

SCARE Sheets, written by John Jos. Miller, with game material and notes by Steve Kenson, is an expansion to our *Wild Cards* sourcebook, looking at the epic shared world setting changed for-

ever when an alien virus mutates some of humanity into super-powered aces and twisted and deformed jokers. *SCARE Sheets* look at the characters of the new generation of *Wild Cards* books, starting with *Insight*

WELCOME TO SCARE SHEETS!

Straight and continuing through *Busted Flush*, and *Suicide Kings*. *SCARE* is the Special Committee for Ace Resources and Endeavors, a U.S. government agency dealing with wild

carders, and the products are formatted as *SCARE* reports on important ace and joker characters and factions. Each entry gets you a full write-up of a single character or short write-ups of a small group or faction.

WILD CARDS CHARACTERS

Of course, *Wild Cards* was published for the second edition of *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*, so our first release for *SCARE Sheets* is a free quick conversion guide to using the sourcebook with the third edition of the game, written by designer Steve Kenson. With this you can bridge editions and generations in the *Wild Cards* setting!

Creating *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* characters for a *Wild Cards* series follows the same rules and guidelines given in the *Hero's Handbook*, taking into consideration the special circumstances and elements of the world of *Wild Cards*. If you know how to create M&M characters for a conventional comic book setting, then you can do so for this setting as well.

This document looks at power levels for a *Wild Cards* series, different character concepts, and ways of handling the expression of the wild card virus. It breaks down the different types of possible characters: ace, joker, nat, and even alien, and looks at particular design elements you should take into account when building them. It is based on material that originally appears in the *Wild Cards* setting sourcebook for the second edition of *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*, updated for the third edition. Players and Gamemasters may also wish to have access to the free second edition to third edition conversion document, available for download at http://grfiles.game-host.org/3e_files/MM2E3EConv.pdf.

SERIES POWER LEVEL

Wild carders are all over the map in terms of their M&M power level, from twisted jokers with no real powers at all to deuces with minor abilities and almost cosmic level aces with Earth-shaking abilities. The overall power level of a *Wild Cards* series determines a lot about what type of series it will be, and what kinds of characters are suited to it.

JOKERS AND DEUCES WILD

POWER LEVEL 4

This is pretty much the minimum power level for *Wild Cards*, and it's low enough that calling it a "power level" at all is almost a contradiction in terms. Characters at this level are little more than normal people with a potentially useful trick or ability; a true ace is possible, but most

powers are more likely to be deuces. At the very least, they are modest compared to some of the more spectacular ace abilities.

Characters at this power level aren't likely to have much combat ability or, if they do, it's pretty much one of the only things they do. That's fine, since this type of series is better aimed at characters smart enough to avoid outright physical conflict when they can. They're more likely people drawn into circumstances beyond their control and forced to deal with them using whatever resources they have. *Deuces Down* (Book XVI) is good inspiration for this type of series.

ACE-IN-THE-HOLE

POWER LEVEL 6

This power level is sufficient to create full-fledged aces with fairly powerful abilities who are otherwise ordinary people. If the GM wants a "wild cards are just people with powers" type of game, this is a good place to start. A power level 6 ace can have damage capabilities to equal decent military hardware (more with some trade-offs), and be tough enough to withstand similar amounts of punishment. It's also a good power level for joker-aces with a few tricks up their sleeves, like enhanced strength or the like.

Note that trade-offs become fairly common by this power level, as wild carders tend to have more in terms of damage and toughness than they do combat skill, unless they have particular training or talent in those areas.

Wild carders at this power level tend to focus on a particular power or ability, although it might have several different facets or effects in game terms. You can expect to spend 20 to 40 or so of your starting 90 power points on powers, which is a fair amount, particularly for effects not limited by power level, such as movement or sensory effects; a PL 6 ace can still have the power to teleport (or see) across the world or transform into a beam of light and fly through space, for example.

DEALER'S CHOICE

POWER LEVEL 8

This is the default power level for a *Wild Cards* game: a bit below the four-color starting level specified in *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*, but still



sufficient to put most characters well above the average man-on-the-street in terms of their capabilities.

Aces at this power level can easily be expected to spend as much as half their starting 120 power points on powers, making them quite capable. It's sufficient for a combination of offensive, defensive, and movement or utility powers more like that of a conventional superhero, including one or more arrays with various Alternate Effects. Nat characters at this power level are superhumanly capable themselves, even within the "normal" limits: they can have a combination of high abilities, impressive skills, and sufficient combat training to take on some aces and win! The nat archer Yeoman is a particular example.

ACES HIGH

POWER LEVEL 10+

In this type of series, wild card characters (nearly always aces) are the equivalent of comic book superheroes. They're peers of famous aces like Golden Boy, Cyclone, or the Great and Powerful Turtle in terms of their powers, able to routinely ignore mundane threats short of military ordinance or the like.

This isn't generally recommended as a starting power level, unless the GM is looking to run a series about powerful aces from the get-go. It tends to be more of a power level characters grow into over time as

their powers and skills mature. The series can transition from a Dealer's Choice series, starting at PL 8 or so, to this level over the course of 18-20 adventures, depending on how many power points the GM hands out as adventure awards.

POWER LEVEL AND TRAITS

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS characters in a more four-color style series generally do well to set their primary combat abilities at or near the series' power level limits. The same is often true with their major powers, particularly offensive and defensive powers. *Wild Cards* characters, on the other hand, tend to be less focused on combat, simply because fights are things most people try and avoid, and because many wild carders are not "optimized" for combat. Unlike comic book heroes, aces generally don't fly around fighting crime or thwarting the schemes of megalomaniacal supervillains, so they don't have the same need for a balance of offensive and defensive traits.

