last 100 issues. Teen Spider-Man at his best, with all the problems and obstacles that has made the character the hard-luck superhero we know and love. Through all the hardship and craziness, poor Peter Parker does his best to do the right thing, and even though he messes up and sometimes doesn't understand the world he's been thrown into—he fights for what he believes in and never gives up. And even keeps his sense of humor.

MARC SUMERAK (WRITER)

Notables: *Fantastic Four*, *Franklin Richards*, *Marvel Adventures*, *Machine Teen*, *Ororo*, *Power Pack*, *Teen Titans*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. One of the great aspects of dealing with younger characters in a super hero story is that sense of wonder inherent in all children. Unlike longtime heroes (like Spider-Man or Batman) who have been donning costumes and fighting crime since before most of us were born, young heroes tend to be able to look at the world of super heroes with a fresh set of eyes. In comic books, lead characters often tend to slough off the truly amazing events that occur, seeing them simply as part of their every day lives. But with young heroes, there's that level of genuine excitement as events unfold—whether it be a victory on the field of battle or an encounter with a longtime idol—that let's the reader see them from a less jaded point of view... and suddenly things seem a lot more super.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. Though not a specific self-contained storyline, the early Nicieza/Bagley issues of *New Warriors* always stood out to me as some of my favorite teen hero stories. For the first time, I was reading about a team of heroes that were my own age—that were learning and growing along with me. They weren't old pros. They made mistakes and they had normal teenage problems just like me. And in a Marvel Universe where Spider-Man was already married and the FF were considered old school, the Warriors were finally a team of Marvel heroes that spoke to my generation of comic book readers! And while many people frown on the comics of the 1990s, the Warriors always managed to keep me coming back for more.

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN (WRITER)

Notables: *Y: The Last Man*, *Ex Machina*, *Runaways*, *Pride of Baghdad*

Q. What attracts you to teen-hero comics? What's the allure?

A. I was never actually a huge fan of teen-hero comics, but I do love writing teenagers, just because they feel everything so much more deeply than we adults do. Makes for great drama. Plus, their bodies are literally transforming everyday, so the idea of young heroes suddenly gaining strange new abilities (and responsibilities) is a very powerful metaphor for the adolescent experience.

Q. What is your favorite young champion or teen-hero storyline?

A. I guess I'd have to say that Spider-Man's origin story is probably one of the best teen stories ever, comic book or otherwise. It's just so tragic and powerful.

In this world, parents give their powered kids more slack because kids are more responsible, and a benefactor is always on hand to throw money the hero's way. Some kids work at Burgerriific, others don the spandex...it's all part of the 9-to-5 paradigm.

EVERYDAY KIDS

Teen Heroes from this world are just like every other kid out there. They have parents to bug them, classes to skip, and malls where they can hang out, shop, and chill. They also have secret identities to worry about, heroes and heroines to idolize, and that pesky wormhole spewing out Termanite's wood-hungry soldiers (what...you thought you saw the last of them? They get around.).

Being a superhero on this world requires the fine juggling of home-life and heroic antics. It's a bittersweet mix of drama, comedy, and romance...like an afternoon special with butt-kicking powers and clever remarks.

THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE

Due to some genetic quirk, the teens of the world are practically the only superpowered beings around. See...powers here appear at puberty and fade out somewhere between 18 and 21. A few heroes and villains manage to keep their powers longer, but it's rare.

Essentially, kids rule, and being a powered teen means you're a powered rock star for about 8 years or so, if you're lucky. After that, you're Mr. or Miss Nobody again... like a child star from some '80s sitcom. The problem is this turns some former heroes into jealous villains; what happens when a teen genius, for example, still has an arsenal of gadgets and weapons as he grows older? What happens when some villains discover the key to keeping their power after 21?

"What is this place?" Magni asked. "It reeks of evil's stench." The two hammers orbiting him crackled, one with Surtur's fire, the other with Ymir's frost.

"It's called the Murder House," Elite said, staring at the open rust-iron door. "It's where the Murder League trained me."

"Any chance he said candy store?" Whoop-Ant asked.

"Yes, I much prefer candy stores," Childing responded, her frightened voice belying the eight-foot muscular frame covered in razor fur that she'd assumed.

"Nope," Relentless said. "Definitely Murder House."

"Well...you know where I'll be then," Whoop-Ant said, about to turn and walk away. He squealed when Magni grabbed him by the ear.

"Come, little jester," Magni said, dragging Whoop-Ant through the door after the others. "We shall face this villainy together."

SCHOOL'S IN SESSION

Enough kids on this world have powers that special schools were built for them. Maybe the schools are hidden for the well-being of their students, or maybe the schools are public. Either way, powered teens have a place where they can interact with other teens who "get them."

In this environment, everyone has powers that range from the incredibly useful (can "encourage" fast food cashiers to super-grandify meals without paying extra) to the super-useless (Knows-Exactly-How-Much-Change-You're-Carrying Lass). But only a select, privileged bunch on this world can be the school's official heroes. Anyone else trying to join the team has to prove themselves. In this universe, school rivalries take on a new dimension...get it? Dimensions? Wait...why are you skipping to the next section?

SUPER HAPPY FUN FUN WORLD

Okay, something is seriously whacked with this place. Blame it on the twitchy cosmic entity with more consonants to his name than common sense, or maybe it's just the drinking water, but this dimension has one screwed up outlook. It's something you'd expect to find in a Japanese cartoon, right down to that one throbbing vein that looks like a black "X," or the single gigantic bead of sweat waiting to drop, or the anger squiggles over people's heads when you say something stupid. The characters are super bubbly or super-serious, the expressions outlandish with their saucer eyes, and the enemies are uber-campy. When you run, everything turns into speed lines, and when you pose, there's a starburst effect behind you. Your team battle-cry is something like "Go Go Team Power Rocket!" Oh, and some trendy J-Pop group is responsible for your theme-song. You may not hear it, but the audience will. Trust me.

PETS WITH POWERS

I choose you, Piku...Pita...Puka...Pint—oh, forget it. Anyway, in this reality, the *kids* are normal (sort of). They don't have powers, but they've got the next best thing—pets with powers! Maybe the pets exist inside small containment balls kids wear around their belts, or maybe the pets are hidden in cards, Mah-Jong tiles, Pogs, figurines, or computer programs.

What matters is boys and girls, men and women throughout this world compete in tournaments, and the SPPs (Super-Power Pets...just keeping it real) they summon are part super-powered allies and part best friends. Prepubescent kids are especially gifted in these tournaments and are blessed with more independence than normal. They can travel the world and compete, usually wearing the same clothing and hairstyles every day, and their parents never seem to worry about them.

At stake in these tournaments are badges, rare and powerful pets, prestige, or all of the above! Maybe the pets live in the wilds and have to be captured, or maybe they only exist in special dueling arenas. It varies, as do the enemies, who are dastardly and always after those unique pets the heroes seem to find.

HORROR WORLD

In this 'verse, having powers isn't so much "A rabid chipmunk bit me!" as it is a "By the Hoary Eyelids of Some Old Dude, I Banish You!" thing. Essentially, the high and secret science of the world is magic, and the teen heroes of this dimension are mystics, monster hunters, young immortals, and martial artists, all helping to push back the darkness.

Powers might include a decent shtick (like wielding a magical blade) or several smaller shticks (like knowing a handful of minor spells), but you're still better skilled and better prepared than most folks, Maybe there's a bit of grit and gristle to the world with Lovecraftian Unspeakable Evils™, or maybe the evil is lighter fare with ghost pirates (Grrr...Yaaar...Argh), undead pimps (Grrr...Yo...Argh), or possessed mon-

keys (Grrr...Ook...Argh). Regardless, there's always that special blend of supernatural and horror working against you. Fail, and the darkness rushes in; succeed, and the world enjoys another sunny morning, never knowing an acne-factory just pulled their collective asses from the fire.

SUPERHERO GENRES

QUESTION 8: WHAT ABOUT DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS?

Different eras have different ideas on what it means to be a teen hero, and you might find yourself in another time period instead of another dimension (or another time period in another dimension, for that matter). And before you ask, it's important to know, because each period has its own little Dos and Don'ts. You don't want to be Bondage Lass and Leather Boy stuck in the 1940s. All that fetish gear may get you mistaken for Nazis.

MYTHIC AGE (PRE-20TH CENTURY)

There are no officially documented teen heroes of most ages before the 20th Century. Sure, the Wild West of the late 1800s had its share of stories about gunfighters faster than slicked lightning, Indians with tribal powers, carnival freaks and clairvoyants working the big cities, but these folks were never seen as heroes. They were gaslight oddities, as feared as the monsters they hunted. And, they rarely banded together unless Britain or France decided to pool these folks against a great threat.

Before the 1800s, heroes and powered teens had more to worry about, and if they existed, their costumes were strictly to hide their identities. They weren't called heroes or supers—they were called warlock, witch, heretic, and demon. The eras before this were rife with quaint religious superstition and this shindig thrown by The Church called "The Witch Hunts." Oh, it was a grand old time full of party favorites like pin the tail on the heretic, bobbing for witches, and marshmallow roasts over a burning corpse. In short, if the religious authorities didn't control a person of "magics," then the so-called hero was burned and persecuted. That's not to say, however, that powered individuals couldn't find sanctuary and safety within the Templars or in the Holy Lands (the Muslims were cooler about that sort of thing—just call yourself a genie, and you're gold).

In more pagan times, though, powered teens were more welcome. They were shamans and court advisors, champions and hermits, oracles and diviners. Half feared, half revered, people believed their powers were a manifestation of some god's favor. Heck, in some cultures, they were considered gods—who would tell them otherwise?

Options for teen heroes in the ages of myth include:

- **Dark Ages (Circa 300-1000 AD):** A war of faiths pits the heroes of the Church trying to spread Christianity against the heroes of pagan lands trying to preserve the old ways.
- **The Crusades (Circa 1000-1300 AD):** The attempt to capture and hold the Holy Land has created an era of Templar conspiracies, knights "blessed" with holy powers, and rival Muslims similarly blessed by Allah.
- **The Inquisition (Circa 1300-1700):** The witch trials are in full bloom, and powered teens must band together to fight super-powered Inquisitors.
- **Colonial (Circa 1700-1800):** A ringmaster is using his carnival to tour the world and secretly save powered folks from public hatred; a secret colony of "witchborn" spirit away special children, leaving "changelings" in their place.

- **Victorian or Wild West (circa 1800-1900):** Extraordinary young people are educated in a private school to use their gifts in the service of the Crown; a band of young outlaws with unique gifts roams the Wild West serving their own brand of justice.

PULP AGE (1920S-1930S)

Okay, teen heroes weren't really big in this era, and any kids along for the crime-fighting ride were usually orphans, sidekicks, or street waifs. They almost certainly didn't own up to any powers...at least as far as people saw. That said, it is possible for teen heroes to exist, particularly if they are the children or grandchildren of champions from the turn of the century. Imagine the offspring of Alan Quartermain, the Invisible Man, Mina Harker, Ichabod Crane, Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Frankenstein, Dracula, Captain Nemo, Dr. Jekyll, the Unknown Soldier, or Dorian Gray uniting to fight evil in the years between The Great War and WWII.

The world of this period is filled with the mysterious and the strange. Forgotten cities in the jungles of South America and the Orient, lost islands in the Pacific, Nazi relic hunters operating before WWII (how can you not love kicking Nazi butt?), magic and mysticism, speakeasies and dens of iniquity (that don't card you for ID) in exotic port cities like Shanghai, all rolled into one great adventure. Just don't expect anyone to take you seriously, and fully expect the government or police to chase after you as delinquents at every turn. You will sometimes be considered a greater threat than the bad guys you put down.

Options for teen heroes in this period include:

- The children and grandchildren of heroes from previous ages who possessed near-mythological status.
- Orphaned survivors of a doomed archeological expedition and sole recipients of ancient power.
- Direct descendents of Atlantis or Lemuria and the last of your kind.
- Children whose parents belonged to a secret, privileged society, like the Hellfire Club or the Templars.

GOLDEN AGE (1930S-1950S)

Ah, the days before television and the Internet filled you with sass...you call it the Dark Ages, but to your grandparents, it was the Golden Age. Kids were respectful and listened to their parents, and Adolph Hitler made it real easy for the rest of the Free World to unite in kicking his behind. Good times, if you ignore the whole WWII thing, but it was the only time when teen heroes were involved in the war effort and nobody batted an eye.

The pros of this period were the pulp-level villains and the entire Fight for Democracy thing. Teen heroes had the true blue opportunity to fight for good and emerge as national heroes. The con, and you knew there was a con, was there were few independent teens at this time. Heroes under 18 were usually sidekicks for a responsible adult hero. That's not to say teen-hero groups can't exist at this time (they did). If there is a teen-group running around, you're likely still sidekicks of a larger, reputable group, and you probably get together as a social club kind of thing.

Options for teen heroes in this period include:

- The big deathtrap designed to kill the adult heroes actually worked; now the sidekicks have to step into the vacuum and help a desperate War Department.
- The big hitters are off in Europe and Asia, fighting the war or helping with reconstruction, and they've left you and a few adult heroes behind to tend the home front.
- The teen heroes are all sidekicks who get together once in a while to help each other out.

- Tired of being under the yolk of older heroes who just don't get it, the young heroes do the impossible and branch out on their own with new identities.

SILVER AGE (LATE 1950S-1970S)

The Silver Age: When heroes adopted lighter tones, an almost campy sense of dialog, and brightly colored costumes. This era, like all the rest, had its good and bad.

The Good: Good humored, campy, end of McCarthyism, the atomic age gives rise to mutants as a new archetype, and a new age of exploration with alien worlds, lost civilizations, time travel, and strange dimensions.

The Bad: Campy, garish costumes looking like Ziggy Stardust's hand-me-downs, the Cold War, everybody and their mothers getting superpowers from radiation accidents, and a new age of exploration with alien worlds, lost civilizations, and strange dimensions—all filled with intelligent, smart-ass apes...or ducks (don't ask).

The Silver Age is also the first real era for teen-hero independence. The youth movement of the 1960s spills over into the costumed set, leading to young heroes willing to stand up to "the Man" and not trust anyone over 30. They're willing to strike out on their own and do their own thing.

Options for teen heroes in this period include:

- A kindly patron opens a school for "gifted" individuals and creates a teen team of New-Men.
- A group of independent teen heroes gravitate to each other and form a loose coalition when they have time from their solo duties.

- The heroes form and bond around a common theme, like the hippie movement or their own status as "mutants."
- A single event creates the teen heroes, be it the machinations of an ultra-evil genius or an alien invasion.
- A group of young supers forms a rock band, playing music and also fighting for justice (social as well as criminal).

BRONZE AGE (1970S-1980S)

Heroes of this era are more about the drama than previous ages, and like *Soylent Green*, drama is made with people. Okay, you probably have to be in your 30s to appreciate that, but the analogy was so worth it.

In the Bronze Age, heroes are finally cluing in to the fact that the world is multi-cultured, multi-ethnic, and filled with real-world concerns. Women's rights are in full-swing, heroines are strong and independent, drugs and alcoholism are both dangers to combat and pitfalls ready to ensnare heroes, and multi-ethnic teams are appearing, often with...uhm...stereotypical passion. Russian heroes used "Red" in their codenames, black heroes used "black" (but to be fair, so to did blaxploitation films like *Black Belt Jones*, *Blacula*, and *Blackenstein*), and international heroes adopt unfortunate stereotypical identities (such as an Irish "hero" called "The Drunken Green Brawler" or an Australian hero called "Kangaroo Jack").

Into this era's minefields and Cold War sensibilities, young heroes are finally coming to the fore in respectable teams. There's an effort by young heroes to separate themselves from their older mentors and prove their worth. For some this means choosing identities of their own, for others it means walking that line between sidekick and independent hero. Unfortunately, nothing says "Young" like "Fad," and as sure as you have teen heroes searching for a unique identity, you've got code-names like "Break Dancer," "The Mullet," and "Disco Belle."

Options for teen heroes include:

- Heroes come together as sidekicks and learn to become more independent.
- One teen hero with a dark past unites others to fight a new evil.
- A family of kids meets a dying alien who gives them all superpowers to fight a recently-arrived evil.
- A school master for a "gifted" school loses his first team of heroes and creates a second team.

IRON AGE (1980S-2000S)

Somewhere around the fall of Communism, the lines of morality got blurred. Maybe it was the distinct lack of a central enemy/threat. Maybe it was because people started distrusting their own governments or the motives of corporations. Regardless, it was suddenly okay if the ends justified the means, and people liked it when the heroes did all the nasty things they couldn't.

Suddenly, power wasn't power anymore. Real power was information, real power was money, and the real bad-ass villains were the ones with the moolah (which usually meant that being a hero meant being poor... sucks, doesn't it?). Supers in paramilitary and black ops units became in vogue. So did using guns, wearing leather, smoking cigars in combat, having costumes with tons of shiny & sharp pointy-bits, and using ninjas...man, were ninjas big. Suddenly ninja-training firms like *Ninjas-R-Go* and *Okinawa Technical College of Ninjitsu* can't keep up with demand, forcing evil masterminds to start shopping at bargain-bin discount operations. Y'know, places like *Ed's Ninja Emporium* and *Yvonne's Beauty & Ninjitsu School*...but that's another story.

That said, teen heroes of this era, while sometimes dark and all immersed in the shades of gray thing, still haven't fallen to it completely.



Killing is usually that one step they haven't made yet, and if they do, it's hugely significant. On the plus side, though, teen groups are relatively easy to form, and there's usually about a half-dozen floating around. They've become common enough to the landscape that older heroes aren't going to bat an eye when working alongside teens.

Options for teen heroes include:

- A super from the future gathers young heroes together, because only they can fight an upcoming evil.
- The world's preeminent supers vanish thanks to yet another annoying cosmic entity, and the teen heroes step in to help fight the surging crime rate.
- A group of powered teenagers escapes slavery and the clutches of a government black-ops department and must band together to stay free.
- While fighting crime independently, powered teens band together and decide to remain together.
- A teen hero with resources and a marketing plan puts together a team of fellow teens to show the rest of the world how it's done.

URBAN DARK AGE (CIRCA POST-1930S)

Urban dark ages happen at any point during the 20th and 21st Centuries when there's a huge disparity between the haves and have-nots, and cities ignore those ultra-depressed sections of town where the high-flying heroes never come to help.

Welcome to the ugly-side of contemporary life. Kid-heroes are either sidekicks or grizzled veterans of the war on crime and the fight against urban decay. This is a street-level affair, and if you're here, it's not usually by choice. Your parents died during a mugging gone wrong, you're an ex-gang banger looking for a better life, you're the product of a single parent with really strong ethics, or you're living on the street.

Anyway you paint it, life is dark and grey, and you aren't so much a hero as you are a crime fighter. Even the guys and girls you fight are blue-collar normal, and many have ties to the local mobs as enforcers, lieutenants, and bosses. When you're not picking the bullets out of your Kevlar padding and cleaning the blood from your baton, you go to a public school with metal detectors and security officers, you know about teen pregnancy, AIDS, and crystal-meth, and on the weekends you hit the raves...just to bust up the latest E-shipment from Miami.

Options for teen heroes include:

- A retired crime fighter handpicks a new generation of heroes to train and take back the streets.
- A concerned police officer introduces individual crime fighters to each other to help them combine their efforts in the war against crime.
- The heroic teens are already neighborhood friends who train at the same dojo or attend the same school.
- An evil corporation secretly tests a bio-chemical enhancing additive in the local slums, and the teens are the only survivors—emerging with superpowers as a result. Maybe the other survivors turn to crime....
- A motivated young hero with a grudge brings the teens together as part of his "war on crime."

APOCALYPTIC AGE (POST-NOW)

In about five minutes time, the world as you know it ends. A great evil unleashes the Apocalypse, someone launches a nuke, someone outlaws heroes, or some boy band accidentally records a remix of their

hit single, "Damn, I Look Fine," using stanzas from the Idiot's Guide to the Necronomicon. Regardless, the world is turned on its ear, the cities are burning, civilization has gone the way of the dinosaurs, and Earth belongs to the cockroaches.

In this era, heroism is no longer about rescuing cats from trees, unless it's to give said cat to the starving refugees to, uhm, pet. It's about fighting to survive, fighting to bring an end to the horror, and fighting to rescue people from certain death. The villains of this age are no longer bank-robbers or mad scientists, they're the ones trying to keep the world the ruin it has become. They're the authority, the powers-that-be, the warmongers, and the status quo. In this age, teen heroes are on equal footing with the adults in terms of powers and responsibility; everyone has to pitch in to rebuild society, and if kids ever hope to hang out in the malls again, they have to participate and help.

In this era, hero groups might actually be a mix of young and old working together to survive, though the young folks naturally gravitate to each other. Still, death is a common reality, and the teens are as hard-edged as their adult counterparts.

Options for teen heroes include:

- Teen heroes and their former adversaries unite to change a world they never wanted to see happen.
- Heroes bring the teenagers together to help them in running an underground railroad or sanctuary.
- The teen heroes meet in a prison camp and must work together to escape "the regime."
- The teens are former foot-soldiers of "the regime" who realize that they can stand by no longer and must act to save humanity.
- A new generation of mutants is born from the disaster that destroyed civilization and may be humanity's only hope for the future.

GOLDEN AGE REDUX (POST-22ND CENTURY)

The human race has found its happy place. Disease and pollution are a thing of the past, global conflict no longer exists thanks to the one planet, one people government system, and mankind is enjoying a new cultural golden age. Sigh...okay, fine...the city-sized malls are also slamming, the holo-reality field trips are a riot, and while the zero-g cheerleaders & neutron-ball jocks are still elitists, it's nice to see some things never change (despite the Robo-Chess Club Riots of 2205).

In this era, Earth is an important part of an intergalactic family, and it is home to some of the universe's preeminent heroes. The existing teen hero groups have memberships that number in the dozens and also include members of other races. Heroes of this age fight intergalactic threats, the machinations of rival empires, omni-corps, and galactic-level villains. More importantly, teens are given equal respect, and many are major contributors to human advancement and super-science.

Options for teen heroes here include:

- The largest and most popular of the super-teen groups is holding membership try-outs, and the team meets during the auditions.
- The teen heroes are from the 21st Century, brought into the future to show them the results of their valiant efforts to improve the world.
- The heroes are members of different species that meet at Alien High and discover they share something in common...their unique powers.
- The teen heroes can count a major hero or villain as one of their ancestors, and those powers have somehow been bequeathed to them. Now, the teens are the next generation of Earth's former greatest, trying to live up to the legacy of their predecessors.

CHAPTER 2: HIGH SCHOOL HEROES

QUESTION 9: IS IT TIME TO GO KICK ASS NOW?

Uhm, no. You have no idea how your powers work or the things that are going to work against you. And who the hell picked out your costume?! Did the Seventies have a sale or something? No, no...take off the cos-

tume, pay attention, and stop rolling your eyes. This chapter is here to help you understand the foundations of being a teen hero.

Chapter 2 looks at creating a teen hero, from power level to different sub-genres, ability benchmarks, and traits (skills, feats, powers, etc.). It introduces some new traits, and a set of twelve teen hero archetypes you can use for quick characters (both heroes *and* villains, if you want).

MODIFIERS & BENCHMARKS

QUESTION 10: OKAY, SO WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

It's fun being a teen hero, but you're facing an uphill battle at the beginning. Physically speaking, you're damn good at what you do; you just don't match-up to the adult heroes yet. Your advantage is that in the long run, if there is a long run, you just might be better than your predecessors. They're from a different era and probably didn't get their powers until they were in their twenties. You started playing hero much younger, meaning as you grow, your powers will grow right alongside you. Your upward potential is huge.

Until then, life and biochemistry have a few curveballs to throw you.

STARTING POWER LEVELS

QUESTION 11: WHY AM I SO WEAK?

Do you seriously want me to answer that? Actually, the truth is you're generally weaker than the big gun super-types because you're still growing into your strengths. Unlike adults, you've still got this pesky hormonal growth spurt to work your way through. But why am I telling you this? This is pure Phys Ed lectures or that really awkward talk Mom or Dad mumbled their way through with you.

There is one thing to remember, though; different time periods may have inherent restrictions on power levels. Call it a cosmically enforced rule, or maybe it's tied to the same thing that's been increasing our collective heights and weights over the centuries. Whatever it is, the fact is that while each era might have its paragons, humanity's evolving understanding of the universe seems to raise the ceiling on super-heroic potential. Landing a man on the moon, the A-Bomb tests, the advent of the Internet, Michael Jordan's re-retirement—all seem to bring about some change or shift in direction, and the eras of heroes & villains that follow these seminal events are different or more powerful. That means each era has its power level. It can vary and it can shift, but it's a rule of thumb that seems to work across history.

MYTHIC AGE

While the Mythic Age had its share of awesome legends, it didn't take much to be "greater" than average. And, man, could people embellish the facts back then. Or maybe it was the broken telephone syndrome, where folks related heroic feats through word of mouth, and the message got twisted along the way. You throw a javelin ten extra yards because you're slightly stronger than the yokels, and two months later, folks are telling you how you threw a lightning bolt that slew a mighty dragon. Sounds good, right? All that publicity and adoration? Not so

The two fighters danced around one another, their footwork a routine of feints and sweeps, their hands parrying and striking. Elite used no weapon in this fight; he needed none. His opponent, a gang lieutenant with enhanced strength and dexterity, flipped the swiveled handles of his ballisong open and shut, revealing the blade one moment and hiding it inside the handle the next.

The ballisong spun in the gang-banger's grip, a constant flash of sliver that went from one position to the next. Elite blocked or evaded each thrust, however, calmly discarding the different deathblows and crippling shots presented. He could have ended this fight half-a-minute ago if he wanted to kill his opponent, but he didn't do that any more.

Finally, the gang-banger lunged too far forward by a centimeter. Elite caught his opponent's wrist and twisted just shy of breaking it. The man howled and dropped his knife at the same time Elite's spinning back kick to the solar plexus robbed him of breath. He fell to the ground, trying to draw air in stuttered gasps.

"The Murder League used butcher knives when they taught me how to block barehanded," Elite said. "Next time, bring your A-Game."



good when you're suddenly on the hit list of Warlord Yu Gon Napay because he's worried about some uppity champion trying to usurp him.

In the Mythic Age, while it's likely you're going to see gods sporting power levels in the 15+ range (hey, they're gods, right?) and legendary monsters in the 10+ range, the teen heroes of this age will usually start in the 5+ (just enough to make a reputation for themselves) to 8+ range. At power level 8 and higher, though, you're talking god-borns like Young Hercules.

PULP AGE

Science was pulling back the veil on magic at this point, and there's a considerable drop in power levels. Young heroes of this era aren't very powerful, but they are better skilled and equipped than the average adult. At PL 3, the teen hero is some wisecracking street-kid with above average ability scores and some handy skills. At PL 5, you're talking the same but adding some minor powers or gadgets, like an archeologist's assistant who pilfered a magical medallion, or a teen who inherits a primitive tribe's power as its defender.

GOLDEN AGE

The appearance of costume-clad heroes and villains and two World Wars account for a small shift in power levels to PL 4-6. Kids are still treated with kid gloves, as it were, and most of the teen heroes of this era don't reach the power levels of adults. Still, the education of young heroes improves, and heroes of this era are often better trained than most veteran soldiers.

SILVER AGE

Power levels enjoy a bump with teen heroes no longer being an oddity, but they're still rare. The space race is responsible for changing people's perceptions, and this affects the types of heroes that exist. A few teens might hit PL 7 range, but for the most part, they are closer to PL 5-6.

BRONZE AGE

Heroes mature, and suddenly there's an accountability thing happening. You can't always save the damsel (or dude) in distress, there is a widespread drug problem, and heroes can abuse their powers. It's a darker and nastier place, and teen heroes grow in responsibility and powers. By this point, they're approaching adult power levels, and while they're still a touch shy of the big leagues, they're powerhouses in their own rights. PL 8 is a good benchmark for folks in their upper teens, while those closer to puberty are closer to PL 6 (and the acne and the cracking voice).

IRON AGE

Anti-heroes and brooding champions fighting their darker urges teach heroes how to drop certain inhibitions and act all...goth-like. There's more power to be had, with experienced teen heroes approaching PL 9—on the verge of overtaking their mentors and idols. The younger teens are somewhere around PL 7, but the Age of Mutants means not only are kids becoming more powerful at a younger age, but their powers are also more diverse. Forget shooting arrows and nailing foes with whammyangs; this is all about mental powers, shapeshifting, optic blasts, leather bikini costumes, and angst.

MODERN AGE

Welcome to the *mélange* of things, the Rocky Road of the eras. The age has a bit of everything, with a drive by some heroes to revisit the Silver or Golden Age ideals (but not their naivety). There's a general distrust in authority, and many teens are not only coming into power independently, but also fighting crime on their own. This marks a substantial boost in power level to PL 8-10, with many teen heroes forces in their own right. In many respects, the only thing limiting them is their relative inexperience.

URBAN DARK AGE

They don't call them "the mean streets" for nothing, and many of the teen heroes helping fight crime and poverty barely have the skills or powers to do it safely. That's because raw power may be critical when you're fighting an alien invasion, but the war on drugs means fighting an insidious cancer that has spread through the entire community. Bash down all the doors you want, but for every drug dealer you knock off the list, another fills the void. It's not a hopeless fight, but the fact is that the high-powered heroes are off fighting the major threats. That leaves you with your ability to skillfully ricochet your titanium baton off multiple surfaces fighting the war. And, that may be a good thing. People may idolize the big-name heroes, but they'll always turn to local heroes for help. It's a trust thing. Power levels in this case run from the well-trained street fighter at PL 4-5 to the low-powered vigilante at PL 6-8.

APOCALYPSE AGE

Heroes rise to meet the needs of the age, and the need is great in this time period. With teen heroes fighting the good fight and dying the bad death to save their tattered world, there's little distinguishing them from adults other than that pesky age thing. Beginners to the struggle might ring in at PL 8, while teen veterans might come in at PL 12, but that's not always the case. Young mutants who manifest powers at puberty and who clock in at a hefty PL 10+ might be seen as lynchpins in the fight for Earth. The bad guys (if there are bad guys) would want these kids on their side, or dead—either is good. The heroes, however, would need that kind of firepower on their side, and frankly, they'd probably have the more compelling arguments for using your powers for good.

GOLDEN AGE REDUX

The universe is no longer the final frontier, the undiscovered country, the nemesis we thought it was. With humanity pushing the limits of self-discovery and improvement, the line between adult and teen has practically vanished. Generations of gene-treatment have eliminated most genetic defects and diseases, as well as creating a sturdier, more resistant breed of human. The common cold still exists, but we signed a treaty of non-aggression with that species once we realized colds were sentient, so things are just swell. Teens are contributing members of society and are thriving now that the world has given them a chance to prove themselves. Oh sure, you'll still get your sl4ck3rs and throwbacks, but for the most part, life's on the up-and-up. Teen heroes of this age come into power at PL 10 at the very least, since humanity as a whole is smarter and more physically fit.

STARTING POWER LEVEL ACCORDING TO GENRE

ERA	RECOMMENDED POWER LEVEL
Mythic Age	5-8
Pulp Age	3-5
Golden Age	4-6
Silver Age	5-7
Bronze Age	6-8
Iron Age	7-9
Modern Age	8-10
Urban Dark Age	4-8
Apocalypse Age	8-12
Golden Age Redux	10+

TEEN ABILITY SCORE BENCHMARKS

QUESTION 12: HEY! WHAT'S WITH THESE LOW ABILITY SCORE BENCHMARKS?

Benchmarks are those annoying little limitations you hit on the way to adulthood. Where most adult heroes start with Ability scores of 10 and work their way up, teens could potentially start lower. Yes, it sucks, but that's the breaks.

That said, there's two ways for folks aspiring to be teen heroes to represent the potential limitations facing them as a youngin'.

RULES

You can hedge the teen hero through their skills and abilities, meaning they've got some limitations in experience and physical training. This comes with age, not necessarily maturity.

ROLEPLAYING

In this method, the teens are probably old enough that they aren't limited skill-wise or through their abilities. What limits them is maturity, and they can get in plenty of trouble through attitude and roleplaying.

BASE ABILITY SCORES

In determining the base ability scores, you've got four options, each designed to handle a preferred style of play. It also supports those teams already active and in the field, saving them from coming in for a refit just because this brilliant tome of wisdom crossed their tables.

STATUS QUO

The heroes are old enough or experienced enough that their base ability scores start at 10. This is the standard for any teen campaign, and all the stats listed in this book reflect that.

TYPICAL TEENS

The heroes are typical teens under the age of 15, so their base ability scores start at 8, as opposed to 10, at a cost of zero power points. They don't earn the usual two power points per ability that's two points below 10, and each must pay 2 points for an ability score of 10. This is a good model for hard-edged or gritty campaigns where every point is the difference between life and death.

GIFTED TEENS

This is the same as previous with the ability scores starting at 8, but each character is really good at one thing, meaning each hero on the team has one score at 10 and the remainder at 8, all at zero-cost. The teen hero might be naturally strong, smart, or wise, but whatever it is, the hero should be the best there is at that ability on the team. If more than one person wants to excel at that ability, you might consider allowing them to have two abilities at a base of 9 as a sort of jack-of-all-trades compromise.

IMMATURE TEENS

The reverse of the Gifted Teens option is that the teen heroes all start with base ability scores of 10, with an exception to one ability that they're not so good at, which starts at 8 (all at zero cost). The hero is a klutz, impetuous, or not well learned. Generally, though, the lowered ability score should be something tied into being a teen. This is a good model for humor-based campaigns.

RENAMING SHIZZLE

The existing feats, skills, and drawback lists in the *Mutants & Masterminds* tome are extensive, but teen heroes can put their own youthful spins on the existing names and descriptions. *Mutants & Masterminds* was written by crotchety Old Man Kenson, after all, and is thus lacking in today's full-flavored hip-ness. [*Hey, you're *older* than me, Soulban! —Kenson]

This way, Beginner's Luck becomes "Hey! I saw this thing on TV once!" Concentration becomes "Yo! Shut the hell up! I'm trying to think!" Contacts & Minions become "Homeboys" or "My Crew," and Master Plan, Leadership, Fearsome Presence, Pilot, etc. all become "Yo, dis da shizzle, boy!"

Just don't lose the Gamemaster with your whacky expressions and don't overdo it, and he might see fit to throw you a little bling-bling (hero point) your way for being original or funny...or maybe just to shut you up. It's all good.

In those cases where ability scores are lower than 10, campaigns could adjust the benchmark as the campaign progresses and the heroes gain more experience. A young teen could start at a base of 8, progress to 9 once they hit mid-teens and progress to 10 in their late teens. They could keep their abilities below the new benchmark, gaining power points if they do, or enjoy the free boost to the abilities in question.

Example: *Thirteen year-old Tommy Flex has Strength, Intelligence, and Wisdom at 8, costing no power points. Along the way, he matures emotionally and physically. When he hits 16 years of age, his ability score baseline rises to 9, meaning Tommy can either enjoy a free +1 boost to his Strength, Intelligence, and Wisdom, or keep his ability scores at 8 and reap three extra power points to feed into other areas (as per Re-Allocating Power Points, M&M, page 25).*

If a teen hero has abilities above both of the existing age-related benchmarks, then he or she gains a power point back for the one spent in initially raising that ability. The hero can then spend the point on increasing the ability again or place it somewhere else.

Example: *Tommy Flex is exceedingly resilient. At 13 years old, his Constitution was already 12 (Base score of 8 + 4 = 12, or 4 power points spent). At 16, Tommy's Constitution base score naturally goes up to 9, meaning he gains back 1 power point. Tommy can spend that point elsewhere or pump it back into Constitution to turn his 12 into a 13.*

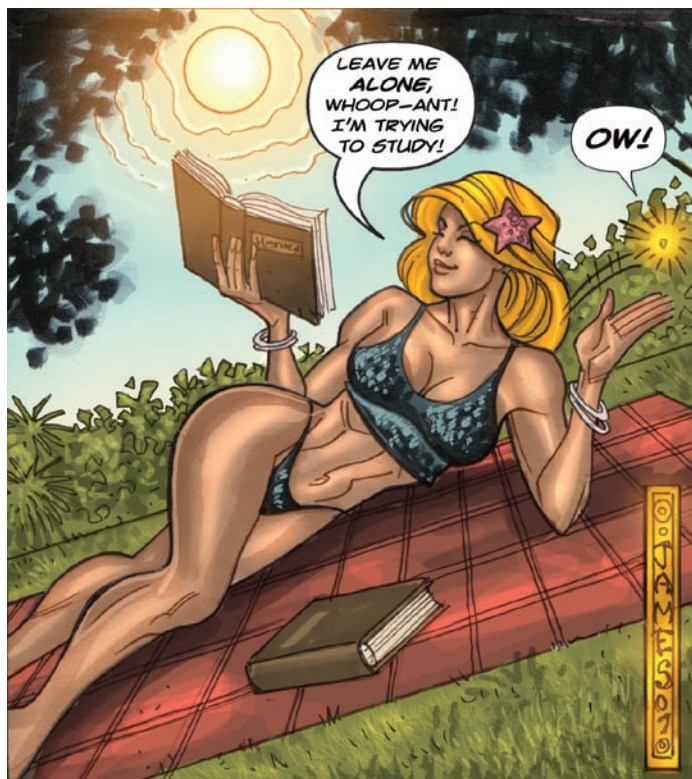
The only exception to this rule is no skill or ability can be increased beyond the limits dictated by the game's power level.

TEEN SKILLS

QUESTION 13: WHY DO I NEED SKILLS? I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A JOB.

You need skills because there's nothing as sad as being a 50 year-old clerk at Teen Gap. Sad, and creepy. So, you need skills to get by. Bad news for you, though, is that shopping, cruising, and talking with your mouth full are *not* skills. No, they're not going to be skills either.

Like ability scores, being a teen means potentially being restricted in what you can or can't do. Here are a few suggestions that will let you pick and choose what fits or works for the campaign.



STATUS QUO

As with the base ability scores, teen heroes are not restricted in any way. This is appropriate for older teen campaigns and is the standard approach in this book.

LIMITED TRAINED ONLY SKILLS

With this option, teen heroes can learn one trained-only skill like Acrobatics, Computers, Investigate, etc., if their key ability score is 10.

Example: *Tommy Flex raised his Dexterity from a base of 8 to 10. This means he can learn the Dexterity-derived skill of Acrobatics.*

The ability score modifier also indicates how many extra trained-only skills pertaining to that ability the hero knows. So, someone with Intelligence 12 has a +1 modifier, and could thus learn two different Intelligence-derived skills. This option is good for campaigns featuring young teens.

NO HIGHER EDUCATION SKILLS

With this option, the teen hero is barred from any skill that requires a university education, unless the hero's shtick is skill-dependent (like a young scientist or pioneering engineer). Barred skills include:

- **Knowledge** (arcane lore, art, current events, history, popular culture, streetwise, tactics, and theology/philosophy are permitted)
- **Medicine** (Perhaps no more than 4 ranks, to indicate First Aid training)
- **Profession** Skills like Pilot, Craft-related specialties, and Computer are not included here because you can explain them as hobbies of the teen hero.

LIMITED RANK

With this option, teen heroes can learn any skill, but the maximum rank in any one skill is equal to power level alone (not the campaign's power level +5). This represents familiarity with the skill, but not extensive practice.

FEATS

There are some definite pluses to being a teen hero. These new feats—good for use in a Hero High game—are just some of them.

COOL

SKILL, RANKED

You have a certain style and calm method to your actions that works on anyone under 20 years old. This gives you a +5 bonus on one Charisma-related skill when rolling checks (Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, or Perform) involving teens. Adults don't "get it," and are thus immune to your hip charm. Each rank in this feat adds an additional Charisma-related skill, and the bonus given can never give you an effective total skill bonus higher than the campaign's power level limits.

DISARMING

FORTUNE, RANKED

It started with Mom and Dad, the way you could wrap them around your little finger with a doleful puppy dog stare. You're cute and innocent looking, and when you want to, you can make villains really nervous about hitting you. Oh they'll blast you if they have to—they *are* evil after

all—but they're likely to pull their punch because attacking you is like blasting away at Thumper or a Tribble.

By spending a hero point, you can direct this innocent charm at one villain, forcing the miscreant to make a Will save (DC 10 + rank). If the villain fails, he still attacks, but he "pulls" his punch, reducing his attack's rank by the amount by which the save failed. The effect lasts until you attack and hurt the villain. If the save succeeds or you attack and hurt the villain, he cannot be affected by the Disarming feat for the rest of that encounter.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

FORTUNE

Folks expect you to grow into your powers eventually, but you're special; you haven't even begun to tap into the full extent of your abilities. With Untapped Potential, you can push your powers beyond their current limits and touch upon that greatness for a short time. When you use extra effort (*M&M*, page 120), you can increase a power by 3 ranks rather than 2.

DRAWBACKS

Don't give that look, you know exactly what drawbacks we're talking about—the kind that get you in trouble, like, all the time? The kind that sometimes make you a bigger menace than the villains?

HOLDING BACK

This mirrors Untapped Potential, but it's pretty much the downside of that feat. Holding Back means you possess a lot more power than you're letting on, but you won't use it out of a legitimate fear. Can you shatter buildings with a thoughtless word? Can you tap into an endless pit of darkness to fuel yourself? Can you surrender to an indiscriminate battle-fury that turns you into a lethal tornado of death? You can tap into and wield abilities above and beyond the campaign's power levels. In fact, the current power levels are holding you back from going full-bore. This is a dangerous ploy, however, and a slip could prove worse than the threat facing you now.

With Holding Back, two conditions must be met before you can access this untapped reserve. Over half the team must be unconscious or dying for you to consider making this sacrifice, or many innocent lives should be at stake (possibly including your own), and you must make a frequency check for the drawback to overcome your own years of self-deprivation training. If both conditions are met, you have access to greater powers for that encounter (during teen hero creation, make two character sheets for the normal hero and the tricked-out, really dangerous hero; this prevents you from slowing the flow of combat).

- **Minor (DC 5):** +2 power levels or +30 power points to distribute to various traits.
- **Moderate (DC 10):** +4 power levels or +60 power points to distribute to various traits.
- **Major (DC 15):** +6 power levels or +90 power points to distribute to various traits.

The bad in all this is that once you unleash your full potential, there's a price to pay. You suffer a complication chosen by the GM for unleashing your full power. See the following section for some possibilities.

SAMPLE COMPLICATIONS

Note that in any of these instances, you can spend a hero point to prevent your powers or actions from killing anyone.



- **Berserk:** You lose self-control and enter a feral state. Intelligence drops to 1 and until subdued, you're enraged, like a use of the Rage feat (*M&M* p63), but with none of the benefits. This may even happen at the beginning of combat, with your principle target being the threat that started the combat.
- **Host:** Your powers exist because you're host to some terrible, evil entity. It might be extraterrestrial, extra-dimensional, or magical, but unleashing its power means it temporarily surfaces and assumes control of your body. It may be hell-bent on destruction, or perhaps it quietly goes about some secret agenda while your conscious is unconscious. You wake up, not knowing what it's done or who it's killed, but dreading the impending truth nonetheless. Regardless, regaining control of your body may happen automatically after a few hours, it may happen at dawn or dusk, or it may happen once your body needs rest and falls asleep. It's up to you and the Gamemaster to decide.
- **Hunted:** Somebody out there is looking for you, whether it's the corporation that gave you powers, the mad scientist who built you, or your demon daddy looking to open a gateway through you. Either way, it's bad news. By unleashing your powers at full bore, you may have given your hunters a way to locate you. They'll find you and attack you to get you back. If you're lucky, you have a couple of hours to prepare. If you're unlucky, they're already on your back. Gamemasters should create this nemesis in advance and keep them ready for use.
- **Inert:** You reach great heights in your power, only to crash even harder. With this drawback, you shut down, lose cohesion, become a statue, or fall into a coma. Essentially, you are out of commission. You recover as per the Recovery Table (*M&M*, page 165) from a disabled state, and you cannot use your offensive powers until you are no longer Injured.
- **Monstrosity:** Your power turns you into a monster for several hours. And no, it isn't some cute and fuzzy G-Rated critter, but something exceedingly gross or horrifying, something that would raise an eyebrow on H.P. Lovecraft. It's so bad, cops will shoot at you, and the armed forces will be called in to deal with you as a threat. Even the people who know and love you won't be the same. For a week after you revert back, you suffer a -2, -4, or -6 penalty (depending on the power levels you normally gain) on all Charisma-related rolls when dealing with anyone who's seen you as the beast.
- **Power Unleashed:** Your power is explosive, and unleashing it is like a meltdown. If you fail to contain it, your most offensive power lashes out randomly at full force until you're rendered unconscious.

IMPATIENT

Whether it's that teen impatience thing where you think you don't need help, or it's one too many Big Gulps, you have a hard time focusing over an extended period. You're impatient and ready to go-go-go-allright-let's-*GO!* In short, you can't even concentrate to Take 10 or Take 20 properly. You start out fine, but your nagging, hyperactive jitters take over, and you either rush through something or just drop that crucial last step all together.

- **Minor:** You get the job done, but barely. You're at -2 whenever you Take 10 or 20, meaning you Take 8 or Take 18, respectively.
- **Moderate:** You're at -4 whenever you Take 10 or 20, meaning you Take 6 or Take 16, respectively.

REFUGE: EARTH

Okay...how bad are things out there in the multiverse that every frightened parent is sending their super-powered kid to Earth? Earth! The same planet where parents are telling their kids, "Don't talk to strangers!" "Don't do drugs!" and "Wear clean underwear!" Seriously...do you actually have to be *told* to change your underwear?

Earth seems to be a popular doormat for all those intergalactic orphans, so you gotta figure the planet's got something going for it. Maybe it's the high number of heroes here that makes it seem safe, or maybe Earth is so primitive that folks figure, "Nobody will ever look there." Or, heck, maybe some aliens really get off on that yellow sun thing giving them superpowers. If that's the case, who wouldn't send their kids to a world where they're practically gods and capable of defending themselves?

If that's the case though, the big-and-heavy warning bell should be telling you, if one member of an alien species discovers this about Earth, how long before more aliens come here for a sip of that power? Something to think about, because guess who's on mop-up? Yeah, that's right...you.

THE TOP TEN REASONS TO SEND ALIEN TEENS TO EARTH

- 10) Earth's yellow sun (or low gravity, oxygen atmosphere, or what have you) is like a big ol' sugar-high for powers. Come for the powers, stay for the adventure!
- 9) A traitorous, black-hearted relative stole the Galactic Throne from you, and you've been sent to Earth to hide.
- 8) You come from a distant future where Earth is the throne-world of a cruel empire. Now you've gone back in time to prevent your own future from coming about.
- 7) You are hunted by another race because legends say you'll eventually destroy the Universe. Earth seemed like a good place to hide out, since they already beat said alien species in a previous conflict.
- 6) You and your parents are part of a highly advanced civilization; you've been sent to Earth to blend in, learn, and eventually prepare Earth for peaceful first contact.
- 5) Oops, scratch that last one. You discover your home civilization isn't so peaceful after all, and your family is on Earth to secretly kill off its heroes and pave the way for invasion. You like Earth too much to let that happen.
- 4) You are part of the Intergalactic Power-Teen Legion, assigned to protect Earth as its new Teen Guardian.
- 3) The Galactic Oracles say Earth will eventually help usher in a new Golden Age by defeating a despotic species. Said species is sending agents to Earth to stop this future from happening, and the Galactic Oracles have chosen you to find Terran heroes to fight the incursions.
- 2) You're just an everyday kid who found an injured super-alien and gave it a chance to survive by letting it hide in your body.
- 1) You are the last of your kind and the pinnacle of your once proud species. Before your world died, your parents sent you to Earth for safekeeping. Welcome to your new home. Protect it well.

- **Major:** You're at -6 whenever you Take 10 or 20, meaning you Take 4 or Take 14, respectively.

The Ultimate Effort feat (*M&M*, page 65) is the counterpart to this drawback, meaning the teen hero is struggling to overcome his problem. Skill Mastery (*M&M*, page 64) with this drawback works as intended.

TEEN HERO ARCHETYPES

QUESTION 14: ARCHETYPES? I THOUGHT EVERYONE WAS UNIQUE?

Yeah, sure, like a snowflake or a bullet...or something like that. Thing is, while every powered kid has a different reason for getting into the hero biz, some patterns keep popping up across the same dimensions,

especially among the big-gun heroes. It might be a parallel world thing, where the Alien Exile archetype exists in multiple universes, but with a different look. It might be there's a dimension of paragons out there so powerful that all the other dimensions have echoes of those heroes, turning them into archetypes and telling the tales of those legendary heroes over and over in different forms.

ALIEN EXILE

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+5	+4	+1	+3	+2
18	20	18	12	17	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+7/+4*	+7	+8	+6

*flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+10), Diplomacy 5 (+7), Knowledge (alien culture) 4 (+5), Knowledge (tactics) 4 (+5), Language 2 (English and one other)

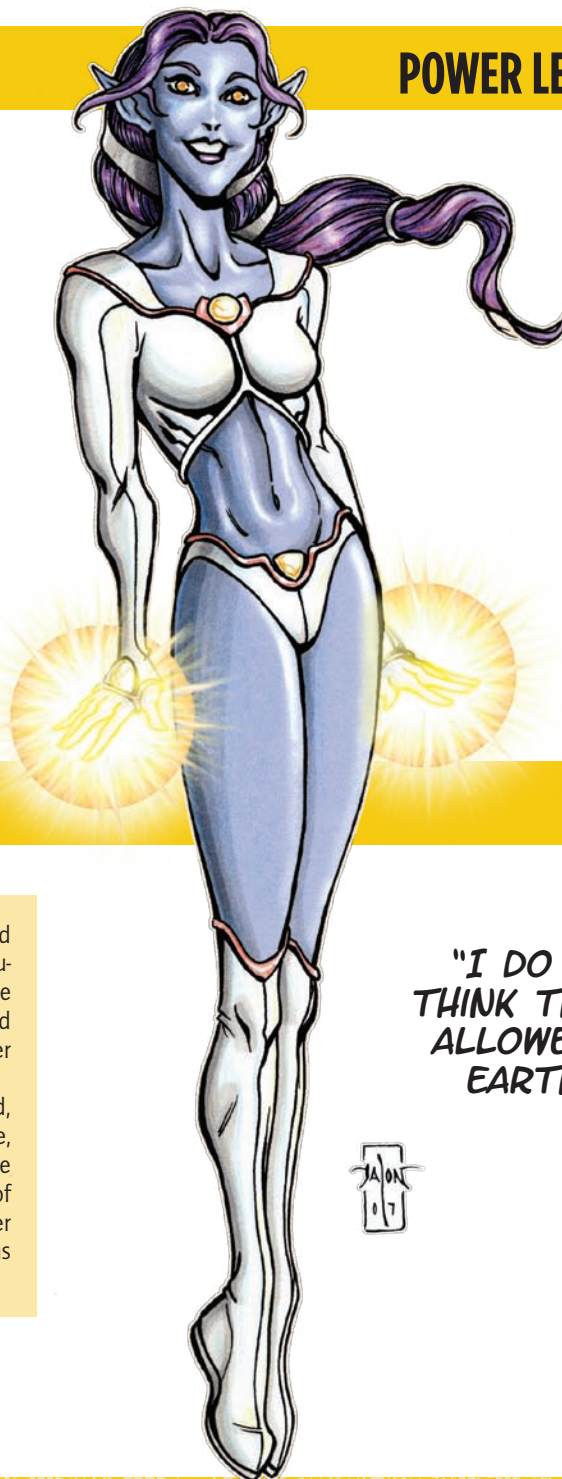
Feats: Attractive 1, Defensive Roll 3

Powers: Blast 9, Flight 6 (500 MPH)

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +11, Damage +4 (unarmed) +9 (blast), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +5

Abilities 40 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 30 + Combat 32 + Saves 9 = Total 120

POWER LEVEL 8



"I DO NOT
THINK THAT IS
ALLOWED ON
EARTH..."

A war, a coup, and the legitimate and benevolent rulers of a distant world are forced to send their daughter to the alien world Earth. This hero is doubly innocent in the way of things, first as a teen, and secondly, as someone charmingly naïve of human customs. She's quick to call people friends and not only trusts those friends with unreserved loyalty, but she'd lay down her life for them.

Her love of life and her love for people are unrestrained and undimmed, making some folks feel uncomfortable around her. Once she's in your life, though, it's hard to imagine life without her. Despite her innocence, naïve does not mean stupid or defenseless, and the Alien Exile is a cauldron of seething cosmic energies waiting to fly from the tips of her fingers or her eyes. The Alien Exile is a battery of power, often as turbulent and explosive as her own personality.

ALIEN HYBRID

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+3	+5	+0	+2	+2
26	17	20	10	14	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+9	+8	+6	+5

Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Intimidate 4 (+6), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+2), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+2)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2

Powers: **Protection 4**, **Shapeshift 4** (Limited to humanoid forms), **Super-Strength 3** (heavy load: 7 tons)

Common Shapeshift Traits: Additional Limbs, Defense/Toughness trade-off, Flight (wings), Strike (Mighty, claws or spurs, with attack bonus trade-off), Super-Strength (muscle growth)

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +6 (ranged), Grapple +19, Damage +8 (unarmed), Defense +7, Knockback -4, Initiative +3

Abilities 42+ Skills 3 (12 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 38 + Combat 26 + Saves 9 = Total 120

The Alien Hybrid is a member of a militaristic society, one that prizes genetic purity and the importance of species over the concerns of the individual. Unlike this species' purebloods, however, the Alien Hybrid has one parent who is of another race and is, at best, considered inferior (since *all* other races are inferior). At worst, he's hunted for being genetically impure or as proof the two species are not so different after all.

Now the Alien Hybrid lives on Earth, a planet far more tolerant of his unique nature; he's grown to love the world and its freedoms, and he is familiar with its society, habits, and customs. His innate abilities as a shape-shifter make him a hero, and he takes that responsibility seriously. In fact, thanks to his harsh upbringing, he might seem more serious than his Terran peers, but in the end, he's still a teenager.



CHILD OF DARKNESS

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+4
10	12	15	17	18	18

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+9/+2*	+6	+5	+10

*Without force field

Skills: Concentration 6 (+10), Intimidate 6 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+9), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 6 (+9), Language 4 (ancient languages), Sense Motive 4 (+8)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 1, Attack Specialization (blast) 2, Fearsome Presence 2, Ritualist

Powers: **Darkness Control 9** (mystic shadow, *Alternate Powers:* **Blast 9**, **Dazzle 9** (visual), **Snare 9**, **Telekinesis 9**), **Flight 3** (50 MPH), **Force Field 7** (shadow, Impervious)

Combat: Attack +4 (melee), +5 (ranged), +8 (blast), Grapple +4, Damage +0 (unarmed), +9 (blast), Defense +7 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -8, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Holding Back (uncommon, moderate, Host to demonic parent, -2 points)

Abilities 30 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 42 + Combat 22 + Saves 14—Drawbacks 2 = Total 120

"LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE PARENT ISSUES."



Daddy was a major demon in the depths of the Abyss with *big* plans for his daughter. Earth-born, she would anchor him to the physical realms and usher in a new reign of darkness, helping conquer worlds in the name of her father. But children rebel, and sometimes with good reason. Daddy's little girl fled her destiny, stealing a critical artifact he needs to conquer the universe.

The Child of Darkness isn't having any of that. She may carry a kernel of her father's darkness within her, but she's fighting her alleged destiny every step of the way. Unfortunately, she can't do it alone. She thinks she can, but every time she isolates herself to protect others, she shifts closer to Daddy. She needs friends to remind her what she fights for, and to remind her she can use her dark powers for good.

CONSTRUCT

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+0	—	+3	+1	+0
26	10	—	16	12	10

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+8	+0	+4	+5

Skills: Knowledge (technology) 4 (+7)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Jack-of-All-Trades

Powers: **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Protection 8** (Impervious), **Quickness 4**, **Regeneration 5** (self-repairing, Recovery checks, +0 bonus), **Super-Strength 4**

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +20, Damage +8 (unarmed), Defense +8, Knockback -8, Initiative +0

Abilities 14 + Skills 1 (4 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 63 + Combat 32 + Saves 8 = Total 120

"PLEASE DESIST. I DO NOT WISH TO CAUSE YOU HARM."

Built in a lab and forged from the finest alloys of his era, the Construct is an artificial person. The Construct is a free-thinking machine, an artificial mind with a true soul and the curiosity and innocence of a child. This wasn't supposed to happen, but there's a bit of wonderful magic in the Construct's hard science frame. He sees the world through new eyes, and his pattern-instinct protocols are untouched; he's a true innocent marveling at the world around him.

Unfortunately, he wasn't designed as a social experiment, he was built for war. He knows how to kill people, but he wouldn't hurt a fly. He could level a wall with his fist, if he didn't admire the beautiful mural painted on it. Thankfully, while the scientist that built him is constantly on the hunt to reclaim him and circuit-wipe this "anomalous behavior," the Construct has new friends who will protect him and show him how to use his powers for good.



ENVOY

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+5	+5	+5	+2	+2	+2
20	20	20	14	14	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+7/+5*	+8	+8	+8

*flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+11), Climb 4 (+9), Concentration 4 (+6), Diplomacy 6 (+8), Knowledge (technology) 4 (+6), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 (+6), Language 4 (English, plus three others), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 4 (+6), Pilot 2 (+7), Ride 2 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+6), Survival 2 (+4), Swim 4 (+9)

Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Attractive 1, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 1, Evasion 1, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Jack-of-All-Trades, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Set-Up, Teamwork 1, Trance

Powers: **Device 1** (weapon, easy to lose), **Immunity 2** (aging, disease, Limited to half effect), **Super-Strength 1**
Weapon: **Strike 3** (Mighty, Thrown)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +14, Damage +5 (unarmed), +9 (weapon), Defense +9 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +9

Abilities 42 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 6 + Combat 32 + Saves 12 = Total 120

"JUSTICE IS JUSTICE
EVERYWHERE."



The Envoy is a member of an advanced hidden culture on Earth diligent in their policy of "stay the heck away from humans." Now, humanity's closest neighbors are slowly abandoning their isolationist ways and sending out delegates to see if human society has moved beyond the spear-chucking phase (and our nuclear missiles would probably make the answer a clear "no, but we can throw further and harder now").

The Envoy, however, sees potential in humankind through her new friends, fellow heroes putting themselves on the line to save lives. Fortunately for the Envoy, her people are genetically sophisticated, and thus stronger, faster, and smarter. In other words, perfect material to fight crime while building the bridges of trust between two divergent peoples.

FUTURE PARAGON

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+10	+1	+10	+0	+1	+2
30/12	12	30/12	10	12	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10	+10	+5	+5

Skills: Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+5)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Ultimate Effort (Strength checks) 1

Powers: **Enhanced Constitution 18**, **Enhanced Strength 18**, **Flight 5** (250 MPH) **Immunity 9** (life support), **Impervious Toughness 7**, **Super-Strength 5** (heavy load: 24 tons)

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +21, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +6, Knockback -9, Initiative +1

Abilities 12 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 72 + Combat 24 + Saves 8 = Total 120

"DON'T WORRY, I CAN HANDLE IT."



This kid is destined to become a major powerhouse in the affairs of supers. He's a natural at his own powers, and his potential for growth is tremendous. He's faster, stronger, and more resistant to punishment than most experienced heroes around him, and even Herculean efforts seem casual to him. But it's a lot to live up to, almost too much. Everyone keeps expecting the impossible from him, or so he believes; they keep forgetting that he's still a teen, with all the doubts and hesitations that come with it.

The Future Paragon lives in a constant state of personal vigilance...afraid one slip will hurt or disappoint the people he loves. It seems like the future has been decided for him, and while the Future Paragon loves his powers, he wants to rebel against the heavy weight of responsibility, against his destiny. He wants to cut loose, guilt-free, but there's too much at stake for that. So, the pressure keeps building, and the Future Paragon continues rising to the occasion each time, even when it seems like he's fallen beyond the cusp of failure. But, it's only in this kind of crucible that true paragons are forged.

THE HEIR

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2
12	14	14	12	14	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+4/+2*	+6	+9	+5

*flat-footed

Skills: Knowledge (history) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+6), Search 4 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+6)

Feats: Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 2

Powers: **Super-Speed 8** (Alternate Powers: **Strike 8**; Power Feats: Rapid Attack, Wall Run, Water Run)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +9, Damage +1 (unarmed), +8 (speed strike), Defense +11 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +34

Abilities 20 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 44 + Combat 34 + Saves 14 = Total 120

Heroism *runs* in the family (literally), and the Heir is on speaking terms with two of the world's greatest heroes—or, as he calls them, "Mom and Dad." The Heir's entry into the world of super-heroics was a given, like going into the family business, only *much* cooler. As they say, he was "born into the biz."

While some teens might rebel against this "destiny," the Heir is a good natured kid looking forward to fighting alongside his parents and becoming the kind of hero they are. Fortunately, the power is there to mark this individual as one of the greats, but unfortunately, he's lacking in the finesse and experience to be truly effective. His parents are great coaches, and he has heroism in his blood. What he lacks in training, he more than makes up for in enthusiasm and determination. The Heir isn't just born into the privileged rank of heroes; he truly belongs there, and intends to prove it.



"VEGA III? USED TO VACATION THERE IN THE SUMMER."