Players and GMs may wish to consider this as they create their own *Wild Cards* characters. While comic book superheroes justify incredible abilities, skills, and combat traits on the thinnest tissue of reasons, wild carders should have some reason why they have extensive combat training and skills. A character like the Turtle, for example, doesn't have (or really need) much of an attack or defense bonus: he doesn't leave his shell

and his power is perception ranged. Indeed, Tommy Tudbury's relative lack of combat skill is one of the primary reasons he *has* a shell!

Wild Cards Gamemasters may wish to consider some of the character creation options given in the *M&M Gamemaster's Guide* (page 185) notably Free Equipment (for mundane, real-world things) and Unlimited Power Level for aces with one, tremendous power but significant limitations elsewhere.

ACE CHARACTERS

Aces are the closest to conventional **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** characters: people granted amazing powers by the wild card, making them superhuman. This means they're also the easiest characters to create using the standard M&M guidelines, with just a few additional things to keep in mind.

The first thing to bear in mind about aces is they are *not* superheroes, for the most part. Few aces dress up in skintight costumes or use their powers to fight crime, at least in the way it's done in the comic books. Aces are not two-dimensional, four-color do-gooders, but real people with their own lives, motives, and foibles. Players should try for a certain level of realism in their game traits as well, avoiding cookie-cutter "supers" optimized for winning fights, and aiming more for well-rounded individuals with some unique quirks that fit their concept.

ACE POWERS

Ace powers have two primary descriptors: either *psionic* (or *psychic*, which amounts to the same thing) or *biological*. Golden Boy's force field, for example, is biologically generated, as is Howler's sonic scream (by his mutated throat). The Harlem Hammer's ace strength comes from his altered skeletal and muscular structure, and so forth. Other ace powers, like Sascha Starfin's telepathy, Poppinjay's teleportation, or the Turtle's telekinesis, are clearly psionic.

Some apparently physical powers are *also* actually psionic in nature, in whole or in part: Peregrine's flight, for example, is actually a form of telekinesis, rather than reliant on her wings, although she still has the power drawback of being unable to fly if she can't use her wings, simply because that's how she *believes* her power works (see **Power Crutches**, following). Similarly, many shape-changing or physically-transforming aces do so through psionic means, rather than purely biological processes (which are rarely fast enough, and too reliant on things like conservation of mass). Ultimately, it depends on the individual character and it's left up to you and the GM to assign the appropriate descriptors to an ace's powers.

Wild carder powers also have a general *wild card* descriptor, as they all stem from the same source. Relatively few characters in the books are non-wild carders with powers, and most of these are aliens (with the "alien" power descriptor, usually as an add-on to some biological or psionic descriptor, such as Takisian psi-powers). The one real exception is Modular Man, who has technological powers without a wild card descriptor, as he is the *creation* of a wild carder, but his own abilities do not depend on it.

Although the wild card descriptor exists, it doesn't play much of a role in

the series, as few effects target all wild carders. The only real exceptions are other viruses like the Trump and Black Trump, aimed at nullifying and killing wild carders, respectively. Gamemasters should consider whether or not effects targeted at "all wild card powers" or "all wild carders" are too broad for the series, and may disallow them or charge a premium on them. Generally speaking, "all wild card powers" is practically equivalent to "all powers" in this setting, given the relative rarity of non-wild card powers.

Other descriptors apply on a case-by-case basis, and are usually fairly obvious from the nature of the powers involved. Jumpin' Jack Flash, for example, has powers with the "fire" and "plasma" descriptors, while Water Lily has "water" powers and Fortunato has "magic" (or even "tantric magic") powers, or at least behaves as if he did. Remember, in *Wild Cards* how something *appears* is often at least as important as what it actually *is*, if not more so.

POWER CRUTCHES

Many psionic ace powers have particular psychological limitations to them: for example, Jay Ackroyd's need to make his "finger gun" gesture in order to use his power, the Turtle's need to be in his shell to use his full powers, or the prayer Midnight Angel must utter to summon her flaming sword. These quirks may be "all in the head," but then, so too is the ace's power, so they have a real impact on how that power works, and it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for aces to overcome them. Without the crutch, the power simply doesn't work.

Generally speaking, this is a Power Loss complication (see *Hero's Handbook*, page 28): when deprived of the crutch, the affected power doesn't work. So if Poppinjay's hands are bound (or, to use an extreme example, if his fingers are severed, as Blaise once did), he cannot use his power and his player earns a hero point.

Some extreme power crutches, particularly reliance on a "talisman" or unique item, may constitute a different sort of complication, even a power flaw. The Limited flaw is a useful modifier in this case. As a general guideline, if a particular crutch falls into the effects of an existing game flaw, such as Distracting, Uncontrolled, or Unreliable, apply it instead of the Power Loss complication. Likewise, if the crutch relies on a particular item, such as Topper's hat or Detroit Steel's armor, it may be Removable; the actual power lies with the ace, but it's useless without the item, meaning the net game effect is still the same. Note that if the ace's crutch is an easily accessible, common item rather than a unique one, it may not qualify as Removable *per se*; for example, Lazy Dragon needs material to sculpt the figurines he animates, and is powerless without it, but his power is more Limited than it is Removable, as he can use any soft material or piece of paper to create something.

POWER COMPLICATIONS

Wild Cards takes a somewhat more realistic view on superhuman powers than most comic books—enough so aces sometimes encounter unusual complications as an outgrowth of their abilities. For example, some mass-changing aces absorb energy from their surrounding environment, causing a temporary brown-out when they use their power. And they tend to fall through floors and such when they attain tremendous mass.

Sometimes these are enough to constitute a flaw, as in the aforementioned **Power Crutches** section, or even a separate power altogether, but on other occasions they're simply odd quirks about a power that happen to come into play in unusual situations.

The Gamemaster may wish to treat such "power complications" the same as other complications in the game. So, for example, if a power causes an accident, this is simply an accident complication. If a wild carder runs up against a power-related complication, the player earns a hero point for the problem.