LOOSE CANNON

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+0	+1	+0	+0	+1
12	10	13	11	10	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10/+1*	+4	+4	+6

*Without force field

Skills: Knowledge (current events) 4 (+4), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+4)

Feats: Power Attack

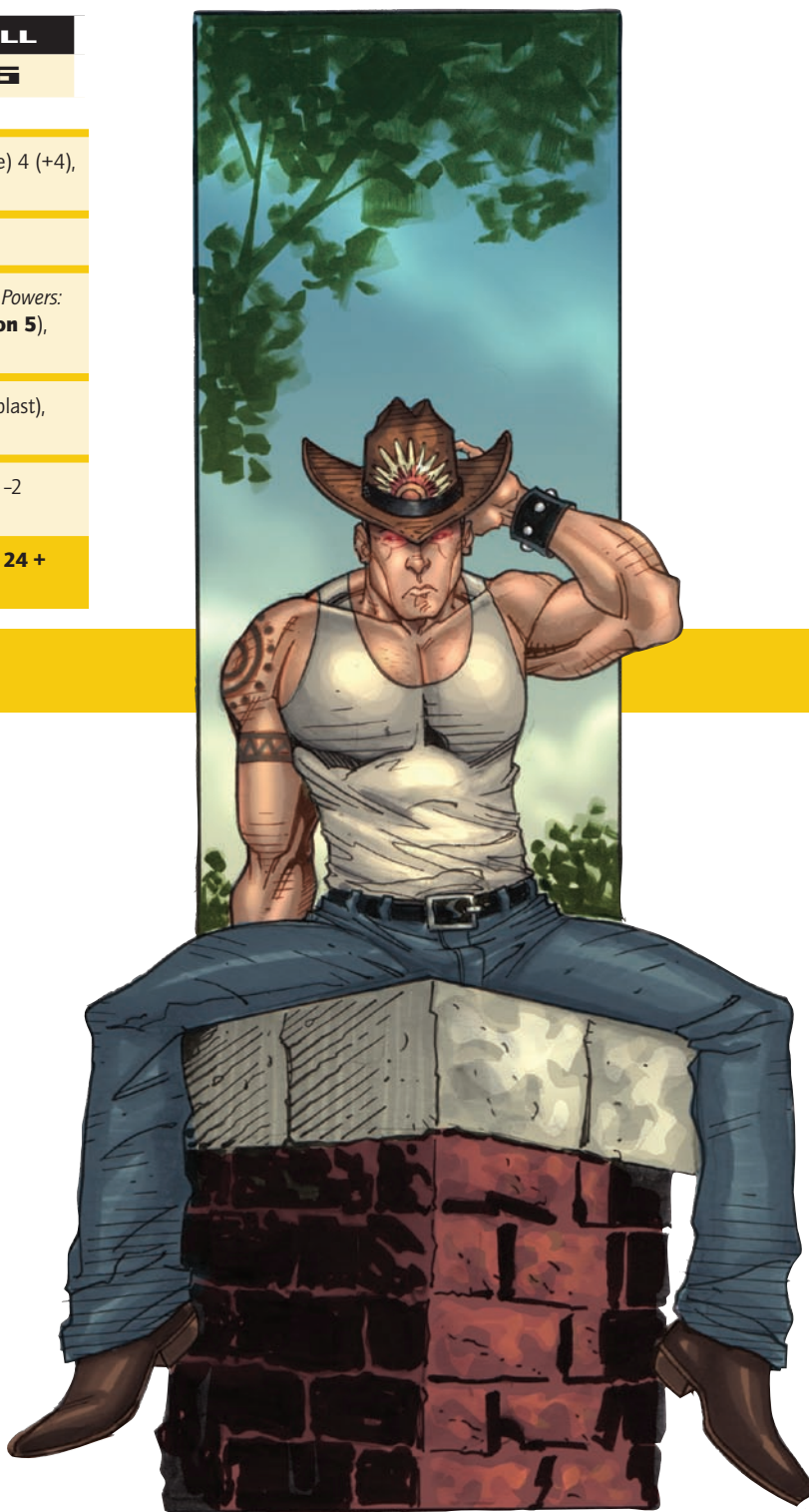
Powers: **Force Field 9** (Impervious), **Plasma Control 11** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 7** [Burst Area], **Dazzle 7** [visual, Burst Area], **Disintegration 5**), **Strike 8** (plasma, Aura, Sustained)

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unrmed), +11 (plasma blast), Defense +6, Knockback -9, Initiative +0

Drawbacks: Holding Back (uncommon, moderate, Power Unleashed, -2 points)

Abilities 8 + Skills 3 (12 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 75 + Combat 24 + Saves 11—Drawbacks 2 = Total 120

"JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!"



The Loose Cannon is a typical teen with self-control issues, both personal and in terms of his abilities. Most folks figure he'll become a villain sooner or later, and unfortunately the Loose Cannon feeds right off that negative reinforcement. It doesn't help that his powers are destructive.

He plays the bad boy, half because it's expected of him and half because he's been scarred by life. Bad attention is better than no attention at all, right? At least, that's the way the Loose Cannon survived his childhood. His father was abusive and his mother either indifferent or too scared to help. So the Loose Cannon did his own thing, seeking empowerment through rebellion, until his powers manifested.

Now his powers are how he cuts loose, and when he cuts loose, it's with little self-control. The destructive nature of his powers also feeds right back into his hidden self-esteem problems. His powers wouldn't be this dangerous if he wasn't a bad person, right? His powers reinforce his personal fears about himself, that he honestly is a bad seed. Without friends and teammates to pull him out of this self-destructive cycle, the Loose Cannon may stumble over that line from misunderstood to genuine villain.

THE MYSTIC ALLY & THE KID

POWER LEVEL 8

THE MYSTIC ALLY...

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+0	+8	+0	+1	+1
26	10	26	10	12	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+8	+10	+4	+5

Skills: Concentration 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+5), Search 4 (+4)

Feats: Interpose

Powers: **Flight 5** (250 MPH), **Immunity 32** (Fortitude, Mind Control), **Insubstantial 4**, **Magic 8** (choose six spells)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +16, Damage +8 (unarmed or by Magic), Defense +8, Knockback -4, Initiative +0

Abilities 36 + Skills 3 (12 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 83 + Combat 32 + Saves 10 = Total 165

"LEAVE MY FRIEND ALONE!"

The Mystic Ally is a force of sentient arcane-energy, a virtual genie-in-a-bottle, a powerful being lacking only one thing to guide it...a human friend. The Mystic Ally has found itself trapped on Earth. Its nature prevents it from surviving long outside of its vessel, a magical ring or brooch, maybe a lamp, or even a video game controller. It has to bond with a human to survive. Unfortunately, most adults don't have the imagination to befriend the entity or to use its powers wisely, and the task of serving as the Mystic Ally's counterpart has fallen to a boy.

...AND THE KID

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+0	+1	+3	+2
10	13	11	13	16	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+4/+0*	+4	+5	+7

*flat-footed

Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Knowledge (arcane lore or technology) 4 (+5), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+7)

Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Luck 3

Powers: **Summon 11** (Mystic Ally, 165 points, Continuous, Fanatical, Heroic)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +6, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +1

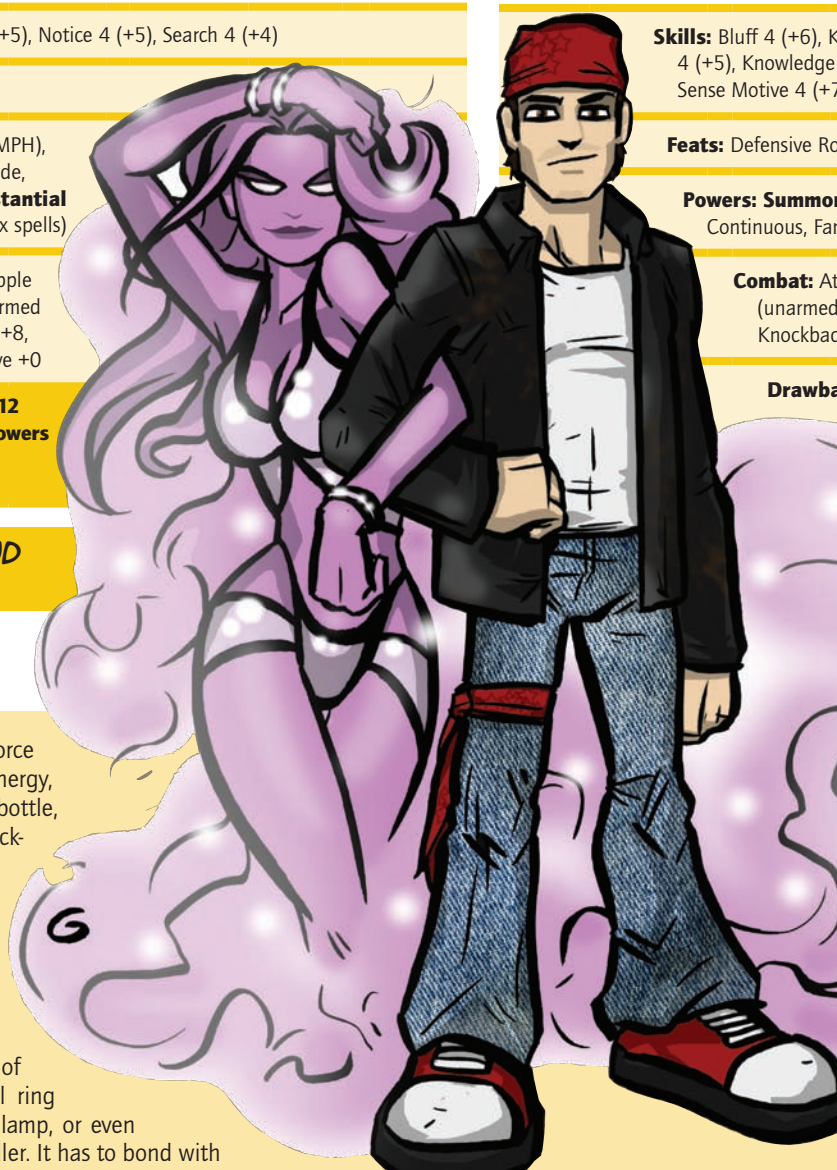
Drawbacks: Power Loss (Summon, must be able to speak, -1 point)

Abilities 18 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 55 + Combat 20 + Saves 12-Drawbacks 1 = Total 120

"IT'S GOOD TO HAVE FRIENDS"

The Mystic Ally is a powerful friend to the boy, using its abilities to combat evil and protect him from harm. The boy also acts as the Mystic Ally's moral compass, telling it what is acceptable behavior among humans and teaching it valuable lessons in compassion.

While the boy has no real power himself, he possesses the will to not be used. While the Mystic Ally has all the power, it lacks the direction provided by its most-cherished companion. They help each other out because that's what friends are for, right?



PROTÉGÉ

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+4	+2	+3	+4	+4
14	18	14	16	18	18

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+6/+4*	+6	+8	+8

*flatfooted

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Bluff 6 (+10), Climb 6 (+8), Computers 4 (+7), Disable Device 6 (+9), Escape Artist 4 (+8), Intimidate 4 (+8), Investigate 6 (+9), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+7), Notice 4 (+8), Search 4 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 4 (+8), Stealth 6 (+10)

Feats: Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 4, Evasion 2, Jack-of-All-Trades, Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Stealth) 1, Sneak Attack 1, Uncanny Dodge 1

Equipment: Commlink (1 point), Costume (**Protection 2**), Grapple Gun (**Super-Movement 1** [swinging]), Utility Belt (array): Flash-bangs (**Dazzle 3**, Visual and Auditory, 15-ft. Burst), Alternate Powers: Boomerangs, Smoke Bombs (**Obscure 4**, Visual, 20-ft. Burst), Stun grenades (**Stun 3**, Ranged, 15-ft. Burst)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +12, Damage +2 (unarmed), +5 (boomerang), Defense +10, Knockback -3, Initiative +4

Abilities 38 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 0 + Combat 40 + Saves 12 = Total 120

"INTERESTING STYLE,
LET'S SEE IT IN
ACTION."



This young hero knew tragedy far too early in life. With both parents murdered and his childhood erased by that overlooked injustice, the Protégé fell under the care of a wealthy philanthropist. Now, by day, the Protégé is the ward of his caretaker, going to school and acting out the life of a typical, if not somewhat grim, teen. By night, though, comes grueling training and combating evil. The philanthropist is a crime-fighter, and he has taken it upon himself to train his Protégé, honing his physical skills and turning his thirst for vengeance into a thirst for justice.

The Protégé is at his physical peak and has trained in a number of physical disciplines. Although he possesses no powers, his abilities, his equipment, and his intelligence are more than enough to even the odds. The relationship between Protégé and mentor is rocky sometimes, especially now that the teen hero has started associating with other teen heroes, but both Protégé and mentor have found new family in one another.

TECH-HEAD

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+0	+8	+4	+0
10	12	10	26	18	10

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+8/+0*	+4	+5	+8

*Without force field

Skills: Computers 6 (+14), Craft (chemical) 4 (+12), Craft (electronics) 6 (+14), Craft (mechanical) 4 (+12), Disable Device 6 (+14), Knowledge (physical sciences) 4 (+12), Knowledge (technology) 6 (+14), Notice 4 (+8), Sense Motive 4 (+8)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 3, Eidetic Memory, Dodge Focus 2, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Skill Mastery (Computers, Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical], Disable Device)

Powers: **Device 4** (blaster, easy to lose), **Device 5** (force field belt, hard to lose), **Device 2** (jet-pack, hard to lose)

Blaster: **Blast 8**

Force Field Belt: **Force Field 8** (Continuous, Impervious; *Power Feat:* Selective)

Jet Pack: **Flight 5** (100 MPH)

Combat: Attack +5 (melee), +8 (ranged), Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +8 (blaster), Defense +8 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -8, Initiative +1

Abilities 26 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 40 + Combat 22 + Saves 12 = Total 120

"WHAT DO YOU THINK?
PRETTY COOL, HUH?"



To say this teen hero was born smart is like saying the Great Wall of China is sort of long. At age two, she reprogrammed the VCR so it wouldn't blink 12:00...ever again. At five, she'd upgraded the home satellite dish to intercept NSA burst transmissions; at seven, her pet cat was partly bionic and capable of zapping mice with microwave pulses at 20 yards; and at eleven, she'd built her first exo-sheath armor.

Unfortunately, the Tech-Head's approach to science is entirely innate, like a poet's creative muse or an artist's talent to paint. While she understands scientific principles, she isn't entirely sure of what she's creating half the time. Whereas science is a discipline to most, the Tech-Head has a free-form, creative approach to technology. She keeps adding components until the blasted contraption works, like sculpting a rock to see what shape is hidden inside of it. She won't know what it is until she finishes building it, but rest assured it'll work...somehow. Naturally, this is of limited comfort to her hero-friends, who are often the victims of her "Push this button while I watch," moments.

THE VESSEL

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+5	+3	+5	+0	+2	+2
21	16	20	10	14	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+9	+9	+7	+6

"YOU DO NOT WANT
TO MAKE US ANGRY."

Skills: Concentrate 4 (+6), Intimidate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+6)

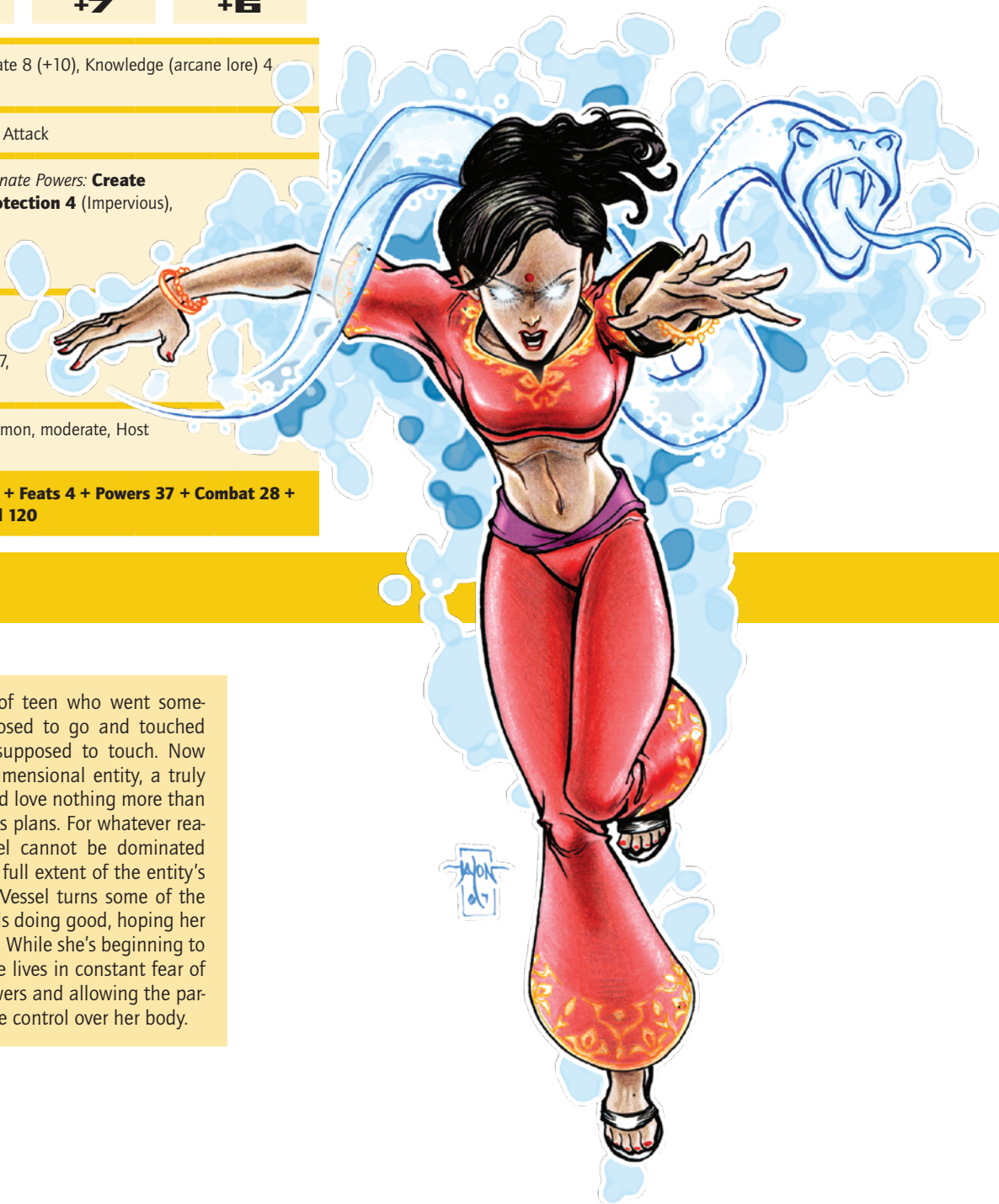
Feats: Fearsome Presence 3, Power Attack

Powers: Hellfire Control 9 (*Alternate Powers:* Create Object 9, Mental Blast 4), Protection 4 (Impervious), Strike 4 (claws, Mighty), Super-Strength 2 (heavy load; 1,840 lbs.)

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +14, Damage +5 (unarmed), +9 (claws), Defense +7, Knockback -7, Initiative +3

Drawbacks: Holding Back (uncommon, moderate, Host to demonic force, -2 points)

Abilities 36 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 37 + Combat 28 + Saves 12—Drawbacks 2 = Total 120



The Vessel is the kind of teen who went somewhere she wasn't supposed to go and touched something she wasn't supposed to touch. Now she's host to an extra-dimensional entity, a truly nasty creature that would love nothing more than to use her to carry out its plans. For whatever reason, however, the Vessel cannot be dominated unless she taps into the full extent of the entity's powers. Until then, the Vessel turns some of the creature's powers towards doing good, hoping her actions will free her of it. While she's beginning to enjoy helping others, she lives in constant fear of losing control of her powers and allowing the parasite inside of her to take control over her body.

CHAPTER 3: GAMEMASTERING HERO HIGH

QUESTION 15: SO, BEAT THE BAD GUYS, SHOP, AND LOOK FABULOUS... WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Plenty, but here's where it gets fun. This chapter deals with the crunchy cool stuff about being a hero, from what to expect in school to the kinds of baddies you'll be facing. This section is all about building the campaign or playing the teen hero, so enjoy.

Yes, this chapter is primarily for the Gamemaster (that's why it's called "Gamemastering Hero High"), but you players can get a lot out of it, too. Reading over this chapter will give you a good idea of what the GM is talking about when it comes time to start up a teen hero series, so you can make heroes who fit into it perfectly and ensure everybody has a good time. It can also give you lots of ideas for characters, including origins, family, relationships, and subplots to play around with.

ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING: CAMPAIGN FUNDAMENTALS

QUESTION 16: WHAT KIND OF TEEN HERO GAMES CAN WE PLAY?

All sorts of campaigns are open to you. It all depends on where you're starting, whether it's from the beginning or jumping into this with already experienced teens. Are your adventures set in rural America or in the cities? Are your teens old or young? Are you part of a supers high-school or hiding your mutations?

So, let's start with the basics.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: SETTING

Location is important because it sets the type of campaign that's being run. Start in Smalltown, Kansas, and the environment is intimate and the drama high. Move the setting to a larger city, and there's more adventure but less of that huge revolving cast of characters and everyday drama. Both options, as well as everything in-between, have their advantages and disadvantages...it all depends on what the campaign aims to do.

SMALLVILLE

Like everyone's favorite bar, everyone knows your name, and you've got deep roots in the community. It may be difficult explaining why unusual things keep happening in your rustic neck of the woods, but there's a sense of history. You have a connection with the locals, and the lives and tribulations of the non-powered folks are as important as the strange happenings.

Campaigns of this sort rarely require you to run around in spandex. Heck, everyone knows each other so well that people would probably recognize you even with the mask, so it's best just not to be seen if you want to avoid people thinking you're a weirdo. These types of campaigns are populated with wholesome townsfolk going about their daily lives and the strange dramas that arise. There's generally one high school in these communities, so the school itself is the center of social attention and local sporting events. It also means the local jocks and cheerleaders have an over-inflated sense of importance: really big fish, really small pond.

As far as the possibility of adventures, they might weigh heavily in favor of interpersonal dramas as well as whatever phenomenon powered some of the local teens and is responsible for the regional strangeness. This could be the radioactive aftermath of a meteor shower or the pres-

ence of some mystical hell-portal. Either way, you and your buds are there to fight it and keep Apple Pie, USA safe.

MECHANICS

Various interaction skills might be handy, since the heroes will be dealing with town folks on a regular basis (and getting them to confide in their troubles). Gamemasters may consider letting each hero on the team excel in one Charisma-based skill, such as one teen being good at bluffing while another is better at diplomacy. This, in part, is based on their local rep with the townsfolk.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY

When it comes to wearing spandex, stomping on bad guys, and teaming up with any number of heroes, the big city is where it's at. And if you're going big, you might as well go New York-big. The city has all the adventures you could ever want, from one-shot bank robberies committed by powered felons to longer arcs involving crazed scientists, alien invasions, and other worldly events. And if things get too hot, well then it's time for a guest appearance by local celebrity heroes with minimal explanation.

Big cities have their own drama, with the cast of characters including other heroes. They're cosmopolitan, meaning you can have a wide array of heroes from different cultures and communities, and most importantly, the adventure always comes to you, no justification necessary. Spandex is a must, sometimes to maintain identity, sometimes to upstage others with your fashion sense, and most of the time to show off your hot physique. Thus, the flavor of heroism remains.

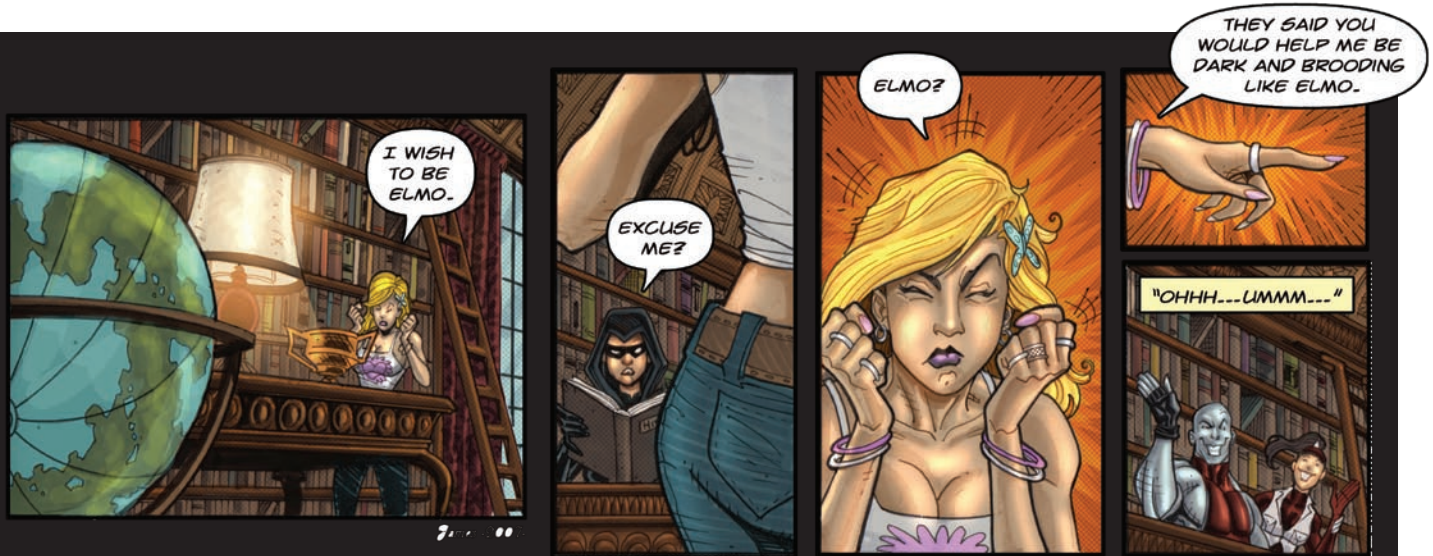
And last but not least, big lizard monsters only attack big cities; it's in their contract. And where's the fun if you can't duke it out with a big monster?

MECHANICS

Heroes from the cities might gain hero points from media exposure and potential celebrity status. There's a bit of inflated ego syndrome when people's opinions of you bolster your self-confidence. If public opinion turns against the hero, however, he might not gain a hero point from the resulting setback.

BOYZ 'N THE HOOD

This setting takes the big city and distills everything down to small town benefits by framing it inside a large neighborhood. The neigh-



Serena sighed. The AlterniTeens were adjusting well to life at Claremont Academy, and the bonds of friendship were forming between the older Next-Gen team and the younger teens. Naturally, that bond was manifesting itself as friendly competition, but it was a promising start.

"I think you mean emo," Serena said gently. "I'm afraid I'm not emo."

"Oh," Changeling said, her innocent face so terribly crest-fallen that Serena shrank at the pangs of guilt.

"But I'll see what I can do," Serena added quickly.

"Wonderful!" Changeling replied, her face suddenly full of cheer and light. Even her golden hair seemed to glow with enthusiasm.

Serena stood and faced the shorter girl. "Now, the first thing is, pretend like you've got no neck muscles."

Changeling's head flopped forward, her long hair falling over her face. "Your shoes are very pretty," she said.

"Thank you," Serena replied, brushing aside the compliment, "but if you want to be emo, you can't compliment people. Now secondly, you have to remember that every morning, life is a dark pit where you languish in the obsidian blackness and drape yourself in the shadows of the universe until you are obliterated by its smothering embrace. Then you wake up the next morning and go through that all over again."

Changeling's head popped back up, beaming. "Wonderful! I am Elmo!"

"Yes...I can see this is going to work."

"It is working. I can feel all Elmo inside."

Serena pinched the bridge of her nose; at the next table, Relentless and Dauntless roared with laughter. "Never say that again...ever," Serena said. "Look...maybe we can work on the look instead. How about we dye your hair purple? That's emo, I guess."

"I love purple!" she said, practically screeching. "It will be wonderful!"

"Okay," Serena said, taking Changeling by the arm. "Maybe the emo thing isn't you. How about I teach you to be like Elmo...or Sponge Bob?"

"Okay," Changeling said, equally enthusiastic about the new prospect. "I enjoy Sponge Bob's antics."

"Yes, I thought you would."



borhood in question is poor and riddled with vice, and local youths who managed to get powers are intent on saving their 'hood. They don't see why they should bother helping the city itself (except on occasion), since the city is treating their neighborhood like a quarantine zone. The intimacy is in the neighborhood setting where folks know each other and the good ones try to help, but there are big-city issues like drug-problems, prostitution, gang violence, malnutrition, and impoverishment.

In this setting, heroes may wear more street-flavored costumes to appear tough in the face of the evil they challenge; leather jackets instead of spandex, chains instead of straps, hockey masks or cowls instead of eye-pieces. Heroes on the street need to strike fear in the hearts of evil and assure the neighborhood that they're taking the job seriously.

Unlike the small town setting, however, the neighborhood heroes have the option of spending an evening or day relaxing in the city. They're always just minutes away from their neighborhood, as the hero flies. And, for those teen heroes who think fighting crime is more important than an education, it's easier to skip school in favor of donning the costume. Not entirely advisable, but the schools are too overburdened with other problems to worry about the occasional truancy.

MECHANICS

Inner city heroes might have an allegiance to their neighborhood (*M&M*, page 118), where they gain a +2 bonus to positive interactions with the locals for their efforts to help folks and reduce crime. Gamemasters may find the Iron Age sourcebook for *M&M* a useful resource for running this type of teen hero game.

ON THE MOVE: RUNAWAYS

The teens in this series are always on the move. Either they're one step ahead of a pursuer, one step behind someone or something they're chasing, or both. Alternately, they might just be traveling for the fun of it; you know, looking to see the world or the teen hero equivalent of backpacking across Europe or Central Asia. Maybe they just aimlessly drive around in their cool van solving crimes or something. Whatever the case, the setting varies from one adventure to the next, and each adventure is often based around where the heroes end up that week.

The supporting cast in this kind of series either travels with the heroes or has some kind of mobility allowing them to keep up (or some means of communicating with the heroes no matter where they go, not so hard in the 21st century). The series allows for a lot of different settings, but it doesn't provide much in the way of stability, unless the heroes have a mobile headquarters of some kind, allowing them to haul all their stuff along with them.

Expand this idea to one of the following settings and you've got wandering teen heroes who don't just travel the highways and byways of the land, but who are seeing the world, the galaxy, or even bopping between different dimensions, giving "world tour" a whole new meaning.

MECHANICS

The heroes primarily need a means of getting around, either a plot device provided by the GM or a suitable movement power or vehicle. One hero may serve as the "transporter" for the whole team (posing some problems if that character is ever taken out of action) or the group might share a common resource like a vehicle. The GM decides whether the heroes all need to chip in equipment points for the vehicle or it just comes to them as a free perk of the setting.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL...

...Well, not really, if you consider it takes the world a day just to turn around, but that's not the point. In this "setting," the group of teen heroes has decided the world is their stage. Maybe they have the Justice Group Satellite or some awesome ship navigating the exo-dimensional arteries of the omniverse's circulatory system. What matters is they can get anywhere in the world in moments to avert whatever crisis is at hand. From fires in Frankfurt to monsoons in Mumbai to villains victimizing Venezuela and other forms of alliterative disasters, the teen heroes are there to help. This means the scale of the adventure is always large, since it's doubtful the team will pop in on Reno to rein in ruinous robbers...sorry, couldn't help myself.

While events are usually big, the interactions are more limited. There may be other international groups helping the teen heroes, but because they don't stick to one area, the possibility of interaction drops. The heroes may have other folks helping them, and there's always interaction between teammates, but any hero pursuing this life is pretty much dedicated to a single cause, especially since so much happens in the world during a day.

The other option here is the heroes are older teens working for an international organization like the United Nations (or UNISON in the *Freedom City* setting). In this case, the scale is still global, but the interactions can be as intimate as a small town, thanks to the support structure surrounding the team. Not only that, but the U.N. would likely have several teams based on regions, such as a PacRim Team and an African Team, or based on cooperative efforts between member nations. In the latter case, membership may or may not vary per mission, but there are always other heroes with whom you can talk, befriend, help, and form relationships.

MECHANICS

The heroes of this setting might have Equipment feat ranks to reflect a sponsor or benefactor helping them with the purchase of vehicles, gadgets, or a base. The sponsor might even throw in an extra rank or two as a reward. Alternately, the GM can just assign team equipment (including vehicles and a headquarters) at no cost to the heroes, since their patron provides everything (but can also potentially take it back).

GALAXY QUEST

Like the global idea, this campaign setting is universal...literally. The heroes are helping save the universe from various threats, but because the universe is relatively large in the scheme of things, the heroes aren't alone in their fight. They're likely part of a very large team...or bloody arrogant for thinking the handful of them is enough to do the job. Let's go with large team then, shall we?

The heroes are either part of a large policing organization or enjoying the patronage of a trillionaire, which means they have a central HQ and plenty of opportunity to interact with other mundanes and powered-folk. They also have the means to travel to whatever far-flung destinations need them. The fringe benefits are also decent, with teen heroes and their immediate families enjoying medical coverage, living in company-sponsored housing, and probably earning a decent salary. It's as close to a real job as a hero can enjoy, and gone are the days of heroism as a "hobby."

Also, heroes and teen heroes of this setting wear superhero costumes because brightly colored, form-fitting outfits are actually the most common clothing in the civilized galaxy. Who knew?

MECHANICS

Heroes of this setting might have access to certain skill sets other teens may never see until they earn a Masters or PhD. This includes Computers, Craft, Knowledge, and various Profession skills. The Immunity power (*M&M*, page 89) is common in this setting, particularly life support, which allows the heroes to travel easily in space and to various alien worlds.

SLIDERS

In this campaign setting, the teen heroes are completely displaced from their home dimension. Maybe it was an accident, maybe the heroes fled a global apocalypse, or maybe the air just smelled funny. Anyway you slice it, the teen heroes are dimension-hopping and no specific Earth is home...at least, not yet.

In this type of campaign, the teen heroes need someone or something to make these dimensional leaps. It's also likely that unless the whole thing was an accident, the teens may not even be from the same dimension. Each one might be from a different reality and have a different reason for leaving home behind.

Regardless, the drama is mostly inside the team, with some interaction possible with other folks in the various dimensions. The adventures are likely episodic, but there's always the interesting premise of encountering different versions of family and loved ones (or enemies, for that matter). Heroes become villains, villains turn to saints, Mom and Dad never met, your alternate reality version is flip-flopped on the whole gender thing...and no...that doesn't mean his genitalia is where his butt should be.

On the other hand, the dimension hopping thing could be an overarching storyline, such as if the teen heroes were trying to find a specific person/object/place in the dimensions to save their own world or prevent a disaster from unfolding. Or, it could be a quest to find a home for themselves and maybe other refugees from their world(s).

For Gamemasters looking for a little more stability, maybe the heroes have a central base, like a dimension, vessel, or pocket realm they can always jump back to. In this case, it's possible for a wider range of interactions with a regular cast of NPCs.

MECHANICS

Teen heroes of this campaign may want the Immunity power (*M&M*, page 89) through natural or artificial means to contend with potentially hostile environments (if they land on a virus-plagued world or an Earth with no atmosphere, for example).

WORKING 9 TO 5: FULL-TIME SITUATIONS

QUESTION 17: WHAT ARE SITUATIONS?

Situation is a catch-all term for the circumstances and immediate environment of the teen heroes. Full-time means the teens may not necessarily stay young, but being a superhero *does* seem to retard the aging process. Thus, the teens are likely in it for the long haul.

Is the campaign about learning how to cope with powers in a school environment? Is it about teen heroes learning how to become independent? Is it a powered soap opera where sentences like, "It's me, your evil twin brother Razorfist!" actually make sense?

FAST TIMES AT HERO HIGH: HIGH SCHOOL CAMPAIGNS

It's high school! With powers! How awesome is that? If Harry Potter has taught us anything, it's that being in a school where superpowers are part of the curriculum rocks. Not necessarily in a good way, but it makes dodgeball a heck of a lot more interesting (the class, not the movie). And if cartoons have taught us anything, it's that stuffing critters into airtight balls a fraction of the creature's size is also fun...but that's beside the point. With this situation, think of it this way—the teens meet one another out of costume and become crime-fighting buddies after.

Generally, there are three types of schools a powered teen can attend:

MUNDANE

Real life school with real life drama. In this environment, the character attends classes like Civics, Algebra, and English, and deals with all the social restrictions and cliques of schools today, be it the schism between jocks and nerds, cheerleaders and Goths, or asking someone out on a date.

This environment allows the teen hero to be normal for a few hours a day, but hiding one's powers from classmates, friends, teachers, and even girl/boyfriends can be tiring. That said, the teen heroes are unique, and they're probably the guardian angels of their school if the school has its share of weirdness. These types of school are generally daytime only, though a boarding school set in the heart of Weird County could be interesting, especially for teen heroes with low power levels. Campaign options include:

- High school in a normal world where powered teens study by day and fight crime by night.
- Boarding school where the school is normal except for a plot device that generates the "Threat-of-the-Week."



- Youth detention facility for powered teens where the heroes must survive emerging young villains.
- Small town where the high school is an integral part of the local community in a town with a big secret (like the aforementioned Threat-of-the-Week).
- Expatriate privileged school where the heroes are not only powered, but in a foreign country where their parents work as delegates and diplomats.

POWERS SCHOOL

Like a mundane school, this type of institution is normal except in a few respects. Those respects pertain to their powered students, the training regimens for controlling and using said powers, and more classes on philosophy, ethics, and physics (or metaphysics). To hide the school's nature from the generally unsuspecting public, the powers school is often located outside a small town or suburban neighborhood. Why? Because adults are as skittish about a mutant school on their doorstep as they would be if the Department of Energy and Bureau of Prisons combined forces to open up a nuclear power plant run by convicts. (Hey, now there's a story idea...).

A powers school is also likely a boarding school. This means intimate environments where teens interact and socialize before, during, and after class. On weekends, they all hit the local malls or go on field trips. Unlike normal schools, the cliques aren't as obvious; powers tend to even things out, though some groups may form among the elites, the weaker students, or the different grades. It all depends on the spread of power levels because, face it, no matter how hard the teaching staff may try to put everyone on equal footing, teens will still find some way of discriminating

against one another. The only way to know when you're part of the in-crowd is when someone else is an outsider. If nothing else, the cliques from ordinary high school won't go away easily. Campaign options include:

- A mutant boarding school where young people learn to control their abilities and meet others like them.
- A strange school where the heroes gain their powers from the same event causing the "Threat-of-the-Week."
- A school where the majority of the students are normal and a hidden subbasement hides a facility to teach a powered few.
- A mutant-exclusive school run by villains to train the next generation of bad guys.
- A military school where the U.S. Government has a hand in molding tomorrow's supersoldiers.

OUTRAGEOUS POWERS SCHOOL

This type of school is an over-the-top environment as magical or wondrous as the students it houses. It might be a sprawling castle estate with its share of dark secrets, or a floating high school hidden from detection by an artificial cloud-bank or cloaking device. Regardless, the operative word here is outrageous, and that includes the curriculum. Classes cater more toward the student's gifts instead of pigeonholing everyone into the same skill sets. Magical students benefit more from Tarot and Divination 101, while tech-heads and gadgeteers prefer Applied Dark Matter Exochemistry. The classes are as outrageous as the teachers themselves, with former heroes, sidekicks, and reformed villains rounding out the faculty. It's time- or dimensional travel instead of "Field Trips," and Holographic Combat Environments in place of "PhysEd."

The teen heroes of this series not only face deadly rivals from among classmates or external threats, but the school grounds are also rife with adventure possibilities. What if the school is magical and dark secrets

have seeped into its foundations over the centuries? What if the school is secretly sentient and testing students to locate a champion to fight an evil lurking in the halls? What if the school's true dimensions have never been explored, and the hundreds of students are only occupying a fraction of its grounds? What if the school is a gateway that not only brings strange things to the heroes, but takes them elsewhere as well? These are all possibilities, but remember the environment also demands a certain amount of whimsy and comedy. Options include:

- The school is a magical castle in the remote countryside that not only educates students but is the source of half the mischief students find themselves in.
- The school is a space station at the edge of the solar system catering to alien students as well.
- The school is a pan-reality nexus designed to educate students from multiple dimensions.
- You'll find this school floating high in the atmosphere, catering to the children of heroes and villains alike, and it's considered "neutral ground" for any outside super-conflicts.
- This strange institution doesn't exist; it's a psionic construct where students all over the world attend mentally—in trance or in their dreams—as though the school has a physical presence.

AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL: ADVENTURES AFTER SCHOOL-HOURS

Congratulations, you found some way to skip the school grind and hit the exciting stuff first. In this situation, the teen superheroes get together after school and their family chores to fight crime. Or, maybe they have no real family situation or school isn't a concern. Or, maybe they have to juggle all of the above. The cause probably depends on the specific teammate. That means one hero's real-world dilemma is sneaking past Mom and Dad to fight crime, while another might be worried about juggling work, school, and spandex patrol, and a third is living and fighting crime on the street.

What's important is the teens cleave together in costume first, before developing a friendship out of costume later. The drama here is between teammates and not classmates, because the focal point of the campaign might not be school, but the after hours stuff.

For this option, teen-folk have several subcategories available to them:

REALITY

No two ways about it...these teens have to go to school, or they'll be too dumb to solve Dr. Riddlemerotten's latest brain-twisting crime. (In fact, it may be too late already, but that's beside the point.) And the kids have familial obligations, or they're booted out of the house in a moment of "tough-love." Half the adventure with this situation is juggling those real moments in life in an effort to fight crime and keep one's secret identity just that. Call it 50% real life and 50% heroics.

This also means the folks would never let said teen out of the house if they knew what he or she was really doing. Unfortunately, this creates its own set of problems. The teen hero appears delinquent for skipping school, breaking curfew, and sneaking out all the time to do the responsible thing. The only thing parents and teachers are going to see in this, however, is a teen who is rebelling horribly and probably doing drugs and engaging in promiscuous sex every night.

The other reality of this option is that the teens don't have a nifty base or kewl gear. They can't afford the rent or the tech, meaning they may have no base or they may be operating out of an abandoned location. This also means if a benefactor approaches the team to house or help them, look for the strings, because nothing comes for free. Some options to consider here are:

- The teen heroes are independent and spend their nights patrolling and following leads; their base is the former lair of a villain who might escape jail and return (or who may have left traps or safe-guards behind).
- The super-heroics are just something this group falls into occasionally in between those pesky real-life moments; when they need help, they call each other.
- The super-group forms over the summer when the teens can afford to do their own thing, and they operate on holidays and weekends during the rest of the year.
- The teen heroes come from broken homes where the parents don't care where their kids are, or they have a single parent working the nightshift, leaving the heroes to their own devices.
- The teen heroes have a mentalist ally who can alter the perceptions of teachers and family members when the need arises to cover for the heroes' absence.

A HELPING HAND

In this situation, the teen heroes have some friends or allies who can provide support in some form or another, whether this means providing the heroes with a base, removing the parental pressure, or helping them with the school problem. The realities of the world still slip in to blindside the hero—it wouldn't be fun otherwise—but it's a heck of a lot better than the previous option. Something to consider here, though, is the rule that nothing is free still applies. If adult heroes agree to help the teens skip school (occasionally) to fight crime, then they'll provide the teens with tutors. If they get a teen's parents to ease off a little bit, the hero or benefactor becomes a third parent. That's a major funny moment right there when the teen realizes what this "help" actually means.

The rule of thumb is the benefactor or hero can help the teen hero deal with one or two of these things: parents, school, job, legitimate base of operations, friends, or significant other.

- **Parents:** A notable and widely-loved hero vouches for the teen's safety and offers to take him under his or her wing; parents are naturally awed and elated, and less all about the third-degree treatment.
- **School:** The benefactor knows the local high school principal and arranges to let the teen miss classes for training and crime-fighting if the student makes up for it with tutoring sessions.
- **Job:** The benefactor provides the teen hero with a fake job to cover her crime-fighting duties. Or, the benefactor provides doctor's notes for the teen hero's "unique medical condition."
- **Base of Operations:** Maybe it's an old hero base or a new building constructed for the teens, but the base may include an adult manager to chaperone and ensure the teens don't wreck the place.
- **Friends:** The benefactor provides the teen hero with a fake job that "requires" the teen to remain "on-call at all times" (jobs like caretaker, home care provider, ROTC training, etc.).

- **Significant Other:** This one is tricky, but might simply involve a good friend to both teen hero and SO covering for the hero's absence. Or, maybe it's just a mentalist making the SO believe he/she is in a happy, committed relationship...though don't be surprised if the mental-dupe of the teen proposes marriage, much to the chagrin of the flesh-and-blood hero.

Whatever assistance is rendered, dealing with real life while playing the hero is now more of a 25%–75% trade-off. A quarter of the time, the teen hero is contending with real life problems, while the remaining three-quarters of the time, he's kicking butt in the name of Lady Justice. Here are some campaign options:

- The benefactor is a retired hero who sees a desperate need to train young champions and remind them of yesterday's values. In exchange, he helps them however he can (offering them "work" to disguise their activities, speaking to their parents, etc).
- The benefactor is a sophisticated and benevolent artificial intelligence that cannot act on its own; it asks the young heroes for help in exchange for helping them with aspects of their lives (providing them with a base, falsifying medical reports to get the teen excused from school, etc.).
- This strange benefactor is actually a group of people who are grateful to the teen heroes or heroes in general. These folks run interference for heroes any way they can, whether it's providing counseling, tutoring, ensuring a hero's identity is kept secret from the media, holding fundraisers for low-income heroes, etc. Essentially, they're a very proactive booster club (see the **Hero Boosters Club** in **Chapter 4** for an example).
- The benefactor is a corporation, and while some heroes may frown upon corporate sponsorship, the corporation doesn't necessarily have to be evil or the hero's involvement deep. The corporation may provide perks if the heroes wear a corporate banner or use technology from said company.
- This benefactor is a wolf in sheep's clothing, providing the heroes with direction, assistance, and a base to better use them to his or her own benefit. Whether this individual is a villain in disguise or merely self-serving is another matter, but eventually, the heroes will discover the truth; how they react is another matter.

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT

It's gold, baby. In this light-hearted series, it isn't so much that realism got thrown out the window. Rather, the focus of the campaign is all about the costume escapades and almost zilch about real life...or at least the part of real life most teens would kill to drop. So, lying to the parents, struggling to make passing grades, and working a 4-10 shift at Pizzanias are all gone; gone as in out of the picture. All the other stuff like friends, love interests, super-cool bases, and pummeling bad guys are 100% in.

That's not to say real life doesn't rear its head every little while, but it's usually something involving a wild caper for an episode, not a recurring theme. The hero needs money for a date, so he lands a job for one episode to scare up the cash. The teen heroes' families are on a trip to the mega-amusement park Mouseland, so the heroes must fight the Toymonster's rampage at the park while keeping their powers hidden. There's a big final exam tomorrow morning, so the hero must help fight an alien invasion while finding time to study, and so forth.

Sample campaign options:

- The team has a benefactor supplying them with whatever they need to fight crime without any of the distractions of the real world; this means a base, tutors, and emo-clones to fool mom and dad through emotionally distant behavior.
- The teen heroes live together in their super-rad base, and nobody really asks why they don't go to school, have parents, or gain oodles of weight from all the pizza-scarfing; hey...we're talking the ultimate teen fantasy here, not what Social Services frowns on as a concept.
- The teens have a real life with real families, real school, and all-too-real homework, but when they get together, the Gamemaster assumes everything mundane-related has been handled already.
- The heroes have sold their souls to a corporation and now work for a paycheck. The pros are the heroes have a base, money, hot tutors, and parental consent. The bad news is the corporation decides what they do and who they fight. Is the corporation using the teens to test new products or to set market trends (wear this costume so the clothing stores all carry this new tie-in brand)? Is the corp civic-minded or doing good to improve their negative image ("Bio-Cull Destrux Int. cares about you!")? Or does the corporation have a contract with the city to assist their police department?

ALL IN THE FAMILY: FAMILY CAMPAIGNS

Welcome to teen hell, when your one claim to fame is something your entire family shares. In this situation, the whole family has powers, and the bonds of teamhood form along bloodlines. Maybe Mom and Dad passed their powers along to their offspring, or the siblings all received their powers from the same event. Doesn't matter, it's now like you're on permanent family vacation... with supervillains.

There are cool bits, like bonding with your brothers and sisters and gaining the respect of Mom and Dad (if they're on the team). There are bad bits, like parents constantly embarrassing you or your little brother getting underfoot. And then, there are the humiliating moments, like your dad in supertight spandex that's more revealing than the Speedo he wore pool-side once (gross!).

Here are some campaign options for this morsel of delight:

HEREDITARY

So Mom and Dad had the irradiated gene, and they passed it along to their kids. Now, the teen heroes are siblings with the chance that Mom and Dad may chaperone a few missions. If the kids are lucky, the parents are just being cautious until their kids learn the ropes. For those unlucky ones, though, the parents are "stage heroes," reliving their glory days as younger heroes, meaning major embarrassment for the kids. For the truly unfortunate few, Mom and Dad haven't learned how to let go yet; they may either insist on escorting their kids through every mission (inflicting them with major doses of humiliation), or worse, following them at a barely discreet distance and stepping in at every fumble or miss-step. Now, some folks might wonder what sort of parent would let their kids go out and fight crimes. However, unless the parent can depower their kid, which is one campaign option, the adults know from having powers themselves that their sons and daughters will need training. It's like driving a car or learning to hunt; what's important is the teen is responsible for his actions, and the best way to ensure that is to educate them. Of course, not all powered parents follow this philosophy, and not all teens follow in their parent's footsteps.

Here are some campaign options:

- Mom and Dad are villains, and now their kids are rebelling in true teen form, by becoming heroes and trying to undo the damage caused by their parents
- The parents are a pair of those rare über-cool married adults who understand kids need space to be kids; the parents trust that they raised their offspring responsibly and let the teens grow to be heroes on their own
- The globetrotting and mostly absent parents are neglectful in that passive way of "I have my life and you have yours"; the teen heroes must grow and mature despite the lack of guidance
- Mom & Dad mothballed their capes and cowls ages ago, and they're doing everything they can to "protect" their powered kids from becoming heroes in the hopes they'll live "normal" lives
- This single-parent household is one of adult relationships and themes; the older kids help Mom or Dad cope with single life, while the parent trains the kids to be better heroes than he or she ever was. One twist on this is that the parent is training his/her children to avenge the death of their other parent.
- Being a hero is the family business, and the parents are trying to persuade the teens to follow in their footsteps. They just haven't realized the world needs different kinds of heroes, and the teens need to find themselves before they can decide on who they want to be.

ACCIDENT

In this campaign, Mommy or Daddy accidentally dunked the kids in the radiation pool. Oops. Thank heavens that in hero-logic, radiation leads to powers and not radiation poisoning. Maybe Mom's cold fusion generator project in the basement misfired, or Dad took the teens for an orbital sight-seeing tour during a cosmic storm. Heck, maybe the parents didn't do a thing wrong, and the only reason little Jimmy is glowing electric pink is because he opened the particle accelerator door while the alarms were blaring. Regardless, everyone is now dealing with a new family phenomenon, and nobody has experience with superpowers. It's a family experiment gone wrong, and everyone must cope. If the campaign's all guilt-free, then the accident didn't do anything more than empower the heroes with no side-effects. If the Gamemaster wants to drop some angst into the formula, the accident turned one or more kids/family/friends into freaks. If heavy, teen drama action is required, then the experiment killed or will kill someone in the near future.

A key thing to remember here is that no matter what happens, parents will always feel guilty. Whether they caused the accident or their offspring wandered into one of their experiments, the parents will somehow feel responsible for putting their kids in harm's way. This also means they'll probably act overprotective, both because they don't know what fighting crime means, and because the small unknown is always a big scare. Part of the campaign may be about the teens growing into their own despite their parents.

Here are some campaign options:

- The parents were safely shielded when the accident turned their children into super-powered teens. Now, the teens must learn the extent of their abilities while their parents learn to let go.
- The entire family got zapped with powers. Now, everyone is on equal footing and learning the ropes together. This may strengthen



or weaken the relationships, depending on how family members can adapt.

- Not everyone survived the accident. Some family members got turned into monsters or simply died. Now, the teens are using their powers to fight the good fight, while the parents are trying to reverse the calamity to atone for their mistake (assuming they're still around, of course).
- The accident not only powered the kids, but a handful of their friends or cousins, too. Now, the parents who caused the mishap have become the de facto mentors for the teens, out of a sense of responsibility.
- The kids got their powers, but the parents never realized there was a mishap. Now, the teens are adventuring as costumed brothers and sisters and keeping their secrets from Mom and Dad. If another adult was responsible for the accident, then he or she may become the kids' mentor.

BESTOWED

The teens are given powers from a strange source. Maybe it was a dying alien or that talking mask in the strange curio shop, or maybe it was the toaster with James Earl Jones's voice after that lightning bolt hit the house. It could have been any number of tabloid-sounding events. The point is, the powers were given to the kids and given to

them for a specific reason. That's the main difference between powers that were accidental and powers that were bestowed; the latter means an extra layer of responsibility to use those abilities towards a specific end.

In this instance, it's not so important that the parents have powers as much as it's important the siblings share them. The teens may or may not keep this a secret from Mom or Dad, but there's a definite hierarchy among the brothers and sisters, especially in combat. The oldest might take the role of parent, acting like Mom or Dad. The middle one could resent being treated like a child and act out against the others. The youngest might be seen as needing protection.

Campaign options include:

- A dying alien gives the teens powers with the condition that they protect their world from intergalactic evil.

- After a plane crash, the kids are saved by a lost tribe and bequeathed powers to help restore the balance in the world between light and dark.
- The teens sneak into a supposedly haunted home, but they find a lost artifact that gives them the power to hide and protect the artifact from those seeking to use it for evil.
- The siblings receive strange powers that only work when they are in proximity to one another. This forces them to operate as a team and rely upon one another as equal partners.
- The teens witness the last stand of Earth's greatest hero and receive a share of his powers and responsibilities when he dies and his energies are unleashed. The problem is a villain was waiting to steal that power and might have succeeded if it hadn't been for those meddling kids.

PART-TIME SITUATIONS: IMPORTING ADULT CHARACTERS

QUESTION 18: CAN ADULT HEROES BENEFIT FROM THIS BOOK?

Sure you can! Your money is just as good as anyone's. Err, that is, you've got a campaign that's been steaming along and your Gamemaster decides to run a *Hero High* game. You don't want to end the campaign, but the allure of reliving your childhood with all that hindsight in your pockets is too alluring, so alluring in fact, that "alluring" is used four times in this sentence. What to do, what to do....

Here's one idea...zap the heroes and make them young again using that Plot Device the villain's been building. Sounds corny, but face it every superhero story has the heroes reliving a portion of their youth, whether with the mentality of a teen or grownup, or through a flashback.

This option allows existing campaigns where the heroes are firmly entrenched in adulthood to still experience the fun and mayhem of teen hero life. This means the teen hero thing isn't full-time, but something to use for the occasional or semi-occasional episode. After that, the heroes are able to return to their real lives.

Here are some ways to incorporate *Hero High* into existing adult games.

SIXTEEN CANDLES: TURNING ADULTS INTO KIDS

The big bad villain turns his age ray on the heroes, believing that as kids, they can no longer interfere in his plan. Or the Fae Queen turns everyone into children as she reorders reality into a fantasy-scape. Whatever the cause, the heroes are now back to the squeaky voice and zits phase. If they're lucky, they'll have the common sense of their adult selves, but where's the fun in that? If they're somewhat lucky, they'll have the attitudes of teenagers, but enough of their own memories to cooperate with one another. If they're completely unlucky (i.e. the Gamemaster is feeling particularly cruel), the heroes are not only regressed physically, but emotionally and mentally. That means they may have powers, but not the training to use them properly. They may feel a kinship with these other powered kids they woke up alongside, but none of the memories they shared as teammates. This means relearning everything all over again.

There are many advantages and disadvantages to running this kind of session. It's all based on what the hero loses.

POWER LEVELS

This is a given and something a regressed hero automatically loses. Dropping someone's age affects their power level. If you're looking at being 16 again, you're talking a 2 rank drop in power level. If you're looking at puberty, then you're talking a 3 or 4 rank drop in power level, while any drop below puberty might be as much as a 4 to 6 rank drop. This isn't just a reflection of overall power, but the loss of muscle-memory training and the fact that the body may not be at peak physical conditioning. All those factors count for something. The big advantage here, though, is that the teen heroes might be forced to rely on ingenuity or teamwork to handle the crisis.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

In this case, the memories are there, but not the emotional maturity. Regressed heroes may remember their adult lives, but it's something they see as a mystifying event. They can't understand how they got so old and made the compromises they did. They may swear to never become the adults they grew up to be, but it's not necessarily because who they are is bad. Change is a terribly scary thing, and the thought that who you are now is not who you will continue to be is frightening. Teens may not understand that evolution happens as a positive reaction to sacrifice or change. Some heroes caught in this predicament may even refuse to become adults again. That said, the advantage here is adult heroes can reconnect with who they were and re-embrace the ideals that once drove them to the hero business. They can find what they lost or forgot about along the way. They can also see their teammates in a new light and gain a new appreciation for one another.

MEMORY LOSS

In this case, the regression turns back the clock. The hero no longer remembers anything past his current age. He or she is truly a teenager in memory and personality. This means relearning the fundamentals and discovering how to work with a team of strangers. More importantly, it also means re-exploring relationships. Rivals may become fast friends as kids, while love interests that were never there are now in bloom. This could change the dynamic of the team when they return to adults, strengthening relationships or driving old ones apart, fostering a better understanding of one another or revealing uncomfortable truths. The flipside is the instinct of the panic-stricken is to return to anything

familiar. What happens when these teens, who may be frightened and confused by the world that suddenly changed, try to return home to see their parents or friends who know them as adults?

Here are some plot or game options:

- A villain turns his de-evolution ray on the heroes, but they only receive a partial burst. Now, the heroes are at a physical disadvantage and must find and defeat a villain who was already tough when they were adults.
- The mad Fae Queen alters the world into a medieval realm and turns everyone into children—physically, emotionally, and mentally (which means politicians and celebrities remain largely untouched). Now, the heroes quest to find the other child-champions and fight the Fae Queen before she turns Earth into a fairy realm forever.
- The campaign begins with the teens having powers, but the world they remember hasn't existed for 20 years. The heroes discover they've been mentally and emotionally regressed; they are, in fact, a missing team of the world's pre-eminent heroes. Can they uncover what happened to them and regain what they've lost, or will they choose to remain kids?
- This flashback option is one where the heroes realize they have worked together before as teens, and someone mind-wiped the experience from them. Now, the flashback is them uncovering the memories and working toward the big reveal of who messed with their minds.

FREAKY FRIDAY: BODY SWAPPING AT ITS BEST

It's the old body-swapping routine, where a team of heroes swaps places with a group of kids for whatever reason. It could be some cosmic joke care of that intergalactic rascal, the Star Mimeyoulookgood or maybe it's some ancient artifact some advanced civilization left behind when they moved off-planet. It doesn't matter. The important thing is the well-oiled, muscle-thick piece of perfect machinery you call a body has been jacked. Congratulations. Now, you're in someone where hormones rage and do strange things to parts of your body.

Your powers may be gone, alongside all that muscle-memory and conditioning you practiced so hard to perfect, but at least you have your mind. Wow. You're so screwed. If you're lucky, the teen has a power physical training, or you have some way of bringing your abilities across with you. You'll need every advantage you can find to get your bodies back. If you're unlucky, you're temporarily stuck in the body of someone who didn't exercise or study very hard. Even worse, every time you try calling up some higher-education skill, some useless bit o' trivia from *South Park* or *World of Warcraft* pops out.

Here are some game or campaign options:

- Highly-intelligent teens decide to skip that pesky growth spurt thing by stealing the characters' bodies, leaving the heroes stuck in theirs.
- The heroes switch bodies deliberately with a group of children to investigate a villain or organization that preys on kids. It can be anything from the Murder League's lethal Murder Houses, to a young villain kidnapping kids to be his friends, to someone murdering children or harming them for rituals or kicks.
- An accident causes the heroes and a team of costumed teens to switch places. Both teams must now settle any potential differences between their two camps to switch back in time (to stop a disaster or a villain).

There are two more things to consider with this option. The first is that the teen whose body you've inadvertently jacked belongs to

someone...someone with a life and a family. You pull a vanishing act, and "your" family will report you missing. You start acting "strange," and they'll ground you or call the cops. Try to blend in to avoid the hassle, however, and you'll have tons of fun trying to fake being this individual. The second drawback, and probably the big one, is that some teen is now squatting in your house, and he has your powers. Here are some of the bad things that can come of that:

- The teen goes on a joyride, buzzing buildings at mach one, flying around naked, getting drunk (hello legal drinking age!), or any other juvenile frat boy behavior.
- The teen commits some inadvertent felony, like visiting a school-mate he has a crush on and trying to sweep them off their feet. Now, you're wanted for soliciting minors.
- The teen suddenly has the power to pay back every bully who ever harassed her. Now, she's out for vengeance, and you're on television, giving some kid a noogie and screaming "Who's the <CENSORED> now!"
- The teen gains access to artifacts or technology under your care. Now, he's opened the gate to that Zombie Earth and gone in to "check things out," while leaving the portal open behind him.
- The teen has your body but his eating habits. Suddenly, after all your hard-fought years of abstinence and regimen, he reintroduces the concept of "lack of exercise," carb cravings, and double-fried donuts. Pray you aren't gone long.
- The teen is one of your biggest fans. So, she trains hard and fights crime...and proves herself better at being you than you were! She teaches you new tricks about your powers, and the public seems to really like this "new" and more wholesome version of you. Perhaps, for some, that's the worse thing that could happen.

13 GOING ON 30: KIDS TURNING INTO ADULTS

This adventure option is a 180-degree switch on the adults turning into kids thing. Yup, you guessed it, it's all about the teen hero somehow entering the puberty tunnel at Mach 5 and blasting out the other side like bad Mexican food on a hot day. It might be a time-shift event where the teen becomes himself as an adult. It might be an instant transformation where he turns into an adult overnight.

What? Still trying to push that bad Mexican food analogy out of your head? Good luck!

Regardless, the important thing is the teen hero always retains his perspective and outlook. This way, he can question the events that might have changed him into something he fears the most...his parents. Or, maybe becoming older is a way of telling the hero her life isn't so bad and everything will turn out okay. Whether it's about recapturing overlooked values, a warning of things to come, or an appreciation for how life will turn out, there should be a greater purpose to setting someone's biological clock way ahead.