Note this can apply to the psychological effects of wild card abilities as well as the physical ones. If an ace suffers from mood swings, addictions, or uncontrolled rages due to the nature of his or her powers, they count as complications, too.

As with all complications in the game, a power complication has to be an actual *hindrance* to the character to be worth awarding a hero point. If the complication merely applies to the ace's day-to-day existence, or is nothing more than a mere curiosity or annoyance, then it's not worth a hero point award. Some such things can *become* complications, however. For example, an ace might change color when using his powers. Ordinarily that's just a descriptor, but if the ace happens to be operating under-cover or in disguise, and his little power quirk gives him away, then that is certainly a complication!

As with other complications, the GM should exercise good judgment and makes the final decision as to when and if to award hero points.

PROBLEM POWERS

Some standard M&M powers may not be appropriate for a *Wild Cards* game, or can pose problems. Generally speaking, the wild card virus can lead to virtually any power explainable as a biological or psionic ability which, as we have seen, can even include "technological" powers (where gadgetry serves as a focus or power crutch) or "magical" and "miraculous" powers (where occult rituals and prayer do the same). So there aren't too many power effects left out of the setting.

The problem powers generally rely on a comic book style or cosmology. For example, powers based around "comic book" radiation, "cosmic" energy, or similar four-color elements, and things like Dimensional Movement, which should take into account the nature of alternate dimensions (as such) in *Wild Cards*. See the *Wild Cards* setting source-book for details.

Other problem powers are usually those that pose difficulties in telling stories involving that character. They are discussed at some length in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, and the GM may wish to consult that book before deciding what powers aces are allowed to have in the series.



RANDOM ACES

Groups with access to the *Quickstart Character Generator* from the *Gamemaster's Kit* can use it to simulate the random nature of ace powers by allowing players to randomly generate characters. Adjust the results to fit the series power level (reducing ranks as needed) and ignore or adjust results that seem too “four-color” or “comic book” for *Wild Cards*, keeping in mind the series tendency to play around with existing comic book concepts like magicians, power armor, devices, and even artificial life.

JOKER CHARACTERS

Jokers are one of the unique elements of *Wild Cards*, fairly absent from most comic books. They represent the downside of being something other than human. Jokers suffer from some kind of physical deformity, ranging from the minor or comical (even attractive) to hideous and pitiable. Although the wild card offers little choice to those it changes, players in a *Wild Cards* game get to choose the mark of the virus their joker characters must bear.

JOKER-ACES

The most common and viable sort of joker character for a *Wild Cards* series is the so-called “joker-ace,” which is to say a joker with some useful powers in addition to the physical deformities caused by the wild card. A lot of joker transformations are of the “good news/bad news” variety, and some of the wild card’s curses have their blessings, too.

The most common joker-ace power is some sort of Enhanced Strength or Permanent Growth as many jokers have powerful builds to go with their monstrous appearance. Increased Toughness, from Enhanced Stamina or sheer Protection (armored hide, scales, *etc.*) is also pretty common. That said, joker-ace powers are just as diverse as those of full-fledged (*i.e.*, normal-looking) aces, and potentially just as powerful. Although it’s not actually the case, many people believed (and still do) the Turtle was actually a hideous joker inside his shell, so it’s entirely believable for a joker to have considerable ace abilities.

All the advice and information on the powers of ace characters previously also applies to joker-aces. You can even create a joker-deuce (see **Deuce Characters**, following); jokers with relatively minor, or seemingly useless, powers.

JOKER COMPLICATIONS

The downsides of being a joker—a strange appearance and the bigoted, fearful attitudes of others—are complications in **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** terms. Joker characters do not get additional power points for these things, but their *players* do get awarded additional hero points for dealing with the challenges they pose during play.

It might seem a bit counterintuitive that joker characters have more complications due to their appearance and prejudices against them, and therefore more potential for earning hero points in play. After all, jokers in the *Wild Cards* series certainly don’t get any “lucky breaks” (unless you

count not drawing a Black Queen as luck) and generally have a harder time of it than most, so why potentially award them more hero points?

First of all, keep in mind we’re only talking about joker *player characters*; NPCs (ace, joker, or nat) don’t earn hero points anyway. So it’s only the jokers who are the protagonists of the story who have chances to rack up some extra hero points. That is in keeping with the fictional style of *Wild Cards*, and it provides a reason other than pure roleplaying to have a joker character (or an ace with some real personality quirks and personal complications, for that matter). It gives jokers, who may not have the same sort of powers to draw upon as aces, a little extra in-game assistance.

The other question is, how often does the “joker complication” come into play? That depends somewhat on the characters and the situation but, as a general rule of thumb, any complication should be a true setback or problem for the character to be worth a hero point. Just having a bigoted nat making hurtful comments about jokers isn’t a complication, unless that nat either has something the character wants or is in a position to make the character’s life more difficult, in which case his prejudice is indeed a complication for the joker(s). Similarly, just looking freakish isn’t a complication until it causes the joker a problem, such as being distinctive and easily recognized, or unable to blend into a crowd or go certain places.

By far the next most common joker complication is some sort of Disability resulting from the joker’s deformities. A joker might have no hands, for example, just clumsy flippers, crawl on tentacles or a single snail-like foot rather than walk, or lack a common sensory ability, such as having no eyes or no ears. That merely scratches the surface of the full range of burdens placed on jokers by the wild card. Use your imagination when it comes to inflicting new ones.

As with other complications, the “value” of a joker’s deformities vary depending on how serious they are. For example, Sasha Starfin is blind, having no eyes, just smooth skin where his eyes should be. However, he “sees” to a limited degree with his telepathy, partially compensating for his blindness and making occasions where it truly limits him rarer. Take similar mitigating circumstances into account when determining the value of a joker disability and when to award hero points for it.