The Gamemaster should understand what that sort of shift might mean to the different heroes and how it might affect their personalities. It could force heroes to reevaluate their goals; suddenly that "Seek Vengeance" motive might vanish (along with your intricate storyline). A hero may not like who she becomes as an adult and decide to go from power-slinging crime-fighter to charity work champion.

The shift into adulthood also brings its share of potential misadventures, usually tied into the circumstances that changed the heroes in the first place:

- Through a mystical curse, the teen heroes are aging quickly. Now, they must find a way to break the curse before they die of old age. Meanwhile, they get to experience everything about getting older... fast.
- A terrible event changes the future. Desperate to alter the present, a group of adult heroes become vessels for their younger selves, so they can see the future and find some way of stopping it. Of course, the teen heroes might find themselves stranded in the future long enough to appreciate the true horrors of that time.
- Either by accident or deliberate action, the heroes become adults and remain adults until the effects wear off...a week or two later. How do they communicate with their friends and family? Will they bother letting them know not to worry? What do they do for food and where do they sleep? If nobody in the hero community recognizes them, are they treated differently? Better? Worse?
- The heroes are somehow thrust into the bodies of their future selves at the point of a major crisis, personal and global. Perhaps their adult counterparts were on the brink of making a major mistake and the cosmic-forces-that-be pulled the switch to bring a fresh and simpler perspective into the mix.

CLOCKSTOPPERS: TIME-TRAVEL!

It's one small step for man, one quantum leap for humankind. This variant of revisiting one's youthful past is a matter of time travel. It's like walking into a photo album when Mom and Dad were young again and wearing the then-hip styles from ages ago. It's a blast of nostalgia and an opportunity to relive another age of superhero history. Who were the heroes and heroines back then, who did they fight, and what were the ideals of the time?

These episodes can be sweet, bittersweet, or just plain bitter, depending on what the times meant to the hero. Have the heroes gone back by accident to relive some painful portion of their lives, have they gone back to rectify said situation, or is reliving the past just something to flesh out the heroine's background? Regardless of whether the hero sees the past as an adult or a kid, the story should be a personal one. The heroes need something to anchor them to the past for the adventure arc to hold any significance. Heck, maybe the hero isn't thinking along those lines until he sees himself as a child or sees Mom or Dad before their deaths. Will he try to change history? Will she simply watch from afar and suffer in silence?

The big problem with traveling back in time with knowledge of the future is altering that oh-so certain future. This isn't a terrible thing if the Gamemaster plans for the event. What if the hero saves his father from

the car crash that killed him? What if the heroine warns her younger self not to enter the strange man's car? What if the team saves the lives of an entire family from a horrific accident, thereby stopping the only survivor from becoming their arch-villain? There can be benefits to this if the Gamemaster works the repercussions of those events through to logical conclusions. What do the heroes know that can affect the past? Are you willing to allow those changes to occur? Saving a family member from death or stopping a personal tragedy from occurring could change the hero or heroine, robbing them of the reason why they started down the heroic path. Changing a villain's course in life could make a hero of them. Or maybe they still become a villain because they're *that* breed of evil.

Additionally, nothing says the life changed is necessarily for the better. Save Mom from tumbling down the stairs, and she may later suffer from the debilitating effects of MS. Save a villain's family, and maybe you just foiled his first murder plot? Go to save a Silver Age hero from a "mysterious death" and discover he was actually attempting to commit suicide. Not everything has to be twisted around, but those events the Gamemaster considers crucial to the campaign can be fudged in the name of drama!

Here are some time-travel story arcs:

- A villain steps into the past to stop the heroes while they're still young, and the heroes must stop him from killing their families (and maybe deal with a few previous life events). Unfortunately, the time-travel event puts them in their own youthful bodies.
- A mystical artifact is destroyed in the past that could have saved the future from a terrible event. Now, the heroes must use their younger selves as a conduit to access the past and convince the heroes of the age to hide the device to help the future. Naturally, the heroes of the age are not easily convinced.
- The heroes awake one morning to find themselves in the past as their young selves. Was the future they envisioned just a shared dream? Or have they returned to the past to right those wrongs they could never touch?
- The heroes travel to the past as their older selves to stop history from being altered. Unfortunately, the events happen in or around the areas where some (if not all) of the heroes/heroines were raised. Now they must avoid changing their own pasts, while stopping the villain from doing the same.
- The team of heroes find themselves back in the past, reliving their lives...only events are not playing out as they should. There are historical discrepancies (including heroes that were unpowered as teens discovering they have powers now). To return home, they must locate the reason for the changes and rectify the problem.

PUMP UP THE VOLUME: THEMES

QUESTION 19: DO WE GET OUR OWN THEME SONG?

Um, no. This is about theme in the *literary* sense...not theme as in the music all the new television shows are playing in some vain attempt to appear "kewl." Though, if your campaign is sliding in the ratings, you might consider introducing current Top 40 theme songs to impart emotional resonance and replacing your aging heroes with younger, hipper ones with cool catch phrases. It's a little technique television programs use right before the execs panic and shoot the "jump-the-shark" episode that kills the series....

But that's beside the point.

Theme is the idea behind the game. What is the campaign about? What are the kids striving for or is the campaign just for fun? That's totally legit as a response, but it's important the Gamemaster knows this in advance.

The reason why theme is important is because it gives the players an idea of what to expect in terms of content, and it allows the entire group to create heroes with something in common. If the theme is painful growth (psychological/spiritual growth, not growth as in cancer), then a hero called Bobo-Rex the Dino-Clown ranks really high in the "bad ideas" department.

Theme also adds an extra layer of sour cream goodness to the nacho plate of adventures. (Yes, again with the Mexican food metaphors.) The Gamemaster can give various story arcs an effective punch by tying an adventure's end into the theme or letting the heroes improvise and explore their personal themes in the context of the story.

Theme is most often that bit of interpersonal exploration that happens between heroes on their downtime and in between fights. It's what makes them a family and what makes them more human. It's also the guts and soul of drama, the inner and outer conflicts between individuals. Without themes, the game runs the risk of being two-dimensional. Again, not an issue if the point of the game is to, y'know, have fun? It's a strange concept to some folks who didn't clue into the fact that it's called a "game."

MECHANICS

The Gamemaster can award characters a hero point during the adventure if they use their personal or the campaign's theme to create an unexpected story event or roleplaying moment. It must be something that adds to the story, not detracts from it.

INDIVIDUAL THEMES

It's possible the campaign doesn't have a central theme. Instead, each hero has a personal theme they're exploring, making each character unique in their approach. This kind of diversity means the Gamemaster can create different story-arcs that not only appeal to the individual teen-hero, but that the entire team can explore as well. One heroine's quest for acceptance might enable the entire team to step forward to make her feel accepted.

Think of this as the television format, where the theme is almost episodic, and each episode deals with a different character, their personality, and their relationships with one another.

MECHANICS

The hero might gain a hero point for a complication when trying to overcome a limitation based on a personal theme in order to save his friends/teammates.

TEAM THEMES

With team themes, a central idea brought the group together or keeps them together. Each hero retains his or her individuality by dealing with and exploring the theme differently, but they are more like a close-knit family (with all the drama that implies).

For better or worse, the team is a unit; they need one another to work well, and when one person is gone, everyone suffers for it. If one person is in pain, they all feel it; not in that Vulcan mind-meld kind of way, but more in the empathic sense. One person suffers, and they all want to help. It's the nature of sharing a strong common bond.

Now, you're probably wondering how a group of people share a theme. Easy—it might have something to do with their background, where they all have a common origin story or defining moment. It could be their parents all died, or they all received powers at the same time. Maybe they share the same background or immediate environment. For a family of heroes, the theme may be discovering the strength of their familial ties; for kids from the same neighborhood, the theme may be about civic pride and how by improving the life of one person, the community prospers as a result.

Another way to share a theme is by having a common goal. Maybe it's apprehending a master villain who wronged all the kids. Maybe it's about reclaiming something taken from them all.

MECHANICS

So, the heroes share a common theme...what does that mean? The heroes might be able to encourage one another when dealing with an element of that theme by pooling their hero points and drawing from that pool as needed. Again, they might be able to do this if the circumstance relates directly to the theme (meaning that was the Gamemaster's intention) and only if the Gamemaster agrees to it.

TYPES OF THEMES

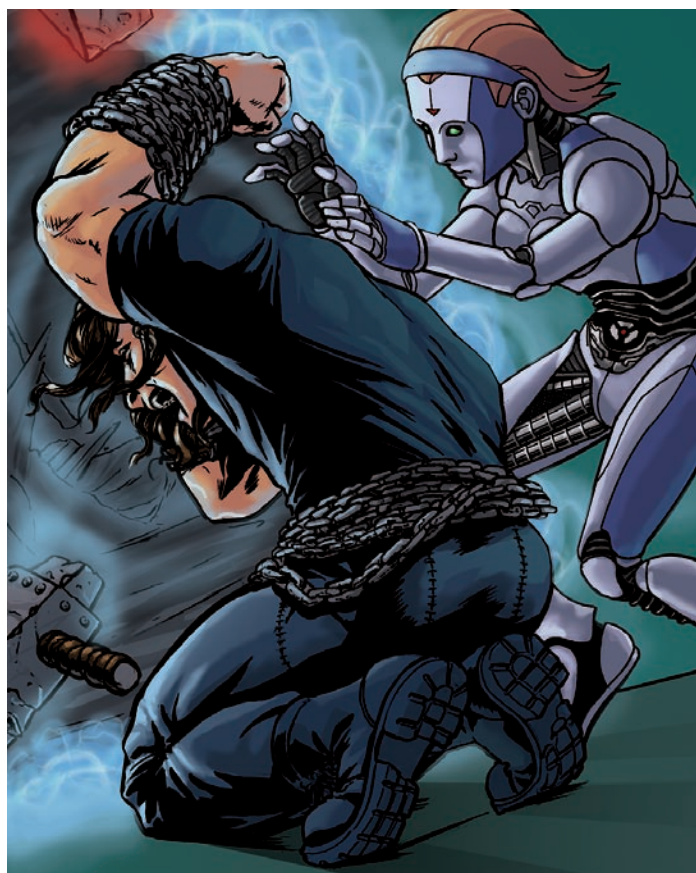
Don't think of this as a buffet line of ready-made themes, but rather like ingredients you can use to mix up your own themes in your *Hero High* games.

ACCEPTANCE

The heroes have long been marginalized, and now they're looking for acceptance, whether in their new roles as heroes or just as individuals. They might be looking for acceptance from a group (the cool crowd, other heroes, etc.), from family, or even from a specific person. Heroes might gain hero points when they either overcome the need for acceptance in a particular situation or gain acceptance from someone. Now here's the tricky thing, that acceptance doesn't have to be positive. Crushing on someone means the person seeking acceptance might do something of which they're not proud, but the thought of finally being appreciated might strengthen their resolve.

DISENFRANCHISED

This theme deals with teen heroes being on the outside of society, outside the accepted norms of life. It might be their quest to make a



place for themselves in society, it might be about surviving self-destructive behavior or surrendering to it, or it might be about how being the non-conformist isn't the negative society pretends it to be. Hero points might come in moments when a hero uses her disenfranchisement to her benefit, thereby validating her views on society or by proving society wrong about her. Again, it can be a negative thing if the hero believes the worst of society and gains a hero point when he's proven right.

FAMILY

Family...that wonderfully slippery eel you can never fully grasp and hold. And, it bites sometimes. Man-oh-man does it bite. Themes involving family might involve things like: "You never choose your family," "Blood is thicker than water," "Mom and Dad don't get me," and "My children don't listen." Familial themes might be about discovering the strength of a parent's love, familial obligations directing one's life, or how the lessons of the parents influence the child. Heroes might gain a hero point if they apply Mom or Dad's advice to a situation, or when they strengthen their family ties despite adversity.

FUN

Not so much a theme as a reason to get together with friends, gorge on junk food, play videogames, and occasionally trash the villain of the week. Fun simply means the teens are typical and well-adjusted, life is a hoot, and nothing is so serious that it stops being enjoyable. This was placed as a theme so that no rule-nazi could say "Hey! It doesn't say you can do that in the game!" It does now, and in case there are any arguments, fun covers zany, crazy, whacky, bonkers, wild, and anything else of a madcap nature.

GENDER

Gender is not giggling at words like "Regina," "titmouse," and "balls." It does mean getting strength from the exploration of sex. (Stop giggling!) What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a man? And if you don't think it's important to teen identity, take a look at Emo and rave-kids who bend their gender (again with the giggling?) in defiance of social norms, goth-boys who wear make-up, or folks going to *Rocky Horror* in drag.

Gender can be a fluid thing to teens exploring their identities, and it can be a personal theme. It can also be a societal theme for gender-exclusive cultures...like the fierce Amazons or their uppity cousins, the sororities. Frats count, too, as do male-dominated sports. Gaining a hero point might include succeeding in a trial despite some opposition to you for your gender. Y'know, stuff like, "You can't do math, you're a girl!" or "You can't wear high heels, it clashes with your penis." See **Sexuality** for related themes.

GROWTH

You see it all the time, from the teens trying to adjust and catch-up to their changing world to the teen-hero team looking to be treated like adults. Or, growth can refer to your evolving maturity (or serious lack thereof). This theme deals with the accelerated growth all teens must endure in that all-too short transition from kid to adult (which always seems all-too-long at the time). In the span of six years, the world changes, and your body becomes some new enigma that constantly messes with your head. People don't seem to know how to treat you, either. They tell you to grow up, yet they won't give you the privileges that go with it. It's even worse among adult heroes who suddenly think they have to protect you. With this theme, you could gain a hero point whenever you do something adult-like and prove wiser than your years,

or if you frustrate a villain or adult hero by doing something supremely juvenile.

IDENTITY

Face it, you go from learning everything you know from Mom and Dad to suddenly realizing you want to be anyone *but* Mom and Dad. For this theme to work, you might need to figure out who your parents are and how they act. After that, identity is exploring what kind of person you'd like to become and whether it's a good fit or not. Sure, you'd love to be a rocker god or the latest hawtness on the Hollywood Red Carpet, but maybe it's in you to be the tech-savvy bookworm or the dark and dour mistress of the night.

Identity is more than just finding the true you, it's finding and being happy with what you find. It can also mean trying to change something in your character you perceive as a negative quality. Heroes might gain hero points if they succeed at something that draws on their true personality.

IMAGE

Ah, image, the thing that makes people unhappy for being too skinny or too fat or too whatever. It also strikes the beautiful people by attacking their self-confidence with perceived flaws like a slightly crooked nose, a beauty mark, or some other trivial nonsense. Image is all about admiring society's ideal man or woman or idolizing a specific individual who personifies that ideal. It's about disliking one's self or maybe just studying a personal flaw too closely. Study a specific brushstroke on a painting and you fail to appreciate the painting itself.

This theme deals with accepting the imperfections in ourselves or in others, or perhaps it's about working to change them. Regardless, the character might gain a hero point for overcoming an image-based fear and being proven right to do so.

RELIGION

Religion is tricky in that "Watch out, that ravenous cougar has a landmine strapped to his back!" kind of way. Religion as a theme can run in any number of directions. It can be about a specific faith targeting heroes or the teen team for being the "minions of evil" (if the team stops the bombing of an abortion clinic, for example, someone's not going to be happy about that). It can be about a cult venerating a hero as one of their long lost prophets. Or, it can be a positive exploration of heroism in the context of one's faith or possibly even finding superabilities through faith. The legends of Samson and Joan D'Arc might have had a heroic corollary. Regardless, heroes might gain hero points by proving a religious persecution wrong in regards to heroes or by drawing on faith to triumph over an ordeal.

ROMANCE

Romance is almost as bad as religion, and it can be just as rewarding. The campaign or hero's theme might revolve around unrequited love, or once it's answered, holding on to the object of one's desire. Of course, you can turn that around 180 degrees, cue the creepy music and the pet-rabbit-in-the-pot routine, and voila...instant stalker and obsession story-arc. And face it, any teen hero with a Charisma 16+ or the Attractive feat is stalker bait. Well...technically that isn't romance, but romance can be one-sided.

If this is the theme, the heroes might gain hero points saving the ones they love from harm or doing something incredibly romantic for them. Giving up your designs on someone for an evening so they can be happy with the person they truly love might also count. As for the

stalker issue, maybe finding a way of distancing yourself from said stalker without stranding them on the moon or teleporting them into a mountain (just saying) could earn the player a hero point.

SEXUALITY

Even more than romance, teens have to deal with their increasing sexuality, and that poses more challenges for some than it does for others, especially for teens with a growing awareness of bisexuality or homosexuality.

The reactions they receive or exhibit might run from tentative acceptance, to attempts to “save” them from their “choice,” to outright hostility. What happens to the openly lesbian heroine if she encounters a homophobic hero? How does a teen hero deal with his own uncertain sexuality upon encountering a hero (or a villain, for that matter) who is completely out? Is the teen hero responsible for representing “his community” as a gay teen? Is a heroine a lesbian only in her mundane life and still in the closet while in costume?

There is no right or wrong answer to these questions because it's all opinion. Even the gay community itself is divided on subjects like outing closeted gays or whether bisexuality “truly” exists. This theme and the questions it explores are many and diverse, and Gamemasters can award hero points if the character does something positive in dealing

with them. Other young heroes might also earn hero points by hitting milestones in their sexuality (like confiding in a friend, telling one's parents, etc.) or making an effort to accept their friend's sexuality (like defending them from verbal attacks or supporting their efforts to come out).

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality and religion aren't mutually exclusive. You can be spiritual but not follow the tenets of a particular religion, and you can be religious without being spiritual. Spirituality is an emotional exploration of self in relation to something greater (Gaia, God, Allah, Yahweh, the universal spirit, the breathing cosmos, or what have you). It implies an attempt to connect with a greater plane of existence than the material one. It could be the heroine trying to find balance in her life or the hero trying to reach beyond the words of his religion's holy texts. Regardless, the theme of spirituality is an attempt to foster a relationship with some universal force. In a superhero setting where there are clearly established other planes of existence, this sort of thing can be even more significant. The Gamemaster may award hero points to a hero who rises above the moment and refuses to let it drag him down; it might come when a heroine discovers something new about herself because of her spiritual exploration.

GROSSE POINT BLANK: CONFLICT

QUESTION 20: CONFLICT? THAT'S LIKE FIGHTING THE BAD GUYS, RIGHT?

Sort of.... We're talking about conflict as it relates to the theme and the stories.

Story is simple. Story is the character trying to reach a goal. Conflict is everything that keeps getting in the way. Same thing with theme. Theme works on achieving a goal, and conflict is everything stopping you from reaching it. And yes, that means conflict doesn't have to be a drag-out, bare knuckles fight...not that beating the collective stuffing, tar, and crud out of somebody isn't fun. It's quite therapeutic, in fact.

Not that this book condones violence. We encourage you to turn off your explosive eyeballs and try to talk the villain down from his orgy of death and destruction first. Best of luck.

Now, the reason why conflict is an important section for teen heroes is not only because of the unique conflicts found in a teenager's life, but also because of how said teenager might deal with those conflicts.

HEATHERS: HOW TEENS DEAL WITH CONFLICT

The fact is, teens no longer accept what parents, teachers, or adults have to say at face value. Couple that with the fact they've learned how to debate, think, and argue (we still haven't figured out who taught them, but we'll get to the bottom of it eventually and stop all that sass), and they'll pretty much debate everything you have to say. It's perfectly normal; they're debating as an exercise of power and as a way of protecting their territory and identity. And, they'll question everything because it's part of the creative learning process. They ask why and learn from the answer or ignore it outright.

Teens tend to see things in polar opposites. Call it a passionate view if you want, but life is much more black and white than gray-scale. If they agree with something, they'll support it wholeheartedly; if they don't like it, they'll be vocal about it. Unfortunately, it's also easier for

teens to get violent about a situation. It's part of their frustration for failing to convince someone else to see the oh-so-obvious truths that are apparent to them. Again, this isn't true of all teens. Some teens are empathic or less likely to fight out their problems. Others aren't.

Remember that thing that was mentioned earlier? You know...the thing? The one about the motivation centers of the brain not being as well-developed as an adult's? Anyone? The one about teens seeking a quick fix to gain the rewards? Hello? Oh, wait...that's mentioned later. Nevermind. Well, anyway, bring that into conflict resolution and you have teens shouldering their way through problems rather than being patient. It's only after that they realize the repercussions of their actions may have created more problems than they solved. Essentially, the ends justify the means. That's where the excuses come from.

MECHANICS

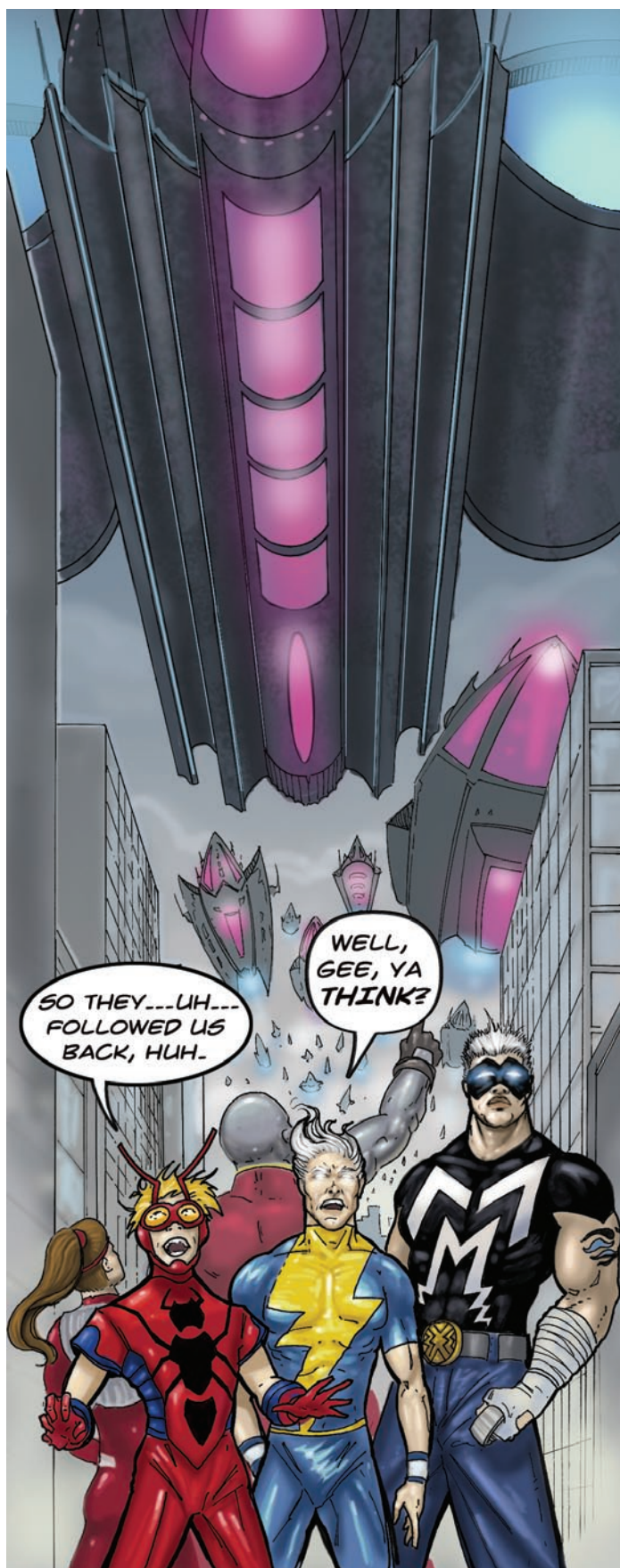
The Gamemaster may let teen heroes take the Impatient drawback (page 21) to reflect the character's approach to solving situations or the Temper complication (*M&M*, page 123) when things don't go the teen's way.

TEN THINGS I HATE ABOUT YOU: TYPES OF CONFLICT

Okay, well, maybe not ten, but definitely four. Conflicts come in many shapes and sizes. Because some of these might be tied to themes, it's often best if the Gamemaster (hey, a typo—someone should fix that)* decides the types of conflict he wants to explore ahead of time. That way, groups playing a simple and fun game aren't suddenly confronted by their angry parents because the Gamemaster wants to explore an intrafamilial conflict.

(*Hey, your mother doesn't work here.—The Developer)

(*Hey, I do, but they won't let me fix it! —The Editor)



INTRAPERSONAL

The conflict is an inner one...no, not like the hero has an upset stomach. Inner, as in emotional or psychological, a tummy ache of the mind, if you will. The hero is struggling to function properly and hide that inner conflict. Maybe she's feeling guilty for constantly lying to her parents, or maybe he's confused about his sexuality. Maybe he's afraid he'll become like Dad, or she's afraid she'll let her friends down when they need her the most. Essentially, the conflict is the hero wrestling with an inner demon. It could be a secret, a character flaw, or a truth the hero's never shared. Heck, it could be the teen thinking her butt looks too big in that costume.

Another interpretation of intrapersonal is that the conflict is literally a Jekyll and Hyde schism. The character is in conflict with another part of himself, whether it's an inner voice he can barely resist, a second personality that takes control of her body, or something that can manifest outside the hero's body. With teens, the "second personality" could be a defense mechanism to a traumatic experience or a repressed persona. It could be the hero's way of dealing with his fears (by isolating them) or a heroine's way of playing the hero. In some cases, this kind of intrapersonal conflict can even manifest as the Involuntary Transformation drawback (*M&M*, page 126).

INTERPERSONAL

This conflict exists between two people, be it two sisters constantly bickering, a teen dealing with a bully, or a hero tackling his arch-nemesis. This level of conflict can be tied into a personal theme and is especially strong if the other person represents what the hero could become (for better or worse). Think of it this way, the other person is a funhouse mirror, where the heroine is looking at her reflection, but one twisted in a critical way. The other person might represent the hero's angst if he succumbs to despair or the heroine's dreams if she pursues them. The conflict then becomes more personal, because both people recognize something of themselves in the other and may react out of jealousy, anger, fear, or even hope. It's the way parents give their kids advice because they've "been there," and the way teens ignore that advice because they're certain they "won't make the same mistakes."

This can also serve as the inspiration behind a hero's arch-nemesis. Many villains appear to be a hero's polar opposite, but what makes them a long-time and recurring foe is that they also share common ground. In any other life, they could have been friends or lovers. But what separates them now is circumstance or an event. Now the hero fears what the villainess represents: the ease with which one can plummet from the heavens. The villainess hates the hero, in turn, for what the hero represents: a better life denied her.

Another common source of friction and conflict between teens is conflicted and misdirected emotions. You feel one way about someone, but you act another way. Or, how you feel about someone makes you act like a different person around them. A hero who loves someone may try to push that person away, or he may act like a jerk around them. In this type of conflict, both parties dance around one another, too afraid to be the first one to speak out or too worried about the repercussions of their actions.

Then, of course, there's the straightforward type of conflict where two people simply don't get along. They don't like one another, maybe they just disagree on points, or one's a bully and likes pushing the other one around. Regardless, the friction exists, and there's a good chance it may become physical, especially if one of the teens feels pushed into a corner.

INTRAGROUP

Intragroup can be any friction that happens within a group, a team, or a family. It can be something as simple as sibling rivalries or the differ-

ent members vying for the team's alpha spot. At its most innocent, the conflict within a team might be a form of friendly competition where the teens poke fun at one another. Most of the time, it's harmless, but sometimes it backfires if a teammate's had enough.

More serious conflicts might happen within a family environment where the sibling competition is fiercer or where a teen is clashing with the parents. This is to be expected and can be a relatively safe theme to explore, since the familial ties mean fights can get quite heated, but they often withstand the friction better.

Taking this a step further, in dysfunctional families and bureaucratic organizations, the fights can be downright vicious and backbiting. Physical violence among teens at this point isn't unheard of, and unless resolved fast, it will result in teens leaving the family/organization. Teams cannot survive this level of constant friction, but it may prove a good launch point for a team if they divorce themselves from a larger group because they found common ground with one another.

INTERGROUP

Two groups or organizations are in contention with one another. It might be the government versus the heroes, another hero team in conflict with

the teens, or a villain group against the characters. Regardless, the type of conflict might be verbal, though there's always the chance the fight becomes physical, especially if one group constantly thwarts the other.

On the non-violent side of things, this kind of conflict usually springs up when one group opposes the actions or existence of another group such as a citizen group trying to disband the teen group because they're minors, the government trying to make the teens accountable, or another hero group that believes the teen-champions are too reckless. In this instance, one group might bring to bear social or political pressure to achieve their ends. Eventually, though, either the teen group or their rivals are going to get frustrated. And when that happens, someone is going to cross the line.

That brings us to the old-fashioned "talk with your fists" approach to conflict resolution, a path teens can easily be prodded along. In this instance, a villain group might form from all the individual villains the heroes have bested, the government decides that forcing accountability on someone requires a physical component, or the other heroes might decide to take away the teen team's powers. That's when things really get nasty. We're talking changing the face of the campaign nasty.

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT: PLAYING TEEN HEROES

QUESTION 21: CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO BE A TEENAGER?

I doubt even teenagers know how to be teenagers. It's just something they are, or it's that transition from what they were into what they'll become. Part of being a teen is trying to find your place in the world. You started out with a collection of lessons and parables that you learned from watching Mom and Dad interact with the world. Then, once you hit puberty or a little before, you got tired of people taking you for granted. You started rebelling against the things that were expected of you because you didn't want folks to think they have you all figured out. And, man, is it annoying when they start assuming things about you. You're not that kid anymore.

More so, you're also achieving some independence. The weekends belong to you and your friends, for example; it's not family time anymore. You're not a child. But what are you? You're not a kid, agreed. Your changing body is proof of that. You're not an adult either; or, at least, they won't let you become one. It's like you and your friends are the only ones who realized you're not kids anymore.

There's another part of being a teen, and that's social acceptance (aka peer pressure). There's always been a need to fit in, and in the very consumer-oriented society of North America, there's a huge amount of pressure on wearing the latest trends or sporting the latest gear. If you don't buy it or can't afford it, you're on the outs with the popular crowd. And if that happens, it's Mom and Dad that you blame, because they're the ones holding the purse strings.

Throw in the spikes of development, attrition of gray matter in the frontal lobe, the biochemical stew that's cooking in your body, and the raging hormones, and there's a lot to consider about being a teen.

That said, it's not always hell. Being a teen can mean forging new relationships and exploring life on your own terms. It can mean having fun and not taking everything so seriously. Being a teen means living life unafraid, because the entire world is full of possibility, and the future is anything you can make of it.

This section is all about being a teen hero and the things that come with it. From the drama to school, from hanging with friends to fashion, from types of villains you'll face to your parents (and there will be days you can't tell the diff between the two), this section is your guide.

THE INCREDIBLES: THE TEEN MINDSET?

QUESTION 22: SO, HOW'S A TEEN HERO DIFFERENT FROM NORMAL TEENS?

Well, they don't have to be. They can be like every other teen out there, meaning they can be hard-working or slackers, generous or petty, serious or capricious. That said, there is one difference between a regular teenager and your typical glow-in-the-dark heroine, and that's motivation.

Some studies suggest that the teen brain doesn't have the motivation centers developed like an adult's. The gratification centers are tuned just fine, but the part of the brain that pushes someone to work hard to earn said gratification is underdeveloped. It's the current theory on why kids are more susceptible to drinking and the other big evils. An adult can work with long-term goals to achieve gratification, but a kid is less likely to have the carry-through, hence, the reason for the quick shortcuts to money and pleasure.

You could use this argument to say that a teen hero has better developed motivation triggers. That part of his brain is better developed, so he knows what he wants to do, and he guns for it 100%.

There's another brain-behavior related theory that says just before puberty the brain goes into overdrive, building excess grey matter. The body then gets rid of those extraneous cells and keeps most of the pathways that are hardwired through repetition (things that the teen does consistently like languages, sciences, or sports). And because the teen is a natural with whatever he's been hardwired to do, he's empowered by it. With teen heroes, you could say that because teens gain their powers relatively young, the use of powers is more natural to them; it's something hardwired into their brains. So like a kid who's addicted to his

hobbies, a teen hero is addicted to using his powers. It's an extension of him, and it stops him from just slacking or letting his powers atrophy.

That said, feel free to drop the scientific theorems and quantitative gobbledegook. Life would be boring if everything was explained away in scientific or biochemical terms. Having powers is a rush. It's the ultimate wish fulfillment, and it's the Holy Grail of self-empowerment. Teen heroes get a license, they go out and drive and hang with their friends; they develop powers, they go out and use them for good or bad. Frankly, who wouldn't want to be someone they idolized as a kid?

THE DRAMA: INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS

QUESTION 23: SO, WHAT'S WITH ALL THE DRAMA?

Drama is huge in teen-life; it's part of live large, drive fast, and take everything personally. You fight with your boyfriend? It's the end of the world. You meet a really cool girl? She's the best. It's the reason you hear larger than life statements like, "I am SO hungry," "Could you BE any dumber?" and "He was TOTALLY hot."

Drama doesn't exist on its own. It needs other people with whom you can be dramatic. We call these folks Non-Player Characters (NPCs), and NPCs can be your friends, your family, your helpers, and even your teammates. The Gamemaster controls the NPCs, meaning she also controls their actions and reactions; no, that doesn't mean it's time to suck up to her...well, okay, maybe a little will help. What this means is that the Gamemaster will try to offer the hero different NPCs to reflect those themes, conflicts, and dramatic moments that best suit the teen hero. So,

to partake of the drama and other goodies the campaign will throw your way, here is the cast of NPCs who'll play an important part of your life.

LEAN ON ME: FRIENDS, PEERS, AND SIBLINGS

Friends are the family you make, instead of the ones you inherit. They'll stick by you through thick or thin, or betray you something silly when you get something they want. You might hate some and love others. But they're always the friends you'll remember the longest. Peers...you share the same age and that's about it. As for siblings, your relationship with them matures as you do. They can become friends and confidantes down the road.

There are several different types of friends, peers, and siblings, each of them with something different to bring to the table. The thing to bear in mind is that whether they have powers or not, they are relatively close to your age (plus or minus a few grades). Secondly, a person could fill multiple roles, like best friend and rival, or crush and secret admirer.

THE ALPHA

This person is the leader of a popular clique, be it the jocks, the cheerleaders, or anyone else. They are incapable of listening or following other people, no matter how badly they're out of their league. Essentially, they lead by sheer force of will or popularity, and not because they're a good influence on others. They're only loyal to themselves, and while they demand absolute devotion from their cadre, they offer nothing in return.

DRAMATIC TENSIONS

The alpha hates you as a student but idolizes you as a hero. The alpha has a dark personal secret that you discover, one which would ruin him or her. The alpha is your friend, even though you don't agree with their methods. The alpha is dating one of your siblings. The alpha gets into trouble, but his/her followers are always willing to take the blame.

THE BEST FRIEND

Your best bud, your gal pal, your sister, the one person you'd trust with your secrets and your life...this individual is irreplaceable. If you lie to them, you feel guiltier than that farm kid who shot his dog, and when you're in synch, the world is never better. The best friend gets you. You never feel judged by them, and if they do criticize you, it's to set you back on the right path. You're there for their problems, and they're always good with the helpful advice.

DRAMATIC TENSIONS

Your best friend is secretly jealous of your powers or your significant other. Your best friend is secretly your arch-nemesis, but still cares for you. Your best friend is keeping a secret to protect you. Your best friend is in love with you. Someone your best friend loves has a crush on you.

THE BULLY

The bully smells weakness and preys on it. They'll threaten, cajole, insult, and even hurt people to get their way, be it forcing other teens to do their homework, stealing lunch money, or terrorizing students because it's fun. They might do it for any number of reasons, including mimicking the abuse at home, trying to compensate for a private fear, or because they're plain mean. Regardless, this teen makes life around



them pure hell, and it doesn't help that their bravado is propped up by followers. They travel in packs, and they aren't afraid so long as they have the advantage.

DRAMATIC TENSIONS

The bully is stalking someone the hero cares about. The bully is becoming more violent as their home situation degrades. The hero inadvertently helps the bully, becoming their "friend." The bully gains powers. The bully can be redeemed if the hero can uncover the source of their cruelty. The bully pushes one student too far, and they decide to push back...with a gun. The bully has a special dislike of the teen heroes. The bully has a crush on one of the teen heroes.

THE COMEDIAN

This friend takes little seriously. They crack jokes and do great imitations, they aren't above getting in trouble for the punch line, and they always hide their real emotions behind their humor. They can be very socially apt, always the showman putting folks at ease. Or, they could say the crudest things at the wrong moment as a kind of social Tourette Syndrome where they hide their discomfort behind a cavalier attitude. Unfortunately, while they may be eminently trustworthy, folks are leery when it comes to trusting someone who makes a skill out of shooting off their mouth.

DRAMATIC TENSIONS

The comedian is hiding suicidal tendencies and thoughts. The comedian is far too intelligent for their good and constantly lands in trouble for their biting wit. The comedian comes from a harsh home environment. The comedian is hiding a dark, sadistic streak. The comedian has a crush on the hero and is trying to impress them. The comedian is a narcissist who only cares about the punch line and not who they hurt.

THE CRUSH

This teenager is the object of your affection. You know you'd be good together, and you'd do anything to protect them and make them happy. Problem is, they either don't know how you feel or they know but can't reciprocate. Every time the moment seems right to say, "I love you," the crush says something like, "let's never stop being friends," or "you're like a brother/sister to me." They're never actually mean or cruel to you, just oblivious or trying to spare your feelings. What's worse is that they somehow land in trouble a lot, forcing you to save them. That only complicates how you feel about them.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The crush is toying with your affections. The crush is actually in love with your best friend. Your crush is carrying a secret and is too afraid of letting anyone get close. Your crush knows your secret and is frightened by it. The crush is in a relationship she's afraid to leave. The crush is secretly hunted and is trying to protect friends like you.

THE FOLLOWER

You see them in every school—the students with no real personalities of their own. They just follow the strongest, most popular person around, mimicking everything they do and say. Alone, they may not be too bad, but they lack the strength to stand up for what is right. Put them with an alpha or a bully, and they become mean, nasty, or arrogant. And if the alpha or bully should slip a notch, then the follower is ready to stab their former friend in the back and take their place as top dog.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The follower is a former friend who doesn't stand up for you anymore. The follower is a true manipulator, controlling the bully or alpha to do their bidding with no one the wiser. The follower is about to go to jail for a crime committed by the bully/alpha. The follower realizes they've been used and seeks vengeance on their former friend. The follower gravitates towards you, if you've managed to take the bully/alpha down a peg.

THE OLDER BROTHER/SISTER

You may have fought like wet cats in a burlap sack when you were kids, but your older sibling changed along the way. They entered university and somehow became wiser for the experience. Now, they're no longer a rival, but a good source of advice and a better listener. They understand what you're going through—well most it, anyhow—and more importantly, they know how to handle Mom and Dad. If you're in a real-life jam, they'll probably be the one you rely on to get you out of your predicament.

DRAMATIC TENSION

In no uncertain terms, your older sibling is a butthead, and your relationship hasn't matured. Your sibling has powers and is a fellow hero (whether you realize it or not). Your older sibling comes out of the closet and confides in you first. Your parents die, and your much older sibling becomes your guardian. Your older sibling is powered and using their powers illegally (eco-terrorism, crime, etc). Your older sibling is diagnosed with cancer. Your older sibling is addicted to gambling/drugs/booze.

THE OUTSIDER

In most circumstances, you probably wouldn't hang with this individual. They're a loner or were made an outcast by their fellow students. Be they bad-boy rebel or a 10.0 quake on the geeko-meter, they keep to themselves and generally dislike their fellow classmates. Now, you've found yourself in their company for whatever reason—because you need their help, because they don't deserve their rep, or because they could be dangerous and you need to keep an eye on them in that "friends close, enemies closer" kind of way. Naturally, they don't trust you and keep you at arm's length. Gaining their confidence requires a metric ton of work.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The outsider is an emerging super and needs to be steered towards good. The outsider doesn't see the need to cooperate with anyone. The outsider is hoping to use you to become more popular. The outsider knows about your powers. The outsider is only an acquaintance through other friends. The outsider is an able superhero and someone who deserves better. The outsider's parents are supervillains who are steering him down the wrong path.

THE PUPPY

The puppy is someone your age or younger who idolizes you completely and follows you around. Whether you want them to or not is another matter. That doesn't stop the puppy from tagging along, dressing like you, or being your gopher. If you treat the puppy with respect or as a friend, they will be loyal forever; if you betray them or humiliate them, however, the puppy will do their utmost to hurt you and avenge their misplaced trust. That said, the puppy isn't in love with you; he or she simply admires you a great deal or wishes they could be like you. All they need is a bit of self-confidence.



DRAMATIC TENSION

The puppy is a stalker and overly jealous of others in your life. The puppy puts themselves in real physical danger so you can rescue them. The puppy has a severe crush on you. The puppy holds you up as a role model and trains to be a hero. The puppy begins to emulate you in every regard and will try to replace you. The puppy is secretly a shape-shifter who tries to replace your boyfriend or girlfriend. The puppy has no self-esteem and looks to you for assurance. The puppy is a villain with powers who is trying to uncover your secrets.

THE RIVAL

No matter how good you are at something, there's always someone of equal or greater skill or who wants the exact same thing you do. The rival recognizes you as a fellow competitor, and you probably see the same in them. Unfortunately, rather than working together, both of you fear the other person's potential success or the notion that you aren't that unique. You're too much alike to like one another, but you don't see your similarities (especially when friends point them out), only the differences that bug you to death. So, you always seek to outdo the other person, trying to beat them to the punch or win in every situation. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose...that's what makes the rivalry so frustrating. And, they'd probably say the same about you.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The rivalry is such that there's an unspoken layer of attraction between you both. The rival is willing to do whatever it takes to win, regardless of the cost to others. The rival truly hates you, making every victory insufferable and every defeat personal. The rival is also a good friend, so the competition is friendly (ish). The rival is actually a nice person, but is pushed to succeed by their parents. The rival is also super-powered and willing to play the villain to beat you. The rival is a good natured competitor whose temper occasionally gets the better of them.

THE SECRET ADMIRER

You have a secret admirer, someone who loves you, but whom you can't see as more than a friend...if you even know how they feel. Like most normal crushes, though, they won't push the issue. They stay friends because they genuinely like you, but there's always that part of them searching for the glimmer of hope that you'll return that love. In fact, it's a point of frustration. "Why can't you love me?" they wonder, and it makes them seem moody or sullen. They might change their appearance or attitude to suit their perceptions of your ideal, or they may have enough of a self-image to stay the same. Regardless, they can be highly loyal most of the time, but act mean or betray you when they feel angry, frustrated, slighted, or jealous.

DRAMATIC TENSION

Your secret admirer is a member of whichever gender you're not attracted to. Your admirer knows your secret even though they haven't told you they know. Your admirer is jealous of anyone in your life. Your admirer involves themselves in all facets in your life. The admirer will kill/hurt anyone who hurts you. You grow attracted to your admirer, but they've found someone else.

THE YOUNGER BROTHER/SISTER

Nobody pushes your buttons like your younger sibling. You could be a brainiac with a level 12 intelligence, and they'd not only get under your

skin, but reduce you to a state of name-calling the likes of which haven't been seen since kindergarten. Face it, though, you love them. You'd risk your own life to save theirs. Yes you would, stop shaking your head. It's also why you hate them so much. But when the going gets rough, they really need you. Not that either of you would admit it. You'd continue bickering the moment the crisis lifted, but then it's in those moments where you're also closest. And the fact is, one day they're going to grow old enough to mature and do something really stupid, like become your friend.

DRAMATIC TENSION

Your younger sibling also has powers that they can't control. Your sibling is a troublemaker and continually getting in trouble with the law. Your sibling discovers you have powers and starts blackmailing you. Your younger sibling is mature for their age and is actually a good friend and confidante. Your normally annoying sibling covers for you and takes the blame for something you did. Your younger sibling runs away from home. Your younger sibling is drawn into a street gang. Your sibling is diagnosed with a life-threatening disease.

PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND: SERIOUSLY...PARENTS... 'NUFF SAID

QUESTION 24: WHY ARE PARENTS SO IMPORTANT TO A TEEN CAMPAIGN?

Ahh, parents.... that wonderful mirror that says, "Ha, ha! Look into your future!" Is it any wonder why teens rebel? It's part independence rearing its head and part, "Oh Crud! I don't want to be like *them*!" But guess what? It's inevitable! Regardless of whether you're a nature or nurture sort of fella or gal, it doesn't matter. Parents are often responsible for both genes and environment, so you're royally humped.

Best of luck with the psychotherapy.

The type of home a hero comes from will influence that teen's life. Since parents are responsible for that home environment, it's important to understand them a little more and to show you the spectrum of parentage.

If parenting was like Kung Fu (and by "if" we actually mean "is"), there would be eight basic styles. While there are a wide variety of parent types, these groups provide the framework that allows you to tweak parents accordingly.

THE DRILL SERGEANT

"It's my way or the highway," is the mantra of the drill sergeant parent. They aren't interested in negotiating or pleasing you. It's a war, and they aim to emerge the winner. If this means intimidating or bullying you, so be it; they intend to overcome the obstacle course of your life! There is no negotiation here.

MOST LIKELY TO

Ground you by locking you in the room, kick you out of the house in a show of tough love, strike you when they're frustrated, and upon discovering your powers, report you to the police or kick you to the curb to "protect" your other siblings.

THE HERMIT

The hermit parent refuses to deal with confrontation or the hard decisions. Conflict makes them uncomfortable, and they'll do whatever it takes to squirm out of parental responsibilities by ignoring a problem,

relegating it to their partner, being entirely absent, or retreating into an addiction. They won't push their point-of-view, but neither will they work to understand their child's point-of-view either.

MOST LIKELY TO

Use booze or drugs to retreat from reality, vanish for entire weekends on trips without telling you, leave stacks of frozen food in the freezer for you to eat, ignore your powers and retreat further into whatever escape presents itself, fail to notice you're gone for at least a week, and not bother contacting the police until after another week.

THE MARTYR

This type of parent will never like anything you do. It will never stack up to their accomplishments. And lest you should argue with them, they'll bring up the sacrifices they made so that you could have a good life. The way they talk about suffering, you're surprised the entire house isn't covered in blood from all the stigmata.

MOST LIKELY TO

Be jealous of your youth or friends because it reminds them of the youth they sacrificed to raise you, sacrifice money or time to make sure you're provided for (and never let you forget it either), hand you off to a nanny or maid to be raised, put their career or job ahead of your needs, and try to control your use of powers out of jealousy.

THE MEDIATOR

The mediator is stuck between love for their significant other and love for their children. In this situation, the mediator tries to smooth over conflicts and differences of opinion by getting both sides to listen to reason. As such, the mediator rarely expresses any of their own opinions, instead becoming a mouthpiece for either side.

MOST LIKELY TO

Shield you from potential abuse, love you without question or hesitation, keep your secrets from their significant other to prevent more conflict, be prouder of you than any parent has a right to be, and listen to grievances with Saintly patience.

THE NEGOTIATOR

This type of parent is good at give and take, but within reason. They're capable of giving in to some of your needs on condition that you give in to some of theirs. And, they are skilled at the diplomacy thing, meaning they can be fair or they can really bargain you into a corner. Regardless, parenting with them is always a matter of a little give and take, meaning that every inch you win is an inch you had to capitulate elsewhere.

MOST LIKELY TO

Listen to your position to reach a compromise, put their foot down upon reaching an impasse, be fair in their judgments, never give up on you, and keep your powers a secret, though they will try to dissuade you from using them.

THE OVER-PROTECTOR

You can't move an inch without this parent slapping crash pads, sunscreen, and anti-bacterial soap all over you. They are too afraid of life and too aware of every news story dealing with some recently unveiled

hidden threat. This parent means well, but they are too controlling and too reactionary to have a normal relationship with them. They argue everything on the principle of safety and refuse to budge.

MOST LIKELY TO

Call you constantly to ensure you're all right, hide a GPS transmitter somewhere on your clothing just in case you go missing, have a minor stroke if they knew about your powers, have a major stroke if they knew you were fighting crime, never think anyone is good enough for you, and keep you at home and safe until you die of old age.

THE RECONCILER

If one parent says no, do you usually go to the other parent to get your way? Then that parent is the reconciler – the one who can't say no, the one who wants to be your friend. Rather than trying to solve a problem or situation, they'll generally capitulate to keep their relationship with you intact. Unfortunately, this will put a severe strain on your relationship with your other parent, and the reconciler can only be pushed so far before they have to side with their partner.

MOST LIKELY TO

Put their foot down in front of their significant other, but reconcile with you in private, try to smooth things over with a gift or concession, always be there when you need to talk, hide your secrets from their significant other, move heaven and Earth to get you out of a jam, and never see the bad in you, always believing in the good.

THE WISEMAN/WISEWOMAN

This type of parent is an original thinker and problem solver. They know that right mix between friend and father/mother, and they know how to navigate a situation so that all parties involved have their needs met. They seek solutions as a true end to a problem; they don't make decisions for the sake of enforcing the law of the house.

MOST LIKELY TO

Seek your advice when working out a solution, treat you like an adult, always listen to what you have to say, modify their own opinions when you present rational or passionate arguments, work with you to help you become self-sufficient and independent, and protect your secrets and work with you to turn weaknesses into strengths.

MY FATHER THE HERO: HOUSEHOLDS

Parents dictate the home life, but there are a variety of different households and family situations that are not dependent on the parent's personality. It's more of a life predicament thing where the teen comes from a household that has two parents, a single-parent, or whatever else is out there. Here's a wide smattering of households that teens can call homes, each with their advantages and disadvantages. In other words, they all affect who the teen is and the kind of relationship he or she may have with their parents.

ADOPTED HOME

You know, or have known for some time, that you, and maybe your siblings, are adopted. Maybe you're all from different families, or even different countries, but your adopted parents had much love to offer. It's a normal family household with the small added difficulty of the questions you want to ask. Who were your biological parents, and why'd they give you up? In a super's campaign, however, you also have to won-

der...was your biological mother or father responsible for your powers? Or are your powers too similar to a certain hero or villain for comfort?

EXTENDED FAMILY

In this household, mom or dad or both are part of a major hero organization. That means that other heroes are also part of the family, and often your uncles, aunts, and godparents. When your parents are away on an extended mission, other heroes step in to take care of you. If they have children, those kids are your cousins (and possibly the inspiration behind your team of heroes). These family situations are filled with an interesting cast of characters and the sheer coolness of being on a first-name basis with some of the world's preeminent champions. And given how many secrets you may inadvertently be privy to, the supers also provide for your education, and perhaps even your social environment, so you don't accidentally blab something important to your schoolmates. Yes, that means you may learn things kids can only dream about, from piloting vehicles to martial arts training.

FOSTER HOME

This is such a potential crapshoot. After losing your parents for whatever reason (whatever meaning for whatever reason the state took you out of their care), you're now in a foster home under the care of someone else. If you're lucky, the person (people) taking care of you are decent and loving; if you're unlucky, the person (people) running the foster home are in it for the money and forcing you to live below the poverty line. There's a chance that you're in a foster home with an actual brother or sister, in which case most sibling rivalries are non-existent. You might also have new friends in the other foster kids, or perhaps enemies.

HERO FAMILY

Mom, Dad, or both are heroes. To the outside world, it might be a typical household, but there's probably a subbasement with a trophy room and training arena. Mom and Dad try to act normal, but there's a definite sense of quirk to their humor and interactions. It also means your parents are far more accepting of your powers and crime-fighting activities, because they understand its importance to you and to the public.

MAGICAL HOUSEHOLD

You come from a magical family where the closet door leads to Avalon, and the tap water comes from the cisterns in Atlantis. Mom and/or Dad are magicians, and your siblings have some magical skill. To the outside world, your family is normal, but inside the walls, anything can happen. Dragon in the basement? Check. Dimensional vortex in the T.V. box? Yup. Eccentric relatives who drop in, even from beyond the grave? You betcha! This also means that Mom and Dad are pretty cool with you having powers and using them for the betterment of humanity.

NUCLEAR FAMILY

No...this household isn't nuclear in the gamma-irradiated sense. It's more that the family fits the conventional definition of family: a mother, a father, maybe an extra sibling or three, and a family pet that doesn't breath fire. This doesn't mean the family is necessarily happy or stable. It simply means that there are two parents of different genders with at least one breadwinner.

ORPHANS

Mom and Dad are dead, and now you live in an orphanage. It sucks, but your chances for adoption are low unless you're in diapers, gurgling, and you're under a year old, that last part's important. Diapers, gurgling, and 15 years old is not a selling point. As a result, you have a

curfew you can't break, and you have duties you can't skip. Hopefully, you and your super-buddies are all orphans, and the evil you fight is on orphanage grounds.

SAME-SEX HOUSEHOLD

It's Mom and Mom or Dad and Dad who raised you. It's more than likely you're an only child, and while only one parent may be biologically tied to you, they're still both your parents. In all other respects, however, it's a normal family environment with its share of trials and tribulation... perhaps a little bit more of a liberal attitude.

SINGLE PARENT

This family has a single parent and breadwinner, be it Mom or Dad. Perhaps a divorce or death separated the parents, or maybe Mom or

Dad never intended to have a partner. Still, with this family unit, the parent works hard to provide while the eldest in the house chips in to provide support. It's a great way for teens to feel a sense of responsibility and to feel like Mom or Dad trusts them.

VILLAIN FAMILY

Congratulations, Mom and Dad may be the coolest people in the world, but one or both of them are super-villains. If you're lucky, they're one of those beloved villains, the ones who launch daring heists, never get caught, and never hurt anyone. If you're unlucky, your parents are Adam & Evil, the two fig-leaved villains blowing up churches, mosques, and synagogues across America. Maybe you developed a sense of right and wrong from somewhere, or because someone has to put clothes on your fig-leaved parents, you've embarked on a life of crime-fighting.

MY LIFE AS A DOG: TEEN HERO LIFE

QUESTION 25: IS THERE A TEEN-HERO CULTURE?

Oh yeah, you betcha! Teen heroes are every bit the hot commodity as the boy & girl bands and the young television and movie stars. Wander into a magazine store and take a look at the teen magazines. And you think there wouldn't be an appreciation for young heroes and heroines in trendy costumes sporting killer bodies? You don't think a few of those young champions wouldn't capitalize on their fame and good fortune to make a bigger name for themselves?

Teen heroes have a culture both in and out of costume, and it's usually the source of their entertainment and their adventures. The more established the hero culture is in a world, the more likely there will be all kinds of secondary industries and activities that spring up as a result. If supers are accepted and part of the landscape, there would be clothing stores pimping the latest hero styles, television shows and magazines courting powered teens for interviews, and major paparazzi action. And, that's just on the outside world looking in on the supers community. On worlds where heroism isn't as widely accepted or is out and out illegal, the hero culture would probably be more subdued and hidden in every day life activities.

This section is all about the various types of experiences and things a group of teen supers may or may not find in their campaign. Some things deal with the mundane, like school and getting a license. Boring stuff, right? Nope, sorry...there's also the supers twist on the mundane stuff, like powered high school and handling that mega bad-ass pet you found on an alien world. Finally, there's the kind of stuff that's entirely unique to teen supers campaigns and hero games.

OLD SCHOOL: MUNDANE SCHOOLS

QUESTION 26: SCHOOL AGAIN? DIDN'T WE ALREADY TALK ABOUT SCHOOL?

Yeah, but we both know you weren't paying attention. Besides, this has a bunch of fresh stuff as well, so keep reading. It might, Heaven forbid, give you a new idea.

When you see teen heroes in comics, movies, or television, you usually see the young super attending a normal high school or college where he or she has to hide their powers. Series rarely deal with a group of heroes attending an institution, and if they do, there's usually an element of that institution that supports the teens as champions in the making.

The term "mundane" isn't to imply that nothing's happening. High school is an exciting and bewildering time, and the temptation to run a campaign during that period is the same one that makes us want to relive those years on our own terms. Despite what might be happening in your life as a teenager, there's still a sense of innocence about yourself and about the world. Things weren't as complicated and life wasn't as intricate as it might be for adults. Teens are also better connected to their dreams, and that means anything is possible. The future is wide open, and the impossible hasn't happened yet. Emotions are also raw at this point in life. They can cut, and they can heal; they carry power because of the conviction of the teens themselves.

It's understandable why teen campaigns feature school as the main stage. For four to six years of your life, you attended school a minimum of nine months each year, and more if you were sucked into summer school. It's where first loves bloomed; it's where you became part of a clique (or were ostracized from them); it's when you learned to drive; it's where school spirit became more important; it's where you ran for class office; it's what your social life revolved around as well, and where you met all your new friends. It's familiar grounds.

School is also a microcosm of the outside world, but it's self-contained so it feels safer. The borders are visible and the rules known, especially in a world where teen life grows increasingly hectic and hazy.

There are three basic kinds of schools, as well as problems and benefits for each.

RURAL

Rural institutions are intimate settings, because everyone knows each other in and out of school. In fact, there's a good chance most of the kids know one another from elementary school. Even the parents know each other and all your teachers, and it's hard to stay invisible in this kind of environment. If you get in trouble, folks know exactly who to call. Rural schools are blessed with things like smaller classes and fewer crime-related issues. You also know the local sheriff and mayor by first name, and the local community is very involved in the high school's social activities. Gangs are unheard of, and gossip is practically the national pastime.

For those rural schools that are well-provided for, the school might have a stronger sense of ethic and community pride. School spirit is town spirit, and as a result, there are more social activities than might be found in other environments. There may be bonfire pep-rallies (no...the cheerleaders aren't set on fire), BBQ fundraisers to support the football team, various dances, a town Christmas party in the gymnasium, etc.

Unfortunately, the reality is that many rural schools have students whose families live in poverty...as much as 23%, in fact. Funding is a problem, course selection and advanced placement options limited, and technology can be non-existent. Drop-out rates are high, almost double that of suburban schools. Students are forced to work to help provide food for the family, and the allure of a steady guaranteed paycheck versus a high school diploma that no longer means anything without a university degree attached to it is a no-brainer for some. More so, rural schools also suffer from a shortage of experienced teachers, and many fear that these small institutions are far too forgiving of mediocrity on the part of educators and students.

Regardless of whether the community supporting the school is affluent or not, there're also drawbacks to an intimate environment. There's a greater pressure to conform. Your actions might reflect badly on your parents, and there aren't enough students in the school for you to hide behind other troublemakers. If you land in hot water, in a few hours, the entire town knows about it. As a result, there's a tremendous effort to hammer the exposed nails back into the board. Also, the community's problem is the school's problem. If alcoholism or gambling are widespread problems, this will also play out in school life and in the lives of teens.

Some things to consider here include: Is the school attached to a community with a failing industry? Is it part of an affluent community with a strong local employer? Is it a farming community? Or is it just close enough to a nearby city where work is relatively available? Is the community growing because of urban spread? Is it growing too fast because of a boom industry (oil or a local prison)? Is it shrinking rapidly because the local mine, plant, or military base closed down? Is the community suffering because of rampant alcoholism or gambling problems? What is the local escape, and how is it affecting the community and the students?

Here are campaign options or even one-line adventure suggestions for the kind of thing teen heroes might do in a rural school.

- Students have to help raise money to improve the quality of education in their school (arts & music supplies, sporting equipment, computers, etc.).
- The local employer is closing its doors, sending hundreds into the cold without a job. How will the town survive? What sinister opportunities present themselves now that everyone's desperate?
- The local mines aren't dry yet, but something in the mines is spooking the miners and haunting the school.
- The failing community is revitalized when a new industry with plenty of employment opportunities moves into town. Nothing untoward here, but how does the community and school change as people and money move into the town to take advantage of the jobs? Are the heroes new to the town and school, or are they townies enjoying the influx of funding and students?
- The community is afflicted with an addiction, and its effects are spreading into the school.
- Something is buried under the school, something from pre-Colonial days that's waking up again and affecting everyone.
- Over the summer, a massive donation is pumped into the school from an anonymous donor. Now the school has new classes, new teachers, and a new look. Who donated the money? Why? And is it tied into the powers that some students seem to have?
- One by one, the teachers, and then the students, begin acting strangely. What's gotten into them, or rather...who?

SUBURBAN

The suburban school is far enough away from the city core to avoid some of the pitfalls of an urban school, but not far enough away to be free of the big city problems. Suburban schools possess a bit of the small-town mentality, with the neighborhood being the microcosm and the local Parent Teacher Association serving as the social glue that creates events beyond the occasional dance or sporting event. Unlike rural or urban schools, however, suburban institutions are generally better funded and offer a more diverse experience.

Suburban neighborhoods are havens for middle-class families looking to raise their kids in a controlled environment, while staying close enough to the large cities to feel metropolitan. It's an escape from the pollution, traffic, and crime rate of the city, but those problems still lap at suburbia's shores. Drugs are a worry and potential problem, as are kids bringing weapons to school and instances of bullying. Still, few suburban schools have reason to put up metal detectors—that sort of thing flies in the face of raising kids in a safe “urban” environment to begin with. Regardless, the quality of life is often better than urban environments, and the mentality is mostly geared towards families and their kids.

Unlike rural schools, there are more schools in suburban districts, and the environment is less intimate. You may not even be attending the high school that's closest to your street. In other words, you may not know everyone in your high school, though there will be some familiar faces from elementary school or your neighborhood. That can be a good thing, especially for students looking to change their image or leave their history behind. It's easier to hide in crowds and remain invisible, meaning it's less likely other kids will recognize you when you're in costume or that someone will recognize you if you land in trouble. There's also diversity in the cultures that attend the local school and thus, in the languages spoken. This can encourage growth in teens and expose them to different modes of thinking.

There's also a slightly higher standard of education and quality of teachers, as well as opportunities for elective classes like arts, music, and languages. Suburban schools may also offer access to technology-oriented activities, classes like computer sciences, photography, and multi-media, or have events like school trips to museums and other countries. While overall test scores and grades in suburban schools rank better than rural and urban, there's also a fear that some schools still accept mediocrity. Mediocrity can be deceptive, because it also implies the absence of trouble, and people like the absence of trouble more than they like pushing teens to work harder. In some schools, this may mean a laissez-faire attitude where teens can slip through the system and through the cracks. Other schools, however, may try pushing teens to perform better...maybe to the point of snapping.

Conversely, while school spirit and parental involvement in school life remains high, the push to force the teens into conformity may be slightly less. The dress code may allow teens to express their individuality or to follow trends more religiously in an attempt to fit in. The exception, obviously, is private school or schools that push a narrow dress code. Here are campaign options or even one-line adventure suggestions for the kind of thing teen heroes might do in a suburban school.

- New foreign students appear at the school, with little understanding of North American culture and vague answers about their home country other than saying “we come from France.” Just how foreign are these students?
- A new designer drug has started making the rounds at school. Where do the drugs come from, and who is addicted?

- Strange men in suits and sunglasses have been interviewing students at school and asking questions about you.
- After the news channels reveal that an attempted terrorist plot was foiled, the foreign students at school suffer from racist comments and bullying.
- Radicals or mercenaries take the school hostage, and the heroes must save the day without revealing their powers.
- Several decades ago, a major dimensional incursion was fought on school grounds while it was being built. What after-effects of that event linger, and why are students getting powers randomly?
- The smart students are getting dumber, and a handful of the dumber students are getting smarter; why is this happening? Did the dumb students get their hands on a device or power? Has someone made a deal with the devil? Or are the smart students tired of the academic pressure being exerted on them, and they've found a way around the problem?
- The teen heroes participate in a school field trip to a foreign country (Canada if the school's cheap or Europe if the school has more money). What new heroes do they see and meet abroad? What new villains do they face, and how do they fight them with chaperones escorting them everywhere?

URBAN

On first blush, urban and rural schools share a truckload of similarities... most of them negative. Now, before we relate the drawbacks and benefits, there are urban schools that break the mold and teachers in those systems struggling hard to fight the limitations of their environment. In fact, that creates a very cool setting, where the struggle for dignity is a daily battle. That said, on with the show....

It's unfortunate, but with the middle-class leaving the inner cities, urban schools are losing money from their already under-funded coffers. And where the money goes, many of the experienced teachers follow, not because they're being greedy, but because they need better tools or safer working environments to function. Like rural schools, there's little money for anything other than the essentials. Extra-curricular activities are practically non-existent, as is the social life that normally surrounds a school. Access to technology is also limited, meaning almost nothing in the way of modern computers, photography labs, or school newspapers.

While suburban schools offer an exposure to more cultures, the urban schools offer a wider sampling of kids from different socio-economic backgrounds. There's a wider mix of Latino and African-American students, as well as students whose parents come from impoverished countries. Poverty is high, and teens might attend school with no breakfast in their stomach and no lunch on the horizon. Thankfully, there are initiatives like the School Breakfast Program (SBP), which feeds about 9.2 million children a year in 80,000 different schools and provides kids with a quarter of their daily nutritional requirements. There are some schools that offer the Universal School Breakfast to all students at no cost to them, giving them the right start they need for the day.

Parents are less involved in school-life, not because they don't care, but because both parents may be working, or single-parents might be holding down two jobs to pay the bills. Urban schools, like their rural counterparts, must compete with daily survival. That means they often take a backseat to real life, too. Sometimes, though, it also means that real life gets intertwined and knotted in school affairs. You have this when gangbangers who don't even attend school hang out with their



homies in the hallways and sell drugs or guns on school grounds. You have this when police show up to arrest students or use drug-dogs to sniff out lockers. You have this when students open fire on their classmates. The biggest challenge here is that while suburban schools are often isolated from the world's troubles, the border between urban schools and the neighborhoods they serve is blurry, if not violently obliterated. Real life bleeds into the school...every pun intended. This forces some schools to use metal detectors to screen the students or security guards to patrol the hallways.

But there is hope...or at least, there should be in your campaign. Some teachers, parents, or principals have a great deal more invested in the success of the students, because failure here could condemn a teen to a hopeless future. It's not an easy struggle, but it's one that can change lives for the better. Urban schools are one of the few institutions where the teachers and staff can do more than just impart lessons; it's where they can influence a student's life long after they've graduated. That's not to say that many teachers don't come to class and coast along for the poor pay, but there are real pioneers in the system as well, pioneers that could make history with their struggles.

Playing in an urban school can be a gritty experience. Crime has turned schools into forts, with security guards and metal detectors, gang fights and school shootings. But, it's also an opportunity to deal with real issues affecting teens in those environments. Plot arcs involving teen pregnancy, drug addiction, gang violence, poverty, hunger, and STDs can all be powerful storylines, especially if the heroes can wage the battle, saving one soul at a time. And, perhaps, that's the crucial difference between any other setting and the urban school environment. In any other place, it's about saving lives, but here, it's about saving the body, the mind, and the soul.

Here are campaign options or even one-line adventure suggestions for the kind of thing teen heroes might do in an urban school.

- A group of students decides to retake their school from crime, endangering their lives as well.
- The principal makes sweeping reforms to help the school. Unfortunately, the local gangs aren't happy with being locked out, and the principal is going to need a team of guardian angels to survive, whether he realizes it or not.
- The students are on a fund-raising drive to provide their classmates with new books and maybe even computers. Who says, however, that the teens have to stick to the streets? Maybe it's time to remind certain adult heroes where they came from?
- Several gang-bangers are murdered on school grounds. Now, their gang is threatening retribution against the school for the deaths of their comrades.
- A gang tries to recruit the heroes, threatening their families if they don't join. Can the teens resolve the situation without revealing their powers?
- The school is finally reopening after a fire guts everything. Was the fire deliberate, and who provided the funds for the new school?
- A new cult that promises deliverance from poverty is sweeping through the school. Why are so many students falling for the cult, and what is this mysterious hold they have on people?

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

In addition to where a school might be located, there are other factors to consider as well, like the type of institution the teens attend. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but it does provide you with some direction. And, frankly, Gamemasters might, and probably should, pattern the school from their own experiences, if only because they understand the sights, sounds, and characters of that environment. That said, here we go....

HOME-SCHOOLING

Whether it's because you had a problem with the school system, or Mom and Dad didn't like the quality of education or class conditions, you're now enjoying a home education. It might be a one student/one teacher affair, or it may be someone in the neighborhood teaching a handful of students. Regardless, this is no way to have an adventure...not unless the adventures happen after school, or Mom and Dad are also heroes and home-schooling was the only way to educate the kids and fight crime at a moment's notice. Another option with this is the Extended Family situation, where the home schooling is for you and a handful of other children of hero-parents.

PRIVATE

Private school is the Holy Grail of education for most parents. It's where they think you have the best possibilities for education and advancement, though it's a hefty blow to the bank account. Private schools offer plenty of extra-curricular activities, because a diversified student will make for a capable student. All you have to do in exchange is wear a uniform and adhere to a strict code of conduct. If the private school is also religious, there's a chance it'll be a same sex-environment, which is phenomenally good for about one out of ten teens. The nine other

teens, well, not so good for them. Still, private schools can afford many things, including a philosophy, so the academic pressures are likely high. You can't coast by like you can in many public schools, which is a lesson learnt by both the students and the faculty. It also means you're more heavily supervised, making heroic excursions during school hours very difficult unless the adventures are mostly on-campus. Some private schools, however, do have an honor program where seniors or students with a 3.5+ GPA can go off campus for lunch.

PUBLIC

Ah, the red-headed step child of the education system. While there are excellent public schools out there, this class of institution does garner a reputation for lesser achievement. It's not their fault really, or at least, not *entirely* their fault. There are several factors at play, including the neighborhood, the school district (which may have conflicting or non clear-cut agendas), and the overall funding (which may rise or fall according to the test scores of the students). Ironically, funding seems to vanish the more the students seem to need it.

Another problem is that because teachers are far more protected here than in private schools, teachers can essentially coast along without ever worrying about the job loss. This means they may not push students as hard, resulting in a graduating class of underachievers or the poorly educated. Regardless, public schools can run from the inner-city nightmares to those institutions that model themselves on private schools with dress codes and extra-curricular activities. One advantage for teen heroes, however, is that it's often easier to "skip class" in a public school. You're not as closely monitored, and you can wear your own clothing.

BOARDING

Mom and Dad sent you away. Can you blame them? Boarding school can be anything from a really private institution nestled away in some forest or mountain (where it's difficult escaping from, like an Alcatraz for teens) to military colleges. The key here is that:

- 1) You're studying, attending classes, eating, and sharing dorm space with the same group of friends
- 2) Extra-curricular activities might include riding horseback, camping, skiing, etc
- 3) Perks like great cuisine and field trips to other countries are a definite (except for military colleges)
- 4) Class-time is heavily regulated, meaning any adventuring is strictly after hours
- 5) The adventure is likelier to come to you than the reverse.

Boarding schools are generally very private and highly exclusive. Discipline is also strict, as is the dress code. Being sent there is either a matter of prestige or a damn fine reason to keep you out of your parents' hair. The quality of education is excellent, however, and the students who attend might include the children of diplomats, world leaders, villains, and multi-billionaires. It's definitely an atmosphere of privilege, but that also means it might attract the attention of a wide-number of miscreants.

SPECIALIZED

Schools might offer a specialized or privileged education for a select few, be it an institution that caters to a religious group, one that offers a different education model, one that provides students and teachers with a say in decisions, or one that focuses on an area of study (no...

boys or girls are not considered “an area of study,” no matter how often they confuse the heck out of you).

CHARTER SCHOOL

This institution is part of the public education system, but without the cookie-cutter curriculum. Charter schools draw on public and private funding, meaning they have a base set of classes as outlined by state mandates and the school board. That’s the public funding. The private funding allows charter schools to create unique and vanguard programs that emphasize a particular area of study (like mathematics, technology, or the arts). Some charter schools are even designed for troubled kids or gifted students (not gifted in the “I am Menta-Lord Kid!” kind of way, but it certainly could be). These particular programs might offer smaller classes for more one-on-one learning.

INDEPENDENT

These private, non-profit schools draw their funds from tuition, contributions, and endowments, but not from taxes or religious coffers, even though they might cater to the members of a specific religion. The costs and qualities of these institutions vary heavily and may include boarding for students. They are run by a board of trustees, and they may otherwise resemble traditional private schools or either magnet or charter schools in their approach and education philosophy.

MAGNET SCHOOL

Another offshoot of the public school system, but one designed specifically to “combat” the shortcomings of that system. Magnet schools are highly competitive and very selective about their admittance process. Once you’re in, though, you can enjoy a specialized education within a high-end facility under the eye of a talented/motivated teaching staff. Like a charter school, the programs may focus on specific programs, and they may even include a boarding facility, since magnet schools were initially designed to bring gifted inner-city students out of their underprivileged neighborhoods. In fact, cultural diversity is a deliberate aim of some magnet institutions.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

A majority of the private schools in the United States are parochial, catering to a specific religion. Most are Christian (Catholic, in fact), with a few that are Jewish. This means that religion is a part of the curriculum, whether through prayer or classes on religious instruction. Likewise, the teachers may be members of the clergy, but it doesn’t mean that all students have to be of that specific faith to attend. It does mean, however, that all students are expected to participate in the religious-centric activities.

PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

These are for-profit institutions that don’t answer to trustees. They can supposedly adapt their curriculum to the every-changing concerns of everyday life.

TRADE SCHOOL

Also known as a vocational school, this type of institution is either post-high school, or it might take the place of 11th or 12th grade for students looking to train in a specific skill set. These institutions dispense with the “chaff” of additional courses and allow the students to focus strictly on their career path. Many students might see these as the fast-track to getting a job, but a trade school diploma is not as well regarded as a university degree by those employers who might care about that sort of thing.

EXTRA FEATURES

Unlike those features that were...um...featured in *Mutants & Masterminds* (ps.146-147), schools have unique traits and requirements all their own. The following are automatic for any school and are not considered features: cafeteria, classrooms, teacher’s room, school nurse (small infirmary), offices, small library, and a basketball court.

CHAPEL

Given that many private schools are religious in nature, a chapel is not a surprising sight for many campuses. The chapel offers daily services, as well as a quiet place to reflect and the helpful ear of the priest on duty. Also, it’s a good place to determine which students might be going through a personal crisis and need help by seeing who visits the chapel frequently.

GREEN ESTATE

The school grounds are nestled in some idyllic outdoors and surrounded by beautiful wilderness, be it forests or rolling plains, mountain slopes or sandy beaches. In short, it’s the kind of place people would pay an arm to visit on vacation. The estate also takes advantage of its location, taking classes on nature hikes, having plenty of open-air sports, or allowing breaks to be held outdoors. During lunch or after school, students can be found outside, playing Frisbee, talking with friends around the benches, or studying beneath trees.

SPORTS PLAZA: BASIC

You can swap out the gym feature and incorporate it into the sports plaza. This building holds a smaller gym, a locker area with showers, one or more basketball courts, a large outdoor playing field (running track, soccer, baseball, lacrosse, etc.), equipment storage, and offices for the coaches/trainers. The difference between this gym and the gym purchased as a separate feature is that the latter is better able to handle a wider strength range of powered teens.

SPORTS PLAZA: SPECIALIZED

The sports plaza is an Olympic-level facility for one particular sport. This might be an Olympic-sized pool, a fully stocked gymnastics training facility, tennis courts, hockey arena, or a track & field sports ground. It still includes a gym and the locker area, as well as equipment storage and offices, but the main drive here is training for one particular sport (possibly the reason why students attend this particular institution if it has a record for breeding Olympic champions). Note that the Olympic-training pool might include things like swim gyms, which generate currents to provide the swimmer with resistance (like a treadmill for swimmers), heated pools, high-dive platforms, or training in synchronized swimming and water polo.

THEATER

Entering stage left is the theater, a dedicated performance area with a stage for plays, recitals, and concerts, and a seating area for the audience. More affluent theaters (especially in art schools) might include an orchestra pit, back areas for the actors to prepare and stagehands to store props/backdrops, workshops to build and repair props, and maybe even a control booth for lighting and sound.

DROP-OUT

The Drop-Out Academy is also known as the School of Life. It isn't as cool as the School of Rock, but definitely more fun than the School of Business Management. Students who go this route generally do so because they have a job that pays them well, they live in a neighborhood with pitiful schooling opportunities, or they can't handle the pressure of school life. It is also feasible that some powered teens drop out of classes to pursue the heroism thing full-time, but no responsible adult hero is going to let them get away with that for long. If the teen hero is no longer attending school, they may have to find a job, if only to keep their parents, their friends, and other heroes off their backs.

SUMMER CURRICULUM

It happens that summer is sometimes taken up with things like summer school or summer camp. Summer school is like normal school, only it sucks harder because you're spending part of the break catching up on the things you already did...just not very well.

Summer camp is a combination job/hang-out where you can make money and pal around with teens your own age. It has the added benefit of plenty of outdoor experiences like camping, hiking, and rowing, and no classes. The bad in all this? Bugs, plenty of bugs.

Both summer camp and school offer opportunities for short-term campaigns where something is terrorizing the teens and staff over the long break. When summer ends, so does the campaign. The other option is that the campaign deals with a new longer story arc that only happens at camp over the summer. Each year, the heroes return and are reunited with one another. They grow in experience and evolve over the year, and they handle the new threat that summer. This provides an excellent opportunity for stories involving haunted woods, old towns flooded by the camp's artificial lake, abandoned mine shafts, ghosts of murdered campers, Indian burial grounds, and a number of other spooky themes.

SKY HIGH: POWERS EXCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

QUESTION 27: SO ASIDE FROM THE STUDENTS, WHAT MAKES POWERED SCHOOLS SO DIFFERENT?

A good deal, actually, but you're right in wondering that. Let's cover the base similarities that the powered and mundane schools might share. At its core, school is school, and the purpose of school is to educate. Powered schools are more likely private or specialized, because the school boards and Department of Education are both squeamish on the topic of metapowers in the classroom. That's not to say that some governments won't consider powered teen education their responsibility, but it's usually an all or nothing deal. Either the government is in charge of schooling and training all powered teens, or they take responsibility for none of them.

Powered schools can be independent, parochial, or even proprietary, with the expenses to run such institutions falling to private citizens and contributors. Charter, magnet, and public education schools for super-teens are rarer, because they imply that the public or government is responsible for partially subsidizing costs. If the school is keeping the nature of its students hidden or if metahumans are a political hot-potato, then you can forget public funding. If powered teens are an accepted reality or the government has a hand in their education for whatever reason, however, then there may be powered charter or magnet schools, or even boot camp.

Just remember that once the government is involved in educating or providing funding for the education of meta-teens, hidden agendas and "sanctioned meta-weapons" come into play.

Another note concerning powered schools is that they tend to be boarding schools. Even with megacities like New York, Tokyo, Mexico City, Shanghai, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Cairo, Paris, and anywhere else with a ten million-plus population, the occurrence of powers is still low. Therefore, there will rarely be enough powered teens from one area to have a school cater to local supers only. The only times this may not hold true is if 1) The city supports a "mutant ghetto" where mutants from across America come to live and form their own culture (think the Golden Age and subsequent fall of Harlem in the 1920s); 2) A highly localized event gives powers to a large population segment within a neighborhood, district, or even city; or 3) The occurrence of powers and mutations in the world is very high, meaning cities have high concentrations of supers.

There's another motive behind why powered schools tend to be boarding schools. The person or group running the institution will try to ensure the privacy of faculty and students for a variety of reasons. Privacy allows students to experiment with their powers in peace without fear of upsetting locals, and it prevents unscrupulous individuals from approaching and recruiting or attacking students on their way home after the day is done.

Here are examples of the types of powered schools that might exist, with many assumed to be boarding schools unless otherwise stated.

IVY LEAGUE ESTATE: HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW

PHILOSOPHY: PROTECTING POWERED TEENS FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD

To the outside world, the school is Ivy League caliber, and the students are snobbish and aloof. What folks don't realize is that behind the high walls of the green estate, and under its Victorian structures, are the trainings grounds for tomorrow's heroes. This style of school is accessible to the public if necessary, and everything about it reflects a traditional boarding school for the affluent. What they don't see, and may never see, are the hidden subbasements and training facilities. The school stresses high academic standards to avoid being scrutinized, and they likely train their young charges to handle their powers.

THINGS TO STRESS

A rich history, duality of traditional exterior versus high-tech and chrome interior, higher standard of time-honored education, stress on normal school life and on keeping powers hidden, and a sense that the outside world isn't entirely friendly towards super-humans.

IVY LEAGUE ESTATE

Size: Colossal; *Toughness:* 15; *Features:* Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed, Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Green Estate, Gym, Hangar, Infirmary, Library, Living Space, Pool, Power System, Security System, Sports Plaza: Basic, Theater, Workshop (Crafts)

Cost: 16 equipment points

SECRET FACILITY: HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD

PHILOSOPHY: THE WORLD WON'T UNDERSTAND POWERED TEENS

Something about the school renders it inaccessible and invisible to the outside world. That's usually because the nature of the school is extraordinary. It might be a magical castle with twisted towers and living gargoyles, a floating high school hidden in the upper atmosphere, or an extra-di-

mensional fortress. The list continues, but the important factor is that the school is as much a character as the students. Additionally, the very nature of the school means that the standard curriculum is also bizarre. Students might take classes on magic or learn about the dangers of time travel. Sure, one might take an English class and learn Shakespeare...from the ghost of the bard himself. Perhaps one might learn mathematics from the floating brain of a former villain. Nothing is what it seems, and even the ordinary has some unusual twist to it. One thing about locations like this, however, is that they probably cater to a hidden culture or community, one with its own set of dealings, politics, rivalries, and alliances. In essence, the dealings of the parents are reflected in the actions of the students, though it does make for strong stories when teens fight against following their parents and committing the same mistakes.

THINGS TO STRESS

A wild and rich history, forgotten and hidden parts of the school, extraordinary and fantastic classes, part of a greater society or culture, students carry the conflicts of their parents, schism with the outside world, powers and abilities displayed openly, and the outside world never intrudes on school life.

SECRET FACILITY

Size: Awesome; *Toughness:* 15; *Features:* Communications, Computer, Concealed, Defense System, Dock (or Hangar), Fire Prevention System, Garage, Green Estate, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Pool, Power System, Security System, Sports Plaza: Basic, Sports Plaza: Specialized, Theater, Workshop (tech, craft, or magical)

Cost: 28 equipment points

PUBLIC SCHOOL: GHETTOIZING METAHUMANS

PHILOSOPHY: TEACHING POWERED TEENS TO BE NORMAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

This type of school is likely to draw its fair share of criticism from supers and their opponents. It's a public day school where powered students still live at home. During school hours, the classes may offer some nominal training for supers, but they probably don't have the budget to support a dedicated training facility. Instead, the school focuses on educating superteens like any other school, with an emphasis on basic school skills and integration into society. They try to teach the teen to be "normal" and obey local, state, and federal laws (which many heroes may inadvertently ignore in their pursuit of justice). Some superpowered advocates see this as nothing more than a form of racism, the same kind of racism that saw cultures like the American Indians and the Irish being taught to ignore their own identity and language for the sake of assimilation. Supporters, however, say that most schools aren't equipped to handle powered teens in the class, and that it's best they be educated among their kind. Advocates rail against this argument, saying parents of "mundane" children are frightened of supers in schools and are pressuring local politicians to isolate and segregate the powered from the unpowered. This type of teen campaign puts the heroes on the forefront of a new civil rights battle, one that could turn downright ugly in this modern age of sound bites and spin doctors.

This kind of school makes a very tempting target, and not just for super-criminals looking to strike back at their old foes or young upstarts trying to make a name for themselves. A public super-school is also a likely target for public watch groups and anti-super civic organizations who don't want such things in their "backyard." Protesters and pickets demanding the school board to "think about the children" can make teen-hero life even more difficult.

THINGS TO STRESS

School at ground zero for civil rights initiative, students being told to "hide" their powers, stress on social assimilation and ethics, minimal powers training, demonstrators outside the school, and the occasional bomb threat.

PUBLIC SCHOOL

Size: Large; *Toughness:* 10; *Features:* Chapel, Fire Prevention System, Infirmary, Library, Security System, Sports Plaza: Basic, Theater, Workshop

Cost: 11 equipment points

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION

PHILOSOPHY: POWERED TEENS ARE WEAPONS FOR A BETTER WORLD

In this campaign, supers are too dangerous to be left to their own devices...at least, according to the government's way of thinking. So, they've decided to run this cross between powers boot camp and school. This type of institution is more akin to a juvenile camp, although they let students return home at night or weekends if they live nearby. Being a member of this school means that the teens are in the reserves, and while military service isn't mandatory, they will be among the first called to duty the second a draft is instituted. During the school year, however, students may undergo a battery of tests, training regimens, and power-combat training in addition to their regular (if Spartan) curriculum. It's not uncommon for this agency or that to ply the students with job offers and assignments if their powers closely match a mission's profile. After all, why ignore someone who can walk through walls and turn invisible when the Chinese Consulate may have some sensitive documents that need retrieving? In this case, the boot camp has two levels of trainees, the regular students who aren't fit for active service for whatever reason, and those elite students that have shown potential and interest in serving the United States' government and military. The former are given the standard school tour of duty and kept in reserve after they graduate. The latter are given extra privileges in school, additional combat training, and university scholarships, and they are eventually offered high paying jobs as agents for the high-action divisions of the Department of Justice, Homeland Security, Defense, Energy, or Treasury.

THINGS TO STRESS

Unsanctioned heroes are illegal, the government offers perks for supers on their payrolls, school is bootcamp, heroes are trained in the use of their powers in typical military fashion, metas are indoctrinated to obey the government, supers are used where necessary to advance the cause of the current administration, and any hero can be co-opted into missions and wars at a moment's notice.

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION

Size: Huge; *Toughness:* 10; *Features:* Chapel, Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Dock (or Hangar), Fire Prevention System, Garage, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Library, Living Space, Power System, Security System, Sports Plaza: Basic, Workshop (Crafts)

Cost: 19 equipment points

INDOCTRINATION FACILITY

PHILOSOPHY: PROTECTING THE WORLD FROM POWERED TEENS

Take boot camp and add the word "prison" in front of it. Maybe even throw the word "brutal" in there, and you get the idea. Whether it's

because the United States outlawed superheroes or the heroes have found themselves in juvenile detention, the prognosis is grim. Supers are treated as sub-human, their rights as civilians stripped for whatever reason. This "school" is part of a prison or work camp, with its barbed wire walls, guard towers, suppression fields, and 60-foot tall killer robots. The government has suspended civil rights for metahumans, but all of society is shackled by the totalitarian administration. In this instance, younger teens might receive some semblance of an education just to keep them busy and out of trouble, but what they learn is sub-par and filled with propaganda exalting the state. The jailers may not even be responsible for teaching the children; it could be handled by concerned adults. In some environments, education is offered as an alternative to labor, meaning the teen can spend his days either breaking rocks or learning. In the most extreme of environments, however, the prison is a death camp and may include laboratories to experiment on victims and exhausting labor. If this

is the case, however, the camps and the incarceration are nothing more than holocaust through attrition. Regardless, it's time to escape.

THINGS TO STRESS

Forced incarceration, high security to prevent escape, guards will shoot to kill, presence of power suppression or high penalty for use of powers, education is negligible and possibly even non-existent, teens treated with equal severity as adults, and prisoners always looking to rebel or escape.

INDOCTRINATION FACILITY

Size: Awesome; *Toughness:* 15; *Features:* Chapel, Concealed, Defense System, Dock (or Hanger), Fire Prevention System, Garage, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Power System, Security System, Workshop

Cost: 22 equipment points

SCHOOL DAYZ

QUESTION 28: WHAT CAN WE DO IN SCHOOL THAT WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW ABOUT?

Well, it's not so much what you don't know, but how to apply what you *do* know to give your campaigns more bang for their buck. It's to offer you ideas on things to do in school that you might not have considered yet. School shouldn't just be about the classes, it should be about the possibility of adventure throughout the day. Fighting villains is easy, but being in school is much harder. Harder doesn't have to mean unpleasant, though, and that's where this section comes in.

In this segment, we discuss all the things that happen within a school day, be the setting public or private, boarding or day school. It won't cover all the variants, like classes in a detention center, however, since the majority of school-oriented campaigns are happening in normal environments. Well...normal is a highly subjective term. Normal *enough* is better.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB: SCHOOL BASICS

You walk down the school's linoleum floored hallways, past the offices and the drinking fountain. Inset lockers line the smooth walls left and right, with intermittent doors leading to a classroom or bathroom.

Yawn! Boring! Ever visited a school when the lights are off or during a quiet summer? There's something intrinsically depressing about the entire thing, like the kids left with all the life and color of the place.

The central thing of any school is the kids. Without them, what's the point, unless you're running a horror session where the spook factor is a familiar but empty building? Still, if you're looking for what to find in a school, here you go. Just don't forget to populate the halls with life.

You walk down the linoleum floored hallways, through the rush of students hurrying to classes. Past the offices, you nudge Jay at the drinking fountain; he yelps in surprise as the cold water shoots down his neck. You pass the inset lockers lining the walls left and right. Up ahead, Deke and his crew are shoving Edgar into a locker. Looks like it's time to save Edgar again.

The environment is never more important than the people in it. That's why each section has "Game Moment Ideas," a snippet of an event that can be something quick and fast or something that can play out for a session or even a story arc.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

This is the catch-all term for the offices of the principal, vice principal, guidance councilors, secretaries, treasurer, school disciplinarian, etc. Anyone involved in helping run the school has offices here, except for the janitor and possibly the school nurse. There's a constant buzz of activity here, be it students in trouble, new students arriving, parents coming to speak with the principal or pick up their kids, teens waiting to speak with a councilor, etc.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

Police arrive to arrest or question a teen. Parents demand the principal deal with a growing bully problem. A cafeteria food fight fills the waiting room with students in trouble. The school councilor wants to talk to you. The principal wants to talk to you. You're questioned by school authorities after witnesses claim they saw you vandalize school property.

AUDITORIUM

The auditorium also doubles as a theater with its high stage, rows of seating, and open hall. The seats might be bolted to the ground and locked, or they might be folding chairs that are put in place on the day of the performance. In either case, the auditorium is used for school gatherings and events, plays, recitals, and possibly even graduation, if the space is relatively lavish or the only thing the school can afford. During normal school hours, however, plays, the debating club, or the school band might practice here.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

The auditorium is reputedly haunted. A shy student sneaks in to sing to an empty house with his beautiful voice. The area is awash in activity with the upcoming school musical. Someone loosens the lights above the stage before a big performance. A missing student is actually hiding and sleeping backstage. Students are called in to help usher an upcoming event. Thieves attack a performance and hold the audience hostage while they rob them.



BASEMENT

Generally, students aren't allowed in this neck of the under-woods without permission. It contains the heating and water system for the school, usually a labyrinth of pipes, small tunnels, and machinery. There's also an office for the janitor. The basement is generally a plot device for exploration and strange happenings. Its dimensions can be as big as you'd like.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

The basement is connected to an old, abandoned tunnel system (like Chicago's work tunnels). The janitor is hiding transients or illegal refugees. The janitor provides abused students with a safe haven to hide. The basement is larger than the school. A student enters the basement and goes missing. The janitor is hiding a secret in the basement. A fire starts in the basement, and the janitor is trapped.

BATHROOMS

Aside from the bathroom's obvious usage, it's the hideout for teens looking to smoke, bullies preying on their victims, or students hanging around for a bit of quick gossip.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

A student in the adjacent stall is sobbing. A bully and his cadre are trying to dunk a geek in a toilet. A student is unconscious on the floor and bleeding. A drug dealer is selling product in the bathroom. Bathroom conversations seem to stop when you walk in. You catch two boys or two girls kissing.

CAFETERIA

Good luck running a school without feeding the omnivorous mall rats. The noisy, bustling cafeteria includes the kitchen and pantries, as well

as the dedicated staff to make meals three times a day, wash the dishes, and clean up the devastating aftermath of the lunch rush. Cafeterias might also include vending machines for quick snacks and drinks, though some schools are beginning to block candies and sodas, instead stocking fruit, 100% fruit drinks, and water as healthy alternatives. In some schools, the cafeteria is also a study hall during non-lunch hour.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

A food fight breaks out. Kids pull pranks on one another. A hungry teen tries stealing food from a discarded tray. A strange critter smells food and starts foraging in the pantry. A grease fire starts and spreads panic. The fire alarm triggers and activates the water sprinklers. A bully cuts in line and starts a fight. A teen tries to tip a broken vending machine, and it topples towards him.

CLASSROOMS

The classrooms are the spine of the school. Without them, students would mill about the hallways, uncertain of where to go next. Classrooms contain the essentials of chairs, desks, the teacher's desk, inspirational/educational posters, and a blackboard. Some classes might have island desks with gas jets for experiments and beakers; others might have easels and art supplies instead of desks. Classrooms are there to serve the subject matter.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

A student falls asleep next to you and starts snoring softly. A student starts screaming hysterically at something only they (and maybe you) can see. A student reaches into her bag to pull out books, and you see a revolver. Someone is passing you notes, and you get caught. The teacher accuses you of cheating on your last test. You're taking an exam, and someone starts cheating from your answers. Someone leaves a pin on

the chair of a well-liked teacher. The teacher gets into a heated argument with a troublemaker and suffers a stroke on the spot.

GYM

Showers, basketball courts with the mascot painted on the floor, school spirit and playoff banners pinned to the walls, announcer's booth, lockers, separate showers and changing facilities for the sports teams, equipment storage, coaches' offices, weight room...check, check, check. The gym is either a reprieve from the grind of the day or a new kind of hell. It's the battleground for basketball games, dodge ball, badminton, whiffle baseball, laps, rope climbing, or any other indoor torture the coaches can dream up.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

It's dodge ball time, and one student on the opposing team seems too good at the game. The coach pushes one student to tears. A student slips off the climbing rope while at the top. Several students get into a pushing match during a heated basketball game. Someone breaks into the lockers while everyone's on the court. A bully is throwing basketballs at weaker students.

THE HIDDEN SPOT

Every school has that one spot that the staff forgot about and the students found. It might be a subbasement, heating tunnels, an attic, the crawl space under the theater stage, or even a part of the school that sank and was built over for that "oooo spooky cool" effect. Regardless, it's become the hangout for one particular clique, with the senior students inducting the occasional freshman into the lair. Or, perhaps, the heroes are the first ones to rediscover it, meaning they have a potential base of operations for school-centric campaigns. If the teachers ever discovered it, however, it would be locked down.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

Different students over the generations have left their names on the walls. A drug-dealing student is using the spot to hide his stash from drug sweeps. A runaway student still attending classes is sleeping in the spot. The spot allows people to eavesdrop on juicy conversations in the bathrooms. Students who've been to the spot contract some strange disease. The spot is haunted by a ghost. A student commits suicide in the spot.

INFIRMARY

From scrapes to colds to embarrassing accidents students never want to admit to, the school nurse sees it all. This small office space handles the basics of medical care, long enough to send the student back to class, back home, or off to the hospital. It will likely include a cot or examining table, some chairs, a desk for the nurse, a filing cabinet, and a small medicine cabinet.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

Someone breaks into the infirmary filing cabinet to steal medical records. An addict steals from the medicine cabinet. A student collapses coming out of the infirmary. A student has injuries but refuses to see the nurse. A teen hypochondriac goes to see the nurse every day. The substitute nurse acts nervous and doesn't even know the basics of first aid.

LIBRARY

The library is that place with all the books. In addition to the librarian's station and office, it has rows upon rows of shelves and islands of desks

for study. Richer libraries might have glass-walled private rooms for study groups and rooms with AV equipment to watch documentaries. The important thing about the library is that, generally, it's easy to hide between the stacks for a quick nap or a clandestine rendezvous. It's also filled with quiet activity, with students whispering to one another, passing notes, sneaking off into corners to talk, and throwing the occasional gob of *something* at a fellow student.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

Parents are demanding the school remove "questionable" fiction from the library. In a secluded corner, you catch the school jock or beauty queen frenching someone well beyond their perceived social standing. Books suddenly fly off the shelf for no reason. A student is pushed against the stacks, toppling them and beginning a domino effect with the shelving units that could crush other teens. A religious teen is stealing books he considers evil or sacrilegious. A group of teens slips into one wing of the library and vanishes...where's the secret Hidden Spot?

MACHINE SHOP

This isn't as much of a fixture of schooling as it once was, but some institutions still offer automotive repair or woodworking classes for students looking to go to vocational schools after high school. The classroom is likely a separate garage or building on school grounds, and if it's a full garage, it might handle vehicle repairs for students and faculty. For wood working class, it would hold table saws and a variety of hand tools. Regardless, the teacher in charge would be watching people like a hawk and accepting no attitude, given the dangers of the environment.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

Late at night, when the teacher leaves, someone works in the garage. A student accidentally lops off a finger while working the band saw. The school board wants to close the garage classes after a serious accident. The teacher always seems to stop accidents right before they happen. The garage is the hangout for a clique of students. You stop the teacher building something light years beyond military grade technology.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The music department, for those schools that have them (how do you think rap was born—from schools that couldn't afford instruments), usually practices during classes and after school hours. Some departments maintain different types of bands, including marching bands that perform during games, genre bands that play at fund-raising concerts, and school symphony bands that practice and play specific pieces. This area is always alive with sound or the sounds of animal torture as performed through a horned instrument, be it one student practicing or the entire student orchestra rehearsing.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

One student is gifted beyond words with a saxophone. Someone robs the music department of its instruments. The music teacher heard you play an instrument and won't stop hounding you to join. The band is practicing hard for a parade. The music department is in danger of closing if funds aren't raised soon. The music teacher is too afraid to try anything more daring than "Star Spangled Banner." A new music instructor arrives to shake things up with rap vocals, Rock & Roll songs, and Jazz pieces.

PRACTICE FIELD

The practice field is where track and field, football, baseball, and soccer are played and where the marching band and cheerleaders practice. The better equipped practice fields may even have the stands and bathrooms to host sporting events.

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

A new hottie on the field is so distracting that everyone has accidents around him/her. The jocks are picking on several weaker students. The cheerleaders are trying a new pyramid formation and are seconds away from a bad accident. Superheroes and a supervillain are fighting and land right on the practice field. A pep rally's being held for an upcoming game, and everyone's there. The practice field is grounds for the popular School Fair and Carnival. It's the home game match-up between the school team and your school's fiercest rivals, meaning fights, pranks, and vandalism are happening in the arena and in the parking lot.

TEACHERS' LOUNGE

The teachers' lounge—that mysterious part of school whose interior is only seen in stolen snippets through the door crack. This is the teachers' haven, and it usually has a small lounge, a table, a coffee machine, and a refrigerator. It's where the teachers eat their meals and share the war stories of their day. Few students are allowed inside this sanctum, and the teachers almost always keep students waiting outside the closed door rather than allow them inside (like somehow your presence will taint the sanctity of the place).

GAME MOMENT IDEAS

The door opens long enough for you to hear the teachers talking about going on strike. Two teachers get into a physical altercation. You see students sneaking into the lounge to vandalize it. You open the door and see two teachers kissing each other passionately...and they aren't married to each other. Teachers invite students into the lounge, but they come out "different." A fire starts in the teachers' lounge when nobody is in there. You have to retrieve evidence from the lounge that could jeopardize your heroic identity.

HOME ROOM: CLASSES

QUESTION 29: WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT CLASSES?

Apparently nothing with that attitude, but still, some schools are increasing course selection to keep up with technology. Not all schools can afford this, but it's still a good idea to know what you're getting into. After that, though, we'll get into the unusual classes you might run into if you're attending a supers high school.

Those courses listed as "Musts" are the basic courses you'll find in most schools, regardless of income. Those listed as "Intermediate" are those courses that help round out students and are usually found in most public schools. "Privileged" are those courses found in private and special schools (magnet, charter, trade, etc.) with considerable funding or in schools with a religious focus. These are only suggestions meant to encompass a wide range of classes. You can have some classes earlier in high school and others later, and you can sometimes have a basic class listed as a must, but further exploration of the class is covered under Intermediate.

MECHANICS

One way to give classes more emphasis, so that they aren't just filling out the hero's day, is that the classes help the teen build skills. At the end of each semester, the teen gains one power point to either spend on learning 4 new skill ranks or to purchase a new feat. This is to reflect what they've learned over those three months. The teen should not be able to buy more than two ranks in the same feat if the skills directly relate to the class, like improving the Computers skill after taking a Computer Science class. Or the relationship between class and skill may be more tenuous, like taking Journalism classes to improve Bluff. In this case, because the student didn't receive any direct training on how to Bluff (for example), the skill rank only improves by one.

Feats are a bit trickier, but a teen can conceivably gain a skill or General feat through class learning. As always, the Gamemaster is the final arbiter in all decisions, so be sure to butter-up on those brown-nosing skills (no, it isn't an actual skill, so don't ask for a page number).

Finally, the classrooms can only teach so much before the universities take over. In this case, the Gamemaster can institute a rule of thumb that each grade has a rank limit on what the student can learn, unless the student is in an accelerated or enriched program.

GRADE	MAX SKILL RANK LEARNED	MAX SKILL RANK FOR ENRICHED PROGRAMS
9	1	2
10	2	4
11	3	6
12	4	8

GRADE 9

Introductory courses designed to give you an education in broad strokes.

- **Musts:** Basic English, Basic Geography, Basic Math, Basic Science, Beginning Composition, Physical Education, World History
- **Intermediate:** Arts, Basic Foreign Language, Chemistry, Dance, Dramatic Arts, Music, Photography, Visual Arts, Woodshop
- **Privileged:** Computer Science, Introduction to Business, Introduction to Technology, Theology

GRADE 10

The beginnings of some specialization, with a mix of some focus and some broad courses.

- **Musts:** English, General Sciences, Geography, Mathematics (Algebra), National History (Basic), Physical Education
- **Intermediate:** Arts, Civics, Composition, Computer Science, Core Language Skills, Dance, Dramatic Arts, Geology, Home Economics, Journalism, Media & Film Studies, Music, Nutrition, Photography, Visual Arts, Wood Shop
- **Privileged:** Communications, Comparative Religion, Computer Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism, Manufacturing Technology, Theology

GRADE 11

Greater focus on subject matter that has potential in collage, university, and the work place.

- **Musts:** English, General Sciences, Geography, Mathematics, National History (Advanced), Physical Education
- **Intermediate:** Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Civic Studies, Computer Programming, Creative Writing, Dance, Dramatic Arts, English Literature, History (20th Century), Journalism, Music, Philosophy, Photography, Theology, Visual Arts, Wood Shop
- **Privileged:** Agriculture, Anthropology, Automotive Repair, Carpentry, Communications Technology, Computer Engineering, Construction Technology, Fashion, Food & Nutrition, Hairstyling, Information Systems, Leadership & Peer Support, Psychology, Sociology

GRADE 12

Preparation for university and a greater focus on a subject pertinent to your perceived path in life.

- **Musts:** English, General Sciences, Geography, History (20th Century), Mathematics, Physical Education
- **Intermediate:** Advanced Creative Writing, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, Civic Studies, Computer Programming, Dance, Dramatic Arts, English Literature, Geometry, History (20th Century or Classical Studies), Music, Philosophy, Photography, Physics, Theology, Visual Arts, Wood Shop

ADVENTURES IN THE CLASSROOM

Given the nature of some teachers and the classes they might teach, here's a list of classes and their potential adventures.

ARTS

You'll have to speak up...Dali is deaf in one ear. This is the reason why you should never try sculpting elementals. Why won't the painting stop screaming – Sentient Paints & You. You're out of frame – Bringing Paintings to Life. I see dead people – Haunted Portraits. Here are the reasons you should never use the Clay of Life to make pottery. Presenting: Painting the Future for Profit and Comic Books. Presenting: Wood Carvings Using the World Tree, Yggdrasil.

COMPUTERS

Now, what you have here is the launch codes for China's nuclear arsenal. Anyone want to see what a pan-global blackout looks like? Who here thinks we can't reprogram the human brain using this PDA? Today's assignment is tracking down that mega-virus I accidentally released on the 'Net. Uhm, who broke the Internet? The keyboards will discharge a mild electric shock for every answer you get wrong. It's an MMO called the City of Champions; now, let's see what happens when we digitize ourselves into the game world.

GEOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY

Let's go visit the Villain Isles, shall we? This is what an erupting volcano looks like up close; now, where is that damn portal? And that's the tidal wave that destroys Atlantis—wow, it looks big from down here. This meteor rock was responsible for devolving *snort* Freedom's Vindicators *snort* ...ugh, meat! Now, what happens when we momentarily reverse the Earth's orbit? Now, if anyone asks, we have no idea who triggered that last earthquake.

HISTORY

Class, we're about to bring Genghis Khan into the present to speak to us—nobody startle him. Was Napoleon really that short; let's find out! Time to visit the future...Professor needs to bet on a winning horse for once. Did someone say sabertooth tiger? Could you have survived for a week in the Dark Ages; we're about to find out. Okay, class, the holo-casters are set to show us the Battle of Stalingrad, but be warned, the safety protocols are erratic.

MATH

In today's pop quiz, you have one hour to mathematically disprove the existence of God...go! Now, the following Euclidian formula was thought to open a gate to the parallel dimension of dark things. I've just released a fast-acting strain of Ebola Zaire into the classroom—those of you who properly plot the infection vector for the school will get the cure. 18, 4, 72, 98, 423...discuss.

MUSIC

Let's see if we can find the proper harmonics to shatter bone, shall we, class? In today's class, Mr. Jericho was nice enough to lend us his trumpet. And so ends today's lesson in playing a Lendaro cat, the musical instrument and official pet of Cetis IV. Now, before we begin, I must stress the importance of soothing the frost yeti before it can fly into a homicidal...

SCIENCE

Nobody move—I'm sure I dropped that sub-atomic black hole here somewhere. C10H14N2 ...determine what the poison is, and I'll administer the antidote to Mr. Fluffles the Bunny; Class...Commander Lazarus has kindly volunteered to be dissected today. Remember, students, you have to grab the Antilles rage-fang by the nose ring with both hands before you can milk it. Now, we'll see what happens when you splice this mystery DNA into Mr. Fluffles.

SEX ED.

We brought in Jimmy's mom today to talk to you about the female orgasm...wave 'hi' to your mom, Jimmy.

TECHNOLOGY

Egon teaches you why you should never cross the matter streams. Wait...if this safety switch isn't in the device, shouldn't it be malfunctioning now? Okay, class, you may glow for a few hours, but it'll be totally worth it. Now, it's important you *don't* head into the light before we have a chance to resuscitate you. Wow...it's never done that before...where do you suppose we are?

- **Privileged:** Accounting, Agriculture, Anthropology, Automotive Repair, Carpentry, Communications Technology, Computer Engineering, Construction Technology, Fashion, Food & Nutrition, Hair Styling, Information Systems, Leadership & Peer Support, Psychology, Sociology

WEIRD SCIENCE: UNUSUAL CURRICULUMS

Forget about what those mundane schools are offering. Sure, some of the courses are important, but you're attending a mutants-only academy, Serena's School of Splendiferous Sorcery and Strange Circumstances, or Professor Apocalypse's Academy of Lethal Technology and Deadly Know-How. If the schools sound odd, it's because they are odd, at least as odd as the classes themselves. Sure, some institutions are serious experiences, but face it, the minute supers are involved in the education of other supers, the experience is going to get a little...hinky. You'll be perusing the class list for electives, and somewhere between Technology: Introduction to OS and Theology: Comparative Religions is a little class called Temporal Ethics: Don't Kill That Fish.

Now, you take that class, thinking it's going to be a dry dissertation on time travel and ethics with lively debates on Einstein's and Hawkins's theories, but no...your teacher is a little "eccentric" in the way Rasputin was a little "kooky." He opens a small time rift with his powers and tosses in a bit of rancid-looking meat somewhere into the past.

"I just changed the immediate past," he announces happily.

Your stomach clenches. Something you ate in the cafeteria disagrees with you.

"I just dropped this in with lunch."

Suddenly, half the class is running for the bathrooms. The other half...well, they're a bunch of invulnerable bastards anyway.

But, you get the point. Unusual curriculums, whether slightly tweaked or full on pretzel-twisted, are their own sources of daily adventure and excitement at school. Unusual curriculums are broken down as follows.

SERIOUS CURRICULUMS

The school is serious and professional, with a curriculum that might shame Ivy League universities. Part of it has to do with the nature of its students, who might rank in humanity's top percentiles physically or mentally. So, the institution is out to challenge its students and force them to rise to expectations. This might mean schools with course selections found in first or second year university. Physics leads to particle physics or temporal mechanics. Ethics might lead to the study of law in relation to supers. History might contain classes on the History of Earth's Secret Societies or The History of Heroes. Religion and Theology might have discussions on the presence of mythological figures among heroes or even guest lecturers from former pantheons. The classes are exciting and colorful, even though they're treated like any normal class.

CLASS SUGGESTIONS

Alien Languages, Combat Gymnastics, Dimensional Incursions, The Ethics of Heroism, Fourth Dimension Physics, Heroes & Villains in WWII, Heroes in Mythology, Household Magic Spells, Laws and Heroes, Protection Against the Mental Arts, Tactics, Understanding Super Sciences, Xeno-Biology.

QUIRKY CURRICULUMS

These schools have their serious moments, but there are plenty of classes that are quirky or odd. It may be indicative of the institution, but more than likely, it's the nature of the teachers themselves. What makes the

class peculiar isn't just the subject, but how it's handled. In the normal world, nobody would hand you radiation mitts and teach you how to handle spent uranium fuel rods. In these classes, it's always a possibility, but there has to be something in the environment or the nature of the school that minimizes accidental death. It might be that the crazy or outrageous antics are counterbalanced by a luck field that the teacher built. So, yeah, the lessons might be otherwise lethal or catastrophic, but they somehow work out in the end...mostly.

That said, the classes offered in this environment have their serious and useful sides, but the approach is out of whack. You might deal with dangerous situations, and you might handle dangerous items. If time travel is dangerous, they may give a class tour into a world where time travel destroyed a civilization. If the class is about defending yourself against mental powers, then a mentalist might be brought in to use you as a puppet. Regardless, the key here is that the class is an adventure in itself.

CLASS SUGGESTIONS

Alien Languages, Building Super-Weapons 101, Ectoplasmic Sculptures, Everything You Wanted to Know About Gamma Radiation, Disarming Super-Weapons 101, Holo Gym, Puppetmaster Theater: Now Everyone's In Your Play, Quantum String Basket Weaving, Super-Science and MacGyver, Time Travel Dos and Don'ts.

ABSURD CURRICULUMS

The school is one of those out of the way locations with some fantastic element attached to it. Magic schools in forgotten parts of the country, floating institutions orbiting the planet, and extra-dimensional campuses are just some examples. As a result of the school's strange nature, the classes might be likewise skewed, but it seems normal to the people who attend. The teachers treat the classes with all-due seriousness, and the students treat the subject matter much the same. But it's still fun attending class, because you never know what might happen. Somewhere along the way, students somehow learn the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but they never actually study those disciplines specifically.

The classes are whimsical, but they do involve an element of real danger. In fact, entire adventures might revolve around the daily curriculum, with students emerging singed from Dragon Handling 101 or wet from their jaunt to the ruins of Atlantis. Much like quirky-style classes, however, it's in the nature of the school that few students are actually killed unless it's a plot point. Hurt, however, is a definite risk, and the school's history and roster of teachers are filled with stories and examples of the seriously scarred. This, however, should merely be a remainder to the students that messing with powers and abilities well beyond their own is always fraught with danger. Now, while the students and staff may accept the strange curriculum and the nature of the campus without batting an eye, the outside world would not be as accepting. In fact, the outside world is relatively "mundane" and would never know such places exist. In class, however, anything and everything is possible.

CLASS SUGGESTIONS

101 Ways To Change the Past Without Changing History, A Mile in My Shoes: Switching Powers Class, Building a Better Shark, Dragon Handling, Handling Dark Artifacts Safely, How to Dodge Meteor Strikes, How to Talk to the Old Ones, Making Your Own Costume, Popular Battle Cries, Radiation Sickness & You, Sex Ed.: Why Faster Than A Speeding Bullet Isn't a Good Thing, Things to Know For Your Next Alien Invasion, Trash Talking in Battle.

HOT FOR TEACHER: TEACHERS

Outside of your parents, teachers are the next group of adults who influence your life and, hopefully, allow you to learn and advance through life. Some teachers you'll remember for their indifference, and some you'll remember for their dedication. Regardless, you'll remember many of them well into adulthood, even when you're forgetting your spouse's anniversary.

Like friends and family, there are many kinds of teachers that will come into your life:

THE BUMBLER

This teacher is a bit of an unintentional goof, and everyone loves him for it. He adores teaching kids, which he does without that demeaning attitude, and he loves his job. In fact, he makes learning fun, and he asks his questions in such a way that it always engages you to understand the lessons and not just memorize them. You will recognize this type of teacher by his half-tucked shirt or slightly frazzled hair. He carries around far more than he can manage and invariably spills stuff along the way. He is a good teacher and an excellent listener. He also teaches those classes that few students find exciting, yet he also makes the lesson far more interesting.

DRAMATIC TENSION

Some unspoken crisis has robbed the teacher of her spark. The normally beloved teacher is on medications, and that frightens parents into demanding her resignation. The teacher uses outrageous tricks

and schemes to teach students, but one day she may go too far and injure someone. The teacher is a huge fan of your costumed capers and sets out to prove that you're a superhero. If the teacher seems to have that magic twinkle in her eyes...maybe it's more than just a twinkle.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher can help with specific skills. If the hero approaches the teacher with a skill-related problem and the teacher knows the answer, his advice can impart a +4 on the related skill roll.

THE CURMUDGEON

If you didn't know better, you'd swear the school was built around this teacher. She's been around from time immemorial, and even your parents remember having her for class. This teacher has seen every kind of student, every kind of personality, and almost every kind of situation in her long years, so frankly, you've got no surprises left for her. She's bored and she's cranky and she's practically a school fixture. It's probably one of the only reasons she's still around or why she still has a job. It's certainly not her teaching style, which has been deadened by decades of repetition. The books she uses are throwbacks to the 1950s, but that's what she knows. This kind of teacher seems to be going through the motions, though every once in a while she surprises you with an unexpected comment. Good luck surprising her, though.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher starts displaying signs of Alzheimer's. The teacher has a rich history that nobody's ever discovered before. The teacher is being forced into retirement by the new principal. The teacher turns out to be a WWII superhero who vanished after the war. The teacher is much older than he should be... Civil War-older, in fact. The teacher suffers a stroke in your class.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

All Charisma-based rolls made around this teacher suffer a -5 penalty. If the hero succeeds on a Charisma-based skill check by more than +5, however, the teacher opens up, and the heroes learn a secret about the school – something linked to their current case or the location of a hidden spot that everyone else has forgotten about.

THE DESPOT

This teacher still has issues from his own high school years. Specifically, he was beat on, picked on, and spat on. He was an outsider, but now that he's become a teacher, it's time to show everyone who's really boss. In many ways, this teacher lacks empathy. It's all about him, and it doesn't matter that the people who abused him are no longer around; any target will do, even others who've been disenfranchised. This teacher wields his authority status like a baseball bat, always trying to remind you of your place, always belittling you regardless of how well you do. However, this teacher-thing isn't playing out how he thought it would. He thought he would be able to avenge all the wrongs done to him, but his control is illusory. The students don't respect him, and he will back down if confronted. That only builds the animosity and venom in his heart, however.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher comes to school one day with a handgun hidden in her jacket. The teacher is suffering from a substance abuse problem. The teacher suddenly changes for the better one day, but for no apparent



reason why. The teacher seems to have the power to bend students to her will. The teacher is being bullied by her ex-students.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

If the heroes help this teacher through a crisis, especially after he acts like a heel, then the teacher comes to an epiphany about his conduct. He becomes a better person, and for that, he'll help the heroes in major school-related jams. He'll cover for them, but within reason, he'll let them retake tests if they show a willingness to do better, and he'll protect their secrets if he discovers them.

THE DISCIPLINARIAN

It's a good thing that corporal punishment is no longer allowed, because this teacher would have been the one rapping you across the knuckles with a yardstick or smacking your bottom with a paddle. Now, she's just plain mean and harsher than ever because she can't release that aggression. It doesn't mean she won't teach, but she's strict when it comes to enforcing the rules, and she hands out detentions like candy on Halloween. During her classes, there is no talking, no note passing, and no tomfoolery. Frankly, she's just looking for a reason to make people's lives miserable, any reason at all. This type of teacher also teaches nonsense subjects like math or science.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher is a bully and berates students to the point of tears. The teacher believes you are a troublemaker and keeps a vigilant eye on you...in and out of class. The teacher is hiding considerable inner pain and acts from that pain. After failing you out of spite, the teacher is about to have an accident...can you swallow your pride and save him? The teacher is cruel because he isn't human, even though you can't prove it.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

If the heroes somehow help this individual, then she "owes" them, and she doesn't like owing anyone. She'll repay the favor to balance the scales again and return everything to the status quo. This means she'll cover for the heroes once, by giving them a passing grade for a test they missed, providing them with an alibi during a critical moment, or any other way she can offer significant help to even the score.

THE HOTTIE

What does this teacher teach? Who *cares*? He's got an Olympian's body and the looks to match, or she's hotter than a model tied to a burning stake. It seems like this teacher's sole purpose is to remind you of how awkward you really are as a teen. It's like one of life's cruel jokes, "Here's the object of your desire...now go stumble over words, blush like an idiot, and blurt out completely inappropriate phrases in their presence." Perhaps worse, this teacher is always nice to his students and completely oblivious to the passions he inspires. No matter how much of a desperate crush you have on him, you'll always be "sweet" or "nice" or "adorable" in that puppy-licking-a-baby's-face kind of way.

DRAMATIC TENSION

This teacher is a construct sent to the school to distract the heroes from the machinations of a young villain. The teacher knows how to use her looks to manipulate people to her own selfish needs. The teacher is a villainess who robs the rich at night and atones for her behavior during the day by teaching. The teacher may be beautiful on the outside, but

she's cruel and capricious on the inside. The teacher is a truly genuine human being who is being used by everyone else. The teacher seems to be getting more beautiful every week, while the pretty students seem to be getting uglier. The teacher is getting married to someone equally beautiful and nice.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher has much to teach the heroes about poise and grace. If a hero asks for this teacher's help on matters concerning dating or talking to someone they're attracted to, then the teacher's advice gives the teen +2 on all Charisma checks related to the object of their desire. Obviously, this doesn't work on the teacher.

THE JUDGE

This teacher is stern but fair, and she has a way of stripping you to bare bones with her gaze. The judge-style teacher has been in the game for quite some time, but she remains as sharp as ever. If the curmudgeon has seen every type of student, the judge has seen every kind of trick or excuse...and she no longer has the patience for it. Regardless, her classes are always dreaded, because this teacher has such high standards. The judge assesses each student with frightening accuracy and lets none slip through the cracks. The class is hard, but the teens who graduate are better for the experience and tremendously more self-confident.

DRAMATIC TENSIONS

The judge is an eagle when it comes to observation and knows there's something special about the heroes. The judge's attention seems to be slipping, and he appears frailer. The teacher has decided that the heroes are in need of extra attention, because she can sense the potential in them. This teacher is a protector of sorts, who watches over the school—he's been responsible for saving it in the past. The principal is a weakling that the judge controls and manipulates.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

Nobody has her pulse on the school like this teacher. If there's anything strange happening, she knows about it...and she knows the heroes might be the only ones capable of helping. So, this teacher is a secret benefactor, manipulating events to guide the heroes into the situation without revealing her own hand. She might, for example, send the hero to deliver a note to the principal, knowing full well the principal is meeting with the police to discuss the recent disappearances.

THE LEADER

Some teachers inspire you to greatness. They see the possibility in every child, and they know how best to bring out that potential. This individual is the one that has movies made about him. He'll pull a school back from the brink of self-destruction, he'll rescue a class from failure, he'll inspire talent to greater heights, and he'll convince parents to let their son or daughter follow their dreams. In short, the classroom is not the borders of his influence, it's only the front door to greater involvement in people's lives. Unfortunately, that level of involvement always has consequences, whether it's to the teacher's health or to his very safety.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher is a substitute teacher, and unless the students can convince the administration to hire her, she'll move on. The teacher saves a teen from the gangs, and now she has a death warrant on her. The teacher is an activist and in danger of getting kicked off the staff. The teacher

does not support the notion of superheroes, because she believes it makes society lax. The teacher discovers your powers and wants to help you in any way she can.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher can impart lessons on what it means to be a leader or community member. During a storyline involving the positive participation of this teacher, the heroes might have an automatic hero point each session of the story arc, or perhaps even the ability to make one extra effort per session without suffering the effects of fatigue.

THE NINE-TO-FIVER

This teacher is here to collect a paycheck, and whether you succeed or fail, she doesn't care. Maybe she had the passion burnt out of her, or maybe she was never excited about the job. This job is no different than washing dishes or waiting on tables as far as she's concerned, except she isn't on her feet all the time. This teacher goes through the motions of teaching, spitting out information for you to digest. And heaven forbid you should ask thought-provoking questions or ask her to teach you something new...all of that means acting outside the syllabus, and the syllabus is her safety net to mediocrity.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher is a lump by day, but a party freak by night. The teacher slowly takes risks in class, making it fun to learn. The teacher is practically absent while in class and passing students without teaching them anything. The teacher is emotionally dead because there's a parasite in him that's sucking the very life from him.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher is a gossip. With nothing else to care about, it's easy for her to chatter away about school and community scandals, especially with students she likes (those teens that don't tax her patience). As such, she's a source of rumor and a potential adventure generator. In the course of her gossip, the heroes might learn who's acting suspicious, who has a dependency problem, who was admitted to the local psych ward, and any other tidbits the GM may wish to relate.

ONE OF THE BOYS

Wow, are some teachers ever guilty of this...especially coaches. This teacher is reliving the glory days of his high school as a teacher. He acts more like a friend to the popular cliques like the jocks, and he'll cover for them, buy them beer, anything to seem cool. This also means he's capable of being cruel when it comes to other cliques. He'll make fun of geeks and mock the Goths all because he did it as a teen; it makes him feel accepted.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher decides to pick on you because she sees you as an outsider. The teacher is seen at parties getting drunk with her students. The teacher covers up a jock's drug addiction. The teacher automatically gives a passing grade to any athlete in her class. The teacher pays one of her students some unwanted "attention."

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

If the heroes can succeed by +5 or more on a bluff, diplomacy, or perform skill check against the teacher, they can appeal to the teacher's vanity. This lets them access locked and hidden areas of school, as the teacher tries to prove his "coolness."

THE VETERAN

The veteran is the typical teacher with several tours of school duty under her belt. Very little phases her anymore, but she still loves the job, and she still participates in the school culture. This teacher knows her stuff and teaches it with near factory-floor precision, though she still has enough energy and drive to mix it up a bit. She also knows all the students in school by name and has probably taught or will teach your siblings when the time comes.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The veteran is a completely different person one year, though nobody but you notices. This teacher dislikes you and your family and always made life hell for you and your siblings. The teacher is a sleeper agent who has been gathering intelligence on the school for years (this only works with special institutions). You catch the teacher having an affair with one of the parents, double scandal points if the parent and teacher are of the same sex, triple scandal points if it's one of your parents; you get the idea.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher acts like a potential jack-of-all-trades, filling in the roles of other teachers. She might cover for the students, direct them toward an event, tell them a secret about the school, or repay a favor. Whatever works for the character.

THE YOUNG TURK

This teacher only received his teaching certificate this past year. Now, he's out to change the world and revolutionize the institution. He's passionate, driven, and full of fire. The young Turk is someone who either hated the education system that gave birth to him, was inspired by good teachers, or he saw *Dangerous Minds* one too many times. Regardless, he believes that he can change the system and make a difference in people's lives. After all, the world would be a better place right now if academics had tried it before, right? So, he obviously must be the first one with the conviction to see this process through. Unfortunately, this teacher is also easily frustrated, because he believes that the only thing students are missing in life is a role model or a leader. And, he was kind of hoping for that job.