Weakness is also common joker complications, usually reflecting some kind of biological defect. For example, a joker with weak and brittle bones is vulnerable to bludgeoning damage, while a joker with water-soluble skin might suffer a Weakness from immersion. Again, these complications are valued based on how severe they are and how often they come into play.

RANDOM JOKER TRAITS

Like determining ace powers, you may want to randomize your character’s joker traits. To do so, use the following tables, which list a healthy dose of random joker traits with accompanying **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** trait suggestions. Roll once on the **Joker Trait Category** table and then on the indicated sub-tables to determine each trait.

Some traits are followed by suggested effects, modifiers, and complications—some, all, or none of which you can give to your joker character. Joker traits without listed game information may still qualify as complications under the right circumstances.

RANDOM JOKER TRAITS

BODY AREA

d20	JOKER TRAIT CATEGORY
1-3	Appendage
4-6	Body
7-9	Animal Trait
10-12	Facial
13-15	Tail
16-18	Fantastic
19	Roll (1-10 twice, 11-15 three times, 16-20 four times) on this table
20	Other*

*Other denotes an unusual feature not covered in the table and sub-tables. In some instances, the player may opt to choose or, to keep it a bit random, the Gamemaster may make the choice. Be creative!

SPECIFIC TRAITS BY BODY AREA

D20	D20	TRAIT	D20	D20	TRAIT
Appendage Traits			Hair		
1-6		<i>Arm</i>	9-12		
	1-4	Oversized Arms (Enhanced Strength, Noticeable)	1-3		Prehensile (Extra Limbs, Elongation, Limited to Hair)
	5-8	Additional Arm(s) (Extra Limbs)	4-6		Rapid-Growing (potential complication or even disability)
	9-12	Clubbed Hands (Disability, no digits)	7-9		Unusual Coloration
	13-16	Tentacles (Extra Limbs)	10-13		Grass/Weeds/Flowers (Immunity to Starvation, Limited to while in sunlight, Noticeable)
	17-20	Triple-Jointed (Feature: +5 circumstance bonus to escape grabs and restraints)	14-16		Spikes (Reaction Damage)
7-12		<i>Tail</i>	17-20		Alive (e.g., snakes or tentacles, Strength-based Damage)
	1-5	Prehensile (Extra Limbs)	13-16		<i>Size</i>
	6-10	Club (Extra Limb, Strength-based Damage)	1-5		Large (Permanent Growth)
	11-15	Stinger (Extra Limb, possibly a poison-based Affliction or Weaken)	6-10		Broad (Permanent Growth, Limited to Density)
	16-20	Multiple Tails (Extra Limbs)	11-15		Small (Permanent Shrinking)
13-16		<i>Tongue</i>	16-20		Slight
	1-5	Prehensile Tongue (Extra Limb)	17-19		<i>Appearance</i>
	6-10	Sensing Tongue (Senses (Ranged Taste, Tracking))	1-3		Beautiful (Attractive)
	11-15	Oversized Taste Buds (Senses (Acute Taste), Disability (slurred speech))	4-6		Hideous
	16-20	Tentacles (Extra Limbs)	7-9		Aged
17-19		<i>Legs</i>	10-12		Childlike
	1-4	Small Legs (Disability (Reduced Speed))	13-15		Hermaphroditic
	5-8	Long Legs (Speed)	16-18		Monstrous
	9-12	Extra Legs (Extra Limbs)	19-20		Doppelganger (look exactly like someone else)
	13-16	Triple-Jointed (Feature: +5 circumstance bonus to escape grabs and restraints)	20		<i>Other</i>
	17-20	Prehensile Feet (Extra Limbs)	Animal Traits		
20		<i>Other</i>	1-2		<i>Insect Trait</i>
Body Traits			1-4		Antennae (Senses (Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Distance Sense))
1-5		<i>Skin</i>	5-8		Insect Wings (Flight 1, Wings)
	1-5	Unusual Coloration	9-12		Pincers (Strength-based Damage)
	6-8	Transparent (skin is invisible, showing muscles, skeletal structure, or other internal features)	13-16		Chitin Shell (Protection)
	9-12	Sores	17-20		Stinger (Affliction or Weaken Stamina)
	13-16	Leathery (Protection)	3-5		<i>Reptile Trait</i>
	17-19	Hardened (Impervious Protection)	1-3		Scaly Skin (Protection)
	20	Oversized (Protection, Noticeable)	4-8		Reptilian Body (Protection, Strength-based Damage)
6-8		<i>Skeleton</i>	9-12		Cold-Blooded (Weakness to cold)
	1-4	Oversized (Permanent Growth)	13-15		Natural Camouflage (Concealment, Blending)
	5-8	Natural Claws (Strength-based Damage)	16-18		Spitting Venom (Affliction or Weaken Stamina with Reach)
	9-12	Hardened (Impervious Protection)	19-20		Snake Body (Movement (Slithering))
	13-15	Brittle (Weakness to bludgeoning damage)			
	16-20	Inhuman			

D20	D20	TRAIT
6-9		<i>Mammalian Trait</i>
	1-5	Fur (Feature (Insulating Fur))
	6-9	Claws/Fangs (Strength-based Damage)
	10-12	Massive (Permanent Growth)
	13-15	Quills (Reaction Damage)
	16-17	Pouch (Feature (Internal Compartment))
	18	Hooves (Strength-based Damage)
	19	Mane (Feature (Insulating Fur))
	20	Blowhole (Immunity to Drowning and Pressure, Limited to Half Effect)
10-13		<i>Avian Trait</i>
	1-5	Talons (Strength-based Damage)
	6-12	Wings (Flight 2, Wings)
	13-15	Beak (Strength-based Damage)
	16-18	Feathers (Feature (Insulating Features))
	19-20	Hollow-Boned (Leaping, Weakness to bludgeoning damage)
14-16		<i>Amphibian Trait</i>
	1-4	Frog Legs (Leaping)
	5-8	Turtle Shell (Impervious Protection)
	9-12	Water-Breather (Immunity to Drowning)
	13-16	Snapping Jaw (Strength-based Damage)
	17-20	Flippers (Swim, Disability (Reduced Land Speed))
17-18		<i>Fish/Crustacean Trait</i>
	1-3	Flippers and Fins (Swim)
	4-6	Fish Eyes (Senses (Radius Vision))
	7-8	Gills (Immunity to Drowning)
	9-10	Mer-being (Swim, Weakness to dehydration; must immerse in water regularly)
	11-12	Shark Teeth (Penetrating Strike)
	13-15	Claws (Strength-based Damage)
	16-18	Chitin Shell (Protection)
	19-20	Fishy Appearance
19		<i>Arachnid</i>
	1-5	Spider-Limbs (Movement (Wall-Crawling))
	6-7	Web Spinning (Affliction (see Snare))
	8-11	Extra Legs (Extra Limbs)
	12-14	Venomous Mandibles (Weaken Stamina)
	15-17	Scorpion Tail (Extra Limb, Affliction or Weaken Stamina)
	18	Pincers (Strength-based Damage)
	19-20	Multiple Eyes (Senses (Radius Vision))
20		<i>Other</i>
		Facial Traits
1-5		<i>Eyes</i>
	1-3	Bug Eyes (Senses (Extended Vision))
	4-6	Black Eyes (Senses (Darkvision), Weakness to bright light)
	7-9	Ever-Changing Coloration
	10	None (Senses (Spatial Awareness))
	11-13	Glowing (Senses (Darkvision))
	14-17	Unusual Coloration
	18-20	Independent (Senses (Radius Vision))
6-8		<i>Appearance</i>
	1-7	Unearthly Beauty (Enhanced Advantage (Attractive))
	8-14	Hideous or Monstrous
	15-20	Sickly or Ill

D20	D20	TRAIT
9-11		<i>Horns</i>
	1-3	Ram (Strength-based Damage)
	4-7	Devil
	8-10	Gazelle (Strength-based Damage)
	11-13	Elk/Deer (Strength-based Damage)
	14-15	Moose (Strength-based Damage)
	16-18	Bull (Strength-based Damage)
	19	Rhino (Strength-based Damage)
	20	Giraffe
12-14		<i>Ears</i>
	1-5	Pointed
	6-8	Floppy (Senses (Ultrasonic Hearing))
	9-11	Oversized (Senses (Extended Hearing))
	12-14	Tiny (Immunity to Hearing Effects, Limited to Half Effect)
	16-19	Long (Senses (Ranged Touch))
	20	None (Mental Communication)
15-17		<i>Nose</i>
	1-3	Overly Large (Extended Smell)
	4-6	Tiny (Immunity to Scent Effects, Limited to Half Effect)
	7-8	None (Disability, no sense of taste or smell)
	9-11	Tentacles (possibly Extra Limbs)
	12-14	Appendage (possibly Extra Limb)
	15-17	Trunk (possibly Extra Limb)
	18-20	Snout/Muzzle (Extended Smell, Tracking)
18-19		<i>Mouth/Teeth</i>
	1-4	Tusks (Strength-based Damage)
	5-8	Locking Jaw (Enhanced Strength, Limited to Grabs)
	9-12	Hardened Teeth (Strength-based Damage)
	13-16	Sharp Teeth (Strength-based Damage)
	17-18	Digestive Acids (Damage and/or Weaken Toughness)
	19-20	Additional Mouth
20		<i>Other</i>
		Fantastic Traits
1-4		<i>Undead</i>
	1-4	Ghostly (Insubstantial)
	5-8	Vampiric (Weaken Stamina)
	9-12	Draining Touch (Weaken Awareness)
	13-16	Shadowy (Concealment, Blending)
	17-20	Undead Appearance
5-13		<i>Mythological</i>
	1-3	Unicorn Horn (Healing)
	4-6	Fire-Breathing (Ranged or Cone Area Damage)
	7-9	Centaur (Extra Limbs 2, Speed)
	10-12	Bat Wings (Flight 1, Wings)
	13-15	One Eye (Disability, no depth perception)
	16-18	Extra Head (Enhanced Int, Awe, or Pre)
	19-20	Goat/Stag Legs
14-19		<i>Fairy Tale</i>
	1-4	Extremely Long Hair (Feature: Durable Hair (+10 to Climb or Grapple))
	5-8	Fey Size (Permanent Shrinking)
	9-12	Troll-Like (Permanent Growth, Regeneration, Weakness to Daylight)
	13-15	Fey Wings (Flight 1, Wings)
	16-20	Talking Animal
20		<i>Other</i>

DEUCE CHARACTERS

One of the more unusual character choices for a Wild Cards game is the deuce: a wild carder with minor, even useless-seeming, powers. Not all “aces” have tremendous abilities, after all; the wild card lives up to its name, and some transformed by it get the short end of the powers stick. At least they can be grateful for not ending up as jokers.

While on the surface it might seem deuces are good for nothing but comic relief with their relatively weak powers, they can actually be interesting characters. A deuce, after all, spends fewer points on powers, and so has them to spend elsewhere, on things like skills and advantages.

Many deuce powers are still useful enough to make someone wealthy or famous, for example.

DEUCE POWERS

Deuces by definition don’t have much in the way of powers. A deuce character is limited to spending no more than 2 power points on powers! This is sufficient to acquire a rank or two in many existing effects described in the *Hero’s Handbook*, but deuces often just spend 1 point on the Deuce power (see its description in the sidebar) and leave it at that, although a character could potentially have a “pair of deuces” (two Deuce powers at 1 point each).