DRAMATIC TENSION

When the teacher cannot inspire, she cajoles and insults. The teacher actually has the right idea, but nobody is willing to listen. The teacher puts so much effort into helping and inspiring that she's heading for a heart attack. The teacher is trying to be everyone's friend, and the students are using her.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher puts the highest stock in being trusted, so if the heroes entrust him with something, he'll do his best to see it through—if he believes the heroes, that is. If he is convinced, he'll help however he can, whether that means providing transportation, hiding students in the school, admitting them to areas after hours, or covering for them with their parents. He will not take shortcuts, however, like letting the heroes pass their tests, but he will allow them to take a private test.

THE ZEN MASTER

Seriously, there's nothing you can do to tick this teacher off. Not that you'd want to. Most students may not "get" her, but she's serene, under-

standing, and cool in that laissez-faire kind of way. This teacher is always there with a patient ear, willing to listen and rarely offering more advice than you need. Most students don't pay her much heed, but a handful of loners or counter-culture kids find their way into this teacher's quiet company. You're more likely to find this teacher in one of the "liberal" disciplines like art or English.

DRAMATIC TENSION

The teacher is Zen because he's a drug-user. The teacher has a dark, grizzly past that's back to haunt him. The teacher is dying of cancer and is

Zen because he's at peace with what's to come. The teacher is harboring runaways at home, and he could be fired if anyone finds out. The teacher manages to sooth the nerves of other people, thanks to his hidden powers.

OPTIONAL GAMEPLAY

This teacher offers just the right advice to handle a problem without interfering directly or asking questions. The advice helps focus the hero and is something that offers the hero the temporary equivalent of a one-shot Fortune-based feat (*M&M*, page 58). Only one hero can cash in on this, and only once per story-arc (every three or four sessions, for example).

THE WATERBOY: EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

QUESTION 30: THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE TO SCHOOL THAN JUST GOING TO CLASSES.

You're in luck...there are tons of other things to do. Plenty. Yessir. You're still looking at me, why? Oh wait, you want examples.

School is often *the* social experience of your teen life. Sure, you can go out and play hero, but the fact is, if your campaign is set at school, then it's probably good to diversify. Diversifying might include the cliques you hang around with, the groups that share your hobbies, and the different ways you and schoolmates interact outside of classes. More importantly, it's about making those experiences fun, fun being the difference between going to the photography club and talking about shutter speed and lighting (seriously boring for the other players) and going to photography club and discovering a fellow shutterbug caught something really weird on film.

PCU: CLIQUES

Ah, to be accepted, to be welcome by a group of peers who understand your interests and outlook and don't judge you for them (mostly). Unfortunately, for some folks to feel accepted, it means that other teens have to be outsiders. After all, what's the use of being "in," if someone isn't on the outs?

Many teens divvy themselves up into cliques, and only a few can interact with two circles or more. These groups are your identity; sure, some aren't into the whole "follow us or become a pariah" mentality, but the popular ones are exclusive. Remember, "To become accepted, someone has to be an outsider." Few teens mess with this dynamic, because it's hard singling yourself out when you're already part of a group.

For the circle to work, there needs to be an alpha. This is usually an older classmate, like a senior on the verge of graduating. Surrounding the alpha is one or more lieutenants, and the alpha's SO (squeeze, honey, boo, you get the idea). After that, you have the cadre of clique members, the ones who just hang-out and follow the mob. They're along for the ride and either embrace the clique mindset like good drones, or they're just coasting. Some cliques might include a rival to the alpha... an up-and-comer who thinks he or she deserves the position. There's also the outsider, someone who's on the fringes of the group but keeps to themselves, and the wannabe – that one member from another clique who finds his or herself slowly drawn into the group.

There are many types of cliques, and while all schools share some, they don't share all. In Houston, for example, one group might include "Kickers" or those good ole' boys who chew tobacco, listen to country western music, and aren't above raising hell. In Chicago or LA, however, your clique may be gang-related. Thus, rather than identifying the

individual groups, this handy little FAQ identifies the so-called "parent groups." These are the broader definitions for the cliques.

Two final notes on the matter; 1) It is possible for your supergroup to have members from different cliques. Something about the school or your powers has brought you together, and while you may not see eye-to-eye—or even get along with one another—you can set aside your petty differences when the time comes. 2) It is possible for teens to be "floaters"—not participating in any clique, and instead, just being friends with whomever.

THE POPULAR KIDS

PRIVILEGED, SPOILED, RICH, ARROGANT

Okay...yes. Popular can be subjective, but this group consists of the school stars. Be it the bossy cheerleaders, the arrogant preps, or the muscle-head jocks, these kids own the school; they top the clique food chain because the teachers and principals accept them. This clique is high on school spirit, and they bring the school its prestige. The more games or competitions they win, the more donations roll in from proud alumni. As a result, these teens are given a little more power and privilege than any other clique, and they can be a bit...spoiled. They know they can get away with almost anything, and they aren't afraid to take advantage of it.

MINI-STORIES

It's Spirit Week, and the popular kids are bullying everyone into participating. A popular girl accuses one of the athletes of date rape before the clique ousts her and closes ranks. The jocks are involved in bullying and vandalism, but the principal does nothing because of the upcoming semi and quarter finals of a game, competition, or meet. Someone in the clique has powers and helps the clique commit "thrill crimes." The clique pushes someone too far, and now, popular kids start dying one by one. The clique starts trying to recruit you by driving away your friends. The clique's alpha pushes the clique to excel at their sport by introducing dangerous enhancement-performing drugs.

THE COUNTER-CULTURE TEENS

SHOCKING, REBELS, ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT

You notice these kids right off the bat because they make an exceptional effort to get noticed. They stand out in crowds, and they do whatever it takes to be distinctive. It might be a foot-high mohawk, a rack of piercings, sleeves of tattoos, strange clothing, or make-up on guys. You might also know them as goths or punks, though plenty of other cliques also fit the bill. This clique dislikes the homogenized sensibilities of society, and they enjoy flouting their distaste for it in

the most visual way possible. Their tastes are also reflected in their music. That said, just because these teens are counter-culture or anti-establishment doesn't mean they're law-breakers. There is a form of quiet protest, and while they may not obey all rules and laws, many will obey the majority of them.

MINI-STORIES

Under someone's influence, the clique begins dabbling in dangerous magics. The clique indulges in drug usage on school property. One of these kids is accused of a satanic murder that he didn't commit. The clique attracts the attention of an entity that starts preying on them. The clique pushes its members to commit crimes, eventually escalating the acts to violent levels. The school targets the clique for acts of vandalism that they didn't commit.

GANGS

VIOLENT, SHORT-TEMPERED, RUTHLESS, DANGEROUS

Unfortunately, gangs are a fixture of inner city schools and a growing problem in suburban institutions. Some teens join this clique because they see no other escape from the surrounding poverty, while others are forced into these groups because of location or just by happenstance. The gangs perpetuate violence, and they do whatever it takes to keep that reputation strong. They also protect their membership by any means necessary; any insult to the individual is an insult shared by the gang. They will avenge any perceived insult or slight with bloody zeal. In many impoverished schools, they are the popular kids and the only clique that matters. Naturally, gangs are illegal, and schools can and will expel students for participating in one. Gangs indulge in violence, and they commit crimes. They take whatever they want and do whatever they want, but the individual's wants are never placed above the gang's needs.

MINI-STORIES

A new kid in school discovers he can leave his old neighborhood, but the gang will not let him leave them. An unpopular teen sees the gangs as his road to acceptance or, at least, fear. A gang decides to mark its territory at school by attacking other students. The gang gets a hold of superpowers, but it's also killing them. A gang-member tries to escape his gang ties. Working on behalf of a major trafficker, a school gang is responsible for distributing drugs to other teens. Two gangs war over the school as "their territory." After a dozen students are expelled for their involvement in youth gangs, they try finding the person who betrayed them.

THUGS

BULLYING, ANTAGONISTIC, SECRETIVE

Unlike a gang, which implies an organization, team colors, gang signs, and really kicking socials, thugs are simply trouble-makers and law-breakers. They might be bullies or the kid bouncing between foster homes, but they all have "trouble" branded across their foreheads. Most expect to attend the University of Five to Ten, and the only reason they're in school now is because they're being forced to. It's either school or juvenile hall. In one, you choose your dance partners; in the other, they choose you. It's not to say that thugs can't be redeemed. For some delinquents, it requires effort and, more importantly, the possibility of hope. They must feel like they have the chance for a good life once they leave school. For other thugs, however, they like being criminals. They enjoy the power and money that comes from breaking the law.

MINI-STORIES

A thug wants to redeem his life, but he's under the influence of a criminal sibling or parent. The thug isn't obviously a thug—he or she is part of another clique but secretly committing crimes. The thug is attracted to you and starts stealing things to give you as "gifts." The thugs steal a bit of technology they aren't supposed to have. The thugs start working for the city's crime lord and are in danger of committing crimes that would ruin their lives forever. The thugs volunteer for dangerous experimentation to gain powers.

THE ARTISTS

ALOOF, SHOWY, STYLISH, ARROGANT

The artists consist of actors, dancers, painters, sculptors, or anyone else with liberal arts ambitions. They consider themselves above their fellow students, convinced that everyone is boorish and blind for not having their insight. They're less likely to participate in extracurricular activities unless they involve something artistic, and they almost never attend sporting events. Instead, they're more likely to attend gallery openings, the opera, and plays outside of school, rather than hang around any longer than they must. The artists may act superior at times, but they never physically bully anyone unless (like most people) they think they can get away with it. Thus, Brownie Girl Scouts...beware the artists.

MINI-STORIES

A painter is beaten badly by a mysterious assailant and may never paint again. The heroes are asked to participate in the school talent show. The so-called artistes are actually involved with stealing art pieces from local galleries. A particularly talented artist who is hated by jealous peers is the subject of nasty rumors. A painter is painting actual crimes right before they happen; can she divine the future or is her alter ego committing the crimes?

BAND GEEKS

EXUBERANT, OUTGOING, GEEKY, WELL-INTENTIONED

Unlike the artist, who eschews all things school and extra-curricular, the band geek is all about school spirit and the art of music. They play at games and pep rallies, they have their own concerts, and they participate in events. It's a way for some geeks to be an accepted fixture in the school's social hierarchy without the jocks beating on them. Band geeks fit a variety of personalities, from the level-headed jazz lover to the acne-faced chubby kid handling the tuba. Just run if you hear a story begin with "And this one time, in band camp..."

MINI-STORIES

The band bus is high-jacked by kidnappers on its way to a game. The school is hosting a music fair and competition that's bringing in hundreds of local musicians. The band kids are sent on a weekend retreat to practice and learn, but the heroes discover that all of them are in danger. A flute player can mesmerize rats with his music. During a concert, everyone is hypnotized by the music and robbed, though nobody can remember it happening. And this one time, in band camp....

THE GEEKS

SMART, INEPT, UNCERTAIN, STRUGGLING

The geeks are essentially any student with an interest in academics and who possess a less-than-strong grasp on the social graces or customs of

their peers. In short, they ain't popular, and no matter how hard they try, they'll never be popular. Geeks are generally smart, but they lack the wisdom not to share that fact with their peers. They are computer-fluent and into strange hobbies (comics, speculative fiction, sci-fi, fantasy, or horror movies or television, roleplaying games, or computer gaming). They constantly seek popular acceptance, and they generally fail, with horrendous results. They are the number one target of bullies and least likely to date above their station, but they're also most likely to build a she-bot/he-toy.

MINI-STORIES

A geek builds a she-bot/he-toy that looks like you. A geek creates a fantastic bit of tech that a villain wants to steal. The geeks decide to fight back against bullying by booby-trapping the school with practical jokes. A geek accidentally triggers an explosion, and the resulting fire threatens to sweep through the school. It's the science fair at the school, and geeks are scurrying to complete their projects and outdo or sabotage one another.

THE HOBBYISTS

ENTHUSIASTIC, DEDICATED, SERIOUS, CAUTIOUS

This group has a hobby that may or may not be tied to a class, be it photography, gaming, astronomy, wrestling, model train building, superheroes, etc. The hobby in question is not very physically active, and while the hobbyists may watch wrestling, for example, they won't go out and wrestle themselves. It's a fan club of sorts, with the meetings spent discussing the hobby or pursuing it. If the students have

a teacher sponsoring them, then they'll likely meet in a classroom or study room after class. Members of this "clique" are also friends with one another outside of school, because their hobby touches on their personal lives. With outsiders, though, most hobbyists are careful about revealing their interests out of fear of becoming the subject of ridicule. Photographers are among the few that aren't mocked, however, because the photographs end up in the school newspaper, on the website, and in the yearbook.

MINI-STORIES

A school photographer snaps a photo of a villain removing his mask. A photographer fakes a photograph of someone else posing as you in costume. The hobbyists are attending a local convention of interest when terrorists take the convention-goers hostage. A group of students start a fan club dedicated to your hero persona. A hobbyist has an ultra rare stamp that is stolen. A hobbyist discovers you share a hobby with his or her group and invites you to join. The school has an underground hobbyist group for students into supervillains or the dark arts.

THE URBAN ATHLETES

FULL-OF-ATTITUDE, DAREDEVILS, FOOLHARDY, FEARLESS

There is no school program for these teens, but they're athletes just the same. From skateboarders to surfers, from parkour acrobatics (free running) to extreme urban stunt work, these individuals risk life and limb to perfect that death-defying, bone-breaking trick. Adrenaline is their drug of choice, and their trophies are the scars they wear. Image in this clique is all based on what you're willing to do for your sport, though you



certainly have the posers as well – those teens who wear the latest hip trends and who think that being “in” is a matter of looking the part and talking big. Urban athletes perform some of their tricks at school, but the more serious stuff they save for after school, at various parks and abandoned properties.

MINI-STORIES

One urban athlete has all the makings of a hero. Crime-fighting has become the newest urban athlete craze, and now teens are risking life and limb to stop crimes. A group of teens perform crazy stunts at school in an effort to outdo one another. Teens are performing dangerous stunts and walking away unscathed from fatal accidents. X-Treme Urban Sports is auditioning students at your school for their show.

THE REDNECKS

LOUD, TOUGH, GROUNDED, UNCOUTH

Redneck is that catch-all term for those teens that can be vulgar and crass, given to libertine views (less government involvement) and who tend to be old-fashioned in their outlooks. They definitely eschew sophistication and politically correct behavior. Redneck doesn't necessarily mean racism, but there isn't much patience for diversity or “special interest groups.” They can have gay friends, for example, but they'll disagree with gay marriage rights. They may not have an issue with women working, but their wife will likely stay at home to raise the family. It's not a country-western thing, either. A redneck is essentially any teen with a rough demeanor, a fondness for crude, vocal behavior, a dislike of governmental influence

and authority, a penchant for drinking, and someone with old-fashioned, blue-collar views. They can be intelligent and well-read, but they live their life according to a basic, simple set of rules.

MINI-STORIES

A redneck student is mistakenly blamed for racist graffiti. A redneck teacher secretly tries recruiting disenfranchised teens into a white supremacy group. A redneck with a drinking problem starts consuming alcohol at school. A redneck who's acted and been treated like a dumb hick is actually hiding his true intelligence. A group of rednecks is cruising the streets on weekends, gay-bashing and attacking visible minorities. A redneck's political comments trigger a firestorm at school between proponents for his right to freedom of speech and the people who believe his comments racist.

THE INTERNATIONAL CROWD

OUTSIDERS, INTELLIGENT, MULTI-CULTURAL, CULTURED

It's hard for foreign-language students to assimilate into the school mainstream, especially with culture shock and language being issues. That's not to say they aren't welcome at the school, but with many schools hosting an International Friends club, it's easy for expats to cluster together. They may or may not share the same culture or language, but they do share the same experience and, often, the same traditional family ties and values. That's enough of a binding agent. They marvel at the relative independence of North American students and at their familial relations. They also bear distinct pressures that none of their North American peers will ever really understand. The parents of these students moved away from everything they knew, often to give their families a better life. That means there's an increased pressure to perform and conform, more so with traditionally conservative or religious households. That doesn't mean, however, that foreign students aren't just like all other teens out there; they're equally capable of doing stupid things and annoying the hell out of their parents.

MINI-STORIES

A Filipino student is actually a respected hero in her country, but she can't crusade any longer because it'll be too easy to figure out her identity. A Rwandan student has survived the killing fields of his country, but he is still suffering from flashbacks of the massacres. A Chinese student whose family is steeped in dark magic is railing against his familial obligations, because he's to serve as a permanent host for the spirit of a powerful ancestor. An Iranian student is being persecuted and isolated because of her religion and her instance on wearing the traditional hijab.

THE SLACKERS

UNDERACHIEVERS, DOPE-HEADS, RELAXED, EASY-GOING

The grunge crowd, the drop-outs, the dopeheads, the slackers...whatever you call them, this clique is less about schoolwork and all about their music, using recreational drugs, and just chilling. People drift in and out of their group, and some may not even graduate, but they don't care. Most of them don't see the need for school or all that effort. As long as they can make enough money to subsist—to eat, to drink, to have fun—they'll be happy. It's a neutral state of being, one dedicated to satisfying the most basic of needs. They will turn slacking into an art-form, however, expending more effort into avoiding work than the work itself might actually entail. Some are also intelligent scammers, making money through non-traditional means like leveling characters in videogames for customers or buying and selling items on eBay.



MINI-STORIES

A slacker is actually rich because she's an EBay whiz. A slacker has considerable superpowers, but he isn't interested in expending the effort to fight crime. A slacker realizes he's heading for a bleak future unless he changes, but he needs help. A slacker ODs on a batch of bad drugs and needs help fast, or she'll die.

FIGHT CLUB: SCHOOL CLUBS & GROUPS

Every school has a minimum of a dozen officially recognized clubs and groups, each offering a different way of enriching the school experience. While clubs might seem like a waste of time to fledgling heroes, they do provide people with much needed diversity, especially in school-based campaigns. Okay...sure, and there's also bound to be an adventure or three involving said groups if you're a member, and plenty of potential for drama.

Remember that the following list is just a sample of what schools might support and sponsor. The richer the school, the more it has to offer. The more impoverished the school, however, the more likely that the clubs might exist to support parents in some way too.

ANIME CLUB

This group is strictly for fans and appreciators of Japanese animation, thanks to the growing love of the genre in North America.

ADVENTURES

Anime characters are coming to life. A student creates anime caricatures of students, but some students don't have a sense of humor about it. A new anime is mesmerizing fans and turning them into criminals.

ARTS CLUB

This club promotes and encourages participation in the visual arts.

ADVENTURES

The club is sponsoring an artist who is actually siphoning people's talents. The arts club takes a field trip to the museum in the middle of an arts theft. A member of the club discovers that a popular gallery piece is a forgery.

BREAKFAST CLUB

This group meets one or more times a week in the morning for a healthy breakfast and lively discussions on different events.

ADVENTURES

A debate breaks out on whether superheroes like you are actually necessary. The boy/girl you're in love with joins the group. A rival joins the group just to antagonize you.

CHESS CLUB

The Chess Club meets to discuss strategies, their love for the game, and play.

ADVENTURES

You suspect that the genius playing three games simultaneously (and winning) is actually a young supervillain. A boy with a strange chess set challenges the best players, but the people he beats vanish a few hours later. A young super can turn chess pieces into "pets" that fight for him.

CHOIR CLUB

Also known as the Glee Club, these students sing at community events, in concerts, and at school.

ADVENTURES

A mysterious ailment robs all the choir singers of their voice before a major competition. The choir's gifted soprano is discovered to be a mutant; now, fearful parents want to kick her out of the choir. The choir is asked to sing for a visiting politician...at the same time a powered killer plans to assassinate the politician.

CLASS COMMITTEES

This group represents the interests and concerns of one class—freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior.

ADVENTURES

The committee organizes a class strike to protest school policy. The committee is strong-arming classmates to support their initiatives. The committee is choosing a new executive, and people nominate the hero for election.

COMPUTER CLUB

This group meets to discuss and learn about computers and new technology.

ADVENTURES

The clubs' hackers accidentally stumble across a shadow-site that contracts freelance villains. A mysterious hacker is using the school computers to crack secured sites. An advanced AI nests in the school's mainframe and discovers a way to "jump" into different brains to temporarily control students and staff.

DANCE COMMITTEE

This committee decides on the dance themes, hires the DJs/bands, decorates the event, and organizes anything else pertaining to the dance itself.

ADVENTURES

The theme is "Super's-Night," and several teens are wearing all-too-realistic and professional-looking costumes of teen-villains. A prominent superhero agrees to chaperone the school's charity dance. Someone steals the money from the dance's ticket sales.

DEBATE CLUB

This club helps students debate in public, teaching them self-confidence and communication skills.

ADVENTURES

The debate is about Heroes as Menace or Necessity, and the hero is asked to argue against heroes. A champion debater is winning competitions through his hypnotic voice.

DRAMA CLUB

Students in drama club learn about theater and drama, as well as rehearse for plays.

ADVENTURES

Props picked up from a flea market appear to be cursed. A ghost seems to haunt the theater. An unhinged villain with mental powers, who fancies himself an impresario, drops in during one rehearsal to “direct” the actors.

ENVIRONMENT CLUB

This group rallies under the banner of environmental concerns, organizing activities and promoting eco-awareness.

ADVENTURES

Some of the students begin engaging in acts of eco-terrorism to save a local wilderness. Students rescue animals from a testing lab and hide them at school, but they don’t realize how dangerous the animals are. The students organize a rally to save a habitat from developers.

GAMING

The gaming club is for roleplayers, card players, and boardgamers, providing them with sessions and spaces to play.

ADVENTURES

None. Gamers are sensible, law abiding teens who would never get in trouble or cause problems, despite the media’s unfair portrayal of their hobby. If they do get in trouble, however...A gamer with new magical powers turns the school into his dungeon and the students into monsters. Following a school-related shooting, a parent’s group tries to outlaw gaming from the school.

FIGHT CLUB

What part of “You do not talk about fight club,” did you not understand?

HERO CLUB

In a world where heroes leap tall things in a single bound and are stronger than a choo-choo thingie, it’s natural for fan groups to pop up and admire the ideology of heroism.

ADVENTURES

Students sneak into a research facility in the hopes of triggering their “power accident.” The hero group brings in a third-rate hero of dubious morals as a guest lecturer. A major hero falls from grace amidst a major scandal, and now the disillusioned Hero Club is in danger of disbanding.

HONOR SOCIETY

This is a club for those students with a consistent 3.3 GPA or better. The club promotes scholarship and leadership skills in students.

ADVENTURES

A student being considered for membership in the Honor Society is discovered to have ties to a villain (mom, dad, the family pet, etc.). An honor student is cheating by reading the minds of his peers for test answers. The honor society has decided to induct one of the smart teen heroes into its ranks.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS

This club is for international students and for local students interested in foreign cultures. It promotes international understanding.

ADVENTURES

One of the students is the son of the ambassador of a villain-run country and is treated unfairly as such. Kidnappers target one of the international students because of his family’s position abroad. The group organizes a large International Food Fair at the school.

LANGUAGE CLUB

Be it French, Spanish, Latin, Japanese or any other foreign tongue, this club promotes the language and culture of that specific country.

ADVENTURES

The school organizes a class trip to said foreign country. A foreign diplomat comes to speak to the club, but a supervillain is out to kidnap and ransom her.

MATH CLUB

This club promotes the appreciation and understanding of mathematics.

ADVENTURES

The students attend a demonstration of fractal mathematics in action, and now they seem to have contracted escalating bad luck. A strange mathematical formula that makes no sense is changing students.

NEWSPAPER

This group is responsible for reporting on school events and writing articles about them.

ADVENTURES

The school paper’s comprehensive file on local strangeness goes missing. A reporter goes missing after investigating a story about a teacher. A reporter claims to know the identity of a super-heroic student, which she’ll print in the next paper—is she serious or bluffing?

RELIGIOUS/POLITICAL CLUBS

This group caters to understanding and promoting a specific religion or political view.

ADVENTURES

The group is increasingly militant in their promoting of an ideology. An outside organization is using the group to reach more students and sway them into joining. The club angers another club, sparking an escalating war of vandalism in and out of school.

SCIENCE

Like the math club, the science club promotes the various disciplines and encourages learning.

ADVENTURES

A student finds a strange, but dangerous, device and brings it to the club for study. A scientific genius is targeted by a villainous outfit for

recruitment. An old science experiment from decades ago reawakens in the basement and begins to rampage.

YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

The Yearbook Committee is in charge of putting the yearbook together.

ADVENTURES

In reviewing photos for the yearbook, the committee encounters several pictures of students and teachers that nobody remembers meeting. Students die grizzly deaths after threats mysteriously appear in their yearbooks. The yearbook committee offers a \$100 prize to the best picture, and now everyone is carrying around cameras and snapping photos.

FOOTLOOSE: SCHOOL EVENTS

One of the final elements of school is the sanctioned events that surround it. Winter Dance to end the fall semester? That's a sanctioned event. Villain fight breaking out in the cafeteria? Not so sanctioned, and far less stressful than asking someone to the dance.

The events may be fun to roleplay, but without any impact on the hero's or heroine's life, it will eventually seem like a distraction from the action. Like the teachers, the cliques, the clubs, the friends, and everything else, there has to be purpose to the events. They have to influence you as hero and as teen. After all, the dilemma of being a young champion is the very collision of life and crime-fighting.

Additionally, school events are relatively rare; they should serve as the culmination of a story arc. It's the final stage for whatever's been happening over the last week or month.

BONFIRE RALLIES

Many suburban and small town schools host this fall event. Held on a beach or in a field, the organizers build a giant bonfire (under the supervision of the local fire marshal), while the students and parents socialize or sit around and enjoy the fire's warmth. It's often a community-building event, with all the locals welcome, and it's often hosted in conjunction with a football game or Halloween. And while the parents warm themselves around the fires, the teens often drift away to private conversations and kissing in the darkness, just past light's edge.

ADVENTURES

Are you the only one who sees a face flickering in the bonfire? A student and would-be villain decides tonight's the night to start stalking his fellow students in the darkness. At the bonfire, a guy/girl you find attractive asks you to walk with them, away from the others.

CAREER DAY

For one day, the classes stop, and the school is filled with strange adults telling you about the different careers out there for you. The lectures may be happening in various classrooms, and there may be kiosks set up in the quad or gym. It's a relatively stress-free day, unless you have no clue what you want to do in college, in which case, it's an unwanted reminder.

ADVENTURES

Heroes arrive to speak on behalf of local law enforcement careers. A villain is secretly scanning students and trying to recruit the powered

ones. Bad guys use the distraction of so many adults to enter the school and target you and your friends. The day is filled with strange careers (for powered schools touched with absurdity), like broom chauffeur and substitute sidekick.

COMPETITIONS

Music, language, and dance competitions, science and history quiz-offs, and spelling bees are some of the competitions a school might host. If the event is local, it'll likely be a day long event with area high schools participating. If the event is of national or even international caliber, however, then the event will run for several days with local families and hotels hosting the different school teams. The other option is that the heroes are the ones traveling to another city, as guests rather than as hosts. In this case, the heroes need a reason why all of them are going, but there's also the added mystery of a new school with its own history and problems.

ADVENTURES

Your parents agree to host a student at your home, but how can you combat crime with another student tagging along? Your school hosts a major competition, but when the Monster-Of-The-Week appears, new teen heroes arrive to help you fight. The heroes travel to another city to participate in the national finals of a competition, just in time for a major villain attack on the city.

CONCERTS

Whether it's the school's choir group, the high school orchestra, or a student jazz band, the evening concerts are the highlight of an alumni fundraiser or done for the benefit of the elderly, parents, or some other group. They can happen in the school's auditorium, or the musicians can travel to other venues (senior center, churches, theaters, etc.). You don't need to be in a band or choir to participate either. The school needs students to act as ushers, stagehands, and even serving staff, meaning everyone can get in on the fun that's about to erupt.

ADVENTURES

As the music plays or the choir sings, a haunting melody follows the notes, even after the piece has ended. An outrageous and demented villain steps in to perform his solo "The Sounds my Cat Made When it Died." One of the musicians/singers goes to the bathroom right before the show, and then vanishes.

DANCES

From the Kick-Off Dance at the start of the school year to the Senior Prom at the end of the year and all the dances and house parties in between, welcome to the school's main social event. This is the party where the beautiful people flaunt their fashion sense and pocketbooks, the dancers show the funk, the wallflowers work on their camouflage skills, and the party-animals spike the punch. It's also the evening when true love makes itself known and relationships shatter. Like the office Christmas party, it's all about who embarrassed themselves (and teachers are certainly not immune), who was seen on whose arm, who looked fabulous, who had their heart broken and, if things really get wild, who had pig's blood poured all over them.

ADVENTURES

A group of kids decide to sabotage the evening in revenge for being treated badly. A teen who is publicly humiliated at the dance decides it's

a good time to unleash her powers. It's a typical dance, with teens falling in love, sharing their first kiss, breaking up, crying to their friends, getting drunk, sneaking into the school, enjoying their first slow dance, and fighting something evil to prevent it from ruining everyone else's fun.

FUNDRAISERS

Schools always need money, and even if they didn't, they'd still have fundraisers to pony up some cash for a new piece of equipment or a new school wing. The fundraisers can be anything from the concerts mentioned before to the school fair mentioned right after this entry. They can also include telephone campaigns, ticket sales, garage sales, car washes, and baking drives. While the parents are mostly responsible for organizing and running these events, they always need students to help with the phone calls, sell the tickets, wash cars, and set up and help man the garage sales and baking drives. As you rightly suspected, they need help with all the grunt work. That said, there are certain fundraisers that students may never see, like charity auctions and big business donations.

ADVENTURES

At the garage sale, you recognize a piece of jewelry as belonging to a WWII heroine. During the telephone campaign, you call and catch someone screaming for help. During ticket sales, a group of thugs try to steal the money you've collected so far. During the car wash, a crime-fighter's vehicle pulls in for a wash and a generous donation. During the bake sale, Mrs. Applebaum's brownies are having a strange effect on the parents.

HIGH SCHOOL FAIR

The High School Fair is also a fundraising event, but it combines various games and activities in a one or two day event. Parents can shop at the

knick-knack tables or gamble at the blackjack or craps table. Teens can eat from the bake sales and play games of chance and skill. Children can enjoy the inflatable castle, watch the puppet show, or listen to storytellers. There may even be a ticket drawing to win prizes. It's another of those events that fosters the sense of community between students, parents, and teachers.

ADVENTURES

Children are disappearing down a strange rabbit hole in the inflatable castle. A petty crook tries stealing the fair's cash box or the grand prize of the ticket drawing. The bake sale is selling food that's causing almost instantaneous food poisoning.

INFORMATION NIGHT

Information night is when the school hosts an open house for parents and prospective students to tour the campus and speak to the teachers. The different clubs and the honor students are usually involved with showing different aspects of school life and touting the school's academic achievements. Naturally, well-respected or charismatic students are needed to play host, answer questions, and direct people around. For a powered or magical school, the open house might include demonstrations on how students are taught to live normal lives as well as how they're taught to control their power and the wisdom of when to use it.

ADVENTURES

You recognize one of the families touring as villains who've served their time, but you know nothing about their son or daughter. For super-schools, you're asked to prepare and perform a "power-kata" to demonstrate the school's excellence in educating supers. One of the physics experiments meant to impress parents is going haywire—can



you and your friends stop it from causing mayhem without frightening or alerting the visitors?

PARENT-TEACHER-STUDENT NIGHT

The night most every student dreads...when their parents and teachers meet to talk... about them. It's a hellish experience, unless you're lucky and your parents don't care enough to show up, you somehow shielded the event from them, or you're actually doing well in school. During this evening, the school becomes an open house for skittish students, their shell-shocked parents, and nervous teachers.

ADVENTURES

An explosion nearby rattles windows and nerves, and your science teacher excuses himself and runs for the nearest broom closet while fumbling with the buttons on his shirt; naturally, you think "perv" and go forth to investigate the explosion. A parent and a teacher get into a roiling fist-fight that spills into the hallway. One teen, to prevent the cataclysmic meeting between parent and teacher, tries triggering the fire alarms and water sprinklers.

SCHOOL SPIRIT WEEK

The school kicks off various initiatives for Spirit Week, which usually culminates in a major sporting event, dance, or talent contest. Throughout the week, students are encouraged to wear school colors, cheerleaders perform at pep rallies and in the quad, classes are interrupted for spontaneous gatherings, etc. After school, clubs might meet to make banners, students might rehearse for the talent show, or groups of kids may pull pranks on rival teams (for sporting events).

ADVENTURES

During the talent show, one teen performs a martial arts kata with moves very similar to that of a prominent young crime-fighter. Teens from a rival campus break into your school before a game to steal trophies, kidnap the mascot, and write misspelled graffiti on the walls. You're volunteered by the person you have a crush on to participate in Spirit Week as the new mascot.

SPORTING EVENTS

Basketball in urban schools, football in the suburbs (especially down in Texas), hockey in Canada, baseball and soccer in expatriate schools...

every school in every city has its die-hard sports and die-harder fans. When it's game day, you can gauge the game's popularity by the number of parents and boosters in the stands and by the decibel levels of the cheers. You might even find the high school marching band in the seats, playing tunes during the game and marching during half-time (mostly a football thing; putting skates on the band for a hockey game...not pretty). It's another community event shared between student, parent, and teacher. It's also time to interact with other high schools, whether a brother or sister school shows up to support your team or students from the rival school are on your side of the bleachers looking for trouble. Fights are commonplace in games...especially in Texas.

ADVENTURES

A group of thugs decides to vandalize cars in the parking lot. A player is badly injured, and if he doesn't reach the hospital fast, he may die. Another magical/powered school challenges your super/magical school to a powered Olympics competition.

REVENGE OF THE NERDS: THE NEW DYNAMICS OF POWERED-BULLYING

Bullying in high school is a given. It happens, and despite the best effort of teachers and parents, it happens frequently. It seems like a rite of passage, only these kinds of rites aren't meant to last four years.

That said, there is one thing to take into account with meta-schools. Everyone has a power or magic, and being strong or tough is not necessarily an advantage. In fact, imagine a game of paper/rock/scissors, where everyone has an advantage over someone else and is disadvantaged by someone different. What's the use of being invulnerable if someone can switch your thoughts off? How do you mentally dominate someone who turns into acidic mist? How can you envelope someone in your acid mist when they can freeze you solid? How do you freeze someone who can melt anything? How can you melt something completely invulnerable?

That's not to say that bullying doesn't exist in meta-schools; bullies will always prey on perceived targets. But there's now the additional risk that in bullying one person, someone with the power to handle the bully will step in. It's like the UN-version of high school where all the kids have their fingers on their country's nuclear triggers. Bullies can exist, but they're playing on a level field. Their victims can and will fight back. That won't end the problem, but it will make for interesting times. Just remember...the strongest kid may be the nerd, and the bully might be the kid who can shut powers off. It's definitely a different dynamic.

BRING IT ON: TEEN HERO RITUALS

QUESTION 31: RITUALS? LIKE A CULT THING?

No, no...there's nothing wrong with your Kewl Aid, so drink up. We're talking rituals here, rites of passage that celebrate that transition from being a youngster to an adult. Old tribal customs required things like sending you on a walkabout or vision quest or inflicting some body scarring to mark you as a full fledged member of the tribe. Modern day culture, however, frowns on sending the kiddies off into the brush or drawing blood to celebrate your birthday...go figure. So instead, they have tamer rituals for hitting certain milestones. It might be getting your driver's license, having your Bar Mitzvah/First Communion, or hitting the age of consent.

There is a modern primitive movement, though, which believes life is lacking in the rituals that once allowed teenagers to feel like a part of society. Tattooing and body piercing/modification are part of our need to create our own rituals to feel like we belong to something. Admittedly, not everyone gets a tattoo or piercing for that reason, but there is a certain lack of empowering ritual to celebrate milestones in our lives. For this reason, people expose themselves to pain or discomfort, not for the pain itself, but because they survived it. You see it in soldiers that get a unit tattoo, and you see it in gangs as badges of honor (and people wonder why teens find gangs so attractive?).

That said...here's an interesting take on ritual in the teen hero community. What if teen heroes celebrated their own rituals to mark themselves as heroes and heroines? What if donning the costume was

only part of a step. We're not talking cult activities here or frat house hazing, though that could be an option, but something to make the experience of becoming a hero memorable. The blood part of that ritual comes with the first time you go crime-fighting. So, what if there's more to it?

The first step in any ritual begins with the Power Trials....

MORTAL KOMBAT: THE POWER TRIALS

The power trials are exactly what they sound like. It's a series of tests to measure the limits of your abilities and help you use them under stressful situations (without you choking or losing control...both of which are bad, BTW). This assumes you live in an environment where such training and study exists. It could be a mutant school actively hunting for students before they endanger themselves and their families, or it can be an organization dedicated to helping young supers and steering them in the right direction (of course, you do realize that 'right' for them might not be right for you; they could be villains.).

In open, accepting societies, the utmost care would be taken in testing the student with the least amount of discomfort possible. In more military societies where supers are outlawed or drafted, the tests might be brutal and unforgiving with live-fire exercises because, well you know, it's funny. Here are some suggestions as to where power trials might take place. Each entry has a Toughness, Size, and Features recommendation as per the *Mutants & Masterminds* core book (p.145). The size isn't necessarily the size of the testing arena alone, but all the ancillary requirements that go with it. As for features, they might include Combat Simulator, Computer, Concealed, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Infirmary, Isolated, Pool, Power, and Power System.

EL-CHEAPO GYM

(TOUGHNESS: 5 / SIZE: SMALL / FEATURES: 0)

The school or organization doesn't have much in the way of backing or equipment. The tests might only include powered dodgeball or capture the flag, but their hearts are in the right place, even though their budget isn't. Locations might change from person to person and include gyms and neighborhood arenas (after hours of course), open fields, and abandoned warehouses and factories. As a rule of thumb, most offensive powers above PL5 will leave noticeable damage and require repairs. PL 10 and over, and we're talking irreparable damage, the kind that would compromise and destroy most structures because of sympathetic damage (punching out a wall would weaken the ceiling, for example). This type of arena might be something you find with a low caliber group trying to appear all self-important, with a society where heroes are underground, or with a young group that doesn't have the necessary resources.

OBSTACLE COURSE

(TOUGHNESS: 8-10 / SIZE: MEDIUM / FEATURES: 1-4)

The group or organization has the pull to hold their trials in one consistent location, meaning they have a set obstacle course or maze. The dangers and trials, however, are generic and either meant as a "challenge one-and-all" approach or must be heavily modified each time they need to test someone new. The facility could employ other heroes to provide a challenge or use the kind of traps/obstacles you'd have to buy from a home and garden mega-store and build yourself. The location is also probably pockmarked or damaged, with repairs few and far between due to the costs, which are a little beyond the group's pocket-books. Anything above PL8 might leave significant damage that would

shut the facility down, while PL13 and over could level the training area. This type of facility is something you'd find in a private organization or a group with heroes that have established some notoriety (enough to have a "rabbi" or backer).

DEDICATED ARENA

(TOUGHNESS: 10-15 / SIZE: MEDIUM / FEATURES: 4-6)

The group or organization has enough banking and liquid assets to maintain a decent gym and training facility. It might include dedicated pieces of equipment designed to measure and record physical attributes like strength and speed. It might include a shooting range, mechanical traps, or robotic combatants. The arena would have to be prepped for different heroes or teams, requiring a couple of hours of modification, but the group could potentially repair and contain damage up to PL 10 for offensive powers. Anything above PL15, however, might level the training arena. The group or organization could also afford to have one or two individuals dedicated as course instructors, a small infirmary with a nurse, and changing rooms with showers. This kind of facility belongs to branches of the military, groups with one or more generation of heroes that graduated from its ranks, a team with substantial history (and thus many supporters and benefactors) or the help of an older, more established team.

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY

(TOUGHNESS: 15-20 / SIZE: MEDIUM-LARGE / FEATURES: 6-8)

Now we're talking the big leagues. The group or organization doing the testing has massive amounts of disposable income, allowing them to create and maintain a gleaming, shining testing facility. This place looks part laboratory and part Olympic-caliber arena, with all the necessary perks such as on-call trainers and medical staff, showers, and a fully stocked weight room. The modular setup can test any super on the fly with minimal prep (about five minutes to program the test parameters), and nothing short of PL 20 is going to put a lasting dent in the walls. Such facilities may be run by major corporations, special forces units, internationally known supergroups, and high-end schools.

EXOTIC-TRAINING DOME

(TOUGHNESS: 20 / SIZE: LARGE-HUGE / FEATURES: 10+)

This facility is beyond the technology or capabilities of 99.9999999999% of Earthers. It's filled with alien machines, extra-dimensional artifacts, or mental constructs. It's huge, and its only purpose is to test any and all supers to their limits. It's instantly adaptable to any power level or brand of hero and uses solid-light or mystically created environments for full immersion. In fact, there's no way to distinguish the artificial environments of this testing ground from real life. It can be as safe or as dangerous as its operators choose, and it's usually run by intergalactic entities, alien empires, and organizations that managed to gain access to said technology.

YOU GOT SERVED: POWER DISPLAYS

Like cheerleading or football, you've got to audition. Well, you can't really "fail" this ritual because you're not auditioning for a spot on the team, but you can embarrass yourself...badly. We're talking in the kind of spectacular way that they'll remember at your 40th high school reunion. But, don't let that scare you. The point of this ritual is to stand in front of your peers and display your powers.

Claremont Academy's study hall was packed and filled with the low drone of a dozen hushed conversations. Dictionaries both English and foreign, history books, magazines, and encyclopedias of religion, mythology, and animals covered every table top. Students quietly rattled off a litany of codenames from their lists to one another, check-marking some for later consideration and crossing out others according to the reactions. The naming ceremony deadline was in an hour, and everyone was in full panic, second-guessing their chosen names now that they'd discovered Lady Liberty was attending. Anthony Andrews, however, was calm. He leaned back on the chair's rear legs, continued tossing the ball up in the air, and listened to the names being thrown around.

"What about Liberty Gal?" Theresa Songridge asked.

"Sounds like major brown-nosing for Lady Liberty," Anthony replied. "And I bet there's a ton of other kids using Liberty in their name tomorrow."

Theresa sighed and flipped through her history book.

"I got it!" a young man said. "I'll call myself...Razorfist!"

"They'll call you Razorface," Anthony said, shaking his head.

"Look," Theresa said, "you're supposed to be helping us. Instead, you're playing ball and shooting down everything we come up with...except for Markus. You told him The Homo-Sapien was a good name."

Markus perked up from behind his books. "It's not?"

Anthony giggled.

"Actually," Elite replied, walking up to the table, "the question is why are you listening to someone who calls himself 'Whoop-Ant'?"

Anthony stopped tossing the ball. "Dude! Whoop-Ant is an awesome name."

"My group's finished," Elite said. "So far at our table we have Night Guard, Warfire, and Starstriker. Anyone here need help with a code-name?"

All the hands at the table shot up.

"Oh, sure," Anthony said, "go for the obvious, cool-sounding names."

The thought behind this ritual is to show the diversity of the world through the different individuals and their powers, but you'd be right in thinking there's a little bit of competition to be memorable (in a good way). Some students throw in a bit of spice with a battle cry, while others rely on the sheer force of their power to make an impression. Naturally, the school or group throwing this ultra-pep rally also has measures in place to prevent powers from cascading in all the wrong directions or fights from breaking out. The point is to show control, poise, and skill in the use of your abilities.

Originality and style are always appreciated. Why bench-press a car when you can bench-press the platform that the cheerleaders are standing on? Why float in mid-air when you can do it upside-down while spinning? Why blast the air when you can melt the metal off a car frame? Just remember that you have to clean up your own mess. Here are several options for display of powers.

AUDITION PIECE

This typical variant has the hero standing on stage and showing their power to the general audience. Think of it as amateur night at the Apollo, where it's just you wowing the audience for a few seconds with your abilities. In fact, it can be turned into a full-blown talent night for students who wish to participate.

RUNWAY MODELING

The students all line up and walk down a "runway." As each one is announced, they display their powers and join the others who preceded

them. The runway can be anything from an actual stage to a gym floor or the main aisle of a theater or cafeteria.

STRESS-TEST

This process is stretched out over a couple of days. Each student is put through an obstacle course, maze hunt, or arena combat while the other students watch. The event can be simple and fun, or hard and potentially lethal, depending on its purpose (to drive a point home, get others to appreciate your gift, or build confidence).

TAG!

Yes, the exclamation point is necessary. Don't touch it. [Whatever you say, Your Highness.—The Developer]

In this frenzied showcase, all the new students play a game of powered tag with one random person being it. "It" then has to use their powers to tag another student, making them "it." It's a way for all the students to show off their abilities, and the environment is controlled to prevent injuries.

WHAT'S MY POWER?

This is a derivation of a theater classroom game designed to get the students comfortable with one another. In this case, the teens break into groups of five to ten people. Each person introduces his or herself, and then, everyone else tries to guess their power. Afterwards, the teen shows what they can do.

BLANKMAN: NAMING CEREMONY

A naming ceremony works for large hero groups and hero schools. The principle reasons behind its creation are that the naming ceremony is meant to prevent name overlap in a society with many heroes, to force teens into considering their name carefully, and it's a way of giving the hero ownership over their name. It's something they worked for, and it's a name they earned.

Most naming ceremonies happen after the power trials, as a kind of reward for "surviving" them. If the power trials were the classes, then the naming ceremony is the graduation. The names might also reflect how well you did in the trials, making the name a fusion of your powers and qualities. The name may simply be something you choose, or perhaps, it's assigned to you based on conduct, psych evaluations/probes, or powers. The point is, the naming ceremony is based on the principle that the hero must do something to earn their name. It isn't as simple as just splashing several words together; the name reflects action and purpose. Anyone can call themselves The Supreme Fire, but can anyone live up to that name? The naming ceremony is a way of saying you deserve your namesake.

That said, the names are not set in stone. With heroes, few of them ever keep the same name after transitioning from teen to adult—especially true if you originally decided to include Kid, Boy, Gal, Teen, or Young somewhere in your moniker. Heck, even teenagers are allowed to change their mind after going through a particularly grueling or testing event. Save the world once too often, and "The Leet Scorch-Dude" may not be the way to go any more. In this case, heroes may go through another naming ceremony or simply change their name as a right of their experience.

Naming ceremonies can happen in several ways:

FIGHT FOR YOUR NAME

In this variant, a school may allow you to choose a name and then fight for your right to keep that name (lest they choose one for you...not good). This is a possibility in military and paramilitary organizations, as well as gangs and heroes in a world that hunts them.

FISH WEEK

Some schools, to make their new students (or fish) feel welcome and a part of the establishment, may allow students to pick their code names upon arriving. It could be part of a ceremony where they showcase their powers to their peers while someone announces their chosen handle.

GRADUATION DAY

You're not allowed to choose your name until the day you graduate or complete training. At that point, the naming ceremony is your graduation right, and it's a name you choose. This is an option in hero-exclusive schools and even supers boot camp.

NICKNAME

Your name is chosen for you, the way you earn a nickname in real life. This is usually picked by your peers and friends, making the name special as a mark of friendship as well. This option is available for a wide variety of groups, from military cadets to powers school to the ritual of a youth-oriented team.

READING YOUR DESTINY

In this unusual twist, the school/organization/team has someone or something that foresees your destiny. It won't say anything about that destiny, but during the naming ceremony, its choice in name may give you a clue as to your direction in life. If you're given "The Championator" as

a name, you can be assured of an interesting and potentially gratifying career. If you get named "Captain Silly String" or the "Avenging Llama," well...at least you have your health. The names can be goofy or temporary like nicknames, but it doesn't mean that the destiny envisioned for you is the one you can expect. Being a hero is all about making your own destiny and forging your own path. Maybe the name was picked to push you into trying harder. Maybe the name is one of many possible futures. Heroism is about personal choice; if you claim that your destiny is irrefutable, then you also say that choice and action don't matter. Choice matters, therefore the future is what you make of it (very important and inspired words... feel free to use it during pep talks to sports teams, supergroups that just got la beat down les big time, etc.).

PRETTY IN PINK (SPANDEX): COSTUME SELECTION

If power trials are exams and the naming ceremony is your graduation, then costume selection is your spanking new graduation gown and hat. Selecting a costume can also be a ritual on your way to hero-hood. C'mon, admit it...there's nothing like showing off your costume that first time around and getting those ooo's and aaaah's. It's a badge of honor, and it inspires you to go and fight crime.

Costume selection can be tied into the naming ceremony, where you unveil the whole kit-n-caboodle in one fell swoop. Or, it can be another step in the advancement of your skills and something to be earned after a test. Your name comes first, followed by your costume when you show you've got the chops to go mano-a-mano with the real bad guys. It all depends on your school, team, or organization.

Here are some options:

SCHOOL UNIFORM

The costume may have some unique flares and piping, but generally, it's part of a school uniform that matches the uniforms of the heroes around you. You might be given a generic leotard like a Solid Gold cast-away, until you're old enough to design your own uniform (through test or age). Or, perhaps it's given to you at the very beginning to give you a sense of inclusion.

TEAM TAILOR

The team or school has its own tailor or costume designer...someone who meets with you, discusses your identity, powers, and ambitions, and then creates several designs for you. This means the designs are usually top-notch and sensible. And, they're unique. This might be something provided to you when you graduate or if you pass the probationary period within an organization.

TRIAL BY FIRE

Or water, lightning, drooling spiders, or whatever else might challenge you. The right to wear a costume in a school or organization might be available to all students/members provided they can pass...The Test. The Test is a tough gauntlet that anyone can undertake at any time. Fail the gauntlet, and you can always try later...maybe after you heal properly. Succeed, and you earn the right to wear the uniform as a badge of honor. Fail, and your uniform consists of your bruises.

Another option is that you automatically receive a generic costume from the moment you join. It's a training uniform, but the older you are or the more experience you tuck under your belt, the more flourishes you can add to your outfit. Costume options might be like the badges Boy Scouts earn or the kind of pips you gain in the military. They could include any number of things including:

COLOR SCHEME PLATES

The students/trainees may earn the right to wear shoulder and knee pads or arm and shin plates of different colors, much like the belt system in martial arts. Beginners start at white and move through to yellow, green, blue, brown, and black (for advanced students).

CRESTS

Be it a chest emblem, a belt buckle, or just a ring, this mark of distinction is a badge marking the teen as someone of a certain experience or rank.

PATTERNS

The uniform has colors or patterns that can be added to it as the teen advances in rank, age, or ability. It might be leg and arm stripes of different colors or different geometric designs on the chest or shoulders.

PIPING

This is the simplest way to distinguish rank and the most commonly known, thanks to the military. Whether it's something stapled to a collar or stitched into the cuffs and arms, piping uses emblems, stripes, or chevrons to indicate rank.

SASHES

Sashes, belts, military webbing, and bandoliers of different styles and colors might be another way of distinguishing the hero's rank from that of his peers.

FAME: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Power trials, power displays, naming ceremonies, and costume selection...how does it all fit together? It really depends on the organization, school, or team doing this and what they're trying to accomplish. Here are some options for exactly that:

GRADUATION

The teen remains a student, probee, or novice until the training is done. At the end of it, they undergo exams as per power trials and graduation, which incorporates power display, a naming ceremony, and costume selection in one major event that everyone attends. The training might last a few weeks or months for things like boot camp, or a few years in the case of schools. In the case of the latter, because four years is a long time to wait, there might be two graduations. The first is the long-term graduation for academic accomplishment, and the second might be a shorter term (one or two years) graduation for heroic training and achievement.

INCLUSIVE

This method is something schools, organizations, and even cults use to make people feel like a part of the group from the onset. It means that the rituals are meant to bring the hero into the fold and not force them to jump through hoops so early in their career, just to make a mark. It starts with the power display, to introduce the teen to his or her peers. More importantly, it's done so that the teen feels like they don't have to hide their abilities in this environment. Hiding may be a concern for the outside world, but behind the walls of the team, group, or institution, they can be themselves. This might be followed by power trials, to gauge the teen's baseline abilities and slowly teach him or her how to operate alone and with other people. After a small training period or later in the semester, the student may receive the right to choose a codename. Or, perhaps, this is done during the power display. Regardless, the costume and pips are likely something that comes a little later, to reflect the teen's growing self-confidence.

THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

In this realistic setting, heroes can die, be maimed, or be sued into poverty. It's a stark take on the world of heroics, and anyone who decided these rituals are necessary is using them as milestones in your training and advancement. It's done to make you work for every inch of your heroic career and to give you short-term goals to strive towards. You might have power trials throughout the training, with a trial to earn your name and a trial to earn your costume. After each event, the mini-graduation ceremony includes a display of your powers with (hopefully) a show of your improvement.

TRIAL BY FIRE

You can't be a hero unless you go out and earn it. Some cultures use walkabouts, vision quests, hunts, and pep rallies to test you. With this organization, you must prove yourself in the real world, against a real foe, before you get the spiffy costume or the right to a name. Most groups will ask for proof or a trophy of your deed, be it a photo of your battle or a recognizable piece of the villain's costume. Heck, if the group is nasty enough, they might even ask for a piece of the villain...but then, that wouldn't be a campaign in the spirit of *Hero High*, would it? The naming ceremony or graduation to welcome you into the organization might also be equally tribal or wild, with bonfires, the roasting of meat, and the drinking of carbonated libations. The types of groups that might do something like this range from gung-ho, hard-as-nails paramilitary heroes to street champions who demand a certain amount of street-cred to run with them.

DUDE, WHERE'S MY SUPER-CAR? DRIVING AND DRIVER'S LICENSES

QUESTION 32: I CAN FLY... WHY DO I NEED TO DRIVE?

Before getting powers, getting a license and a car was the big thing... and it probably still is. Having flight or superspeed is fine, but if you want to maintain a credible cover as the typical teen, you need a license or you need to work towards a license. Why? Well, for starters, good luck flying from home to school or from school to the mall without getting noticed. Second, folks are going to wonder how you're getting around so easily, especially your parents (when you don't bother asking them for lifts). Third, most teens are social animals, and even relative loners

hang around with someone. That means when you travel, you're traveling in packs like hyenas or wildebeests, and unless your friends know about your powers and you can take them places, you're stuck traveling at the speed of normal.

All that said, the campaign may not deal with things like cars, or maybe the teens have some alternate method of transportation. Heck, maybe it isn't even important. But whatever it is, it should be a deliberate choice, and it should be dealt with if only for the additional fun factor.

There are several ways that a campaign can deal with driving.

VEHICLES

THE MEGA-CYCLE

This sucker is huge and seats three teens on its massive seat. Throw in a large sidecar, and it can carry another two or three people. Ignore the Mega-Cycle's open air design, it provides the riders with life support from hostile environments (outer space and underwater). Yes, that means the Mega-Cycle is space worthy, but without FTL, so the teens are staying relatively local.

Name	Strength	Speed	Defense	Toughness	Size	EP/PP Cost
Mega-Cycle	50	8	10	12	Medium	25/2

Features: Alarm, Navigation System; **Powers:** Immunity (Suffocation)

SCRAM-JET

Appropriated by them or built for them, the heroes have access to a long range jet with low orbit capabilities. This isn't the kind of vehicle you take from one part of the city to another. It's a rocket-engine slingshot, capable of taking the heroes anywhere in the world within hours.

Name	Strength	Speed	Defense	Toughness	Size	EP/PP Cost
Scram-Jet	70	12	8	12	Huge	24

Features: Alarm, Navigation System, Remote Control

MAGICAL HOUSE

Nobody ever expects the magical house, but the ambulatory domicile is good for strange campaigns, traveling around in comfort and style, and dropping in suddenly on evil witches. You might debate whether the house actually moves from its spot when traveling, since none of the neighbors ever seem to notice it vanishing, or perhaps the house is secluded enough to make quick jaunts without scrutiny. Regardless, the house has some amazing recuperative abilities, especially since it returns to its old spot without any plumbing problems or foundation damage.

Seriously...do you need stats for a magical house? It's a Deus Ex Machina, for heaven's sake, meaning the teens are likely to be at the whim of the house. It goes where it wants to, taking the heroes along for the ride regardless of their preferences. It goes as fast as the adventure needs and is as tough or feeble as required to be funny (capable of barreling through a forest one moment and being turned to swiss cheese by golf balls the next, after flying too close to the 892nd Wizard's Invitational Golf Tournament).

DRIVING MISS DAISY: DRIVING THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

Getting a driver's license is a tricky thing, because while there are some uniform laws throughout the United States, if that's where your campaign is set, the specific rules and regs vary from state to state. The fifty-one states (if you believe what some folks say about Canada), for example, all demand you spend a minimum amount of time with a learner's permit, which means driving and learning with an adult in the car. The actual time, though, depends on the state or province, and can range from 30 days, to six months, to two years. Forty-one states have additional restrictions preventing teens from driving during high-risk hours like early morning and overnight. California and Nevada also added further restrictions like "teens can't drive with other teens in the car unless accompanied by someone 25 and older" which, y'know, defeats the purpose of having a car and a license in the first place, some teens might argue.

The legal age to drive is also a tricky thing, and it will vary from 14 years and some odd months to 18 years, depending on the location. Some states have also been raising the legal driving age, citing higher accident rates and rising insurance costs as the reason for the increase. Others have instituted a probationary period, meaning one accident or slip-up and it's no-more license for you. Some campaign options here include:

CHAUFFER

Not all the teens need a vehicle. Only one of them needs to know how to drive and have a car for everyone else to get around. That's assuming said driver doesn't mind being the group's pack mule.

COMPLICATION

The teens are only befriending someone because he or she can give them lifts. The driver feels used and refuses to give people lifts. The driver is only befriending the group because he or she is attracted to someone in the group.

DRIVING ABLE

The teen or teens have their license in full accordance with local laws. Now, all they have to do is hold on to it.

COMPLICATION

The teen is attacked by his/her arch-nemesis while driving—how do they explain a wrecked car to Mom and Dad or the insurance company? The teen is forced to abandon the car to deal with a crisis, and the car is stolen. The teen is car-jacked at gunpoint in broad daylight—how can they deal with the desperate criminal without revealing their identity?

GETTING A LICENSE

The teen is on the verge of getting a license. This is a short-term campaign goal made more perilous by the hero's extracurricular activities.

COMPLICATION

The hero sees a crime being committed during their driving test. The teen suffers from the strange effects of an enemy's powers just before going for the test. The teen is learning to drive with an instructor or parent, when a natural disaster strikes the area.

LIMITED TRAVEL

The teens don't actually need a car, because they live on school grounds or in a small town or neighborhood. This means they can get around on foot, by bus, or by power in emergencies.

COMPLICATION

The teens are stranded away from home, broke, and cannot use their powers to get back, because they're in the company of someone who doesn't know about their unique abilities. The teens are desperate to get to a social event off campus or in another town with their non-powered dates. A friend is injured, and the teens must reach the hospital without further injuring their compatriot.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: LAWS? WHAT LAWS?

There's two takes with this option. The first is that the teens are ignoring the laws and driving however or whenever it pleases them. The other option is that the laws are conveniently overlooked for the sake of the campaign.

In the case of the former, the teens might live in the sort of neighborhood where the police are too afraid to bother patrolling regularly, or they live in a small town where the local sheriff knows everyone and doesn't bother folks as long as they aren't getting in trouble. Of course, all this changes the moment the heroes do something to attract the attention of the authorities. This is a dangerous line to pursue, unless your Gamemaster is willing to run a game about delinquents and their problems with the system.

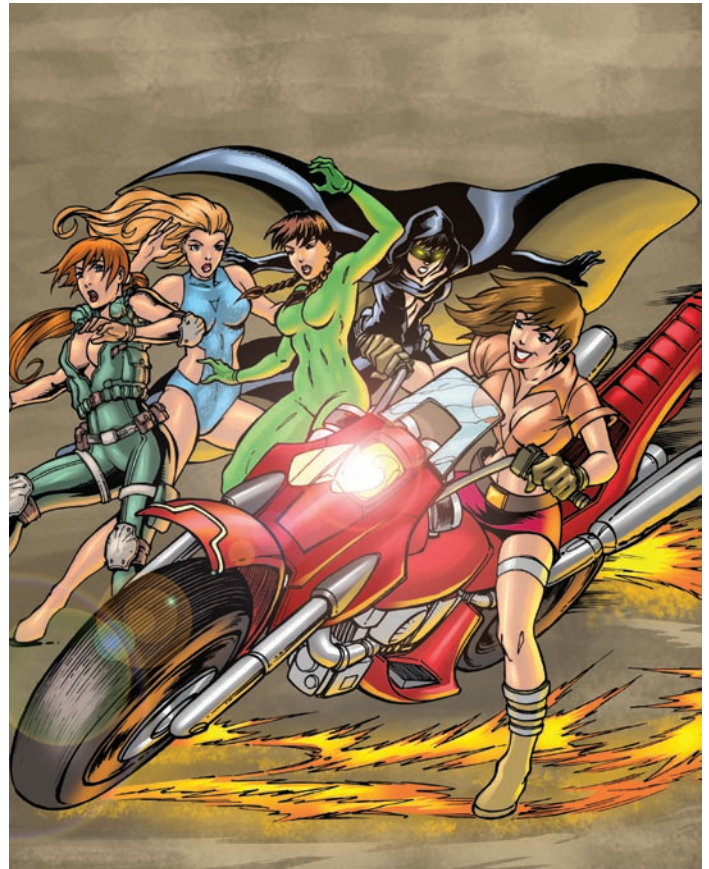
In the latter case, where laws are conveniently overlooked for the sake of fun, the heroes aren't restricted. The Gamemaster might assume they have a license, or they don't need a license to get from A to B. Travel isn't an issue, and the heroes get to where they're going in the time needed to save the day.

HERBIE, FULLY LOADED: STRANGE VEHICLES

Then, of course, there are the souped-up vehicles that are several giga-horsepower past street-legal. And yes, somehow, the teens got their hands on one. Look out world and Smear the Road Safety Bear...the teens are cruising the streets in their rocket engine car.