DEUCE: NEW POWER

You have a minor, but useful, power, the equivalent of a Feature effect (*Hero’s Handbook*, page 108). As a general guideline, your Deuce is either normal range, requires a standard action to use, and has a duration of instant or concentration, or else is personal range, requires a free action to use, and is sustained or permanent in duration. If a resistance check is appropriate for your Deuce, it has a DC modifier of +1. You can modify these qualities with the Gamemaster’s permission, although the GM may require you to use power modifiers to do so (treating the Deuce as a rank 1 power).

You define exactly what your Deuce can do, but it cannot be more than a single power point in an existing effect can reasonably accomplish, although it can be *less*. So, for example, you might have the ability to turn your skin and clothing different primary colors, useful mainly as a circumstance bonus to interaction skill checks, but you couldn’t have a Deuce giving you a bonus to all Deception checks by totally altering your appearance, as that’s the equivalent of 1 rank of Morph at 5 points per rank (exceeding the limit of a 1-point ability).

Some sample Deuces include:

- Cause raw food to cook (at its normal rate) just by looking at it. Alternately, this might be the ability to heat up cookware—but not other objects—by sight or touch.
- Telekinetically move up to an ounce of weight. On the upside, the effect is Subtle.
- Levitate an inch off the ground. You can’t move laterally; you just levitate up an inch and stay there as long as you concentrate. If you fall, you can use your power to break the fall, however, stopping an inch above the ground.
- Function like a living remote control for devices with infrared remotes, like televisions and stereos, changing channels and turning them on or off at will.
- Produce a flame like a candle or lighter from your fingertip at will.
- Permanently change the color of cloth with dye in it by touch. Similarly, permanently change the pigmentation—and therefore color—of plant matter (like flowers) by touch.
- Know the exact weight of anything just by looking at it or touching it. Similarly, know the exact distance between any two points by just looking at them or keep perfect stopwatch-accurate time in your head.
- Cause written materials to “read themselves” out loud in a disembodied voice, so long as you can see (but not necessarily read) where the words are written.
- “Hear” radio transmissions like a living radio receiver; you may have the complication of a bombardment of constant “radio noise” in any urban environment full of cell phones and transmission towers.
- Telekinetically control small, random events like coin flips or dice rolls, causing them to land however you want. (Just watch out for the hired security aces at casinos!)

The possible range of Deuce abilities is limited solely by the Gamemaster and the previous guidelines. As with all other powers, choose appropriate descriptors for your Deuce; in a *Wild Cards* series, a Deuce will be biological or psionic, just like other ace abilities.

NAT CHARACTERS

Of course, there's nothing *requiring* you to play a wild carder in a *Wild Cards* series. The books also features some capable nat protagonists, such as Yeoman, to inspire potential uninfected human characters. Since they should be created with the same power level and starting power points as wild carders, nat characters can be quite effective. They can spend points on skills, advantages, and defenses that aces spend on powers.

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS suggests a benchmark of rank 7 as the peak of human achievement, and it's recommended that a *Wild Cards* series stick to this in terms of nat characters, keeping in mind that such a lofty level of ability makes the character among the most capable humans *ever*. More likely, nat characters will tend to have ability ranks no greater than 4 or 5 (which are still extraordinary), relying as much, if not more, on their ranks in skills than the underlying abilities.

A nat character can have an impressive number of advantages, ranging from combat to skill and interaction enhancers. Nats also can, and likely will, take full advantage of being able to carry whatever equipment they can acquire or afford to help even the odds when dealing with wild carders. See **Devices and Equipment**, following, for details.

ALIEN CHARACTERS

Sentient alien life does exist in the *Wild Cards* universe; indeed, without it there would be no wild card virus at all. However, aliens on Earth are relatively rare (other than during the Swarm invasion, that is), so it's left up to the Gamemaster whether or not to allow extraterrestrials as player characters in a *Wild Cards* game. If inclined to allow alien characters, some possibilities include:

TAKISIAN

Dr. Tachyon, his cousin Zabb, and his bodyguard Durgh are the only Takisians known to have landed on Earth (alive, anyway). However, Tachyon lived on Earth for decades, and spent a good portion of that time as a down-and-out drunk. He fathered at least one illegitimate child that we know of (his daughter, Gisele Bacourt) and, if his grandson Blaise is any indication, the Ilkazam genes breed true: any other children of his may have inherited his Takisian psi-lord powers. There's also the possibility someone secured genetic samples from Dr. Tachyon (particularly during his exile from the United States) and used them to artificially produce a Takisian-human crossbreed or even clone!

Similarly, Tachyon's psychotic grandson was fairly indiscriminate and sexually active in the late 1980s; a child fathered by him could have inherited Blaise's Takisian powers (and perhaps his psychotic tendencies or even jumper abilities, if conceived after Blaise became a jumper).

Then there's the crew of the Takisian ship that brought the wild card virus to Earth. Although they're all dismissed as dead in the crash after fighting Dr. Tachyon in Earth orbit, there's the possibility of a crippled, perhaps amnesiac, survivor or of "alien autopsies" performed on the remains, secretly recovered by someone. Sufficient genetic material could lead to Takisian-human crossbreeds or clones, as mentioned previously.



Finally, if you want a true Takisian character in the game, Tisianne brant Ts'ara sek Halima sek Omian sek Ragnar is ruler of House Ilkazam, and might wish to renew ties with Earth after settling some matters on his war-ravaged homeworld. Takis might well send an emissary to see how Earth is faring and, knowing humans as he does (and that the Network has Earth and Takis under observation), Dr. Tachyon might well send a *covert* emissary or team to size up the situation first.

NETWORK

The Network offers considerable potential for diverse alien characters, but also has a significant catch (as all deals with the Network do): any extraterrestrial from the Network on Earth is either there on-assignment (like Jube the Walrus) or on the run after breaking a contract, which means the Network will follow and *never* give up. Either option presents serious complications for a *Wild Cards* game.

If the GM wants to allow a Network alien as a character, however, it's most likely to try passing itself off as a joker (as Jube does). It may have access to some advanced alien technology, depending on the circumstances of its arrival and stay on Earth, although the Network will try to limit such technology to avoid the natives getting their hands on it for free.

SWARMLING

An unusual concept for an alien *Wild Cards* character would be one of the various third-generation Swarmlings left over from the Swarm Invasion in the 1980s. These creations of the Swarm Mother were designed to mimic humans, and some of them could still be hidden among the masses of humanity. Who knows how the merger of the Swarm Mother and Mai Minh affected the telepathic Swarm?

It's not inconceivable for a third-gen Swarmling to develop independence, human feelings, even a conscience. Such a character might pretend to be an ace, and work against the plans of other secret Swarmlings, or could be following deeply-buried unconscious drives to infiltrate, not even knowing it will eventually betray friends and loved ones to help the remaining Swarmlings conquer the world. Swarm biological engineering and specialization (especially coupled with the dissection of wild carder subjects) can justify nearly any powers or traits the GM is willing to allow.

OTHER

It's a big universe, and the books have only scratched the surface of what might be out there. If he want, the GM can allow players to dream up entirely new alien species to visit Earth, ones not associated with either the Network or the Takisians, but potentially drawn by both civilizations' interest in this otherwise unassuming backwater world. Decades after the release of the wild card, word may have spread about the results of the Takisians' ill-fated experiment, leading others to come and take a look for themselves, or perhaps even try to "sample the goods." As with other visitors from beyond, new aliens may try posing as aces or jokers on Earth. After all, who's going to notice one more weird-looking freak in Jokertown?

DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT

The standard M&M rules draw a division between equipment—items of fairly mundane technology—and devices—which produce effects beyond the capabilities of real-world technology. Characters pay power points for both, with equipment coming at a greater discount due to its various limitations. This structure is based on the four-color superhero comics, where even mundane equipment is fairly important, part of the character's "signature" style and capabilities.

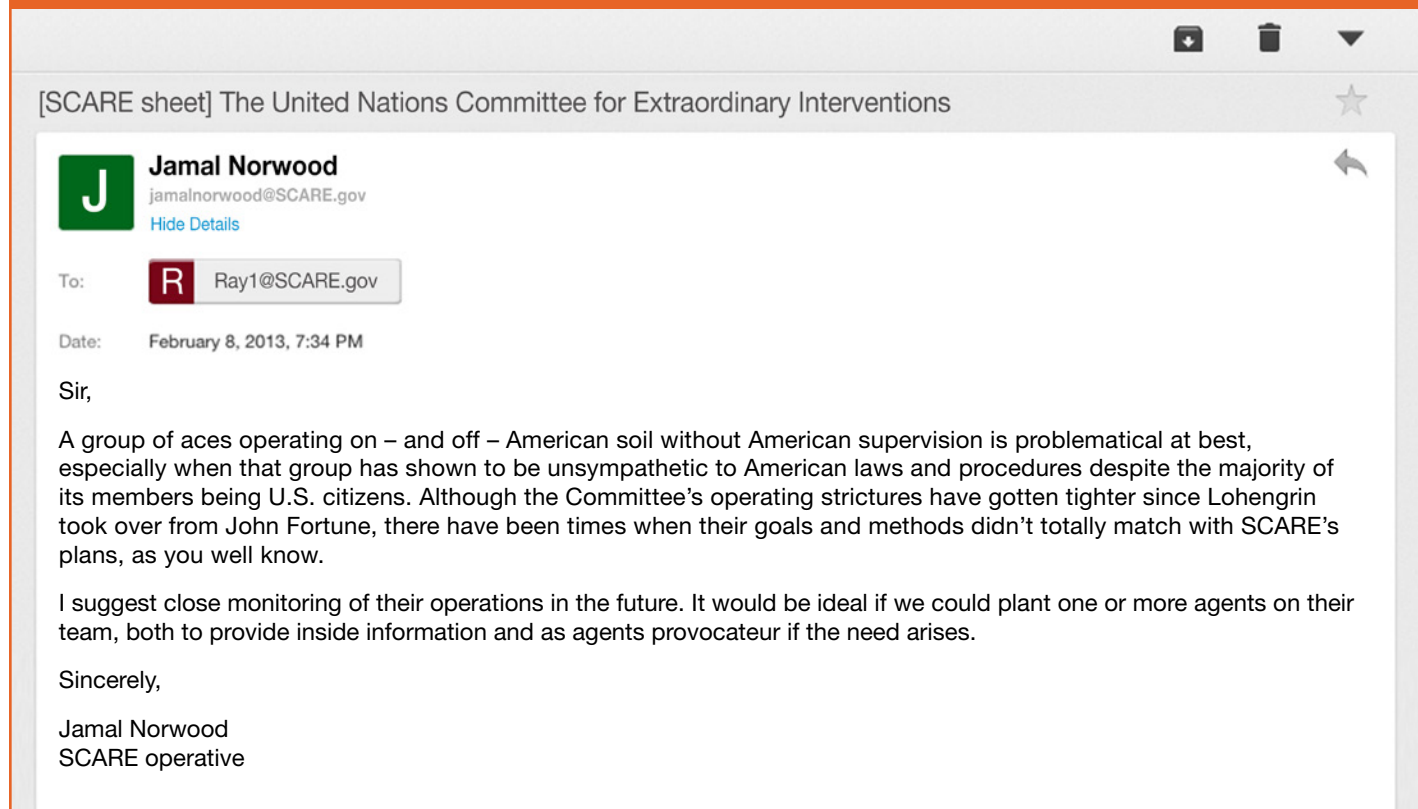
In the more realistic *Wild Cards* setting, the following variant is recommended: characters pay *no* power points for mundane equipment, and can have any equipment the GM feels fits their available resources. Ranks in the Benefit (Wealth) advantage may be required to reasonably own some items, and equipment is still subject to all its other regular limitations, but it doesn't cost any equipment points to, for example, carry a gun or have a cell phone or even a mundane vehicle like a car or motorcycle. *Wild Cards* characters tend to have a fairly casual attitude when it comes to equipment: going through a fair amount of it, as the situation demands. This approach also gives a bit of an edge to nat characters, as they can carry appropriate gear without having to invest points in the Equipment advantage, but then, so can aces or jokers, for that matter.