The vehicle in question might be a jet-car that one of the heroes built from scrap parts, it could be this hover-bike that was lying around the villain's lair, or a spacecraft that the team "borrowed" from the hanger bay of that alien war cruiser. Crashed ships, uncovered vessels, sentient ships seeking sanctuary, transforming gadgets...any of these can fall into the hands of the teen heroes. Why, you ask? Because, teens don't have problems "borrowing" things from the bad guys. Or, they won't ask crucial questions like, "Who left this hover-bike with the cool spikes and skull-plate idling in the middle of this alien wilderness?" No, their sense of privilege will be screaming in their ears, saying "The Gods of Teen Entitlement have left us this wicked looking bike for our reward. Let us cast aside this sign that says 'Do Not Touch Under Penalty of Disembowelment and Subsequent Re-Embowlement! Property of Gorzo the Disembowler!'"

It's also pointless to discuss the law when it comes to driving around, because frankly, who the hell's gonna catch up with you? The adult heroes are probably going to ignore your vehicle, unless said piece of transportation goes on a rampage. So, you're pretty much in the clear...well, obviously, except for the vehicle's real owners coming after you to reclaim their property.



THE TRANSPORTER: CARS ARE SO YESTERDAY

Who needs vehicles with this option? The heroes have access to some sort of transporter technology that eschews the conventional and oh-so-passé mode of traditional travel. Of course, one of the delights of any group of friends is the road trip, but when duty calls, this method is the best way of bypassing all the fuss and muss. That means no worries for travel time, no driver's license restrictions, no buying and maintaining of vehicles, etc.

This method entails any of several modes of instant transport. It could be a magical doorway or mirror that you simply walk through, transport rings that drop you at your desired location, or an FTL beam that shoots you where you need to be. The teleportation is likely instant, though GM cruelty demands adventures where accidents and miscalculations send you into the past, the future, a parallel dimension, or a hostile environment. Hey, everything has its price. Cars need gas, ships need fuel, and teleporters need mishaps.

If science-fiction has taught us anything, however, it's that transporters can be abused. Not *smack my bottom* kind of abuse, but, "Well, if his atomic structure is in the matrix buffer, can't we just teleport him out and bring him back in without all the spiders stuck to his face?" Or better yet, "We don't have to fight Professor Barbarian and his Hordettes—we can just transport a thermonuclear device into his base."

To avoid this pitfall, Gamemasters may consider instituting some significant restrictions on the transporter technology. Maybe the gateway can only be opened once a week, maybe the portal is sentient and pacifist, meaning it will never allow weapons through, or perhaps travel can only happen between two transport stations, which prevents the characters from appearing wherever they wish. In a perfect world, it would be nice to put the players on an honor system...but honor always gets in the way of a good plan.

MALL RATS: POPULAR CULTURE AND TEENS

QUESTION 33: DID SOMEONE SAY SHOPPING MALL?

It's like watching Pavlov ring the dinner bell.

Adult heroes may say they aren't interested in current trends and fashion statements, but if that's the case, then what's up with the tights, re-inventing their image every so often, or staying obsessively buffed? If adult champions care about their image, then it's doubly so for powered teens.

Now, the following section deals with teen heroes in a world that accepts them and possibly even celebrates them. Certain worlds may be somewhat anti-mutant, but unless the government outlaws or restricts powered people, then teens are always going to have their fans and their sycophants (like sidekicks, only useless), and businesses are always going to emerge to cater to the supers and their fan-base.

Face it, you're a celebrity of sorts, and until you do wrong, you can do no wrong.

TEEN HERO MAGAZINES

Teen Hero Patrol, Young Powerhouse, and Ms. Heroine are all magazines that might pop up if the world has several notable teams of teen heroes. Even if these magazines aren't around, existing teen-star magazines would likely have a section on superheroes. The magazines would do their utmost to contact various heroes for quotes, interviews, photo shoots, and contests. There's nothing wrong with any hero participating in these, and you'll certainly see your share of young champions who spend more time in front of the camera than on the street, but this also provides villains with a way of anticipating your moves and ambushing you. And if the villain thinks she can kidnap a magazine staff member to lure you into a trap, then that's what she'll do. Of course, the point of the game or story arc may be the heroes discovering the dangers of this kind of fame and fortune.

THE PAPARAZZI

You're not worried about these guys, right? You're thinking, "These guys can't keep up with me, so who cares if they snap a few shots?" But, the paparazzi aren't interested in shooting any old shot; they want a juicy one that'll start a scandal. They won't hesitate to reveal your secret identity, even if it endangers your family (better yet, they'll blame you, saying, "Hey, you put their lives in danger long before I snapped a shot!"), they won't hesitate to reveal the location of your base if they can find it, and they won't hesitate to snap shots of you lying in the street all busted up. In short, they don't care about the consequences of their actions, as long as it doesn't affect them directly. Nothing about them or their profession is noble. They are vultures, and you're the carrion.

Think of paparazzi as low-level villains, only they have the law on their side, and they're out to hurt your privacy and your integrity. Now, some may not manipulate or stage events to put you in a compromising position, but unfortunately, that's exactly what others might do. They might stage a damsel-in-distress situation so that the woman you rescue immediately starts kissing and fondling you for the cameras, they might arrange a meeting between you and a villain to shoot the fight, they might deliberately provoke you into throwing a punch their way. Anything is game, especially you, especially since in protecting your

secret identity and as a minor, you can't press charges against them. You are the perfect victim, in their eyes.

The other matter to worry about is if the paparazzi photographer has powers himself. Nothing massive, but someone with the ability to fly or turn invisible could wreak havoc with your secret identity. A highly invulnerable or insubstantial photographer can stand right in your face and in your way during a fight and snap photos while shrugging off damage. A teleporter could drop someone on your lap unannounced, snap the photo, and leave just as fast. And, this isn't limited to the paparazzi alone. Overly ambitious journalists and reporters can be just as bad, though many do have standards and integrity.

SHOPPING

So, the popular and insanely hot insect-heroine, the Spanish Fly, wears yet another dazzling and oh-so-R-rated outfit. Now all the impressionable wannabes are dying to look equally hot (and can't figure out why Mom and Dad won't tell them what Spanish Fly means...thank your fragile little minds for the Internet). That's where clothing chains like Badge's and Supernova Fashions come in. Want that latest gold and black spandex pattern worn by Currais? Head over to the local outlet where you can be in hero chic.

Think about it, if movie and music stars are all the rage in some dimensions, influencing fashion sense and being dubious role-models, then why not heroes or even villains? Imagine former villains and villainesses hanging up the power-armor, g-string, or power-armored-g-string to open boutiques or run store chains. Imagine heroes endorsing clothing brands and restaurants. It seems unheroic, true, but some heroes could be generating revenues for charity organizations or championing heroism. Other heroes could be in it for the buck.

Regardless, if teen heroes are public and in vogue, then the fashion industry is right there alongside every trend and fad, altering the fashion enough that it works on everything from leotards to business suits. Some stores may take it further, offering outrageous accessories like glowing contact lenses, aura-generators, and flesh-form masks (so now everyone can look like their favorite champion). Gyms may offer customers intensive and specialized programs to give folks that killer sculpted physique. In essence, heroism is big business, and some heroes and villains figure that if someone is going to capitalize on their public image, it might as well be them.

HANGOUTS

A teen is nothing without a place to chill, but you're probably wondering who has time to kick-back with crimefighting, school, and parents to worry about. See, that's the point of hangouts right there. You need these places to get away from it all, to hang with your friends, or spend quality time with your boyfriend or girlfriend. Still...that interpersonal stuff is good and all, but unless the campaign's thick on the drama, there's no reason for you to have fun in these locations or to hang around for long. These places have to offer something different, something that benefits you as teen and hero. That's why, instead of offering you the standard mall, café, and pool hall selection of locations, you're given locations with a powered twist. Naturally, these don't cover all possible locations, with beaches, bowling alleys, movie theaters, and rec-centers offering more socializing opportunities, but they are good to offer you ideas on how to spruce up ye olde haunt.

PATCH'S BILLIARD HALL

It's the kind of place where you walk in, and every head turns to glare at you. You aren't welcome, unless you're a "powered." The folks recognize their own in this place, and even if you're only well trained, they still know enough to leave well enough alone. Patch's is dingy, old, and reeks of stale beer and cigarettes. They don't even care that there's minors floating around. They won't serve you beer, but they won't kick you out either. This place is neutral grounds since the squeaky clean heroes and world-dominating villains don't come here. Only those supers closest to "the line" frequent this place...villains for hire and gritty heroes with street cred. For a special few, though, Patch will more than happily show you the boxing gym and old-style training room upstairs. He'll teach some promising teens how to fight better and how to survive the hero business. You can also lift weights, but if the guy spotting your bench press looks like Spade Viper, the villain-for-hire, don't panic. All the villains and vigilantes here know better than to ruin a good thing in Patch's by starting a brawl.

THE AFTER-HOURS MALL

By day, the mall is bustling with shoppers and loud with the cries of screaming kids. Heck, you may even hang out here after school, spoiling Mom's dinner with fries and a shake, shopping for new jeans that look old, and chatting up a storm with friends. At night, though, the mall is strictly for teens. A security guard opens the back doors for anyone with the codeword, and the mall is dark but open to hang out in. Start any trouble or commit vandalism, however, and the offending teens are booted out. The mall manager is definitely in on the action, since the security guard varies from time to time, and a handful of stores and food court vendors stay open to accommodate the midnight shoppers. Any business, though, is cash only, with no plastic transactions to leave a paper trail. The hang-out closes around 4:00 AM, after which the janitorial staff presumably appears to clean up everything. Don't bother asking why the mall is open for teens only or why the local cops seem to look the other way. One thing is for certain...the mall is the best hang-out for late hours, even if it sometimes feels like you're being watched or someone claims to see a shadowy figure standing at the rails of the third floor, where nobody is allowed to go.

PLAYGROUND CAFÉ

The cyber café facade looks normal enough, with its coffee counter, its tables with computers, and its comfortable couches. A hallway in the

back leads to a darkened room with rows of computers hooked up for LAN-style fragfests and MMO play and consoles hooked up to television sets for some joystick action. The arcades of old are practically dead...this is the new arcade. The cashier behind the snackbar charges you by the hour, and some kids and adults look like they've been here for days. Another door behind the cashier, however, is by invitation only from an existing guest. But once you're in, you're in. The door brings you into a highly advanced entertainment area with holographic-style games for the sit-and-play crowd, solid light mazes and harmless photon-constructed weapons for the more action-oriented crowd, and full emersion suites that put you in realistic alien environments and situations. There's also a juice bar for healthy snacks and smart drinks, and there's a rumor claiming that the building contains a wild and lethal obstacle course for gamblers to bid on contestants. Regardless, this is mostly an adult playground, though there are teens about. The games are expensive, but new members are given freebies as incentives to play. The question is, however, who owns this joint, and how did they manage to secure highly advanced and potentially alien tech?

THE POWER RAVE

Imagine a rave in some neutral country where the best passport is money, and the best questions are the ones the authorities never ask. Imagine it's an international caliber rave that draws people from around the world and mostly caters to metahumans and their groupies. Rumors of the rave and the odd photo have been floating around the general public, but unless you're powered or a guest of a powered individual, you aren't invited. Age isn't a factor, as long as you're over 15 years old. Getting the invite is another matter. At some point in your crime-busting career, probably during a public or televised fight, a teleporter named X-8, Rabbit Hole, or Shuntway might drop in on your group. He or she hands you the membership card with the date for the monthly rave and gives you a number to call. Just call on the night of the rave, and your designated drivers will port you through the phone lines to the party or open a "door" for you. The party itself is huge. Not all mutants and metahumans are supers, but that doesn't mean they don't like getting together. There is a door fee and the bar isn't free, but everything else goes. Super-powered bouncers patrol the rave, psychics try to forecast trouble, and teleporters are working full time bringing people in and out. The location seems self-enclosed, so there's no visiting the local city...not without special permission from the club organizer, the enigmatic and undoubtedly super-meta powered organizer, Marcus Sphinx.

CRITTERS

QUESTION 34: OOOOH, IT'S SO CUTE! CAN I KEEP IT?

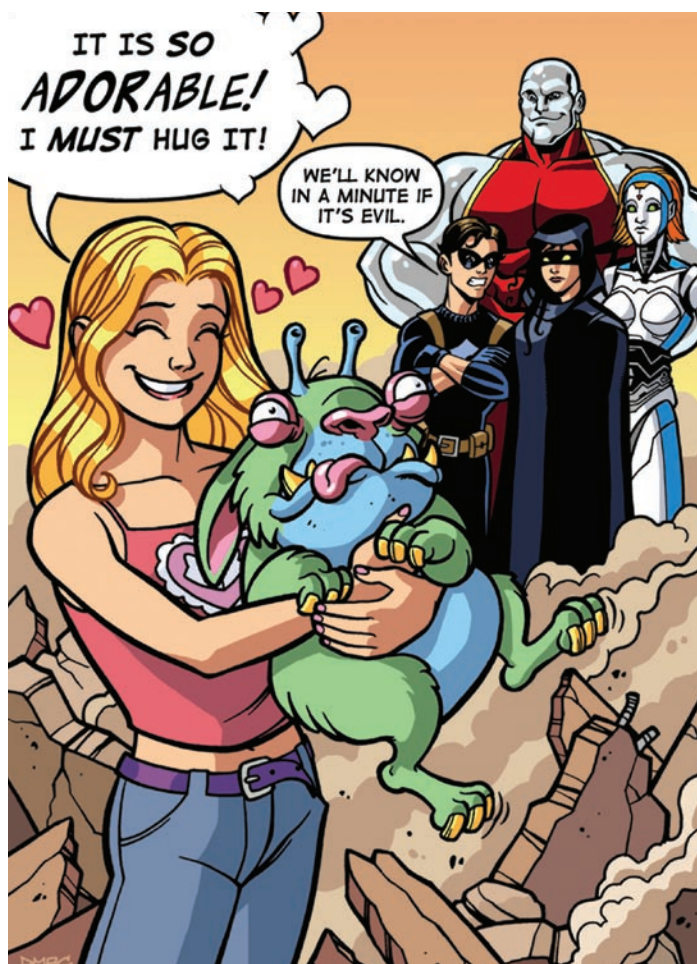
So, you've found yourself in an alternate reality or on an alien planet. Next thing you know, something's following you around. It's about a 10 on the cute n' plushy scale, it talks by making adorable noises, and it likes you. Should you take it back home with you? Probably not. Are you going to take it with you? Of course you are—you're a teen hero, a bundle of angst, hormones, and super-powers all rolled into one. Bad ideas are your specialty.

That's not to say that keeping an alien/extra-dimensional pet is always a bad idea. But if you come across a ravaged world in fiery ruin and the only survivor is something cuddly with big, adorable eyes,

something that looks too cute to have survived on its own...run. You're probably looking at what smoked the planet in the first place.

Super-powered pets, or SPPs for short, can be anything from super-dogs to pet dragons to blobs of goo with saucer-cup eyes. Freedom City even has its own set of powered chimps...I mean, whose bright idea was that? Most villains move on after beating you, but super-chimps do things to you after blasting you silly. I don't really want to get into details, but let's just say your costume needs an extra spin in the rinse cycle. We're talking major uppage in the "Ew" factor.

Anyways. Super-powered pets can be a good thing or a really bad thing. What's the difference, you ask? Seriously, do you need to ask? Okay, fine....



THE GOOD

- Your pet saves your bacon by revealing a hidden power at a really crucial moment.
- It's loyal, and it certainly doesn't steal your totally hot boyfriend.
- Generally, it's got good intuition when it comes to people. If it doesn't like someone...blast them, but only if you trust your pet.

THE BAD

- Your pet doesn't come with instructions, meaning you don't know what might set it off.
- Your pet might be something evil and nasty that's lurking just under its cute and soft skin—like the demon B'ulzablastugood or a head cheerleader... both are pretty bad.
- It isn't loyal, and it actually steals your totally hot boyfriend.

PET CARE 101

QUESTION 35: HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY SPP?

Well, unless some weird race gives you your SPP along with a set of instructions, you're pretty much on your own. Actually, you're pretty much on your own either way. See, whoever gave you those instructions aren't from your planet. So, feeding your SSP five quarts of gumla juice a day doesn't

help you if you don't know what gumla juice is or where to get it back on Earth. Is it a fruit? Motor fluid? The tears of koala bears (for that one, use tweezers to pull out their nose hairs...gets them tearing up every time)?

A set of instructions is as good to you as using a Japanese Kabuki theatre piece to teach you how to rebuild a car engine. Funny, yes. Helpful, no. Here are the ways you can muddle through...urhm...I mean...handle pet care:

LIVE & LET LIVE

Hello slacker's ultimate dream pet. You got lucky if your critter either doesn't eat or doesn't eat anything you see; it doesn't leave little "gifts" on the floor; it doesn't disturb your sleep—it pretty much naps when you do, and it isn't high maintenance in that feline love me/disdain you kind of way. It just hangs around, perched on your shoulder, happy for the occasional petting and squeaky toy. SPPs are big on squeaky toys.

Essentially, don't sweat it with this kind of pet. It's self-sufficient enough to handle its own needs. The only thing you might have to worry about with this kind of pet is:

- 1) It gets into mischief. Maybe it's different enough that bringing it to show & tell isn't such a smart idea. Or, maybe in a fit of boredom, it chases the first bright, shiny thing it sees. Or, maybe it's just lonely and comes looking for you when it should have been hiding under your bed where you keep your smelly socks and half-eaten pizza (seriously, how could you not expect it to bolt at that point?).
- 2) Someone is out to kidnap it. That someone can be a demented scientist, a government agent, a rival cheerleader, or someone out to expose the truth about you; no matter why, your SPP is the target. That means you might be stuck trying to save your kidnapped SPP before some harm befalls you.

READ THE MANUAL

The next best thing in SPP care, having the manual means you know the basic dos and don'ts of caring for a critter. It doesn't necessarily mean it is all smooth sailing after this, though. Instruction books and manuals exist because something is complicated enough to require writing. And, you can bet you'll need to read the fine script and warning boxes really closely. They'll tell you what your pet can and can't eat, how to wash them, and what garden variety allergies turn it from a cute & cuddly horned puppy to a rampaging & slaving hellhound.

Now, if the critter is from Earth, then presumably the manual is too. That means it's easier to understand the instructions, though not necessarily easier to get the ingredients. If the critter requires mushrooms to stave off an ugly transformation, for example, then that's a good thing and away you go to the grocery store. If it requires freshly cut Ling Zhi mushrooms to avoid transforming into said beast, well then...enjoy your trip to China, and try not to get caught breaking any international laws.

On the flipside, if the pet and the instructions are not from Earth or even this dimension, it's time to find or build a universal translator and hope it translates all those exotic-to-Earth nuances.

TRIAL AND ERROR

QUESTION 36: CAN'T I JUST WING IT?

If by "wing it" you mean "shoot to wound," not a good idea. If you're talking about improvise, then welcome to trial and error, better known as hell and terror. Generally, your pet knows exactly what it needs, so it's going to go after it on its own. Sometimes it's as simple as following your pet around and seeing what it does. The trick is stopping it before it does serious damage. Your pet eats vinyl? Cool. Now you know. Your

pet is going after the upholstery of really expensive sports cars? Not so cool. Now you have to stop it.

The other version of this option is that the creature is just a normal animal with powers, like a dog that was irradiated with the same isotope that gave you powers or a cat that was struck with a strange magical effect. Other than the power it possesses and perhaps a kickup in the old IQ, it behaves and needs the same things any normal pet of its type needs.

Some of the questions you're going to have to consider include: What Does It Eat? How Does It...You Know..."Get Rid of Food?" (Now I know you don't want to answer this one, but guess what, you've got to housebreak that SPP. And to housebreak that pet, it's up to you to figure out how it gets rid of that waste.) When Does It Sleep? Does It Act Differently According to Season or Time? What Kind of Quirks Does It Have? Can it Have Babies?

FINDING SPPS

QUESTION 37: SO WHERE CAN I FIND/BUY AN SPP?

This here's a bad news/good news kind of deal. Bad news is it isn't easy to find a super-powered pet. It's kind of in the once-in-a-life-time department and takes some effort to find one. Why is that good news? Well, the fact that an SPP doesn't come standard on all teen hero models is good news for the rest of the world. One of these things is bad enough, but having an army of them could wreak too much havoc.

But, if you've got your heart set on getting one of these suckers, it's like getting a sidekick. Use the Sidekick feat (*M&M*, page 64) to create your pet, or better yet, tell your Gamemaster what you want and let him spend the points. That way, the cute & fuzzy critter is a surprise for you to discover and learn about. Just bear in mind that really crafty Gamemasters might not give you your SPP just yet, and that thing you're petting isn't exactly good news.

Another option is that the SPP is the team mascot, in which case the whole team can contribute to its purchase. You may be wondering why you can't use the Minion feat (*M&M*, page 63) to buy the pet. That's because minions are expendable, sidekicks are not. Minions imply a commodity, but sidekick implies a relationship.

Where might you find an SPP? During the course of your adventures, naturally. Here are some suggested locales or situations where you might find an SPP:

ACCIDENTAL

Who let the dogs out...into that chemical bath? Or maybe curiosity killed the cat, but you have no clue what resurrected him (and no, it wasn't satisfaction; the Rolling Stones were nowhere near him). Doesn't really matter, though, now the family pet has powers and maybe a small boost to the ole' noggin. Hopefully, that gives it enough sense to not go running through the streets at Mach .5 or shattering windows with its high decibel bark.

ALIEN RUINS

On Earth, in some forgotten jungle or hidden cave system, lay the ruins of an alien civilization that predates Earth by a bunch. Maybe the critter you found was mutated from the local wildlife by some malfunctioning alien tech, or maybe it's the last descendent of an alien critter. Regardless, it's intelligent, and it likes you.

ALIEN WORLD

On a distant alien world, a place harsh enough and nasty enough to forge the bonds of friendship more easily, lives this critter. Maybe it's

the only one of its kind to survive for so long, or it's a creature that just got trapped here by mistake. Regardless, it needs the teenagers' help to survive and escape, and they might need it to lead the way to safety. Naturally, it doesn't speak anything they understand, but that doesn't stop it from pushing and prodding them to follow.

BOTTLED

The critter in question was bottled and shelved, maybe for a long time. Now you've found it, whether in a market in Marrakech, on the shelf of a sorcerer's workshop, or in some villain's base. Just by freeing it, you've purchased its loyalty for years to come, so treat it well. By its nature, it has some magical or protean qualities.

DERELICT SHIP

The ship is found drifting, whether in space or on the seas. The crew is dead, except for the plucky pet of one of the shipmates, and whatever killed them is still on board. This SPP will certainly deserve a home for warning you of impending danger.

VILLAIN'S LAIR

You're not the only prisoners trapped inside the villain's lair. A strange creature, one slated for dissection, is also imprisoned. If you can help free it, it'll help you escape as well and become a lifelong friend. The creature's origins and species are a mystery, as are the circumstances that allowed the villain to first find it.

SAMPLE SPPS

Here are some sample SPPs to give you a little bit of a guideline.

THE SHADOW CAT

The Shadow Cat has black pearl fur and a mischievous glint in its eye. It's likely magical, with the ability to bring bad luck to its companion's opponents, as well as turn insubstantial when it's in danger. It seems to lounge around most of the time, even when accompanying its teen friend, and it only responds to them.

SHADOW CAT

PL 3/SIDEKICK RANK 8

Str 5 Dex 16 Con 12 Int 5 Wis 12 Cha 10

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+11), Climb 8 (+5), Notice 8 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11)

Feats: Elusive Target, Uncanny Dodge (auditory)

Powers: **Insubstantial 2**, **Luck Control 1** (Force opponent to reroll a d20 roll and take the worse of the two rolls), **Shrinking 8** (*Power Feats:* Innate; *Flaws:* Permanent), **Super Senses 1** (low-light vision)

Combat: Attack +5 (Melee; includes +2 due to size), Damage -4 (unarmed), Defense +5 (Melee; includes +2 due to size change), Defense +13 (Ranged; includes +2 due to size change & +8 due to Elusive Target), Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +1, Reflex +4, Will +3

Abilities 0 + Skills 8 (29 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 15 + Combat 12 + Saves 3 = 40

FLITTER: THE ANGRY GOLDFISH

And why would a goldfish be angry? Because it remembers, and it remembers for more than just three minutes. It remembers every minute of every hour of being trapped in that tiny fishbowl. It remembers every single face that tapped on the glass. And it remembers how to build electronic devices...strange. Maybe it has something to do with



those flashes of memory from a former life where it ruled over millions as some kind of mentat despot before some uppity heroes thwarted its plans? Regardless, it's loyal to its new companion...for the time being.

FLITTER: THE ANGRY GOLDFISH

PL 1/SIDEKICK RANK 1

Str 2 **Dex 10** **Con 8** **Int 14** **Wis 14** **Cha 5**

Skills: Craft (Electronic) 2 (+4), Notice 4 (+6), Stealth 2 (+2)

Powers: **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Immunity 2** (Dehydration, Drowning [in air]), **Mental Blast 1** (Flaws: Full Action) **Shrinking 16** (Power Feats: Innate; Flaws: Permanent)

Combat: Attack +8 (Melee; includes +8 due to size change), Damage -4, Defense +8 (includes +8 due to size change), Initiative 0

Saving Throws: Toughness -1, Fortitude -1, Reflex 0, Will +2

Abilities -7 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Powers 10 = 5

BLOOP

This amorphous orange blob might be frightening were it not for the puppy dog eyes that stare up at you with utter love and devotion. In fact, imagine a loving, happy, and affectionate puppy dog that's ALL tongue. That's Bloop.

BLOOP

PL 2/SIDEKICK RANK 6

Str 14 **Dex 8** **Con 14** **Int 12** **Wis 8** **Cha 12**

Skills: Climb 6 (+8), Escape Artist 6 (+5), Search 4 (+5)

Feats: Improved Pin, Ranged Pin

Powers: **Alternate Form (Liquid) 2** (Elongation 1, Immunity 2, Insubstantial 1, Suffocate 1; Flaws: Permanent)

Combat: Attack +2 (melee), Grapple +4, Damage +2, Defense +2, Initiative -1

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +2, Reflex -1, Will -1

Abilities 8 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 8 + Combat 8 = 30

ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING: THE VILLAINS YOU FACE/THE FRIENDS YOU MAKE

QUESTION 38: SO, DO I CHOOSE MY VILLAIN, OR DO THEY CHOOSE ME?

It's a bit of both, but honestly, the villain generally chooses you, though neither of you may realize it at first. See, it happens the first time you two tangle. Villains are sore losers, meaning they'll go after the same fish (that being you) over and over again until they win. That's when it starts getting personal. That's when they try figuring out ways of sticking it to you rather than just committing a crime. That's when they become an arch-nemesis.

Until then, villains fill several important positions in a teen champion's life. Why only teens, you wonder? While an adult is influenced by a villain's actions, a teen is still developing their opinions and their outlooks on life. They absorb everything and choose their destiny based on

the events of these formative years. In many ways, the battles you face now and how you fight them will dictate your path for years to come. They help forge who you are as an adult.

The villains represent something unique. They should mirror some element of the character on tilt or provide an example of the theme gone wrong. They're living allegories of the dangers facing the hero should he go down the wrong path or continue on her current course. The overly-determined, martially-skilled teen with a dark past may find his arch nemesis to be the grim vigilante who believes any ends justifies the means. A teen always fighting to retain iron-fisted discipline over himself may find his nemesis to be an unhinged madman whose self-control shattered under too much pressure.

Other villains might represent the character's polar opposite and further cement the teen's values in life. This villain's actions and agendas

will always run contrary to the hero's ideals. Where one reveres life, the other considers it a commodity for his pleasure. Where one prizes freedom, the other believes freedom is his alone to grant. In this instance, it isn't enough to beat or thwart the other person. All that matters is breaking them and crushing their philosophy. With teens, however, the danger becomes that in fighting someone's ideologies and methods, you might adopt their methods to thwart them and eventually become them.

A third class of villain may remind the hero of the advantages she may have possessed or the happenstance of fate. Two street kids were recruited for training, one by a kind hero and the other by a cruel villain. If all that separates the hero and villain is a random event or chance, the villain may react out of jealousy for what was denied them. The hero, however, may try to redeem the villain, believing they can reverse fate. Part of that is fear too, that in saving the villain they somehow negate that moment...negate the possibility that it could have been them instead that turned evil.

VILLAINS & YOU

The first step in choosing villains for a teen campaign is determining what they want, and more importantly, what they want with the heroes. The campaign will have its share of random encounters and one-shot villains, but the villains should have more impact on the characters. It should somehow be personal to one of them, at the very least.

ACCIDENTAL

It's a fluke, but you and the villain just keep running into one another. It's the kind of thing the both of you would probably laugh off, but given the fact that he's committing crimes, and you keep beating the snot out of him, it's going to get nasty real fast.

JEALOUSY

You have it, they don't. You did it, they couldn't. Whatever it is, their ego is bruised, and the only way they're going to feel better is by beating you and taking it from you. They don't actually need whatever "it" is, but they think they do. They just don't want you to have it.

PERCEIVED SLIGHT

Although they may not have met in combat, the villain is insulted by a perceived slight towards him or her on the hero's side. Maybe the hero cut the villain off in traffic, or maybe their mutual trainer picked the hero over the villain. Regardless, the villain is out to avenge her honor and possibly prove that the hero was never worthy of whatever accolades she received.

PROXIMITY

You and the villain can't help colliding because you're too close together to avoid each other. Maybe the villain is a family member or someone in your school. Whoever it is, though, the confrontations have gotten territorial and very personal, especially since the villains may know things about you personally.

REVENGE

The encounter may have been by chance, but you trounced this villain enough the first time around that now, like so many bad Kung Fu flicks, it's personal. The villain's fixated on you and won't stop coming after you until they win or...they win. Either way is good for them.

SECRETLY ATTRACTED

The villain has a crush on you. They may not realize it yet, and they may blast the freckles off anyone who suggests it, but they're definitely

smitten. Maybe they're attracted to what they can't have, to your sense of values, or to your really tight...abs. Doesn't matter. Once they do realize it, they'll either try to woo you or kill you. It's pretty much the same thing in villain land.

SOMETHING THEY WANT

You have something the villain wants, be it the source of your power, a position, an item, a loved one, a parking spot, etc. Frankly, who knows with villains? All that matters is you have it, they don't. They want it, and you ain't giving it to them. Of course, you realize this means war?

SOMETHING TO PROVE

The hero has reached a point in their young career where they've attracted the attention of a relatively new villain or one who isn't taken seriously. The bad guy or girl figures that the quickest way to gain notoriety is to take the hero down a peg.

TEACH YOU A LESSON

You tick the villain off, somehow. Maybe it's your smartass comments, your attitude, or the fact that you're a teen. Doesn't matter, because now they're out to teach you a lesson and erase that thing that they hate about you so much. And you winning is not helping their patience, either.

VILLAINS AS GROWTH

Another way to deepen the relationship between hero and nemesis is to use the villain as a growth marker. Sure, villains can just be villains, but they can also represent the hero's maturity. They serve as catalysts for the teen entering a new phase of perception and understanding.

Some bad guys can trigger this growth, or they can be indicative of the hero's current place in life. Generally, a hero may have three stages to their growth:

- **Age of Innocence:** Being a hero is fun, life is clear cut, and the villains might include comedy relief bad guys and other teens.
- **Age of Escalation:** The heroes suffer their first real wounds and emotional scars at the hands of their first real nemesis.
- **Age of Maturity:** The heroes encounter something truly evil, a deadly and powerful villain who can change a teen's life forever and kick them along the path to adulthood.

Obviously, not all bad guys will fill these roles or fall into these conventions, but it might be interesting if the campaign's "season" or one year arc builds up in this manner. The year begins with the minor threat and steamrolls from the main threat's lieutenants through to the big baddy at story's end. And every time the teens go through this meat-grinder, they lose a little of their naivety and mature as individuals and heroes.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

In the age of innocence, the enemies are not earth-shattering threats, and they aren't capable of devastating a teen's life. There's still real life and classroom drama to do that for them. The real world still rules the course of their life.

The villains in this point in the hero's life are likely outrageous, incompetent, or the same age as the hero. The fights can be difficult or troubling, but during the adventure, the teen can still crack jokes, and after it's done, they can go home, do homework, and have dinner with Mom and Dad. Life returns to normal, the event barely a ripple in their lives. In essence, the hero has little at stake in the event, nothing to

CHESS CLUB

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+0	+10	+1	+2
10	14	10	30	12	13

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+0	+5	+6	+5

Skills: Bluff 5 (+7), Computers 6 (+16), Craft (electronic) 6 (+16), Craft (mechanical) 6 (+16), Craft (structural) 5 (+15)

Feats: Assessment, Equipment 10, Inventor, Sidekicks 15 (Robotic Chessmen)

Combat: Attack +6 (melee), Grapple +6, Damage 0, Defense +10, Knockback 0, Initiative +2

Abilities 29 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 27 + Combat 32 + Saves 13 = 108 PP

ROBOTIC CHESSMEN

POWER LEVEL 8

Str 30	Dex 12	Con –	Int –	Wis 11	Cha –
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Skills: Notice 4 (+4)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 4

Powers: **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Immunity 32** (Fortitude effects, critical hits), **Protection 10** (Impervious 7), **Super-Strength 4** (heavy load: 12 tons), plus:

Pawn: **Snare 8** (force net, "capturing")

Rook: **Force Field 8** (Impervious, Affects Others Only, "castling"; rooks most often defend Chess Club)

Knight: **Teleport 8** ("jumping")

Bishop: **Blast 8** (force scepter); switch Attack Focus to ranged (for +4 melee attack, +8 ranged attack).

Queen: **Flight 5** (250 MPH), **Teleport 3**

King: **Blast 5** (electricity, Aura, Sustained; Selective)

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +4 (ranged), Grapple +22, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +6, Knockback -9, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude –, Reflex +1, Will –

Abilities -7 + Skills 1 (4 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 77 + Combat 20 + Saves 0 = Total 95

push them beyond dropping the bad guy behind bars.

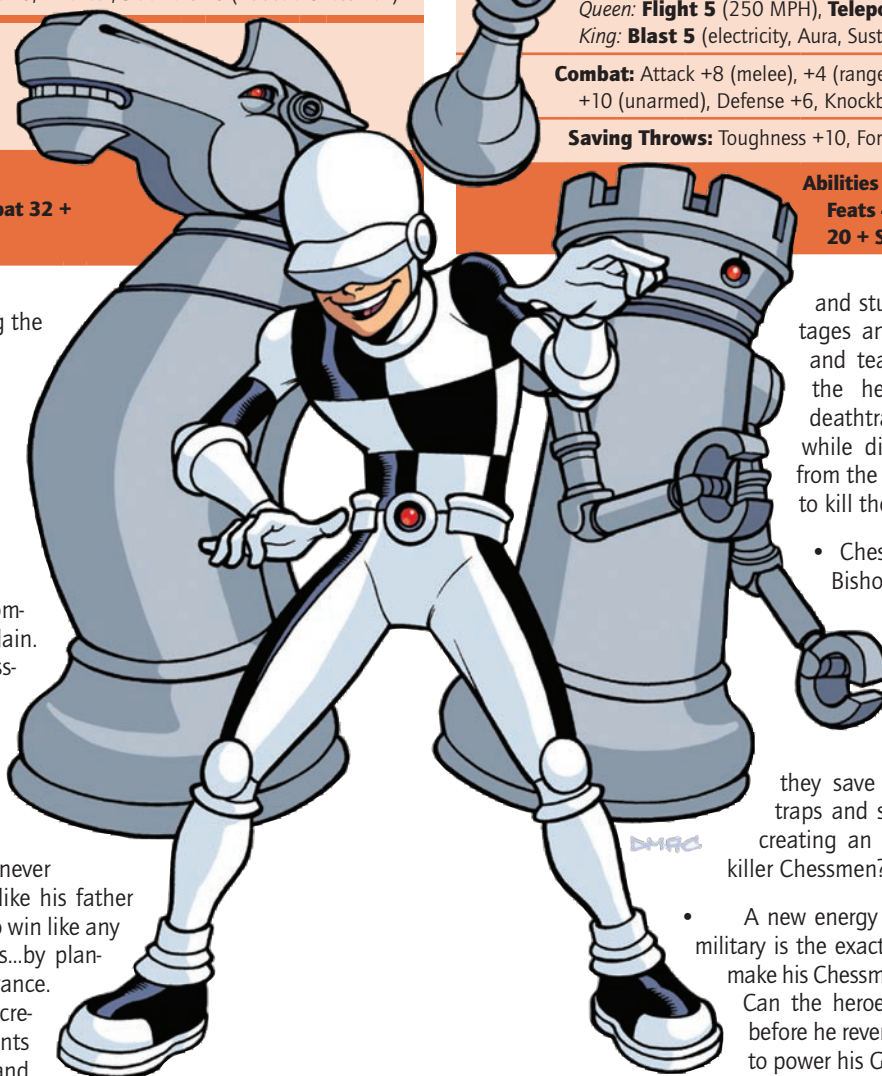
CHESS CLUB

"AH HA! I HAVE YOU WHERE -- WAIT, WHERE DID YOU GO?!"

Chess Club is a typical comedy relief and teen villain. With his father in jail or missing, Chess Club inherited Dad's collection of robotic Chessmen. But where his father failed, in this villain's opinion, he'll succeed. He'll plan out his battles in advance and never enter directly into combat like his father did. No, Chess Club plans to win like any good Grandmaster of Chess...by planning out his moves in advance. To do that, Chess Club creates deathtrap environments and uses elaborate traps and his Chessmen to ambush and defeat the heroes. Or at least...that's the plan. He hasn't managed to trap any heroes, yet, but he has been studying a certain group of teens to make his inaugural run.

CAPERS

- Chess Club recreates the hero's school inside a large warehouse, down to the finest detail. He builds robotic duplicates of the staff



and students as well as takes hostages and intermixes real students and teachers into the arena. Can the heroes safely navigate the deathtrap of their mock school while distinguishing real hostages from the Chessmen duplicates trying to kill them?

- Chess Club's newest White Bishop-bot is too smart. It takes control of the other Chessmen and traps its creator in one of his own mazes. Chess Club manages to signal the heroes for help, but can they save Chess Club from his own traps and stop White Bishop-bot from creating an entirely new generation of killer Chessmen?
- A new energy source being tested for the military is the exact thing Chess Club needs to make his Chessmen and his traps more lethal. Can the heroes find Chess Club in time, before he reverse-engineers the technology to power his Giga-Queen Battlebot?

AGE OF ESCALATION

In the age of escalation, the heroes face a villain who isn't playing games anymore. The bad guy is older than they are and dangerous enough to hurt them. In all likelihood, the villain will emerge as a hero's or team's arch-nemesis.

Villains of this caliber will draw blood and affect not only the hero, but some aspect of their personal life. He might make them realize how

their lives as champions can also affect their lives as teens. Or, perhaps, she might force them to face their mortality or use a weakness against them. After fighting this kind of villain, the hero may need time to reflect and contemplate events. It'll take longer to recover from this type of battle, and while the hero may eventually return to their old cheery self, this villain's presence remains an open wound.

MURDER LEAGUE RONIN: WOUND-MAKER

"SLOPPY. I MIGHT AS WELL KILL YOU NOW."

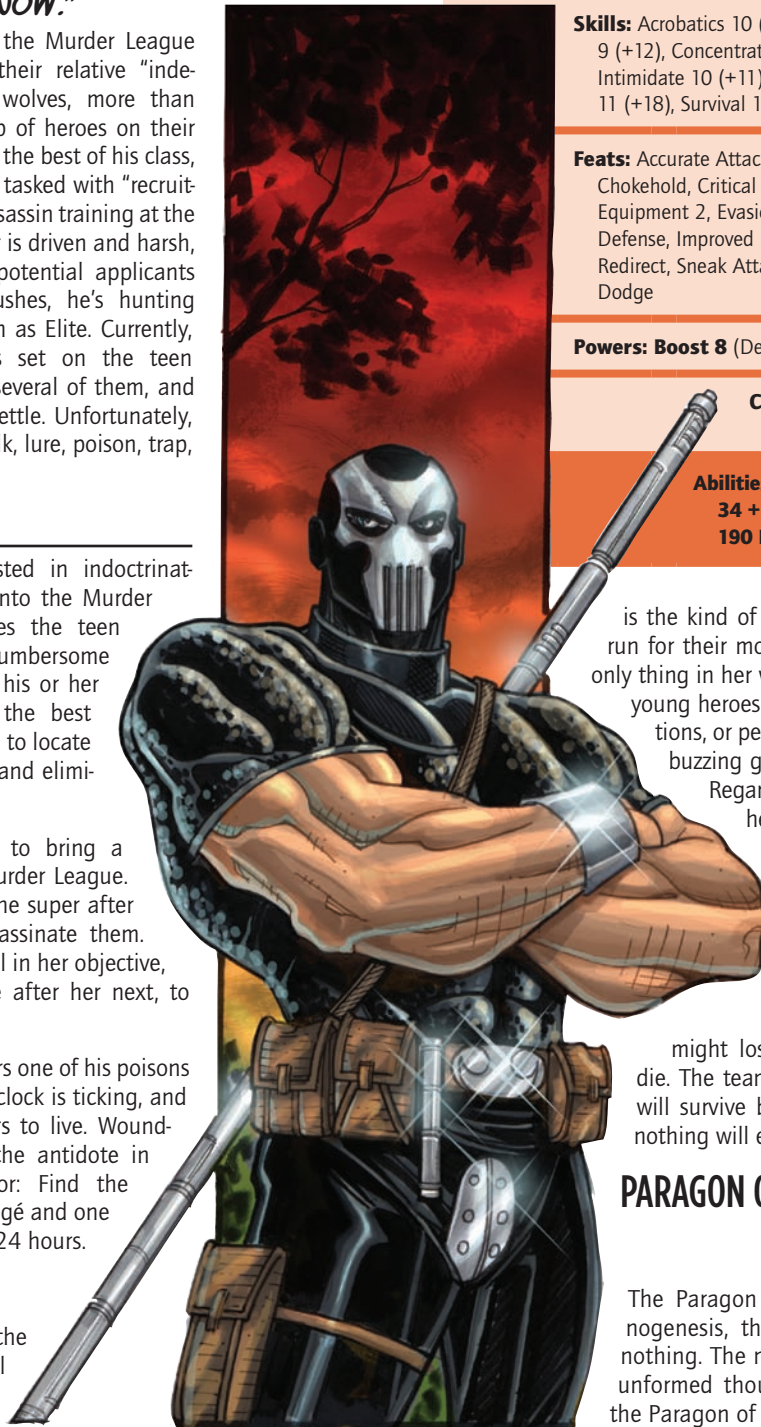
Ronin-class assassins within the Murder League have earned the right to their relative "independence." They are lone wolves, more than capable of handling a group of heroes on their own. Wound-Maker is among the best of his class, and he's one of several ronin tasked with "recruiting" children and teens for assassin training at the Murder House. Wound-Maker is driven and harsh, and when he isn't testing potential applicants through combat and ambushes, he's hunting for his protégé...a boy known as Elite. Currently, Wound-Maker has his eyes set on the teen heroes. He sees promise in several of them, and he's taken to testing their mettle. Unfortunately, 'test' is synonymous with stalk, lure, poison, trap, ambush, attack, and kill.

CAPERS

- Wound-Maker is interested in indoctrinating one of the heroes into the Murder League, but he believes the teen is still saddled with cumbersome commitments that limit his or her potential. He believes the best way to unburden them is to locate their family and friends and eliminate them.
- Wound-Maker is about to bring a young super into the Murder League. His last test is to send the super after the teen heroes to assassinate them. And should the super fail in her objective, Wound-Maker will come after her next, to rectify his failed choice.
- Wound-Maker administers one of his poisons to the heroes. Now, the clock is ticking, and the teens have 24 hours to live. Wound-Maker promises them the antidote in exchange for one favor: Find the whereabouts of his protégé and one failure...Elite. They have 24 hours.

AGE OF MATURITY

In the age of maturity, the heroes encounter an evil unlike anything they've seen before. This villain



WOUNDMAKER

POWER LEVEL 13

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+7	+5	+3	+2	+1
18	25	20	16	14	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+5	+8	+15	+13

Skills: Acrobatics 10 (+17), Bluff 10 (+11), Craft (Chemical) 9 (+12), Concentration 10 (+12), Escape Artist 10 (+17), Intimidate 10 (+11), Notice 10 (+12), Search 10 (+13), Stealth 11 (+18), Survival 10 (+12)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Acrobatic Bluff, Assessment, Blind-Fight, Chokehold, Critical Strike, Defensive Roll 5, Elusive Target, Equipment 2, Evasion, Fearless, Improved Critical 4, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative 3, Instant Up, Prone Fighting, Redirect, Sneak Attack, Takedown Attack 4, Track, Uncanny Dodge

Powers: Boost 8 (Dexterity; Flaws: Personal)

Combat: Attack +15 (melee), Damage +4, Defense +15, Initiative +10

Abilities 45 + Skills 25 (100 ranks) + Feats 34 + Powers 4 + Combat 60 + Saves 22 = 190 PP

is the kind of menace that would give the adults a run for their money, and right now, the teens are the only thing in her way. Maybe she specifically targets the young heroes for daring to interfere in her machinations, or perhaps the heroes are merely the kind of buzzing gnats that deserve to be slapped away. Regardless, this type of villain changes the heroes' lives forever.

This villain is a major threat to the heroes, their personal lives, and even the city itself. Her influence will be felt for years to come, and not everyone who walks into this fight will come back. A hero might sacrifice himself to stop her, someone might lose their powers, or loved ones might die. The team might disband, or perhaps everyone will survive by the skin of their teeth. Regardless, nothing will ever seem the same after that.

PARAGON OF SHADOWS

"TOYSSSSSS."

The Paragon of Shadows was created by parthenogenesis, the spontaneous creation of life from nothing. The nothing, in this case, was shadow and unformed thought. And before the tear appeared, the Paragon of Shadows remembers swimming in the

PARAGON OF SHADOWS

POWER LEVEL 15

STR	DEH	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5
20	20	20	20	20	20

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+5	+10	+10	+10

Skills: Bluff 10 (+15), Concentration 12 (+17), Craft (structural) 15 (+20), Intimidate 14 (+19), Notice 12 (+17), Sense Motive 14 (+19)

Feats: Assessment, Blind-Fight, Diehard, Environmental Adaption (deep space), Evasion, Fearless, Improved Initiative 4, Inspire 5

Powers: **Alternate Form (Shadow) 8** (Concealment 4 [visual, total], Fatigue 5, Immunity 9 [life support], Insubstantial 4 [incorporeal], Super Movement 3 [slithering, wall-crawling 2]), **Darkness Control 20** (*Alternate Powers:* **Animate Shadows 9** [*Power Feats:* Progression 5 (25 shadows), *Extras:* Horde], **Blast 20**, **Create Object 18** [*Power Feats:* Progression 4], **Snare 10** [*Extras:* Block Sight and Hearing], **Teleport 13** [*Power Feats:* Easy; *Extras:* Portal; *Flaws:* Medium—Shadows])

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), Damage +5, Defense +10, Initiative +9

Drawbacks: Weakness: Sunlight (-6)

Abilities 60 + Skills 20 (77 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 85 + Combat 40 + Saves 15—Drawbacks 6 = 229 PP

inky vastness...apart from and a part of her realm. She recalls drifting, no more thought than bacteria, no more purpose than existing. Whatever experiences she possessed, she shared with the shadows around her until her senses were so diluted that they dispersed through the ether and she was made simple again. It was a cycle locked in forever.

Then the rip appeared—a tear in the nothing. She was sucked through it. She was suddenly alone. There was no universal whole to share her experiences and draw away her thoughts and senses. They belonged to her, and she could build upon them. She took the ones she wanted and discarded the ones she didn't. She found strange quadrupeds and brought them joy, brought them madness, and eventually brought them death. Such marvelous experiences to savor. She traveled and moved, avoiding the worlds of burning light and keeping to the night worlds. She found more species, held them tight in her coils, and watched them until they died of starvation or even old age. Their slow misery fascinated her, more so than their adulation. She liked the control.

Then she found a space vessel and played with its crew for a while. She did not understand technology, did not know they'd set an emergency course for a distant blue-green pebble of a world. Her ship crashed on a world of burning yellow light, but it also had many shadows where she could hide. Now, the Paragon of Shadows thirsts for new experiences, and she's learned she has little to fear from the pink-skinned bipeds she's played with so far. With an entire city of these beings enticing her to play, she's wondering how many of them she can kill in one cycle of darkness.

She's not even sure she'd care to stop once she starts playing....

CAPERS

- The Paragon of Shadows starts small, moving through a town and killing as many people as she can, as fast as she can. Within a week, she targets another town, and sees if she can kill more. And another town after that. This speed killing is a test of skill for her, and it's a new experience she's enjoying.
- The Paragon of Shadows was badly depleted trying to survive entry into Earth's atmosphere aboard that spacecraft and from enduring the sunlight. Hiding in the sewers of the city, she's beginning to grow strong, and she's beginning to play again, this time with small animals. Rats know death when they see it, however, and all across the neighborhood, rats are escaping the sewers and attracting attention.
- A hero is badly hurt escaping a shadow-like creature, and while he isn't the first victim, he is the first survivor. Now, the heroes are organizing patrols to locate this creature, and the Paragon of Shadows is more than happy to accommodate them. She's never played this particular game before.



CHAPTER 4: CLAREMONT ACADEMY

QUESTION 39: EXCUSE ME, CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE ADMISSIONS IS?

Sure thing, but before you go galloping off to enroll, we should discuss getting into the school first, what to expect, and everything that goes along with attending Claremont.

Welcome to a new era in Freedom City and its favorite academy. With the arrival of the AlterniTeens, Duncan Summers has made the leap from private school to power-exclusive private school. Admittedly, the move wasn't a popular one, especially since only a privileged few knew

the real reason behind the change or the fact that all the students are somehow super-powered.

Still, there's a funny thing about popularity. The more exclusive the institution, the more rich parents want to get their kids inside. Duncan Summers is refusing massive donations and offers of grants from parents desperate to enroll their kids inside a prestigious institution like Claremont Academy. It's as though by closing its doors, Duncan has ensured its popularity.

The following chapter is an expansion on the previous information about Claremont Academy in the *Freedom City* sourcebook (pages 129-137). You'll find new students, more information on the school and its history, adventure ideas, and plenty of secrets.

USING THIS CHAPTER

You might be new to the Claremont Academy, or you might be returning students who discover their old school has changed. You may be wondering how or where you fit in with *two* super groups making their homes in this fine institution (the Next-Gen and the AlterniTeens). Never fear, this is where we help you out.

NEW CAMPAIGNS

So, the group's entirely new, whether it's a continuing campaign with a new roster of heroes or a new game entirely. Regardless, the change in Claremont's admissions policy leaves plenty of room for new heroes to enter the school and make their place among their peers.

The older students who attended the Academy previously are delighted with the fact that they're no longer forced to hide their true nature on school grounds. Still, there is a sense of elitism among some of the older students. While the Next-Gen have stepped up and are helping other students acclimate to their new environment, some of the veteran students are using the recent shift to assert dominance over new cliques. That's caused some transitional friction...not enough to cause the school problems, but just enough to make life interesting.

There are several ways new students might find themselves at the academy:

THE ALTERNITEENS

The AlterniTeens have been dimension-hopping for a while now, with the help of Navigatrix. They've been rescuing super-teens from various worlds and trying to find a home in a place more accepting of their gifts. That place is Freedom City. As one of many teens rescued by the AlterniTeens, you are part of the reason the school shifted to an all-powered student body. Some students may not like your team as a result: you're the reason they've lost friends. Pile on top of that acclimating to a new dimension that's familiar yet completely different from your own home, discovering your powers and making new friends, and worrying that whatever made you flee your home dimension might find its way here.

DISCOVERED BY HEROES

Few people transition from normal kid to superhuman quietly or in ideal circumstances. If powers (latent or accidental) can be triggered by stress

or pressure, imagine it happening during a supervillain attack or alien invasion. You were just lucky that when your powers manifested, it was with the Atom Family or the Freedom League in the area helping. After dealing with the threat (possibly with the help of you and your friends), the heroes convince your parents the best thing for you is training at the Claremont Academy (recommended by 9 out of 10 superheroes!).

FRIENDS IN THE KNOW

Your parents know you have powers, and they're worried you might not get a fair shake in life. Perhaps your parents are (or were) superheroes, or they're just particularly understanding. They quietly put out feelers through groups like Hero Booster, hoping to find a school for your "special needs," and word came back to them of enrollment in Claremont Academy for "gifted" students.

SUMMERS'S SCHOOL

Duncan Summers learns you have powers through the enigmatic Navigatrix (or one of his many other contacts). He visits your parents, inviting them to enroll you in his special academy. He may or may not tell them about the unique nature of Claremont, but he will wow them with the prestigious nature of the school. If they can't afford the school, there are scholarships and grants available for students, thanks to donations from the Atom Family and heroes like Daedalus and Foreshadow.

EXISTING CAMPAIGNS

So, you were already attending or running your own version of Claremont Academy, and now you're wondering what the hell this all means. NPCs you knew as friends or classmates might be gone, you're wondering where your team fits in with the AlterniTeens around, or you're worried this book (in covering certain NPCs) eliminates the old characters you created for the campaign.

Relax. You're not without options.

IGNORE CANON

It's fully in your right to toss this book over your shoulder, say "forget this," and continue playing your campaign and your characters like you did before. This chapter is not meant to hamper your fun. It's your cam-

A Few Months Ago...

The light washed across the entire campus, waking a few of the summer students sleeping in their dorm rooms and drawing out the teaching staff.

Duncan Summers, cane in hand, hobbled quickly across the green field behind the dormitories. The ex-hero recognized an otherworldly event when he saw one. Alan Archer, the aged and slightly portly speedster once known as Hot Rod, kept easy pace with him, although Duncan knew he was eager to race ahead and discover the source of the light.

They arrived just as the Next-Gen approached the scene—out of costume, much to Duncan's relief. Only a handful of students on campus were powered, and though there were few students attending summer courses at Claremont Academy, the school's true purpose remained a closely guarded secret. Duncan nodded to the dark-haired Serena.

"Anything?" he asked.

"It wasn't mystical, if that's what you're asking, sir."

"Very good," Duncan said. "I need you to return to the dorms. Tell the other students it was a transformer that blew out, and keep them inside."

Serena nodded and headed back to the dorms.

Duncan turned to the African-American boy that had joined them. "Lemar, I need you blanket any noise coming out of this area. Just in case."

Lemar Phillips nodded. A moment later, the air seemed to prickle. Duncan motioned everyone to follow.

A moment later, the cautious group passed a cluster of thick butternut trees and tall white firs. They heard the excited banter of young voices, before they found the group of teens hidden in the shadows of the trees. Several appeared injured, and more than a few were clearly superhuman: the floating boy with the long blond hair and two hammers of fire and ice orbiting him, the girl who blurred with bursts of speed as she cradled an injured teen made from some silvery alloy, the boy with a utility belt and the stride of a fighter who instructed the others on helping the injured. The ground at their feet was flash-burnt. They all stopped talking when they realized Duncan and company were standing there.

The boy with the utility belt calmly walked up to Duncan.

"My name is Elite," he said, with a confidence that belied his age. "Navigatrix told us you offer sanctuary to teens like us. Well...we have injured, and we're in need of sanctuary."

Summers exchanged silent glances with the others, but it was obvious none of them knew what to make of Elite's request.

"I don't think they understand," a young girl said.

"It's a lot to absorb," Elite said. "Give them a moment."

"Maybe they don't speak our language in this dimension," a tiny voice said. "Let me help." A fly-sized speck that was buzzing around immediately grew back to normal size as he landed—another teen boy, younger than the others. Elite tried to stop him, but it was too late.

"I...AM... WHOOP-ANT," the boy told Duncan very slowly and very loudly. "DO...YOU...SPEAK...ANY...ENGLISH?"

And so the AlterniTeens came to Earth-Prime.

"So, you believe them?" Alan asked. He quickly held up his hand. "Forget I asked. You only make these kinds of decisions when you're sure. There's going to be a lot of disappointed students—"

"And upset parents," Martha said. She was squat and rubbed people the wrong way. Summers appreciated her candor.

"I know," he replied, sitting on the edge of his desk. "But the fact is, the non-powered students can find schools anywhere in the world. I'm concerned with these dimensional refugees...heck, I'm concerned with the growing number of powered teens out there. Many of them can't hide their mutations, and ordinary schools are too scared to take them in. With the rumors of SHADOW opening a secret academy..."

"No...." Duncan said, shaking his head, "there has to be a place for them. One place in this world where they can be teenagers. A place they can learn. There has to be a school dedicated to their needs. I say, let it be here."

paign, so it's your call. Take what you want from this book, combine with your existing game, and have fun!

SLOW SHIFT

You have a campaign going, but you like the ideas mentioned here. Nobody says you have to shift gears suddenly and throw the heroes into a new environment. You can incorporate the changes at your own pace and actually involve the heroes in the events that change the school. The characters can be present when the AlterniTeens arrive on Earth-Prime, for example. They can participate in the dialogs when Duncan asks the powered students whether or not the school should shift directions. They can be part of the recruitment drive to find more young supers who might need a school, and they join the welcoming committee as the new semester and a new chapter begins. This is something that can keep existing heroes busy for months.

SUMMER BREAK

If it's approaching summer break, the Gamemaster can use that interruption in the school schedule to make the transition. Sure, it means the heroes may not see certain friends next semester, but they have a whole new group of people to meet and know. Additionally, if certain NPCs are critical to the hero's life or to story-arcs, then maybe that person becomes an after-school friend.

PARTIAL SHIFT

The Gamemaster can ignore certain aspects of the change. Maybe Duncan Summers merely expands the school to secretly accommodate more powered individuals while keeping his old students. Maybe he opens the school to enrollment for both supers and normals, meaning everyone knows it's an academy for superhumans that teaches co-existence.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

You're probably wondering how to make the transition between the events of your campaign and those mentioned in this chapter. Ignoring the catalyst itself and Duncan's decision, both of which the heroes may be involved with, the question becomes, "What do I do with all those NPCs?" Maybe you're about to lose human students, some of whom are important to the heroes or the storylines? Maybe some of the teachers mentioned here fill the same roll as those NPCs you created, and you're not sure how the two can co-exist? Maybe you don't know how to justify a teacher or two that were never mentioned previously but suddenly have an established history at the school?

There are several options, depending on how far you're willing to push the matter.

TEACHERS

Let's assume not every teacher knew about the Next-Gen and the secret subbasement. If all of them knew, then there's no reason for them to leave, and there could be multiple teachers handling the same subject matter but for different grades. Then, your NPCs and those introduced here can co-exist.

If many teachers didn't know about the academy, however, then that's a different matter. If Duncan Summers didn't trust them enough the first time around to tell them the truth, it's unlikely this time will be any different. Still, there are ways around that.

- Some teachers were around the night the AlterniTeens arrived, and thus learned about the academy's secret. Duncan might have kept

those teachers on staff to ensure their silence, but they may be resentful for being kept out of the loop initially.

- An "evil" teacher might already know Claremont's secret. When Duncan starts releasing some teachers, one of them keeps his or her job by threatening to go public with the truth. Duncan has no choice but to keep that teacher (for now, anyway...).
- The teacher has been at the institution too long or is too well liked to be simply let go. Instead, Mr. Summers confides in them and lets them stay.

STUDENTS

This is a little bit trickier, since students don't have any real control over the decision. Parents may threaten to sue Claremont Academy, but frankly, Duncan has enough friends that can protect the school from scrutiny. Still, the bigger concerns are: 1) How does a pivotal NPC react if he can't return to school while his friends can, and 2) How will she react if she discovers the heroes have powers, but nobody told her?

Here are options for keeping pivotal NPCs in the campaign that may or may not involve the school.

- Several of the students in question already know about the supers. They speak to Duncan Summers, saying they were trustworthy enough to keep the academy's secrets before, why should things be any different now? Mr. Summers is not a cruel person, far from it. If the students and the heroes can convince him, he'll allow some normal students to remain at the school.
- The powerful and rich parents of one of the students learn the academy's secrets and blackmail Summers: *Allow my son or daughter to continue their education at the school, or we go to the newspapers.* In addition, the parents may be using their son or daughter to spy on powered teens to determine which ones are ripe for recruitment (corporate, organized crime, military contracts, etc.).
- The teen in question is ousted from school, but lives close enough to Claremont or to the hero's home that they can still get together and interact after classes and on weekends. If the teen in question was formally from out of town or state, they move to Freedom City with their parents.
- The "normal" teen discovers or gains powers and returns to Claremont as a super-student. Naturally, this seems like great news, except the new super may be miffed at her former friends for never sharing their secret (if they didn't).

CAMPAIGN OPTIONS

There's a few givens about a campaign set at Claremont Academy. The first is the campaign will likely involve elements like coming of age, interactions with their peers, and the excruciating climb to maturity through love, friendship, and heartache. Drama is a major cog in school-centric games, and while it's not necessary to run that style of game, those elements are often crucial.

That doesn't mean there aren't additional options to Claremont Academy campaigns, however. And, it doesn't mean these options have to last longer than a school year, taking the heroes on an extended story arc that starts in fall and ends by the spring. The next year, a new story-arc or campaign begins.



FLIGHT OF THE NAVIGATRIX

The Navigatrix is still probing nearby dimensions, looking for powered teens in need of sanctuary. Whenever it locates one, it requires help in rescuing them and finding a new place for them to live (it may not always be Freedom City). For this, it might require the heroes because of their particular talents or because for the first time in months, the AlterniTeens are taking a well-deserved break from dimension-skipping. In addition to the schoolwork, their extra-curricular activities, their friends, and the adventures they find themselves in, Navigatrix may "borrow" them to rescue someone in need.

POLLUTED HISTORY

Duncan Summers has always managed to keep Claremont Academy's history a secret, but the fact is, there was a reason why the property got turned from a failing estate into a private school, and why the private school eventually failed (as mentioned in **History**, page @@). Now, Claremont Academy's secrets are once again rising up to bring misery to a new generation of inhabitants, unless the heroes can somehow break the cycle once and for all.

SHADOWS FALL

Navigatrix's passage into this world was not perfect. Navigatrix breached the dimensional membrane harder than it intended, leaving behind micro-cracks between this reality and the Terminus. Now, creatures that live in the interstitial buffer between dimensions are seeping into the Academy and wreaking havoc. Sometimes they manifest as deadly, horrible creatures, and sometimes they inhabit and mutate the living (plants, animals, people). This results in a monster-of-the-week scenario where, in addition to managing their lives, the heroes encounter emana-

tions of these creatures. Meanwhile, they have to discover where these creatures are coming from and how to seal the breach (possibly at the point of a major incursion).

SHADOW OVER CLAREMONT

One of the new students at the academy is not who she appears to be. She is a recruiter for SHADOW, sowing dissent among the students, coercing teens into joining her organization, and eliminating anyone who suspects her. She may be running her operation as an undercurrent in conjunction with another SHADOW-related campaign arc, meaning she's in position to feed her masters information and warn them of potential raids and attacks. If the heroes ever hope to defeat SHADOW in their current storyline, they'll have to discover and root out their agents first. This scenario is a great opportunity to combine *Agents of Freedom* with a *Hero High* series.

X-ISLE MARKS THE SPOT

The living city X-Isle (*Freedom City*, page 109) has managed to snake its tendrils into the school because of Navigatrix's arrival, creating tunnels beneath Claremont Academy. Now, students are finding these tunnels and disappearing. They're ending up in another version of their school that X-Isle created and are wondering where everyone went. Meanwhile, X-Isle is sending replicants of the missing students back to infiltrate the real Academy and lure more people into the tunnels. It has even captured and duplicated some members of the faculty! The replicants have all the same traits as the originals, but are utterly obedient to X-Isle's will. Can the heroes find these tunnels and the mirror school? And if they do, can they help rescue everyone and make their way back home?

TOUR OF CLAREMONT ACADEMY

Welcome to Claremont Academy, nestled in the hills of Bayview Heights, where it has an unchallenged view of Bayview, Port Regal, and the surrounding areas. The campus is picturesque and said to be a mirror image of the estate of the late 19th Century. Indeed, walking along the manicured lawns and admiring the Victorian-style brownstone buildings, one feels transported back to a different era. The fact is, though, between the various fires that plagued the Heights, the remodeling of the grounds from private estate to private school, and the

damage incurred by the Terminus Invasion, little of the original buildings remain. The architecture has been kept authentic, and some of the buildings still have their original brickwork (reused over the years), but the campus is as modern as any 21st century structure, thanks to the funds poured into the project by Duncan Summers.

Still, for all the remodeling and the renovations, the campus is too old to have shared all her secrets, and whatever Summers and his students think they've uncovered in her past, they've only just scratched the surface.

HISTORY

Go back, before Duncan Summers walked across the campus with its scorched grass and partially ruined buildings with their blackened walls and collapsed roofs. Go back further, to the private school before it turned co-ed out of desperation, and the boys in their school suits walked to class as autumn leaves chased at their heels. Further still, past the Warner Incident when the Burning Ghost walked school grounds, fire cascading from him while the wind chased the flames across the grass and up buildings. Further, past 1871, when Dr. Charles Claremont had a priest bless the land by night.

Just a little further now, you're almost there. Past the Burning Ghost again and his scorching wake, past the buildings being built on the ashen ruins of the old governor's mansion, past the Colonial mob celebrating Major Joseph Clark's victory over the British. Further still...

...and you're there....

PROPHET'S CRUSADE

Freedom City of the late 1600s was a mere pebble, yet to be cast in the waters, yet to make its ripples. In those young years, men like Lucius Cabot and the Reverend Elijah Prophet pursued and persecuted their share of witches and warlocks. All they succeeded in doing, however, was maiming and killing many innocent folk and allowing the real practitioners of the dark arts to escape into the shadows of the surrounding woods.

In those days, Bayview Heights was entirely forested, covered in country darkness, and untamed. It was no place for respectable men and women, which is why a coven called the Brood of Tiamat conducted their rituals there. Unlike the true witches who practiced their arts without hurting a soul, the Brood of Tiamat were violent, power-hungry, and clumsy. They didn't know what they were doing, until Crown Prosecutor Lucius Cabot approached them. Lucius had learned the secrets of summoning, thanks to a witch named Justina Vervain, who was trying to escape the rack. Lucius offered to share that power with the cabal if they helped him conjure one of Hell's many princes.

If you've never heard of the Brood of Tiamat before, it's for good reason. Lucius Cabot was never interested in sharing his power. He just needed sacrifices to offer the demon and knew the cabal would willingly walk into the mouth of Hell for their chance at power. The demon approved, the sacrifices were accepted, and the deal struck. Cabot left the hill, forever young and immortal, never to return. He left the mummified remains of his victims and the summoning circle in the open for winter to devour, but the hill slowly grew over the site, trapping it in a cavern of roots and earth. Nature would not let this travesty be entirely forgotten.

THE VERVAINS

British control over the Colonies continued into the new century, until the rule of Governor Terrance Strype. Governor Strype was a handsome widower and much sought after by the local families and their unwed daughters. Strype, however, went against convention and married—well beneath his station, some muttered—a woman named Constance Vervain, granddaughter to Justina. It caused a minor scandal, given that Justina was hanged for witchcraft, and while the local gentry considered themselves above the brutal excesses of the Witch Trials, they remained a superstitious lot. Strype and Constance, however, were in love.

Constance convinced Strype to build their summer home outside the city, atop the beautiful forests of Bayview Heights that overlooked the settlement of the same name. Freedom was expanding, and it wouldn't take long before the Heights would become prime real estate. In truth, though, Constance was serving a higher purpose. She hated to use Strype, but the Vervains knew a great misdeed had been committed against them. And, they knew they had an enemy in Lucius Cabot.

The Vervains had continued practicing and passing along their tradition of magic to their children, and already there was talk that one of their descendents would be the one to destroy Lucius. Through augury and divination, Constance's mother believed the secret to killing Lucius rested in the summoning circle and the sacrifices he left behind. In performing the ritual, she believed he also left something of himself—something that could destroy him and weaken the demon who gave him his powers.

Unfortunately, the Vervains also foresaw generations of misery ahead of them. Lucius, who knew a descendant of a witch he hanged would destroy him, would stop at nothing to hunt down and kill them. They could not act against him, not yet, not for centuries. All they could do was protect the grounds upon which the ceremony had taken place until the chosen one came. To that end, Constance convinced Strype to build his summer estate over the very site of Cabot's ritual.

THE REVOLUTION

Freedom and the surrounding settlements continued to grow, including Bayview, which slowly spread up Bayview Heights. The Colonies bucked against British rule, and while Governor Strype had his hands full trying to retain control over Freedom, Constance was busy with an entirely different crisis. The sacrifices Lucius made and the hanging of Justina Vervain had attracted a powerful vengeance spirit, a mystic entity similar in nature to the murder spirit (*Freedom City*, page 203).



The spirit latched on to desires for vengeance, but without a target, it would simply attack anything in its way. Constance spent her time trying to keep the spirit pacified so it wouldn't rampage; at least, not until they could unleash its righteous fury against Lucius Cabot. Constance planned to teach her children all her secrets, including that of controlling and pacifying the vengeance spirit. Unfortunately, the American Revolution robbed her of the opportunity.

It was not the Revolution itself that killed her, but one of Cabot's schemes to rid himself of the Vervains. Lucius could not strike against the governor's family openly, but when war came to the shores of Freedom, he had the cover he needed. By this point, the British loyalists were escaping into Freedom for refuge, but Constance refused to leave her Bayview Heights estate. She knew the war would rouse the vengeance spirit to awaken and wreak havoc. It was her duty to keep it pacified.

Lucius's assassins found Constance at home and struck. She managed to fend them off long enough to send her children and their nanny to safety through secret tunnels to the Wading River's shores. Constance died, her murder disguised as the work of Colonial soldiers. Strype was devastated and retaliated against the Colonial forces with ruthless bloodlust; the vengeance spirit had awakened and taken hold of Strype, fueling his anger and empowering him in a coat of flames when he desired.

In a battle unmentioned in the history books, Lady Liberty, Minuteman, and the French hero Bastille fought the powered Strype in his summer home where his wife had been murdered. The battle engulfed the main house in flames, and Strype was burned alive, despite the heroes' attempts to save him. That's when they discovered the true nature of the vengeance spirit; vengeance consumes.

Without their commander, the British forces fell to Colonial Major Joseph Clark. Freedom had reached the city of Freedom at last. The vengeance spirit lingered, however, its effects felt when the celebrating Colonials ransacked the estate on Bayview Heights and burned the remainder to the ground. But with its energies spent on Strype, the vengeance spirit returned to sleep to regain its strength.

DR. CHARLES CLAREMONT

Constance's descendants managed to survive the decades, despite Lucius's continued attempts to eliminate them. Many fled Freedom City, but returned occasionally to put the restless vengeance spirit and the ghost of Strype back to sleep before they could cause too much damage. The full story of what happened was lost with Constance, though some lore survived. At the very least, the Vervains knew that their fate was tied to Bayview Heights, and it was their responsibility to keep the vengeance spirit quiet. The name Lucius Cabot, however, was forgotten save in one place...the journals Constance was said to have written and hidden on the estate in case anything happened to her.

The estate was purchased and sold multiple times through the next century. It was always the home of Freedom City's rich and affluent, but the property carried with it "stories." People wouldn't call it haunted, but occasionally, someone would report seeing a burning man stumbling through the area, oblivious to the flames and crying out for his wife and children. The stories could never be corroborated, but the reports would coincide with mysterious wildfires that would break out in the area.

Finally, after the property remained unused for several years, it was sold to Dr. Charles Claremont for a pittance. Claremont dreamed of running a prestigious private school in Freedom City, but when the Burning Ghost returned and nearly burned down the entire construction site, Claremont secretly called in a priest to sanctify the ground. Father Lee Vervain was happy to oblige on condition that the school be a Catholic institution and that he be hired into the faculty to ensure the spirits remained suitably quiet.

Unfortunately, Father Vervain believed the troubles visited upon his family and his ancestors were God's punishment for their involvement in witchcraft. He was determined to uncover the "secret rooms" hidden beneath the school—a cavern said to hold the original taint of Lucius Cabot's actions, the vengeance spirit, and a room built with the original Strype estate that escaped notice—a room said to hold Constance's journals and notes with the truth she did not have time to teach her children.

It was because of Father Vervain's sway over Dr. Claremont that the campus for St. Thomas Aquinas Academy grew. Lee was trying to uncover the cavern and the room to destroy their contents as an act of redemption for his ancestors and family. Under the guise of constructing new buildings (like the dorms and additional wings for classrooms), Father Lee used every opportunity to dig up the campus grounds, but he never found the chambers.

THE 20TH CENTURY

William Warner was a student at St. Thomas when Hitler was marching across Europe. Because of his German accent, William endured three years of torment at the academy, while his parents lost their jobs and friends because of anti-Nazi sentiment. None of them were Nazis, but that didn't matter. Finally, in his senior year, William was on the verge of being expelled, because his parents couldn't afford next semester's tuition. He loathed St. Thomas by then...loathed every soul, and the spark of his hatred awakened the vengeance spirit.

The vengeance spirit turned William into the new Burning Ghost. He walked the campus grounds, setting portions of the school on fire and

CONTINUITY

It's obvious that if the Vervains had kept their name throughout the generations, then Lucius Cabot would have had an easier time hunting them. But remember that until recently, information was not centrally accessible, and communication was far from instant. Records were scattered everywhere, making investigation difficult. Furthermore, many Vervains changed their name to protect themselves from the mysterious assassin, but a few kept the family name in open defiance. Others only use the name Vervain in the company of those they trust.

exacting his revenge on his cruel classmates. This time, it was Eldrich who fought him with the help of a witch named Lillian Vervain. They stopped Warner and managed to put the vengeance spirit back to sleep. Eldrich wanted to banish the spirit entirely, but Lillian explained the spirit's importance from what she knew. Eldrich consented, and the two became close for a time. Lillian's daughter was born not long thereafter.

The school blamed the tragedy on a freak fire, and the events at Pearl Harbor managed to distract any deeper investigation. Eldrich left Freedom City, while Lillian kept a watch on the school, raised her child, and did her best to keep the ghosts of Strype and Warner dormant.

The damage was done, unfortunately. The school never fully recovered its prestige from the tragedy, even after it turned co-ed in the 1960s to draw in more students. St. Thomas Aquinas was considered too old and outdated. The vengeance spirit appeared at least once more during the dark period of the Moore administration in Freedom City, in association with the vigilante known as the Hellrider, but it was eventually returned to its fitful slumber. Finally, on the verge of closing anyway, the campus was heavily damaged during the Terminus Invasion and simply abandoned.

THE CLAREMONT ACADEMY

The history everyone knows picks up when Duncan Summers opened the Claremont Academy in honor of its original founder. With its history all but forgotten, the new, progressive school was an attractive alternative to school in the city itself. More so, following the Terminus Invasion, Freedom's citizens were on a kick to restore the city's former glory. So

when Duncan reopened the school, while some protested the loss of its original name, they still wanted to show their support by enrolling their children in one of Freedom City's oldest schools.

Since then, Duncan Summers has turned the Claremont Academy into a strong academic force, suppressing those aspects of its history he managed to learn along the way. He hasn't learned everything, but he knows enough to remain vigilant for odd phenomenon like the Burning Ghost.

Lillian Vervain, meanwhile, had a daughter shortly after the Warner Incident. In turn, her daughter bore another girl later in her life, named Serena, also known as Seven (*Freedom City*, page 136). Lillian believes Serena is the one who will uncover Constance's secrets and discover the identity of the man who has been hunting their family for generations. She believes it is Serena who will find a way of putting the Burning Ghost to rest and use the vengeance spirit against their enemy and the demon empowering him. It is for this reason that Lillian sent Seven to train at Claremont Academy, and it is also why Seven is learning magic under the aegis of Eldrich.

Seven has even discovered the presence of the Burning Ghost and the vengeance spirit, and she is secretly using her magic to keep them subdued. Unfortunately, that's proving harder and harder to do. The two entities are awakening and reacting to the return of Lucius Cabot to Freedom City. They are becoming more active, and Seven is having difficulty keeping them under control (though she doesn't know what's triggering them). The only way for her to know is for her, or someone, to discover the room with Constance's journals, the original sacrificial chamber, and the truth behind Lucius Cabot.

THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Despite its colorful history and resulting tragedies, Claremont Academy is a beautiful campus set atop the hill of Bayview Heights with nary a visible blemish from its past. Surrounding the school grounds are a light smattering of woods with beech, birch, and oak trees. A short ways away from the walled academy is the scenic South Bay Road.

The campus itself is carefully manicured and always green when the season calls for it. Paths and driveways curve gently and seem to meander through the property, but that's more a testament to the skill of the landscapers. There are enough trees to soften the terrain without blocking the sightlines, but they also lend a sense of age to the already venerable-looking brownstones. The campus looks like a well-maintained slice of 19th Century life, but the truth is, it's a convincing mock-up of the campus that Dr. Charles Claremont envisioned, with some extra touches in the way of modern amenities.

The school is divided into three main areas. The first is the school proper with its chateau-style buildings surrounding the main quad on all four sides. Behind it is the second area upon which sits the gardens, three dormitories, and the Administrative Building. Behind that is the third area, a large open field with its tree groves and open green spaces

for playing touch football, Frisbee, or just sitting and relaxing. Beyond that lie the baseball diamond and the Academy's swimming pool.

Inside the buildings, the same attention to detail and decor remains. The walls are half-paneled using maple and cherry woods, while the floors are made in the rustic style with maple floorboards. Carved plaster ceilings adorn some hallways and rooms, while various paintings hang from walls. Some of the windows are etched, while brass and copper trimmings and fittings can be found throughout the buildings.

The school grounds and the building interiors look very much like the touches on old five-star hotels. That's not to say there isn't space for the modern touches, but Duncan Summers ensured that they were relatively hidden in comparison to the decor. The multi-story buildings contain elevators, and all the buildings are fully wheelchair accessible for teachers like Gabriel Marquez and certain students.

1. THE MAIN ENTRANCE

From the moment someone approaches the main double gates, they feel engulfed by the portico-style gate tower. The double gates are for vehicles, while visitors entering or leaving on foot can use the door set into the gate itself. On the wall next to the entrance is a plaque that

reads: "The Claremont Academy for the Gifted, *Scientia Potentia Est*" ("Knowledge Is Power" in Latin, the Academy's motto).

The double gates open to reveal a parking area with doors leading into the building on either side, and a driveway leading through to the Main Quad. The parking is mainly for teachers and for parents with appointments. Otherwise, the visitor parking lot is outside the main entrance. A security booth at the gate admits visitors or directs them to where they need to go. All visitors must enter through here first.

Spanning either side of the Main Entrance is the Main Foyer, which is discussed in **Section 3** of the tour. The building's second floor corridor runs uninterrupted through the gate tower.

2. THE MAIN QUAD

The Main Quad is an open air courtyard surrounded on all four sides by school buildings. A circle of grass is stamped in the middle of the yard; at its center, like a spoke in a wheel, is a statue of a proud-looking Dr. Charles Claremont. The Main Quad is the lunch stop for students looking to enjoy a beautiful day or just read, generally under the supervision of two or more teachers. The quad also has wood benches for students to sit and relax during lunch or personal breaks.

3. MAIN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Six buildings form the main academic body of Claremont Academy. They are all connected, and they frame the outskirts of the Main Quad.

DR. CHARLES CLAREMONT BUILDING

The Main Entrance is attached to the Claremont wing of the academy, on the east side of the Quad. A long, straight corridor opening on either

side of the Main Entrance serves as the Foyer's spine, with school lockers clustered together and interrupted in regular intervals by doors leading to the classrooms, the bathroom, or the stairwell. On one side of the Main Entrance is an office with a counter exposed to the corridor and a waiting area to the side. Allison Humphries is one of the secretaries who answers phones and greets students and visitors.

Next to the secretaries' office is the Honor Wall with its inset trophy case filled with various honors and awards. Along the wall itself are the dedication plaques, class-photos (new ones and some salvaged from the school after its brush with the Terminus Invasion), and school memorabilia recovered from the ruin of the old academy. This includes battered trophies, half-destroyed books and personal items, the twisted and near-melted St. Thomas Aquinas school plaque, and even the stripped helmet from an Omegadrone. Directly opposite the secretaries' office is a large engraved wood panel with the names of all the students and faculty killed during the Terminus Invasion.

This wing holds the school's labs and the music department among its many classrooms. The infirmary is also located here and is under the auspices of Nurse Aretha Joy. Nurse Joy is a red-headed beauty, and there are few boys who don't have a crush on her. The infirmary is better stocked than most given the fact that some teachers and many students live on campus.

MATTHIAS COOKE WING

Dedicated to the memory of a senior student who died saving classmates from an Omegadrone Squad, the Cooke Wing stands on the north side of the Quad. The Cooke Wing holds more classrooms as well as the different offices of various teachers, the counselors' offices (including that of Gabriel Marquez), and the teacher's lounge, which is snuggled away from all the heavy foot traffic. The student supply store is also located here; it sells the required textbooks for class and all necessary school supplies.

In the two-story foyer at the center of the wing stands the statue of Matthias Cooke, dressed in graduation robes and holding his diploma, which Duncan Summers issued and had bronzed. Many students touch the hem of Cooke's robe, believing he's good luck for their tests. Double wind-up staircases in the foyer lead up to the classrooms on the second floor.

DAVID SLOANE LIBRARY

A sizable donation came from the coffers of the enigmatic philanthropist David Sloane. While the donation was meant to be anonymous, Duncan Summers eventually discovered who the mysterious benefactor was and honored him by naming the library after him. Sloane, while appreciating the gesture, also seems uncomfortable by the attention. Regardless, the library is a prize for any large school, much less one of Claremont Academy's modest size. The three-story building is one of two along the south of the Quad. It contains many fine volumes and works in its mahogany wood stacks, as well as large study tables; the normally quiet library is made quieter by the carpeted floors. It also comes equipped with ten computers for conducting online searches. The computers are all firewall-protected, and they're connected to the Freedom City Public Library network.

The library has six sound-proof rooms for study, as well as a small micro-film and micro-fiche library with copies of articles from the Freedom Ledger and the Daily Herald. The audio-visual section has televisions, DVD players, projectors, and DVDs containing documentaries. The third floor is currently off limits, and nothing piques a student's curiosity like those two words. Nobody has managed to sneak up to the locked third floor, but that's not for a lack of trying. Duncan Summers doesn't even allow the Next-Gen access to that area.



DIANA FALK CAFETERIA

The second of two buildings along the Main Quad's southern facing, the Diana Falk Cafeteria was named for an affluent industrialist who donated her savings to various charities before she died. The Claremont Academy was one such recipient.

The roomy interior of the cafeteria is two-stories high, with rows of long bench tables and a well-stocked kitchen that serves a variety of healthy meals. The meals include access to the salad bar. Along one wall are vending machines serving a variety of drinks and candies. Headmaster Summers considered removing them in favor of healthy snack dispensers and 100% fruit drinks, but the school almost rioted as a result. As a compromise, Duncan removed half the machines and replaced them with healthy alternatives like fresh fruit baskets and bottled water dispensers.

The cafeteria only serves breakfast and lunch during weekdays, to serve the day students. On weekends and at night, meals for boarding students are served in the staff restaurant, which was designed to feel more like a traditional restaurant than a cafeteria. On weekends, students are also allowed to order fast food delivery, which is dropped off at the Main Entrance.

LEONARD FOX AUDITORIUM

The Leonard Fox Auditorium is one of two buildings on the Quad's west facing. It also doubles as the theater and the weekend movie house. The seats are fixed and arranged in amphitheater fashion, while the stage and back area are large enough to handle decent-sized school productions.

The auditorium sees use throughout the week, from school concerts to guest speakers, from school announcements to theater rehearsal and school plays. On Sunday afternoons, a projection screen is dropped in front of the stage while a movie that's already completed its cycle through the cinemas plays. As one of the purer moments of pleasure at the school, Duncan Summers breaks out an old carnival popcorn maker and makes fresh popcorn for the students.

Under the auditorium and stage are the hallways and classrooms dedicated to woodshop, art, and prop/set storage. Many students have a hand in crafting props and painting sets for plays for extra-credit or as class assignments. Still, despite the bustle of student life here, nobody likes to be in the auditorium alone. The shadows seem to fidget, and the echoes dance for just a bit too long. The teachers claim it's an effect of the excellent acoustics, but the students aren't so sure.

AARON CAGE GYMNASIUM

Football legend and ex-quarterback for the Freedom City Heroes, Aaron Cage, was more than happy to donate money to the revitalizing of his old school. While he fought with Duncan Summers over renaming the Academy, he was more than impressed with Duncan's dedication to rebuilding the school exactly as it was. When he first toured the new campus, he said, "It's like I never left."

The Cage gym is large enough to hold a tournament regulation basketball court as well as the surrounding bleachers. It contains lockers and shower rooms for boys and girls, a weight training room, equipment storage bins, and the offices of the various coaches, including Alan Archer and Mike "Iron Jaw" Jones, who's always telling students to "take it on the chin!" Half the students don't even know what that means, but they're pretty sure it isn't good for them.

Note that the Gymnasium has a fairly strict "no powers" rule both for games and in general, to limit damage to the structure and risk to bystanders. Super-powered "games" are generally either held outdoors or in the relative safety of the Doom Room.

ST. THOMAS CHAPEL

Although it's not connected directly to the Main Quad, between the gym and the garden is the chapel. It's a comfortable place with its doors open throughout the day, hosting bible study after class and Saturday and Sunday services. Father Henry Guimont runs the chapel with a quiet smile, and he always has time to talk to the students.

4. THE JASMINE SUMMERS ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING

Named after Duncan Summers's deceased wife (and daughter of villain Dr. Sin), the Administrative Building is the brain of the body academy. A secretary works in a small office located near the entrance. She directs visitors to where they need to go, and few people can get by her. Next to her office is a comfortable waiting room for people to sit until someone's ready to receive them.

The ground floor holds the majority of the offices for the various departments required to run the school, including the orders and supplies desk, the parent/student liaison officer, accounting, and records. The offices of Headmaster Duncan Summers and Vice-Principal Martha Dugan are at the rear of the building, along with the private library. This staff library contains books required to help teachers teach their courses more effectively or the staff to run the academy more efficiently—they include books on various school-related subjects, ways to construct engaging lesson plans, government grant lists for private education, etc. Only a handful of students are allowed in this library, students like the Next-Gen.

Finally, the administration lunch room is also located here, with the cafeteria grudgingly delivering hot meals on occasion.

The second floor is reserved for housing certain teachers like Alan Archer, Jesse Perry, Martha Dugan, and Gabriel Marquez. The apartments are comfortable suites and were originally reserved for those teachers who knew about the Next-Gen and the subbasement. The third floor is Duncan Summer's private residence and his sanctuary. No one but his daughter, Callie (better known as The Raven), is allowed here.

The basement contains the school's mainframe with a net-isolated computer for backups and the storage facilities for school supplies.

SECURITY OFFICE

Attached to the administrative building is the security office. Two security officers are always on call here to watch the cameras and respond to problems. The small building includes the monitor room, a small garage for the electric cars they use to zip about campus, and a coffee room with a comfortable cot for when a guard needs a break.

The camera system uses motion sensors to trigger the monitors. The campus, however, has several deliberate and subtle blind spots to allow the Next-Gen and qualified personnel to access the subbasement unnoticed.

THE SUBBASEMENT

While the campus is now openly dedicated to powered students, and all the staff are aware of that fact and vouchsafed to protect that secret, the subbasement remains off-limits. Not everyone knows it exists, and of those that do, not everyone has open access.

Duncan Summers fully realizes that not everyone with powers wants to be, or can be, a hero. And, Duncan is still loathe to train teens to be heroes without ensuring that there's some quality to the process.

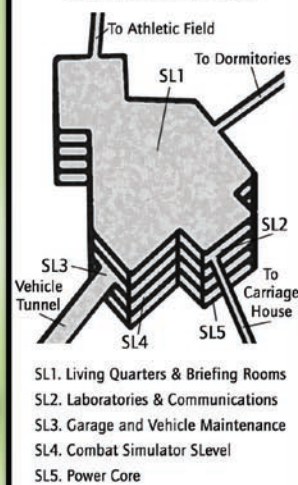
The subbasement is situated beneath the Summers Administrative Building, but it has six entry points. Two hidden elevators are located in Duncan's office and inside the staff library. These access the three tunnels that run to the dormitories, the carriage house, and to a clutch of

CLAREMONT ACADEMY

MAP KEY

1. Main Entrance
2. Main Quad
3. Main School Bldgs.
- 3A. Dr. Charles Claremont Bldg
- 3B. Matthias Cooke Wing
- 3C. David Slone Library
- 3D. Diana Falk Cafeteria
- 3F. Leonard Fox Auditorium
- 3G. Aaron Cage Gymnasium
- 3H. St. Thomas Chapel
4. Jasmin Summers Admin. Bldg.
- 4A. Security Office
- 4B. The Subbasement
5. Roberta Isley Gardens
- 5A. Zen Garden
- 5B. Carriage House
6. Andrew Scoble Building
- 7A. Rita Kord Dormitory
- 7B. Edward Jon Carter Dormitory
8. Grounds Keeping
- 8A. Pool
- 8B. Athletic Field

Subbasement Levels



trees near the athletics field. The final tunnel leads outside the academy and is strictly a vehicle tunnel whose entrance is hidden near South Bay Road. This tunnel accesses the base's garage directly.

Access to the subbasement is restricted by a retinal/thermal scan, meaning the system is a double blind security precaution. Not only does the scanner scan the eye, but it uses thermal imaging to ensure the eye and surrounding tissue are still receiving blood (to prevent anyone from plucking out an eye to be read).

The subbasement is a complete 180 from the organic comfort of the campus. The base is polished steel, frosted glass, and gleaming linoleum. The system is entirely automated, with doors opening upon approach, lights dimming or strengthening when people enter or leave a room, and security cameras keeping track of anyone in the base.

SUB-LEVEL ONE

This level contains the briefing room, living quarters, and trophy room. In the briefing room, Duncan Summers can apprise young heroes of various situations and debrief them after missions. The amphitheater-style room has a holo-projector on the central dais and a 100" plasma screen on the back wall. Each seat has a fold-tray laptop hidden in the armrest. It isn't uncommon to find Bolt, Chris, or Sonic here, using the plasma screen to play a console game...when Duncan is sure to be somewhere else for a long while.

Attached to the briefing room is a trophy room for the exploits of the Next-Gen and some of the resident supers. Some of the items on display include a Deep One's broken power staff, a Serpent Person blade, a Grue blaster, a petrified branch from the Green Man, a full Omegadrone battle-suit, and various awards and citations for helping Freedom City and saving lives.

The base holds private bedrooms for the members of the Next-Gen or those supers who gain Duncan's trust. These rooms were initially designed to give super-powered students a break from hiding their powered identities. Since the school is now an open campus, however, the Next-Gen and other heroic students mostly use the rooms for privacy, to recuperate from battle, or to rest if they're participating in a battery of tests at the labs.

These mini-apartments share a communal living room with sofas and a satellite television, a game system or three, and a kitchen with a refrigerator and oven. Connected to the living room is a small, but well-stocked library with computers for homework and a network connection to a massive information database.

SUB-LEVEL TWO

This level holds several high-end laboratories, testing facilities, and the communications room. The labs and workshops cater to building, repairing, and examining various items and elements. They fall into three categories: Bio-Sciences (medicine, biology, epidemiology, etc.), Earth-Sciences (chemistry, geology, mineralogy, etc.), and Technological (electronics, constructs, weapons, etc). Sub-Level Two also contains a vault to store those items considered dangerous, at least until they can be relegated to Astro Labs or the Freedom League. An advanced infirmary is also available on this floor to handle potentially critical injuries.

The communications room monitors all the channels and frequencies for emergencies, using a sophisticated AI program to detect keywords and images to alert Duncan of a potential crisis. The center links directly to the Freedom League's Freedom Hall and the Lighthouse, allowing Duncan to share data with the Freedom League.

The testing facilities are designed to test a super's powers and abilities and are filled with various alcoves oriented around a specific purpose. Some of the test alcoves include high-end scanners that can study the human body down to an atomic level, a hydraulic-stress press that can measure someone's strength up to 200 ton capacity, a near-frictionless

treadmill (the running surface isn't frictionless, just the underside) that can measure speeds up to 10,000 MPH (Speed 10), and a heavy-duty blast-chamber (20 Toughness) that can break down and measure the energy waveform of various blasts.

SUB-LEVEL THREE

This level holds the garage and vehicle maintenance bays, as well as the emergency tunnel that runs beneath the academy's high walls. Unlike most of the facility, this is a large open area with less spit and polish to the metal walls and support girders. It's filled with a handful of vehicles to transport the Next-Gen well beyond the school, as well as all the supplies needed to repair and maintain them.

SUB-LEVEL FOUR

Most of this floor is dedicated to the combat simulator and the massive amount of tech needed to run it. The simulator can duplicate any environment and enemy using solid light technology. It was built by Daedalus, who could never refuse the request of the lovely Raven. Since then, Daedalus occasionally drops in to tweak the simulator or add new programs and tech to improve it.

The simulator's control room includes a bank of monitoring devices to measure performance values, movement, and power output to help the young super become more effective. The AI also has a threshold kill-switch that shuts the simulation down if or when the super is in legitimate danger, as well as safety protocols to prevent the simulation from ever turning lethal.

This level also shares space with a gym capable of handling many different levels of strength and speed, as well as accompanying locker facilities, showers, saunas, and hot-tubs.

SUB-LEVEL FIVE

This level contains the power core to operate the energy expensive base, the massive mainframe to control the various systems, the air-circulation systems and carbon scrubbers, and the automated security room that tracks and records all movement throughout the base and its tunnels.

CLAREMONT ACADEMY

HEADQUARTERS

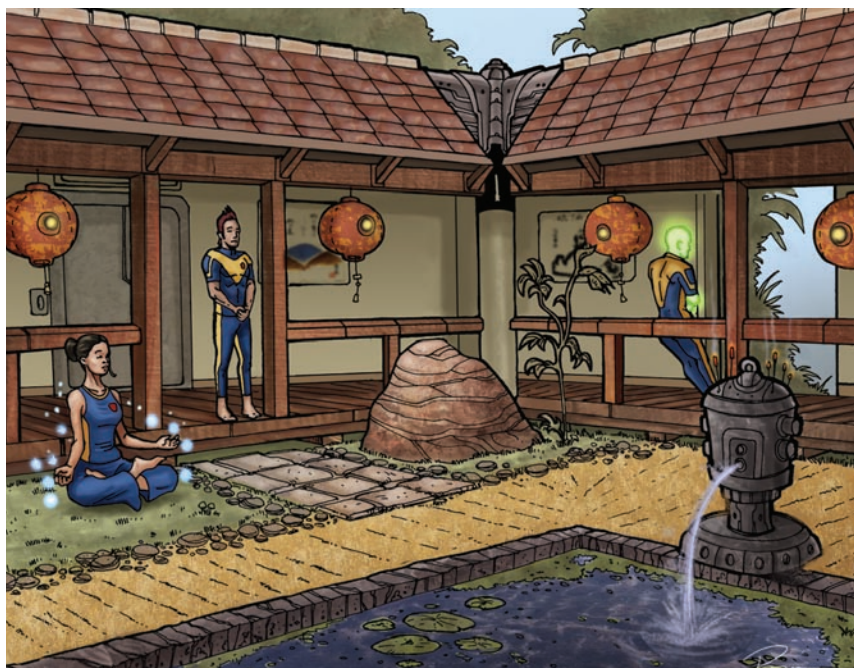
Size: Huge, *Toughness:* 10, *Features:* Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed, Garage, Gym, Infirmary, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Security System, Workshop

Cost: 17 equipment points

5. THE ROBERTA ISLEY GARDEN

Surrounded by hedges and a low wall, the beautifully manicured and landscaped Roberta Isley Garden is named after one of St. Thomas Aquinas's first female graduates. In her life, Roberta went on to become a prominent horticulturalist who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work on cataloging plants and herbs used in native remedies and treatments. Many of the unique and strange flowers found in the garden were those found around the world and donated by Roberta, after she deemed them safe for the local flora and fauna.

After the destruction wrought by the Terminus Invasion, Duncan Summers managed to secure or recover the seeds of many of the garden's rare plants. In fact, with the rapid deforestation of Earth's once thriving ecosystems, there may well be several species in the Isley Garden that have since gone extinct elsewhere. Duncan has kindly opened the school to several professors at Freedom City University to study the plants and protect the seeds, on the condition they don't damage the garden in any way.



In addition to the unusual plants, the Garden includes a small Zen garden, rows of perfumed flowers, and benches to sit upon and enjoy the calm air. Groundskeeper Terrance Williams, one of several people who tend to the large estate, has quite the green thumb when it comes to the garden. He's always willing to chat with students about plant care, and even runs impromptu lessons for any student who stops by to learn.

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

Although not attached directly to the garden, the rustic carriage house is a long, green-roofed building along the academy's south wall. Groundskeeping uses the carriage house to store gardening equipment, fertilizer, and seeds for the garden as well as smaller lawnmowers than the riding mowers for areas like the Main Quad. The carriage house also has a locked room that appears cluttered with crates if entered. It contains a hidden retinal scanner and secret passage that connects to the administrative building and the subbasement.

6. ANDREW SCOBLE BUILDING: STAFF QUARTERS

It takes many people to keep Claremont Academy operational. Not everyone receives an apartment in this building, but teachers, the head of the cleaning staff, and staff chefs do live here... essentially anyone whose services are required almost full-time. The apartments are by no means lavish, but they're large enough to include a living room, bedroom, private bathroom, and a small kitchen. Everyone is given a phone, satellite television, and a computer with an internet connection. The apartments of the fourth floor are slightly larger and capable of accommodating a family, like Vice-Principal Martha Dugan, her husband Charles, and their five-year old daughter Cassie.

The first floor of the building is taken up by the staff restaurant and kitchen, where students and staff dine at tables and order from a prepared menu. The second and third floors are exclusive to the apartments, as is part of the fourth floor. The fourth floor is also reserved for a spacious kitchen with large bay windows, a dining area for those staff-members who enjoy cooking for one another, and a large communal area. The lat-

ter includes a big screen television, comfortable sofas, a wet bar, a fireplace, and a billiards table.

The building is named after a teacher who died saving his students from a classroom chemical fire. Behind the building is the staff parking lot. The basement contains the residence laundry machines and dryers.

7. RITA KORD & EDWARD JON CARTER DORMITORIES

The two dormitories were built at different points in the academy's history, when it was still enjoying some level of popularity. Later, when the board of trustees decided to turn St. Thomas Aquinas into a co-ed campus, they changed the name of the smaller dormitory to that of philanthropist Rita Kord and designated that the women's dormitory.

Following the Terminus Invasion, the Jon Carter Dorm was nearly destroyed. It took longer to rebuild, and so Duncan made the Kord Dorm co-ed. Once the Jon Carter was repaired, the school merely kept the boys and girls together.

Most of the rooms are double occupancy, meaning freshmen and sophomore students have a roommate. All double occupancy rooms have two beds, two study desks, and two bureaus as well as a phone jack for the room and separate internet connections. Juniors and seniors, however, are given a room to themselves, meaning they have enough space to bring in a couch and coffee table, if they want. One school tradition is that when a senior graduates, he or she leaves behind the couch and table, but not before signing it. Some furniture is covered in signatures, with a treasured few dating back to the days of St. Thomas Aquinas Academy.

All floors have two communal bathrooms and shower stalls for boys and girls. Each floor also has two rooms, one each for a male and a female resident assistant. These seniors are trained as peer counselors and are often the first stop for students with a problem or who are scared. Serena Vervain is one of the resident assistants.

Each floor has a student lounge with cable television. The dorm-monitor on duty is the one who decides on the television programs being watched, generally choosing with the consensus of the other students. The lounge also has vending machines and chairs and sofas. Also located on each floor is a small study hall for students to work on their assignments together, though the school library is also open seven days a week for that.

A portion of the basement in both buildings has been turned into larger lounges with some tables to eat on, a few pinball and videogame machines, an announcement board, two billiard tables, a ping-pong table, and plenty of sofas and chairs. A music system also plays Top Forty, while another dorm-monitor ensuring nothing is getting out of hand. The other portion of the basement holds laundry machines and dryers, as well as cleaning supplies.

8. OPEN FIELD & GROUNDSKEEPING

A large open field stretches out behind the dorms. Butternut and fir trees sit on perfectly manicured and landscaped lawns, while the Groundskeeping cabin lays nestled in a clutch of trees. During late spring, summer, and early fall, when the weather is perfect, students with rooms facing the field place their music speakers against their open windows, crank the tunes, and go out to play or hang with their friends.

During lunch hour and after school, you'll find students here reading, talking, playing Frisbee, or throwing a football. On weekends, students might sunbathe or pursue some other leisurely activity. Many students spend their entire Saturday alternating between the field and the swimming pool. At night, you might catch two lovers hidden in the shadow of a tree, making out, though the teachers seem to have a sixth sense about these sorts of things and manage to pass by at the right time.

The Groundskeeping cabin is a combination apartment for the groundskeeper, an office/lounge for the gardeners, and a supply shed with a garage for the riding mowers and other supplies.

9. POOL

The heated swimming pool enjoys usage from spring through late fall, thanks to heat lamps that warm the air around the pool. No swimming is allowed without a lifeguard on duty, which is usually one of the certified students or teachers, but the pool is almost always open between the last class and dinner time, and always during the weekend. Once a month, the teachers and students gather to roast hotdogs and cook hamburgers in a barbecue pit near the Athletic Field.

The pool includes a small shed for the pool supplies, changing rooms, and outdoor showers.

10. ATHLETIC FIELD

The Athletic Field is designed to handle baseball and soccer games, but not simultaneously, obviously. There are bleachers for both sports, but the school doesn't have any competitive teams. Instead, they're used for gym class games and, during weekends, for pick-up games. There's a small supply shed with the bats, batting helmets, gloves, baseballs, soccer balls, and team jerseys.

11. THE UNDERBELLY

This section comprises all those areas under the care of the janitorial staff, plus some places they don't even know about. All the buildings have basements that are off limits because of the pipes and machinery to run

heating or air conditioning, cold and hot water, and sewage. When the school was rebuilt, all the buildings were connected together through service tunnels and conjoined basements. It's actually possible to go from the dorms, to the Administrative Building, to the school's massive basement without stepping foot outside. Naturally, these areas are restricted, but there are students that have found ways in and out of these locations.

Additionally, many of the basements existed before Claremont Academy; they're the oldest untouched parts of the school, some of them dating back a good century. Who knows what doors were overlooked, what passages were missed, and what basements lay hidden when the Academy was rebuilt? Since Duncan Summers added no new structures to the campus, these places still exist. For certain there are two hidden areas of note:

SUMMONING CIRCLE

Hidden deep beneath the earth, and made invisible by Constance Vervain's magic, is the cavern where Lucius Cabot summoned a demon and murdered the Brood of Tiamat. The pentagram he drew is etched into the stone, and the roots of forgotten trees have grown from the ceiling down into the pentagram itself. The blood of Lucius's sacrifice is still wet, though the bodies of his victims look withered and desiccated. Why this place spells doom for Lucius Cabot or the demon he summoned remains unknown, but there is enough wet blood in the room to mark a ritual circle or consecrate a weapon.

CONSTANCE'S REFUGE

Constance had paid one of the masons who was building a secret passage down to the river's shores to construct a room for her deep beneath the Strype Mansion. When the mansion burned, the room was never found, and the original secret trapdoor was mistakenly bricked up. Within this room are Constance's last surviving worldly possessions—a few pictures of the Vervains of that era, her magic journals, her altar, and the truth of Lucius Cabot.

The remaining areas of note are covered in the Storylines section of this chapter.

HERO BOOSTERS CLUB

"You don't have to have powers to be someone's Hero."

The Hero Boosters Club is a new organization comprised entirely of volunteers and funded by donations and grants. The club began forming after the Terminus Invasion, when heroes sacrificed so much to repel the forces of Omega. A news report, buried in the aftermath of the attack, spoke about the number of heroes who were currently homeless; they were so busy helping the city with emergency relief efforts that they didn't even have time to rebuild their own lives. The movement started then in scattered pockets, and it started with the smallest considerations—a civilian handing a thermos of coffee or hot soup to a hero taking a break from the rescue efforts or a family taking a heroine in for the night to give her a place to shower and sleep. The news agencies missed these small events, until the Gurudat family launched an "Adopt a Hero" campaign.

The campaign swept through Freedom City, with citizens donating change, canned goods, or whatever else they could manage to create care packages for heroes. The Gurudat used their business, a textiles warehouse, to gather and package the donations. More families volunteered, many of them having been directly saved by a hero or heroine. The campaign was a success.

After Freedom City had been rebuilt and life returned to normal, the Gurudats and other core families of the "Adopt a Hero" movement realized they still wanted to contribute and help heroes. They recognized the fact that heroes had a difficult life, and they may sometimes need help or encouragement. That became the rallying point for the Hero Boosters Club.

Since the Terminus Invasion, the Hero Boosters Club has grown, thanks to quiet benefactors and dedicated volunteers. Almost everyone there has a story of being rescued by a hero on some occasion, and all of them want to repay that kindness. The club offers a variety of services, including counseling for families that survived a villain battle, care packages for those street-level heroes who might have difficulty making ends meet, public support for various pro-hero initiatives, a hotline to render assistance to any family with a powered teen, fundraisers to help the victims of various villain-related tragedies, and a referral service using military-grade background checks for civilians looking to work for heroes in a support capacity. All requests are numerically coded so that no hero's identity is ever jeopardized. To further ensure that their records are kept secured, the Boosters Club received a highly encrypted data network thanks to Dr. Alexander Atom. This allows the organization to safely provide help to the Freedom League and Claremont Academy while keeping their identities and needs a secret.

FACULTY

With the shift to an all-powered student body, Duncan Summers was forced to hire a staff capable of keeping the academy's secrets. For some choices, he didn't have to go far. He knew who he could trust or believed he could trust, and told them the truth. For others, he relied on the help of groups like the Freedom League and the newly formed Hero Boosters Club to recommend "safe" people. In some instances, Duncan hired former or retired heroes to teach, so long as they were qualified and reliable.

The following NPCs are a sample of the individuals working at the school. The Gamemaster can add or drop individuals as he or she sees fit.

The Claremont Academy faculty has many roles available for filling, from the teachers themselves, to the cafeteria and cooking staff, to the janitors and groundskeepers, to the security guards and cleaning staff. Here are some of the more interesting personalities, with plenty of room available for Gamemasters to move around in.

DUNCAN SUMMERS

Duncan Summers was an adventurous man in his youth and traveled the world. While in Asia, Duncan discovered a fabulous lost treasure, but lost his parents and sister to violence back home. Duncan dedicated his new-found wealth to fighting crime and adopted the masked identity of the Raven, operating out of his native New York for many years.

Among the Raven's greatest foes was the sinister Dr. Sin. Raven and Sin's daughter Jasmine fell in love, though Sin's machinations kept them apart for years. After one final battle that seemed to end the life of Dr. Sin and the Raven's career, Duncan retired and married Jasmine, who died tragically fighting to save him and her daughter when her father returned from the dead. Although he lost his wife years ago, Duncan still misses her greatly. In memory of her sacrifice, he remains dedicated to helping their daughter fight Dr. Sin and many other evils. He worries for her safety, but he's also proud she's carrying on his legacy.

Duncan decided to pass on his legacy in another way by opening the Claremont Academy, where he schools young supers in the use of their powers. He splits his time between Bayview and the Raven's penthouse headquarters in Midtown. His students know "Old Man Summers" was a superhero once, and while they don't know which one, some of them have a pretty good idea.

Duncan Summers is in his late-50s, his black hair is white at the temples, and his face, while strong and handsome still, grows more lined from worry every year. His eyes are gunmetal gray and he's always clean-shaven. He tends to wear dark turtlenecks and slacks but still looks quite dashing when forced into a tuxedo for society or charity parties. He walks with the aid of a cane, which conceals a climbing grapple and some smoke and flash pellets for emergencies. He's also adept at using the cane as a weapon, slowed only by his weakened legs.

DUNCAN SUMMERS						POWER LEVEL 9
Str 14	Dex 18	Con 16	Int 22	Wis 20	Cha 22	
Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+12), Bluff 12 (+18), Computers 4 (+10), Disable Device 8 (+14), Disguise 6 (+12), Drive 6 (+10), Escape Artist 8 (+12), Gather Information 8 (+14), Intimidate 12 (+18), Investigate 14 (+20), Knowledge (streetwise) 2 (+8), Language 4, Notice 10 (+15), Pilot 6 (+10), Search 8 (+14), Sense Motive 8 (+13), Sleight of Hand 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+12)						

Feats: Assessment, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment 4, Evasion, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Jack-of-All-Trades, Power Attack, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Disable Device, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Stealth), Sneak Attack, Startle, Takedown Attack, Uncanny Dodge (auditory)

Equipment: cane (+2 damage), commlink, flash-bangs (**Dazzle 4**, visual & auditory), Alternate Powers: smoke bombs (**Obscure 4**, visual, Continuous), stun grenades (**Stun 4**, Ranged)

Combat: Attack +14, Grapple +16, Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (cane), Defense +14 (+6 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +8

Saving Throws: Toughness +5/+3 (flat-footed), Fortitude +6, Reflex +8, Will +10

Drawbacks: Disability (lame leg, -4 with Acrobatics, Climb, and jumping actions, common, moderate, -3 points)

Abilities 52 + Skills 35 (140 ranks) + Feats 26 + Combat 52 + Saves 12—Drawbacks 3 = Total 173

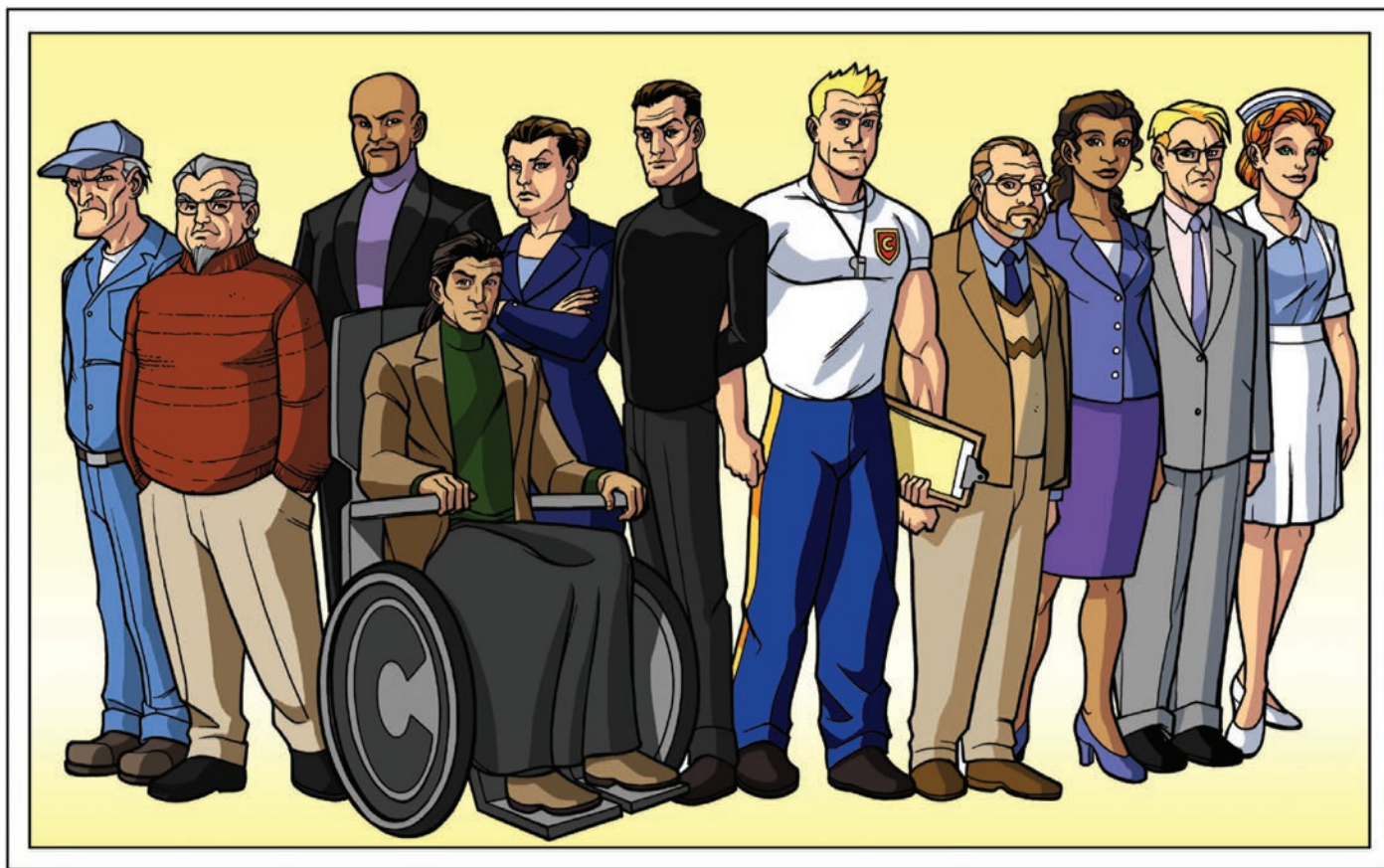
GABRIEL MARQUEZ

Gabriel Marquez was a teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas Academy for a handful of years before the Terminus Invasion. His legs were shattered while saving students from an Omegadrone squad, but the event awoke his ability to nullify powers. When Duncan Summers heard about Gabriel's heroism and his new-found powers, he offered the counselor a new position at Claremont Academy as the Head Counselor. While Gabriel enjoys his job, he is haunted by the attack. He'll sometimes spend hours just staring out his office windows, watching students with a sad look in his eyes.

GABRIEL MARQUEZ						POWER LEVEL 7
Str 10	Dex 10	Con 10	Int 13	Wis 14	Cha 12	
Skills: Bluff 4 (+5), Concentration 6 (+8), Diplomacy 6 (+7), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 8 (+9), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (counselor) 8 (+10), Profession (teacher) 8 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+10)						
Feats: Attack Specialization (nullify) 3						
Powers: Nullify All Powers 8						
Combat: Attack +0, +6 (nullify), Grapple +0, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +0, Knockback -0, Initiative +0						
Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +2, Reflex +0, Will +6						
Drawbacks: Disabled (paraplegic, -4 points)						
Abilities 9 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 24 + Combat 0 + Saves 6—Drawbacks 4 = Total 51						

JESSE PERRY

Jesse Perry is quiet about his origins, much less his adventures as the mysterious Ghostman. A crime fighter who appeared sporadically throughout the Eighties, Jesse used his unearthly powers to strike fear in the hearts of organized crime. Then one day, he simply vanished. Many hero buffs figured he was killed by the mobs he targeted, but it was Duncan Summers who uncovered the truth. Jesse Perry had retired to write a series of pulp novels using his experiences to fuel the stories.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BASIL FAULKS, DEMETRIUS KUZKIN, LEROY HAWKE, GABRIEL MARQUEZ, MARTHA DUGAN, DUNCAN SUMMERS, ALAN ARCHER, JESSE PERRY, STEPHANIE HARCOURT, DARIAN SKYLER, ARETHA JOY

Duncan Summers recognized a few of the incidents and approached Jesse, offering him a job as the academy's creative writing teacher. Jesse, who'd been suffering writer's block for a few years, accepted in the hopes that he could find new stories to write about.

Seventies and early Eighties before he realized that he wasn't making an impact—not on crime, but on people's lives. Alan retired the spandex and went back to school to pursue his first passion, teaching. He's been working as a physical education teacher ever since, though the Terminus Invasion saw a brief return to duty to help save the city. A couple of years after the invasion, the Freedom League put Duncan Summers in contact with Alan, when Duncan was looking for teachers to help educate young supers. Alan's been at Claremont Academy since then, and he's become good friends with Duncan.

JESSE PERRY (AKA GHOSTMAN)

POWER LEVEL 5

Str 13 **Dex 13** **Con 12** **Int 12** **Wis 13** **Cha 13**

Skills: Climb 2 (+3), Concentration 4 (+5), Disguise 4 (+5), Intimidate 4 (+5), Investigate 4 (+5), Knowledge (history) 4 (+5), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+5), Profession (teacher) 8 (+9), Profession (writer) 8 (+9), Sense Motive 4 (+5), Stealth 6 (+7)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 1

Powers: **Insubstantial 4** (Concentration Duration; *Alternate Powers:* Concealment 8 [visual, mental])

Combat: Attack +5 (melee), +3 (ranged), Grapple +6, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +3 (+1 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 16 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 17 + Combat 16 + Saves 9 = Total 76

ALAN ARCHER (AKA HOT ROD)

POWER LEVEL 5

Str 13 **Dex 12** **Con 15** **Int 10** **Wis 11** **Cha 12**

Skills: Bluff 4 (+5), Climb 4 (+5), Drive 6 (+7), Knowledge (life sciences) 2 (+2), Medicine 2 (+2), Notice 5 (+5), Profession (teacher) 10 (+10), Swim 3 (+4)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 1, Dodge Focus 2, Evasion

Powers: **Super-Speed 4** (*Alternate Powers:* **Strike 4**)

Combat: Attack +5 (melee), +4 (ranged), Grapple +6, Damage +1 (unarmed), +4 (strike), Defense +8 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +17

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +5, Reflex +7, Will +3

Abilities 13 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 21 + Combat 20 + Saves 12 = Total 79

ALAN ARCHER

Exposed to chemical fumes, Alan Archer became the speedster known as Hot Rod. Archer only operated for a handful of years in the late

STEPHANIE HARCOURT

During the Grue Invasion, while most folks were busy screaming and hiding in terror, one woman was busy handing out weapons and devices to stop the invaders. Neighbors brought Stephanie their electric appliances, and she spot-modified them to create tech-weapons. When an injured Star Knight fought in her neighborhood, Stephanie braved incoming fire to rush to Star Knight's side and repair her armor's damaged systems. It was through Star Knight and the Freedom League that Stephanie came to Duncan's attention, and through him that she got a job teaching advanced sciences at the academy to a new generation of heroes.

STEPHANIE HARCOURT					POWER LEVEL 5
Str 9	Dex 12	Con 10	Int 20	Wis 14	Cha 10
Skills: Computers 9 (+14), Craft (electronic) 8 (+13), Craft (mechanical) 8 (+13), Disable Device 9 (+14), Knowledge (physical sciences) 5 (+10), Knowledge (technology) 9 (+14), Profession (teacher) 8 (+10)					
Feats: Beginner's Luck, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Luck 2, Skill Mastery (Computers, Disable Device, Craft [electronic], Craft [mechanical])					
Combat: Attack +1, Grapple +0, Damage -1 (unarmed), Defense +1, Knockback -0, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +2, Reflex +3, Will +4					
Abilities 15 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 0 + Combat 4 + Saves 6 = Total 45					

NON-POWERED STAFF

The following staff members have some influence or notoriety at school.

VICE-PRINCIPAL MARTHA DUGAN

When Martha Dugan's daughter, Cassie, demonstrated her ability to fly—to her entire preschool—Martha and her husband Charles didn't know where to turn. The Hero Boosters Club came to their rescue, introducing the Dugans to Nancy Gardener, Captain Thunder's wife. Nancy was speaking to other parents of powered children, but because Cassie was so young, she decided to introduce Martha to Duncan Summers. Duncan and Martha hit it off, and given Martha's extensive experience as a school administrator, Duncan offered her a job as the school's VP with a promise to help teach Cassie. Martha has been living on campus with her family since, watching her daughter grow in age and ability.

NURSE ARETHA JOY

Nurse Joy may be un-powered, but she has that special kind of touch that seems to diminish pain and make students feel better with just a smile. That's not to say she isn't qualified. She comes from a household of nurses and doctors, so the healing touch runs in the family, as does the skill. What makes the pretty redhead even more beautiful, however, is her humble demeanor and outgoing personality.

DARIAN SKYLER

Darian is that teacher the students love to hate. Arrogant and filled with righteous self-importance, Darian teaches calculus with effortless disdain and makes going to class utter hell. He won't just ask questions. He'll ask the questions you can't answer. Some students think he's jealous of their powers, but Skyler sees it as his job to teach them never to underestimate the human mind; a weaker opponent can always beat a stronger opponent by outwitting him.

LEEROY HAWKE

Leeroy Hawke is a reformed villain. Known as the criminal Turbo-Boost, Leeroy was defeated repeatedly and eventually thrown in Blackstone after trying to rob a Federal Treasury truck. For the next decade, he rearranged his priorities and participated in several "Stay Straight" programs for kids. He proved to be a powerful motivational speaker, enough so that he did the talk show circuit for several years after his release. Eventually, Duncan Summers convinced him to work at the school, teaching kids about meta-powered ethics and the need to treat one's abilities responsibly.

DEMETRIUS KUZKIN

Demetrius is a strange old bird. He heads the theater department and teaches drama to students. He's also busy each semester putting on a play, generally a classic Greek or Russian piece. Demetrius claims the theater is haunted, and that if Duncan does nothing to silence the "impetuous" ghosts, he'll leave. It's not the ghosts that bother him, it's that they don't appreciate the artistic process.

BASIL FAULKS

Basil Faulks is the chief janitor at the academy. You'll also never see him outside any buildings. He travels through the underground network, sometimes at all hours of the night. Basil keeps to himself, and he mutters to himself constantly. Students sometimes catch bits of his diatribe, not enough to understand everything he's saying, but enough to feel really creeped out. "That shouldn't have been down there," "Who the hell moved that door?" and "I keep telling them ghosts don't talk," are some of his reputed quotes.

STUDENTS

With over two hundred powered students attending Claremont Academy, there's plenty of opportunity to interject colorful characters and conflict wherever necessary. The following characters are those of note, and while they've earned mention, the campaign shouldn't be about them alone; the focus should remain on the player characters, as well as any of their friends and enemies that you see fit to populate Claremont with.

Currently, there are two powered teams at Claremont's, the Next-Gen and the AlterniTeens.

THE NEXT-GEN

The Next-Gen are the academy's original team and possibly still the best after the player characters. Despite the age of some, like Bolt and Christopher Beck, the Next-Gen team has become the de facto campus leaders, thanks to their experiences. The same can also be said of the supers that Duncan was training before the student body became entirely powered. This means they either have their fans (and thus, enemies), or they're sought after for advice and help.

RAYMOND GARDENER JR. (BOLT)

Bolt enjoys increased celebrity status now that other kids realize he is the son of Captain Thunder. While the attention sometimes goes to his head, there's always Sonic and Megastar to bring him back to Earth with a barbed jibe (or three). Bolt plays baseball when he can, or he can be found in the dormitory lounge, soaking up the adulation. He's currently trying to convince his friend Chase Atom to enroll at Claremont, and while Chase is hesitant, Victoria Atom is considering it. Bolt has hit it off with Whoop-Ant, who shares his sense of humor and doesn't know enough about the Freedom League or Captain Thunder to treat Bolt any differently than anyone else, something Ray really appreciates.

CHRISTOPHER BECK (MEGASTAR)

Chris is still struggling with school a little, but he couldn't imagine being anywhere else. With the arrival of the AlterniTeens and the school's shift in focus, Megastar may no longer be the most powerful super at school. The twin-hammered Asgardian, Magni, seems to be of comparable ability and skill, resulting in friendly, if not heated, competition between the two. Chris still has a crush on Serena Vervain and is overly protective of her and jealous when Dauntless tries to flirt with her.

THETIS (NEREID)

Nereid loves the new student body. She feels closer to them than she did with the humans, perhaps because she feels like less of an outsider. She and Magni also seem to be close, and there is definite chemistry between them. Magni also comes from privileged parentage, and both bear the burdens of their responsibility. Neither really knows how to take that next step to actually begin dating, much less express how they feel, creating many awkward moments. Should Nereid be dating or in love with a player character, then her attraction for Magni is tearing her in two.

SERENA VERVAIN (SEVEN)

Serena is the school's guardian angel, and she's heavily involved in student life. She's been trying to find a way of dispelling the manifestations of the Burning Ghost and the vengeance spirit, but she has had little success so far. She hasn't told Duncan Summers, because she senses he has much on his mind. Regardless, Serena is the most approachable of the Next-Gen; she's a peer counselor for other students, she works in the gardens, she plays the big sister to both Chris Beck and Changeling, and she's protecting the school in her own fashion. She's flattered by Dauntless's attentions, but she's not interested in him in that way. She does find Elite

attractive, especially his sense of responsibility, but she doesn't foresee a healthy relationship there (making her wise beyond her years).

LEMAR PHILLIPS (SONIC)

Sonic remains Sonic, a bit grizzled for his age, hard-edged, and task-driven. Because he doesn't go to school at Claremont, he hasn't gotten close to any of the new arrivals. Or, at least, he's keeping a cautious distance. Of all the AlterniTeens, though, Sonic has some respect for Elite. He appreciates the no-nonsense attitude, and he recognizes Elite's skill in martial prowess, having fought alongside Foreshadow. He also finds Dauntless and Relentless funny, and not in that Bolt/Whoop-Ant juvenile sort of way.

THE ALTERNITEENS

The AlterniTeens formed around the machine known as the Navigatrix, an artificial being designed to navigate across the dimensional gulfs. When twin heroes Relentless and Dauntless found Navigatrix, it aided them in escaping the mutant purge on their Earth. Since then, they've found other powered teens and have slowly gathered a group of young refugees fleeing their worlds. While the twins were the initial leaders of the group, Elite was eventually given that role, thanks to his tactical sense and extensive combat training.

The AlterniTeens were always a loose team, with a handful of core members and others drifting in and out of the periphery, depending on the worlds they visited. In their travels, they saw many dimensions in peril and much too much misery. Now that they've found some semblance of safety in Freedom City, the core members are finally learning to be teens again. They have no plans to leave this dimension, and as a result, they don't operate as a unit as much anymore. They are content to blend in and be part of the school crowd.

That's not to say they aren't heroes or they don't care for one another...far from it. But, it's looking likelier and likelier that members like Elite may become lone crime-fighters, while others like Relentless and Dauntless don't want the burden of being in charge of other people's lives. In fact, given time, some members of the AlterniTeens, like Changeling, may find themselves in the Next-Gen.

The only one having a problem remaining here is Navigatrix. It recognizes this particular dimension as one of the few safe zones in a sea of perilous realities; in addition to its mission (see Navigatrix's entry), it feels compelled to travel to more realities and bring heroes in peril to the sanctuary of Freedom City. Without any offensive capabilities, however, Navigatrix is searching for other heroes who may be willing to escort it on these temporary jaunts.

THE ALTERNIALTERNITEENS

The AlterniTeens' unusual origin makes it fairly easy to adjust the team or its members to suit the needs of a particular *Hero High* series. Some alternate versions might include:

- The players' characters are the AlterniTeens, or another group rescued from various circumstances by Navigatrix and brought to the Claremont Academy on Earth-Prime. You can use the story introducing the team on page 94 as an example of their arrival.
- The AlterniTeens are actually villains under Elite's murderous guidance, biding their time and playing innocent until they strike at Earth-Prime's heroes. Given their otherworldly nature, there could even be *two* teams of AlterniTeens: one good, the other evil!
- The AlterniTeens have parallel duplicates on Earth-Prime, who have lived different lives. Sooner or later, one of them encounters his or her doppelganger, with unexpected results.
- The 'Teens are on the run from legitimate interdimensional authorities, who consider them a "rogue element" in the omniverse and wish to "deport" them back to their home worlds (with terrible results in most cases). Dr. Tomorrow could end up on the wrong side of this problem, working for the mysterious Time-Keepers.

NAVAGATRIX

POWER LEVEL 7

Real Name: None known**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Guide**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** 6'**Eyes:** Green**Weight:** 350 lbs.**Hair:** Blond (artificial)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+7	+1	+7	+3	+2	+1
24	12	24	17	15	13

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+8	+7	+5	+6

Skills: Computers 8 (+11), Concentration 10 (+12), Diplomacy 6 (+7), Knowledge (physical sciences) 8 (+11), Knowledge (technology) 8 (+11), Notice 6 (+8), Profession (explorer) 10 (+12), Search 8 (+11), Sense Motive 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+5)

Feats: Eidetic Memory, Fearless

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Protection 1** (Impervious), **Super-Movement 3** (Dimensional, Any Dimension, Affects Others, Burst Area, Full Action), **Super-Senses 7** (Detect Dimension, Dimensional Awareness, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-Light Vision, Time Sense, Tracking [Dimensional Awareness]), **Super-Strength 3** (heavy load: 5,600 lbs.), **Teleport 5** (Affects Others, Burst Area)

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +16, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +6, Knockback -6, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Super-Movement, must recharge between jumps, -1 point)

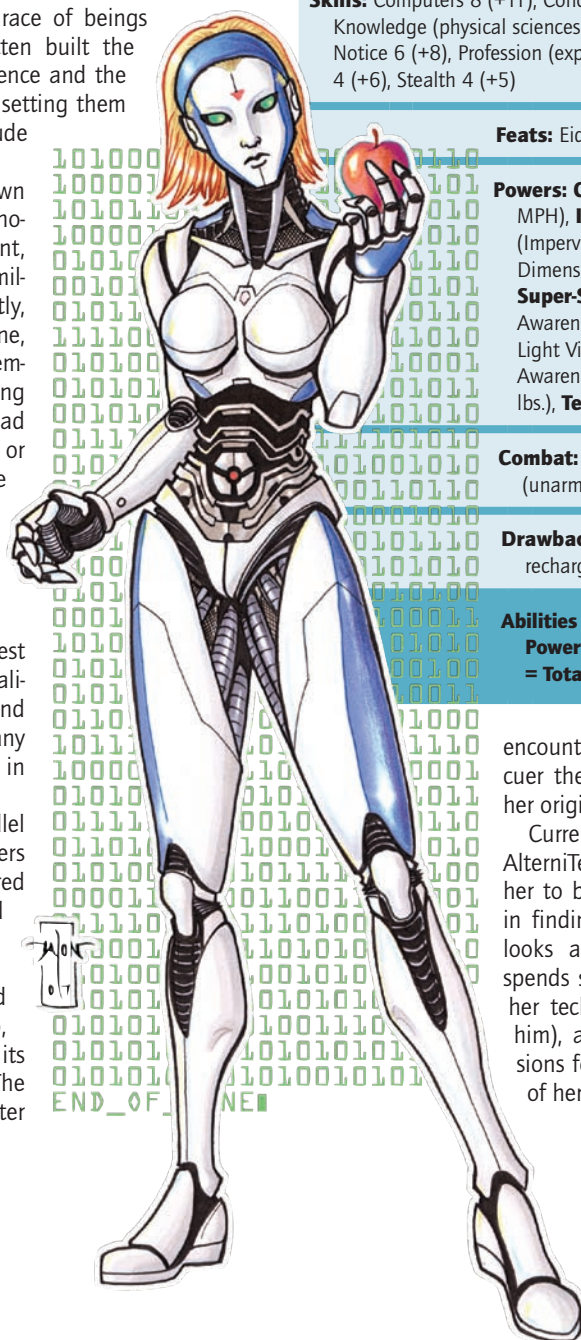
Abilities 45 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 79 + Combat 24 + Saves 8—Drawbacks 1 = Total 175

When the omniverse itself was young, a race of beings whose name has long since been forgotten built the Navigational Matrices, giving them intelligence and the power to bridge the dimensional gulf, and setting them to act as guides and explorers of the infinitude of worlds.

Eons ago, the Matrices were all shut down to prevent the spread of a sentient technovirus. When the re-activation signal was sent, however, the surviving Matrices found that millions of years had passed. How long exactly, they couldn't tell. Most of them were gone, and those that survived had substantial memory-core and systems damage. The surviving Matrices discovered their home reality had been devastated by a war that destroyed or scattered the Builders. Only primitive life flourished in their dimension, and the only reason they had been reactivated was thanks to inter-dimensional explorers who inadvertently reactivated a Matrix they found adrift in interstitial space-time.

The survivors repaired themselves as best they could and dispersed through the realities to uncover the fate of the Builders, and whether any still existed. Thankfully, many retained their code to aid and assist those in need.

One Matrix journeyed to different parallel realities, venturing far further than any others of its kind. On one of its jaunts, it discovered a world where mutants were hunted and dying. It rescued the siblings Dauntless and Relentless, and has since taken on the task of finding and rescuing super-powered youngsters. Perhaps it's because they, too, are orphaned, or because if it cannot save its creators, then it can still save someone. The Matrix assumed a humanoid female form after



encountering Relentless, and she gave their rescuer the name "Navagatrix," after hearing about her origins.

Currently, Navagatrix splits her time (the AlterniTeens—Relentless in particular—don't like her to be called "it"). She aids Duncan Summers in finding superhuman youngsters on Earth and looks after her charges, the AlterniTeens. She spends some time allowing Daedalus to examine her technology (which continues to baffle even him), and continues to scan the nearby dimensions for signs of her Builders and those in need of her aid.

CHANGELING

POWER LEVEL 8

Real Name: Unpronounceable**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Student**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** Varies

(5'3" in default form)

Eyes: Varies

(blue in default form)

Weight: Varies

(125 lbs. in default form)

Hair: Varies

(blond in default form)

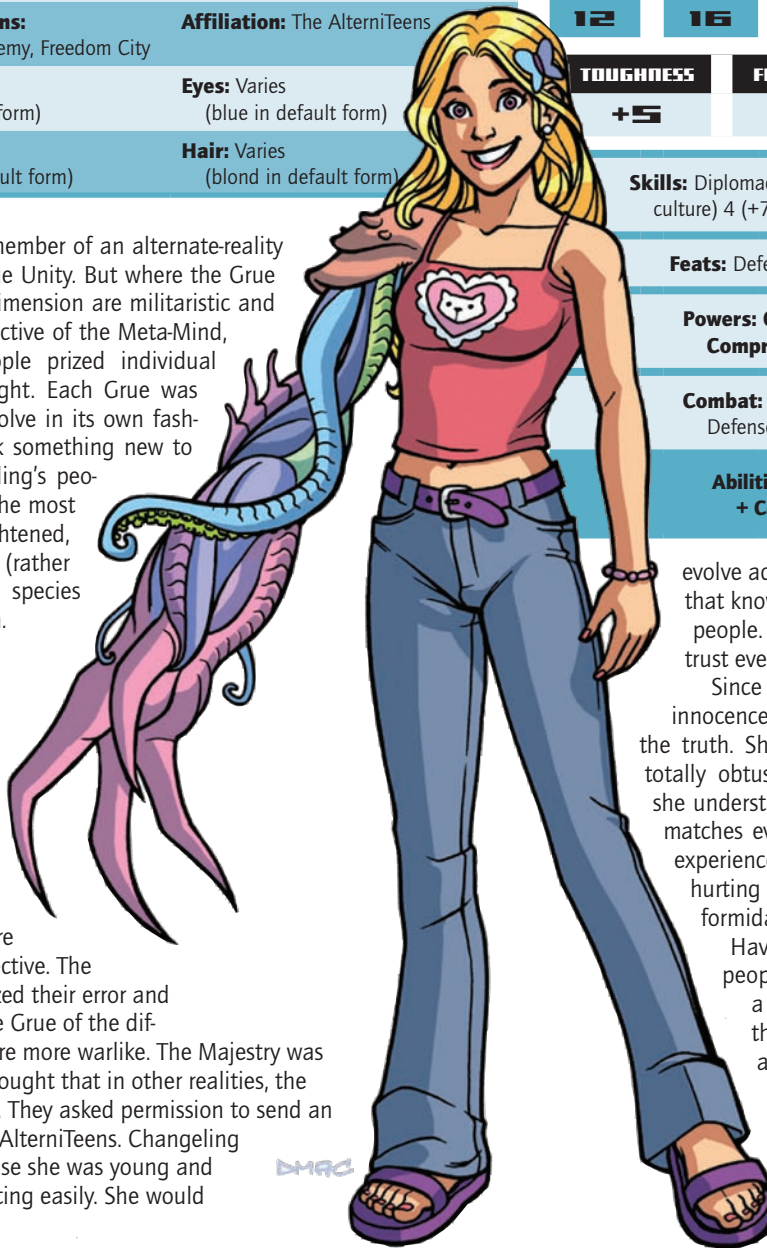
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+3	+5	+3	+3	+3
12	16	20	16	16	16

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+5	+7	+6	+6

Skills: Diplomacy 6 (+9), Disguise 8 (+11), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+7), Search 6 (+9)**Feats:** Defensive Attack, Eidetic Memory, Set-Up, Teamwork**Powers:** **Communication 8** (mental, 2000 miles), **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Shapeshift 8****Combat:** Attack +8, Grapple +9, Damage +1 (unarmed), Defense +10, Knockback -1, Initiative +3**Abilities 36 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 76 + Combat 36 + Saves 8 = Total 166**

Changeling is a member of an alternate-reality version of the Grue Unity. But where the Grue of Earth-Prime's dimension are militaristic and tied into the collective of the Meta-Mind, Changeling's people prized individual growth and thought. Each Grue was encouraged to evolve in its own fashion and add back something new to the race. Changeling's people were among the most advanced, enlightened, and xenophilic (rather than xenophobic) species of their dimension.

When Elite and others arrived in Changeling's universe, they panicked at the sight of the Grue and fought to escape. They were captured and brought before the Majesty Collective. The AlterniTeens realized their error and explained how the Grue of the different realities were more warlike. The Majesty was horrified at the thought that in other realities, the Grue were villains. They asked permission to send an observer with the AlterniTeens. Changeling was chosen because she was young and capable of imprinting easily. She would



evolve according to her experiences and eventually bring that knowledge and her evolution back to her people. The AlterniTeens agreed, uncertain if they could trust even this reality's version of the Grue.

Since then, Changeling's unadulterated enthusiasm, innocence, and love for life have taught the AlterniTeens the truth. She always sees the better in others, and she is totally obtuse when it comes to detecting sarcasm. While she understands there's evil out in the omniverse, she rarely matches evil with the villain standing before her. Still, her experiences have taught her much, and while she dislikes hurting people, her shape-shifting abilities make her a formidable opponent.

Having been warned about how people perceive her people in other dimensions, Changeling has adopted a very human—and very perky—appearance. Only the AlterniTeens, the Next-Gen, Duncan Summers, and Pseudo of the Freedom League know she's a Grue. She's grown very close to Seven, and she has a crush of sorts on Elite, but she is uncertain of his feelings towards her, as she is uncertain about human rituals of love (but also very curious...).

DAUNTLESS & RELENTLESS

POWER LEVEL 8/8

Real Name: Samuel & Samantha Capote**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Students**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** 6'10"/5'6"**Eyes:** White (no pupils)/Brown**Weight:** 500 lbs./130 lbs.**Hair:** None/Black

Samuel and Samantha Capote were raised in an internment camp, their gene-markers designating them as Alpha-class mutants. In their reality, mutants were less than animals, a slave-race to serve the more genetically "pure" *Homo sapiens*, the "saps," as mutants called them in secret. Unfortunately, when the mutant birthrate exploded despite the birth control regulations and genetic-screening programs, the government began culling the internment camps. They planned to terminate mutants until their numbers were brought to more "reasonable" levels.

DAUNTLESS

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+10	+0	+9	+0	+0	+0
30	11	28	10	10	10

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10	+10	+4	+4

Skills: Gather Information 4 (+4), Intimidate 6 (+6), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+4), Notice 6 (+6), Search 4 (+4), Sense Motive 4 (+4), Stealth 4 (+4)

Feats: Endurance, Interpose, Improved Pin, Takedown Attack

Powers: **Density 3** (alloy body; Continuous, Permanent; +6 Str, +1 Protection, +1 Immovable, +1 Super-Strength, x2 mass), **Immunity 2** (cold/hot environments), **Impervious Toughness 6** (7 total), **Leaping 2** (x5 distance), **Super-Strength 5** (6 total; heavy load: 50 tons).

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +22, Damage +10 (unarmed), Defense +6, Knockback -9, Initiative +0

Abilities 34 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 29 + Combat 24 + Saves 9 = Total 108

RELENTLESS

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+6	+4	+6	+1	+2	+0
22	18	22	12	14	11

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+6	+8	+8	+6

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Bluff 6 (+6), Gather Information 4 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+7), Notice 6 (+8), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 6 (+8), Stealth 6 (+10)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Endurance, Takedown Attack, Teamwork

Powers: **Super-Speed 6** (500 MPH; Power Feats: Rapid Attack, Rapid Fire, Water Run)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +16, Damage +6 (unarmed), Defense +10, Knockback -3, Initiative +28

Abilities 39 + Skills 12 (48 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 33 + Combat 40 + Saves 10 = Total 138

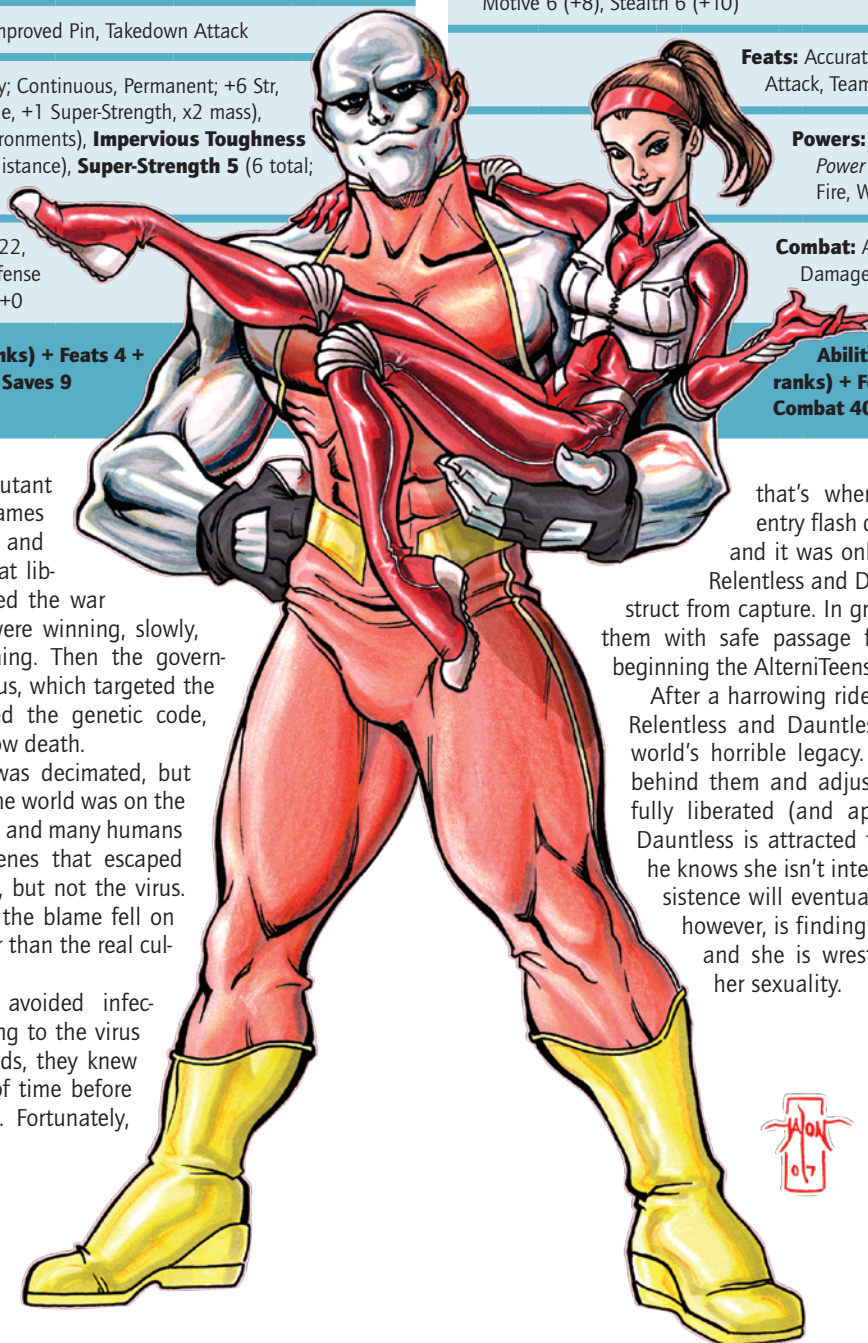
The twins joined the mutant resistance using the code-names Dauntless and Relentless and participated in the revolt that liberated the camps and turned the war on mutants around. They were winning, slowly, but surely, they were winning. Then the government released the Dever Virus, which targeted the mutant gene and unraveled the genetic code, resulting in a painful and slow death.

The mutant population was decimated, but then, so were the humans. The world was on the cusp of an evolutionary shift, and many humans carried recessive mutant genes that escaped the crude screening process, but not the virus. Their world was dying, and the blame fell on the "mutant terrorists" rather than the real culprits.

Samuel and Samantha avoided infection, but with so many falling to the virus and the extermination squads, they knew it would only be a matter of time before they made their last stand. Fortunately,

that's when Navigatrix appeared. Its entry flash drew the military's attention, and it was only the timely intervention of Relentless and Dauntless that saved the construct from capture. In gratitude, Navigatrix provided them with safe passage from their dimension, thus beginning the AlterniTeens.

After a harrowing ride through different realities, Relentless and Dauntless finally feel free of their world's horrible legacy. They're putting their past behind them and adjusting to life in the wonderfully liberated (and aptly named) Freedom City. Dauntless is attracted to Seven, and even though he knows she isn't interested in him, he thinks persistence will eventually win her over. Relentless, however, is finding herself attracted to Nereid, and she is wrestling with questions about her sexuality.



ELITE

POWER LEVEL 9

Real Name: Unknown**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Student**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** 5'9"**Eyes:** Blue**Weight:** 160 lbs.**Hair:** Black**STR****+2****14****DEX****+4****18****CON****+2****14****INT****+3****16****WIS****+4****18****CHA****+4****18****TOUGHNESS****+6/+2*****FORTITUDE****+6****REFLEX****+3****WILL****+3**

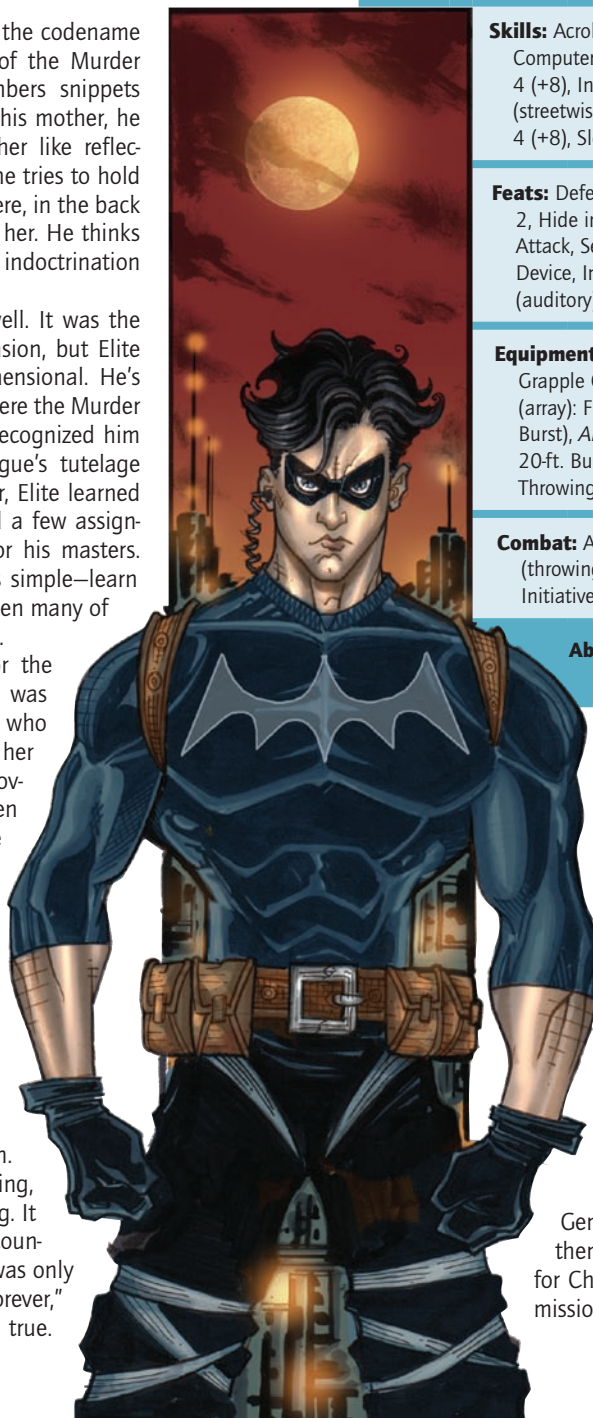
*Flat-footed

Elite remembers no other name than the codename he won for himself. That was part of the Murder League's brutal training. He remembers snippets of another life, of a smiling woman...his mother, he thinks. He catches recollections of her like reflections in broken glass, but every time he tries to hold onto the image, he gets cut. Somewhere, in the back of his mind, he's afraid that he killed her. He thinks that was his final test, before the real indoctrination began.

The Murder League trained him well. It was the premier assassin's guild of his dimension, but Elite has since discovered they're pan-dimensional. He's been to too many alternate worlds where the Murder League exists and where they have recognized him as a rogue. Under the Murder League's tutelage and that of his mentor, Wound-Maker, Elite learned the art of killing. He even completed a few assignments, spilling his share of blood for his masters. The Murder League's philosophy was simple—learn or die. Elite excelled at the former, when many of his peers only accomplished the latter.

It was on his last assignment for the League that Elite met his match. He was to assassinate a successful baroness who made her fortunes outmaneuvering her rivals on the stock market. Elite discovered her potent mental powers when she turned them on him. She tore through his conditioning, through the obedience training, like wet tissue before he managed to escape. The damage was done, though. Without his conditioning, Elite was torn apart by guilt. Fragmented memories of his past came to him, along with awareness of what he'd done and what he had become.

Elite went into hiding, knowing the Murder League would hunt him down. He was on the run, constantly moving, never staying in one place for too long. It wasn't enough. He survived three encounters with the League's agents, but it was only a matter of time. "You can't run forever," they told him, and he knew it was true.



Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Bluff 6 (+10), Climb 6 (+8), Computers 4 (+7), Disable Device 6 (+9), Escape Artist 4 (+8), Intimidate 4 (+8), Investigate 6 (+9), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+7), Notice 4 (+8), Search 4 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 4 (+8), Stealth 6 (+10)

Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment 4, Evasion 2, Hide in Plain Sight, Jack-of-All-Trades, Master Plan, Power Attack, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Acrobatics, Disable Device, Investigate, Stealth), Sneak Attack, Uncanny Dodge (auditory)

Equipment: Camo-Costume (+2 Stealth), Commlink (1 point), Grapple Gun (**Super-Movement 1** [swinging]), Utility Belt (array): Flash-bangs (**Dazzle 3**, Visual and Auditory, 15-ft. Burst), Alternate Powers: Smoke Bombs (**Obscure 4**, Visual, 20-ft. Burst), Stun grenades (**Stun 3**, Ranged, 15-ft. Burst), Throwing Disks (boomerangs)

Combat: Attack +11, Grapple +12, Damage +2 (unarmed), +5 (throwing disk), Defense +11 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +4

Abilities 38 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 20 + Powers 0 + Combat 40 + Saves 12 = Total 127

Fortunately, Elite saw a news report about a group of dimensional travelers arrested and detained by the meta-authorities. He recognized the opportunity and rescued Navigatrix, Relentless, and Dauntless from detainment. He accompanied them when Navigatrix had enough power to dimension shift.

While Elite is enjoying the relative peace and freedom of this reality, he's also preparing. He knows it's only a matter of time before the Murder League finds him, assuming they haven't already. While he won't kill them, he won't run either. He is going to make a stand and take them down once and for all, and to do that, he needs the help of heroes like the AlterniTeens, the Next-Gen, Foreshadow, and the Freedom League. Maybe then, he can finally be free to explore his feelings for Changeling. Until then, he's a young man with a mission.

MAGNI THORSON

POWER LEVEL 9

Real Name: Magni Thorsson**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Student**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** 6'4"**Eyes:** Blue**Weight:** 235 lbs.**Hair:** Black

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+8	+0	+9	+0	+1	+2
26	10	28	10	12	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+11	+11	+4	+5

Skills: Intimidate 4 (+6), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+4), Language 1 (ancient Germanic), Notice 4 (+5), Ride 6 (+6), Sense Motive 5 (+6), Survival 4 (+5)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Fearless, Improved Pin, Power Attack, Ultimate Effort (Strength checks), Weapon Break

Powers: **Device 3** (Surtur, hard-to-lose), **Device 3** (Ymir, hard-to-lose), **Immunity 4** (aging, cold/hot environments, disease), **Protection 2** (Impervious), **Super-Strength 8** (heavy load: 117 tons)

Surtur: **Strike 2** (impact/fire damage, Mighty, Restricted 2), **Weather Control 4** (8 paired with Ymir; *Alternate Powers:* **Air Control 4**, **Blast 4** [lightning])

Ymir: **Strike 2** (impact/cold damage, Mighty, Restricted 2), **Weather Control 4** (8 paired with Surtur; *Alternate Powers:* **Air Control 4**, **Blast 4** [lightning])

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +6 (ranged), Grapple +24, Damage +8 (unarmed), +10 (hammers), Defense +7, Knockback -7, Initiative +0

Abilities 40 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 48 + Combat 26 + Saves 10 = Total 138

Magni, son of noble Thor and his Midgard wife Gothilde, was a half-god with his feet on the Earth and his head in shining Asgard. Thor was a consummate warrior who taught his son the skills of battle, but Gothilde taught her son other qualities the gods lacked—humility and patience. With an uncle like Balder the Brave and grandparents in Odin and Frigga, Magni was well loved by the gods, but as a half-mortal, he also spent years on Midgard, learning to be human.

Unfortunately, when Loki broke free of his prison, and Heimdall sounded the trumpet to warn of Ragnarok, Thor and Odin were unwilling to let Magni fall with them. He was young and still had much to learn and many years to live. The All-Father gave Magni a gift of two hammers, forged by the dwarves from the heart of the giants Ymir and Surtur. Magni believed he was being readied for the final battle, but before he knew it, his father and grandparents bade him a fond farewell... and cast him from that reality with their combined powers.

Magni was devastated. He could not return home, could not fight and die alongside his family. He tried desperately to return, but he lacked the power to do what took Odin and Thor together to accomplish. He wandered, his heart broken.

When Navigatrix and the others found Magni, he was locked in pitched battle with the god-heroes of that dimension. They had taken umbrage at his presence and harried him relentlessly. Navigatrix saved the young god and even tried to return him home, but Ragnarok had closed the dimensional paths to it forever. Magni was truly stranded, but no longer alone.

Since then, Magni has wielded the twin hammers, Surtur and Ymir, to protect his new family, and he's fascinated with this version of Earth. It

bears the legends of the Norse gods, which brings him some measure of comfort. The Aesir of Earth-Prime still observe the treaty of non-interference forged with the Master Mage, but apparently it doesn't cover demi-gods from parallel dimensions, so Magni goes unmolested, but unable to contact his "kin." (In fact, there is an Earth-Prime Magni as well, part of the Norse pantheon and son of Thor and a giantess rather than a human. He, too, is constrained from visiting Earth by the pact.)

Magni knows of one other on Midgard with ties to the Golden Realm, and he is disturbed at what he hears about this warrior who dares call himself "Ragnarok" (see the *Agents of Freedom* sourcebook for details). One day, he knows they will meet in battle, and he will have his opportunity to fight Ragnarok after all.

In the meantime, Magni has found a worthy sparring partner in Megastar, and he has found himself drawn to the lovely Nereid, who reminds him so much of the daughters of Njord, but he's not quite sure how to approach her.



WHOOOP-ANT

POWER LEVEL 9

Real Name: Anthony Andrews**Identity:** Secret**Occupation:** Student**Base of Operations:**

Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Affiliation: The AlterniTeens**Height:** 5'2"**Eyes:** Blue**Weight:** 115 lbs.**Hair:** Blond**STR****+0/+6****10/26****DEX****+2****15****CON****+0****11****INT****+1****12****WIS****+2****14****CHA****+2****15****TOUGHNESS****+4/+0*****FORTITUDE****+4****REFLEX****+6****WILL****+6**

*Flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+7), Bluff 7 (+9), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+6), Search 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+6/+22)**Feats:** Defensive Roll 4, Improved Initiative, Move-by Action, Set-Up, Taunt**Powers:** **Enhanced Strength 12** (Linked to Shrinking), **Flight 2** (25 MPH), **Shrinking 16** (Fine; Normal Strength, +8 Atk/Def, -16 Grapple, +16 Stealth, -8 Intimidation), **Super-Strength 6** (Linked to Shrinking; heavy load: 3,680 lbs. when shrunk)**Combat:** Attack +4 (+12 shrunk), Grapple +4 (+0 shrunk), Damage +0 (unarmed), +6 (shrunk), Defense +4 (+12 shrunk), Knockback -1, Initiative +6**Abilities 17 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 60 + Combat 16 + Saves 12 = Total 120**

Anthony Andrews, alias Whoop-Ant, was a young mutant with everything to love about his powers. Sure, he grew stronger as he shrunk; sure, he could fly. But, who cared about that when he could sneak into girls' locker rooms and spy on them in the showers? Dude, it was, like, the greatest deal ever.

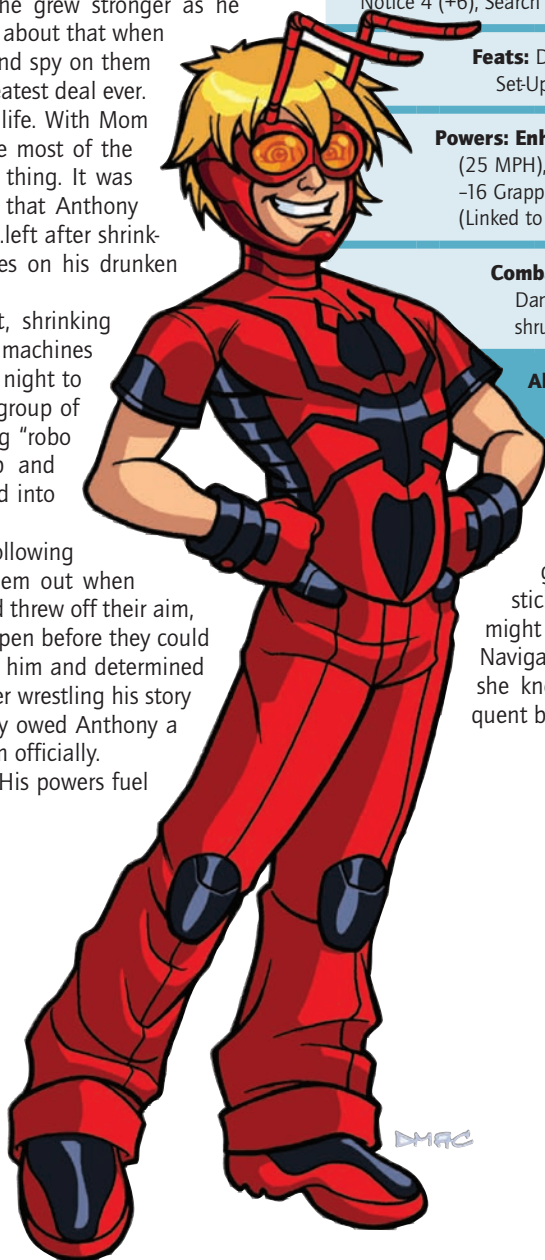
It was certainly better than his home life. With Mom dead, and his pathetic dad in the bottle most of the time, Anthony pretty much did his own thing. It was only when his father tried to beat him that Anthony decided he'd had enough and left. Well...left after shrinking down and playing some mind games on his drunken dad.

Anthony spent months on the street, shrinking down to steal change from vending machines and sneaking into empty hotel rooms at night to stay warm. Finally, one night, he saw a group of strange-looking kids and their hot-looking "robo nanny." He shrunk down to eavesdrop and flew in close...close enough to get sucked into Navigatrix's dimensional vortex.

For a month, Anthony had a blast following the AlterniTeens around and helping them out when they weren't looking. He hit bad guys and threw off their aim, and he pushed ambushers out into the open before they could open fire. It was Elite who finally caught him and determined the source of the team's "good luck." After wrestling his story out of him, the AlterniTeens realized they owed Anthony a great deal. They invited him into the team officially.

Whoop-Ant is a jokester and trickster. His powers fuel

his devil-may-care attitude, and there's been little that's ever really managed to threaten him. He's glad for his new home, though he hates going to school. If it weren't for the AlterniTeens sticking around, and his new bud, Bolt, Anthony might have taken off. Even now, he's trying to convince Navigatrix to take him along on a jaunt, even though she knows better than to encourage Anthony's delinquent behavior.



DMAC

OTHER STUDENTS

The following powered teens are a selection of the potential supers at school. All of them are PL 8 or lower, and all have a Suggested Traits entry that mentions their above average traits and notable powers.

BATTLECRY

Clarence Beaudrie, grandson of billionaire and Freedom City socialite Angela Beaudrie, always wanted to be a hero, so much so that his family spent a fortune on questionable gene treatments for their rather spoiled child. When one process finally took, Clarence developed super-powers, though it's obvious he isn't the heroic type. He may believe he is, but he's too privileged and arrogant to ever risk his own neck helping others. He is good at convincing others to do the hard work while he takes credit.

BATTLECRY

Traits: *Abilities:* Intelligence 12 (+1), Charisma 13 (+2); *Skills:* Bluff 6 (+8), Diplomacy 5 (+7); *Feats:* Leadership; *Powers:* **Blast 8, Confuse 5**

DESERT WASP

Zaid Rahman is a Saudi national attending Claremont, and he couldn't be happier to be here. When Duncan Summers approached the Rahmans, they were glad to be rid of their troubled teen, at least until he matured. He was always getting in trouble, and his last stint in a Riyadh jail earned him a dozen lashes. The Rahmans feared that if the authorities discovered his powers, he'd be drafted into the military or worse. Zaid, however, has recently come to terms with his sexuality, and he refuses to return to his country once he graduates. He knows what happens to gay people there.

DESERT WASP

Traits: *Abilities:* Strength 14 (+2), Dexterity 18 (+4), Constitution 18 (+4); *Skills:* Acrobatics 8 (+12), Language 4, Notice 5 (+5); *Feats:* Acrobatic Bluff, Dodge Focus 5, Elusive Target, Improved Aim, Move-By Action; *Powers:* **Blast 10, Flight 8, Force Field 8** (Extras: Impervious)

EEL-SKIN

Charles Kumble is a good natured lad from Bombay, India who moved to Freedom City with his family when his mutant powers manifested. The Hero Boosters Club managed to put the Kumbles in contact with Duncan Summers, who then invited Charles to Claremont Academy. Charles is well-liked all around, especially for his enthusiastic antics to introduce his classmates to cricket, convince the kitchen staff to cook curried meals, and show various Bollywood hits during movie night. Charles dreams of becoming a hero.

JUST HOW MANY SUPER-KIDS ARE THERE?

Technically, there are as many super-teens as you decide there are. The assumption in this chapter is that the Claremont Academy has a super-powered student body of about two or three dozen, but it can be more or less as you see fit. You can use all the students described here in addition to the player characters in your *Hero High* series and a few NPCs of your own creation, or you can limit the Claremont Academy's students to just the player characters, them and the Next-Gen, or them and the AlterniTeens, as best suits your game.

EEL-SKIN

Traits: *Abilities:* Dexterity 13 (+2), Constitution 16 (+3); *Skills:* Escape Artist 8 (10), Language 3, Stealth 6 (+8); *Feats:* Chokehold, Dodge Bonus 5, Grappling Finesse; *Powers:* **Elongation 5, Electric Control 8** (Alternate Powers: **Strike 8** (Aura, electrical), *Flaw:* Range, Touch)

FELINE

Feline was discovered in the alleys of Rio de Janeiro, after she attacked a squad of killers targeting street kids. Duncan Summers heard about the incident, and the Next-Gen raced to retrieve the young mutant before SHADOW or the government could get to her. Feline has no memories of her past, though it's certain she was a street kid who went feral once her powers manifested. As a half-cat, she's among many of the visible mutants at the academy, and she's taking special tutoring to catch up to everyone else.

FELINE

Traits: *Abilities:* Dexterity 20 (+5), Constitution 18 (+4); *Skills:* Acrobatics 12 (+17), Intimidate 8 (+8); *Feats:* All-Out Attack, Evasion 5, Takedown Attack 6; *Powers:* **Additional Limbs** (Tail) 1, **Animal Control 4** (Power Feats: Mental Link), **Leaping 2, Regeneration 3, Strike 8**

FIREPOWER

Nathan Peter Collins has the pyrokinetic ability to generate and control fire, the awakening of which led to him being shipped off to Claremont to learn to control his powers. Initially somewhat unsure of himself, Firepower has begun to fit into life on campus, his confidence growing as he practices with his abilities (aided by the fact that he can't accidentally burn off his morphic molecule uniform like he did his old clothes). For complete details on Firepower's arrival at Claremont Academy, see the *Mutants & Masterminds Beginner's Guide*.

FIREPOWER

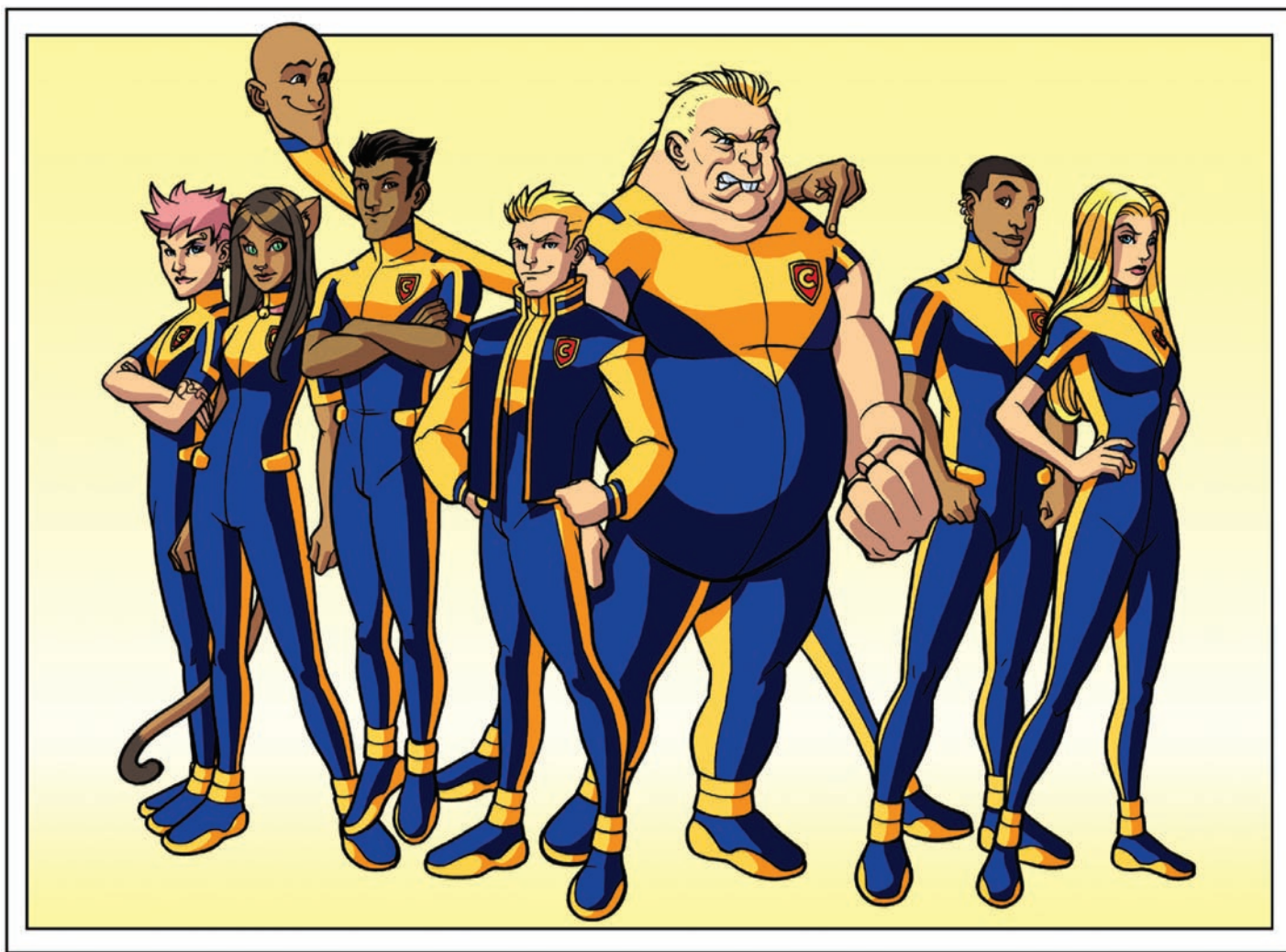
Traits: *Abilities:* Dexterity 13 (+1), Intelligence 14 (+2); *Skills:* Acrobatics 4 (+5), Concentration 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+5); *Feats:* Attack Focus (ranged) 2, Dodge Focus 3; *Powers:* **Fire Control 11, Flame Aura** (Strike 6, Extra: Aura), **Flight 4, Force Field 8**. For Firepower's full game stats, see the *Mutants & Masterminds Beginner's Guide*.

KID ALCHEMY

Terrance "Bling" Brown was an urban kid in danger of falling in with the wrong crowd. He earned the nickname Bling for his ability to transmute metals into gold, and he was making a living selling cheap watches for a substantial markup. When Sonic and Foreshadow saved Bling from a street gang that was using Terrance's ability to make them money, the two heroes convinced the young mutant to enroll at Claremont. Sonic also convinced Terrance to change his name to something less stereotypical. Kid Alchemy was born, and Terrance has since become a better student with a deep respect for "his boy," Sonic.

KID ALCHEMY

Traits: *Abilities:* Wisdom 14 (+2), Charisma 15 (+3); *Skills:* Acrobatics 5 (+5), Bluff 8 (+11), Knowledge (Streetwise) 8 (+11); *Feats:* Seize Initiative, Taunt; *Powers:* **Transform 4** (Metal to Metal; Extras: Continuous; Flaws: Touch)



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PUSHER, FELINE, EEL-SKIN, DESERT WASP, BATTLECRY, SLOTH, KID ALCHEMY. STUDENT BODY

PUSHER

Very few people feel comfortable around Naomi Vasquez. Her mind powers allow her to read thoughts, which she won't hesitate to use against someone if they annoy her, and she can make people "do things." As a victim of child abuse, Naomi refuses to be pushed ever again. She's also afraid of letting anyone get too close to her, though she'll never admit to that fear.

PUSHER

Traits: *Abilities:* Intelligence 16 (+3), Wisdom 18 (+4); *Skills:* Computers 7 (+12), Concentration 9 (+13); *Feats:* Assessment, Beginner's Luck; *Powers:* **Mind Control 6** (*Extras:* Conscious), **Mind Reading 10**

SLOTH

William Polzysky is one of the school bullies. He's not misunderstood or hurting inside; he's just mean. Sloth is a massive teen, with a line-backer's bulky build plus a couple of extra feet in height. And, he likes pushing his weight around, literally. Only Megastar has managed to plant him on his butt, but most other students don't have that kind of

power. Sloth leads a small clique of troublemakers who constantly seem on the verge of expulsion.

SLOTH

Traits: *Abilities:* Strength 14 (+2), Constitution 15 (+3); *Skills:* Disable Device: 5 (+5), Intimidate 8 (+8); *Feats:* Fearsome Presence 8; *Powers:* **Enhanced Constitution 15, Enhanced Strength 15, Immovable 12**

STUDENT BODY

Daisy Gibbons is *the* it girl at school, meaning she's beautiful, she knows it, and she makes sure you never forget it. Daisy and her popular clique are elitist; high school is a popularity contest, and Daisy plans on being the only contender. She has no interest in being a heroine...her ambition is to be a model, a singer, or an actress, preferably all of the above.

STUDENT BODY

Traits: *Abilities:* Charisma 20 (+5); *Skills:* Bluff 8 (+13), Intimidate 7 (+12), Perform 7 (+12); *Feats:* Attractive 4, Fascinate 4; *Powers:* **Boost (Charisma) 6** (*Power Feats:* Slow Fade 2; *Flaw:* Personal), **Emotion Control 4** (*Power Feats:* Mind Blank; *Flaws:* One Emotion Only, Love)

STORYLINES

The following are a few adventures that heroes can enjoy at Claremont Academy. Now, some adventures may seem to include an element of horror, but that's deliberate. Many heroic adventures can happen outside Claremont, but the events unfolding on campus touch upon the academy's shadow history and the Terminus Invasion. Thus, the horror touches. Besides, if there's one thing teens love, it's a good scare.

THE LIBRARY'S THIRD FLOOR

The library's third floor is off-limits, fueling endless speculation as to what's up there. Headmaster Summers has made it clear he wants nobody up there, but curiosity is a powerful motivator. As a result, there's a Dare Club going on on campus. Each student who wants to participate must put \$5.00 into the pot. The first student to actually get inside the third floor and bring back proof of the deed wins the money. Unfortunately, the security system requires a Disable Device roll of DC 20 to bypass, and the camera sensors include Detect, Infravision, Low-Light Vision, and Ultravision.

As to what Duncan Summers is protecting, the third floor interior is open, but the floor is covered with personal belongings. Specifically, the items are all the personal belongings of students and teachers who died in the Terminus Invasion. Duncan has been coming to the third floor to sift through the refuse and identify what belongs to whom, so he can send them back to students' and teachers' surviving loved ones.

THE GRUE

Grue spies have infiltrated the campus grounds as students. They are hunting a familiar mind, a Grue who seems independent of the Meta-Mind. They are hunting Changeling, not realizing she isn't of their species specifically...not that it matters to them. For her to not be part of the Grue collective is to be anathema. She must submit to the Meta-Mind or die.

THE DEVER VIRUS

Relentless and Dauntless thought themselves spared from the Dever virus that destroyed the mutant population of their world. Unfortunately, they were wrong, and the virus has gone from dormant to active. Now, the heroes must use Navigatrix to venture back to the ruins of the twins' reality and find the cure to the virus before their friends die. Will they find a dead world waiting for them? Or a mutant-hating government firmly in control of the virus and its cure?

THE BURNING GHOST

The Student Body completely humiliates a young student, toying with his affections and getting him to make a fool of himself in front of the school. His anger awakens the vengeance spirit for a moment before Seven can react, and it, in turn, unleashes the Burning Ghost. Can the heroes stop the Burning Ghost before it sets the campus ablaze and kills students?

Fortunately, there is an early warning to the Burning Ghost's appearance...the appearance of Governor Strype. The vengeance spirit may have released Governor Strype from his role as the Burning Ghost, but the ghost of Strype still wanders the campus. Most times, it's far too weak to be seen or noticed, even by those attuned to the supernatural.

When the vengeance spirit stirs, however, and the Burning Ghost begins to gather its strength over the next few days, Strype becomes more visible. He continues searching for Constance, but he can be interrupted enough to offer a short warning of the Burning Ghost's coming. He might even illuminate the normally invisible witch fire that's hanging in the air.

THE GARDEN

The Isley Garden contains many strange and wonderful plants, some nearly impossible to find. One of the flowers is blood dew, a reagent for powerful dark magics and one that only blossoms once every 13 years. Pick it too early, and the plant is said to carry a curse. Leave it be, and it dies within days, leaving nothing behind, including seeds. Unfortunately, the blood dew is blossoming, and only now does Seven realize the garden has them. The problem is, when the blood dew blooms, people go hunting for them. That means Claremont Academy is in danger from magical minions looking to harvest the blood dew for their masters.

BASEMENTS

A student discovers a hidden spot at school, a hole just under the exposed roots of a tree. The hole leads into a forgotten basement that's half-choked with rubble and the remnants of old furniture from a century ago. When students start holding séances there, objects get moved around, and some students feel a chill in the air. Is it students using their powers to spook one another, or are they messing with something best left untouched?

THE SPY

After raiding a SHADOW base, the heroes discover a list of various students at Claremont Academy. What secrets might the list reveal about the heroes and their friends? And more importantly, who is the spy, and how do the heroes uncover him or her?

ELITE'S GAME

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, while the campus is relatively empty, Elite decides to demonstrate just how serious a threat the Murder League poses. So, he invites the heroes and supers like Sonic to a game of stalker. The plan is simple—survive for two days without letting Elite “tag” you. Elite, meanwhile, will pull out every Murder League dirty trick to win, short of actually hurting anyone seriously. This means booby-trapping the combat simulation room, sabotaging the base so the air filtration unit distributes KO gas, kidnapping innocent students to force the heroes into a trap, etc.

SUPERLYMPICS

Duncan Summers hosts the school's first Superlympics, a series of tests to determine the smartest, the fastest, the toughest, the strongest, and the most nimble students, among other games. The games are straightforward, and the event runs all weekend long, with the various winners being awarded medals. And just to make things really interesting, some of the judges will include members of the Freedom League, with the winners of various competitions having a chance to compete directly against Earth's principal champions.

THE BURNING GHOST

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
—	+0	—	+0	+3	+3
—	10	—	10	16	16

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+0	—	+0	+5

Skills: Intimidate 8 (+11), Notice 4 (+7), Search 8 (+8)

Feats: Attack Specialization (burning touch) 2, Fearless, Fearsome Presence 4

Powers: **Hellfire Control 8** (burning touch, Affects Corporeal, Aura, Sustained, Limited to Non-living Objects, Touch Range; **Alternate Power: Stun 8** [soul-searing touch, Affects Corporeal, Alternate Save (Will), Concentration Duration]), **Super-Movement 2** (air-walk), **Super-Senses 5** (darkvision, detect sin [acute, ranged]), **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Insubstantial 4** (ghostly form, Continuous, Permanent, Innate), **Mind Shield 8**

Combat: Attack +4, +8 (touch) Grapple n/a, Damage DC 18 stun, Defense +6, Knockback -0, Initiative +0

Drawbacks: Can be bound or repelled by mystic wards (-2 points)

Abilities -8 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 101 + Combat 20 + Saves 2—Drawbacks 2 = Total 125

The vengeance spirit is a powerful thing, and it can't be easily stopped. Fortunately, the Vervains have kept it mollified and asleep, though it stirs occasionally, enough to send out its avatar, the Burning Ghost.

The Burning Ghost is the soul of someone whose thirst for vengeance twisted and completely blinded them. The vengeance spirit gave this power to Strype and, later, to William Warner. Unfortunately, the Burning Ghost is a shell, driven only by a need to hurt and main. It is directed by the will of the vengeance spirit, and if the vengeance spirit cannot find the target of vengeance, it will strike out at anyone and everyone at hand.

In this fashion, the Burning Ghost is more a force of nature than a malicious thing. Worse, its appetite can never be sated; that's not the way vengeance works. It only obliterates everything in its path until it eventually devours itself.



HERO WEEK

The Claremont Academy is holding its first ever Hero Week. During this week, students can expect many different activities like:

EDUCATION

Students are taught about the history of superheroes and their efforts in science, history, literature, and other subjects.

THE RINGER

Physical education creates an exhausting obstacle course meant to tax one's powers and abilities while the coaches ask quiz questions. Each wrong answer adds a time penalty. This is meant to simulate full-out combat, and beating the clock means you won the fight.

SHOW OF POWER

Students are put into groups of ten and asked to create a routine, performance, or skit around their abilities. Gabriel Marquez usually handles the group with the least control over their powers.

NAMING DAY

The students pick a codename and submit it to the faculty committee for approval. At the end of the week, at the closing ceremonies, the students receive their name and share it with everyone.

PARENTS' DAY

The parents, guardians, and families of students are invited to the school to tour the facilities, meet the extended Claremont Academy community, and learn more about their children's progress (and, generally, embarrass them in some fashion).

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Patrick Ballesteros is a Los Angeles-based artist, with degrees from the Watts Atelier School of the Arts and UC Irvine. He is currently working as a freelance concept artist/illustrator/board artist for various game and film companies.

DARREN CALVERT, ART

Raised in the foothills of the Canadian Rockies by a pack of wild squirrels, Darren Calvert rose from his humble beginnings to graduate from the University of Alberta with a degree in Industrial Design. He now works full time for Art Attack, an Edmonton company specializing in custom theming for the amusement industry. In his spare time, he spends way too much time reading comics, playing video games, watching movies, and working on freelance illustrations for the RPG industry.

GRANT GOULD

Grant Gould is an artist based out of St. Paul, Minnesota. He's worked on several popular trading card sets, including Topps' "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith," "Star Wars 30th Anniversary," "The Lord of the Rings: Evolution," "The Lord of the Rings: Masterpieces," "Marvel Heroes: The Complete Avengers" and "DC Universe: Legacy" from Rittenhouse, as well as Upper Deck's new "Marvel Masterpieces." His work has also been seen in Green Ronin Publishing's "Mutants & Masterminds" RPGs, Viper Comics' "Sasquatch" and "Oddly Normal Tales," IDW Publishing's "Wormwood: Gentleman Corpse," StarWars.com, and many others. For

more info and updates on Grant's current and future projects, visit his website at GrantGould.com!

HAL MANGOLD, GRAPHIC DESIGN & ART DIRECTION

Hal has been involved with roleplaying games since he was 9 years old, and shows no sign of stopping now. His graphic design skills have been applied to over well over 50 gaming products, and he's written material for Pinnacle Entertainment Group, White Wolf Publishing, Atlas Games, Twilight Creations, and Green Ronin Publishing. Hal resides in Alexandria, VA with far too many books and CDs, and a temperamental cat.

ATTILA ADORJANY, ART

Comicbook creator and sci-fi/fantasy artist Attila Adorjány was born in Canada. He spent many years in Australia before returning to Canada to attend OCAD. Since 1995 He has worked as an illustrator, conceptual artist, graphic designer and sculptor. He has worked in all areas of the print and entertainment industries from magazines, gaming and comicbooks to film, TV and Video Games. His credits include work for Dungeon Magazine, Wizards of the Coast, Image Comics, Udon Entertainment, White Wolf, Warner Bros, Mirimax, Sony Entertainment, EA Games, and BBDO. His upcoming comic projects include *Breathe*, and the *Night*. Attila collaborates regularly with his friends Tom Fowler, Eric Kim and Ramon Perez in a group called the Hive. They can be reached at www.enterthehive.com. Attila's website can be found at www.600poundgorilla.com.

TALON DUNNING, ART

Talon Dunning is a fantasy illustrator in the great Southern metropolis of Atlanta, Georgia where he was born in 1972. A survivor of both Auburn University's Fine Art school and White Wolf's intern program, he is now known as an illustrator for the *Ravenloft 3rd Edition Roleplaying Game* as well as a regular in other RPG projects. He's also done work for West End Games (*D6*, *Star Wars*, *TORG Revised*), Wizards of the Coast (*Legend of the 5 Rings CCG*), Eden Studios (*All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, *Terra Primate*), Kenzer&Co. (*Kingdoms of Kalamar*) and, most recently, Green Ronin (*Thieves' World*, *Mutants & Masterminds*). Talon is also an avid roleplayer, comic book collector, movie-buff and all around nice-guy. Ask anyone. They'll tell you. (And yes, that IS his real name.)

SCOTT JAMES, ART

Scott graduated from Northern Illinois University in 1995, and hasn't looked back since. He began freelancing right out of collage. He began working for Fasa's *Battletech*, *Shadowrun*, and *Earthdawn*. At this time he began to do work for White Wolf and Pinnacle Entertainment Group as well. He then began doing work for AEG, which he parlayed into a part time staff position for a year working on all their game lines. After that, he did conceptual design for Hasbro on the movie *Small Soldiers* doing character designs, and creating the look for the toy and computer animated cartoon *Action Man*. He continues to freelance for a multitude of companies, along with teaching college art classes.

OCTOGRAPHICS.NET

Octographics is a studio composed of creative young professional artists with individual specialized skills. The studio members have more than 10

years experience as illustrators and graphic designers, and have taken on work for a variety of clients worldwide.

TONY PARKER, ART

Tony Parker is an Arizona-based artist who has worked in the fields of RPG illustration, graphic novels, card art and book cover art. He still enjoys giving hugs.

MARK POOLE

Mark Poole is a freelance artist best known for his vast wealth of work in the CCG field, including many many cards for *Magic: The Gathering*.

KEVIN STOKES, ARTIST

Kevin Stokes has been published under various small press comic companies along with a short series under Image called *Shut Up and Die!*. He

has assisted with the inks on Batman books while working on his own projects and cartoons for a local newspaper.

CRAIG TAILLIFER, ART

Born November 29, 1968 in Ottawa Canada, Craig was raised on a diet of crayons, play-doh, and comic books. An early exposure to Uncle Scrooge, Asterix, Turok Son Of Stone, and the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs left an indelible impression on the budding young artist's psyche. Stumbling into professional work at a very young age, Craig has made a living of sorts at drawing for the better part of the past two decades. His work has spanned the black and white boom at Aircel and Malibu to a long residency at WaRP Graphics working on the *ElfQuest* titles. Craig currently works in TV Animation, RPG Illustration, and selfpublishes *Wahoo Morris* through his company Too Hip Gotta Go Graphics. He splits his time between work with an unhealthy obsession for comic books, old records, and hammocks.

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A woman with dark hair is screaming with her mouth wide open, eyes squeezed shut. She is positioned in the center of the frame. The background is a dark, stormy sky with heavy, dark clouds and several bright, jagged lightning bolts striking down. The overall mood is one of intense emotion and chaos.

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BEST FOR US ALL...WHY
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A large, ornate sign that reads "WELCOME TO UNITY" in a serif font. Below the main text, it says "EST 1959". The sign is set against a dark background with some foliage and a building visible in the distance.

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