The Equipment advantage is still required for certain things, namely unique vehicles and headquarters with capabilities beyond those of ordinary technology. Dr. Tachyon's living starship, Baby, for example, is a "vehicle," but certainly beyond anything found on Earth, so the good doctor has the Equipment advantage in order to reflect access to Baby and her capabilities (although it's worth noting Tachyon didn't have the advantage, or access to Baby, for most of his time on Earth; the missing ship was simply a plot device and element of his background). Similarly, advanced alien equipment from civilizations like the Network or Takis cost equipment points, as it is *not* commonly available on Earth. The GM may waive this requirement in a star-spanning series where alien technology is commonplace, but this is generally not the case in a *Wild Cards* series.

Devices remain relatively unique items with powers and abilities beyond those of mundane technology. Most devices in *Wild Cards* are products of ace abilities, and many of them depend on their creator's powers in order to function at all. A few advanced devices are actual technological innovations created by genius aces, but even these have their limits, as often only their creators understand them, and they may not be able to explain their advances to others lacking their special superhuman insight. Given this, the default assumption in *Wild Cards* is devices are usable solely by their owner.

In either case, these devices work according to the rules in M&M, with their wild card origins serving as part of their descriptors. The GM should work with you to define the nature of any devices your character may have, and use common sense when dealing with those devices in play in terms of who can use them, repair or reproduce them, and so forth.

SCARE SHEET: THE COMMITTEE



THE COMMITTEE

Real Name: The United Nations Committee for Extraordinary Interventions

Base: New York City

HISTORY

The Committee grew out of the loosely allied group of aces that followed John Fortune to Egypt to fight the genocide of the Egyptian joker population by Egyptian authorities and the Caliph. Members come and go, but the supervision under U.N. auspices remains, now with Lohengrin replacing the departed John Fortune as Committee head.

MEMBERS

Many members of The Committee will be covered in the *SCARE Sheets* series of PDFs, in cluding the following characters:

The Amazing Bubbles, Cameo, Curveball, Drummer Boy, Earth Witch, John Fortune, Gardener, Jonathan Hive/Bugsy, Rustbelt, Lilith.

There are several other members of the The Committee. They are listed below, along with a brief history.

BRAVE HAWK

Tom Diedrich is about 5'8" with copper-colored skin and black hair. A full-blooded Apache, he often wears cowboy duds: pointy boots, faded denim jeans, blue denim shirt, as well as a coral-bead necklace with a stone hawk fetish. He manifests illusory brown-black hawk wings when he flies. He can call upon moderate super-strength or his powers of flight, but not both simultaneously. He does nothing to disguise his dislike for white oppression of Native Americans as well as colonial oppression elsewhere. A contestant from the first season of *American Hero*, Diedrich joined the Committee early on. He survives the battle of the Paris Peace Conference. (Created by Steve Perrin)

BURROWING OWL

Nikolaas Buxtehude, from Brussels, Belgium, is short and almost as wide as he is tall. He wears an odd, pointy brass cap, goggles, and old-fashioned leather flying clothes. He has stubby but functional wings. His hands are big and red and massively calloused. He can burrow headfirst through almost anything, pretty much instantaneously. He is killed by Tom Weathers at the Paris Peace Conference reception. (Created by Victor Milán)

GARO

Can shape-shift into a black wolf. A recent member of the Committee at the time of the Paris Peace Conference, his service is short, as he's killed by Tom Weathers there. (Created by Victor Milán)

GLASSTEEL

A new member of the Committee, Glassteel is made of transparent semi-liquid crystal that feels like metal, and he can shatter anything made of hard metals. He worked with Rustbelt in Haiti. (Created by Daniel Abraham)

HOLY ROLLER

From the southern United States, the Reverend Thaddeus Wintergreen is confined to a wheelchair because of his weight and rotund form, but he can turn himself into an almost unstoppable ball of human flesh rolling at high speed. He is kindly at heart. One of the original *American Hero* contestants, he fought in Egypt at John Fortune's side, and is an original Committee member. He retires from the ace game after the hurricanes in New Orleans and returns to preaching. (Created by George R.R. Martin)

THE LAMA

Han, from Nepal, can levitate, turn insubstantial, and release his astral form to work at a distance from his body. Although he is a bit of a coward, he does make a useful scout and spy. He joined the Committee early on, along with his rival, the Llama. He survived the Paris Peace Conference, probably by turning insubstantial. (Created by Royce Wideman)

THE LLAMA

Juan, from Boliva, has a foot-long neck and fuzzy gray hair and can spit a gooey venom an incredible distance. He has enhanced strength, but apparently limited to his kick. An early member of the Committee, he and the Lama don't like each other. He made it through the Paris Peace Conference alive. (Created by Victor Milán)

LOHENGGRIN

After John Fortune resigned, Klaus became the head of the Committee. See individual entry.

WILMA MANKILLER

Mankiller is a Canadian strongwoman ace from the Blood branch of the Blackfoot Nation. She is accidentally injured by the French ace Tricolore during the Paris Peace Conference. (Created by Daniel Abraham)

NOPPERA-BO

After making physical contact, she can mimic a person's appearance. (Created by Daniel Abraham)

SNOWBLIND

French-Canadian Simone Duplax is a slim goth chick who can make people temporarily and painfully blind. She has wildly dyed hair of various bright colors, and usually wears miniskirts and a nose stud. She espouses radical politics and has a bit of an attitude. She is one of the Committee's later recruits. (Created by Walter Simons)

THE STRANGELETS

Nothing is currently known about this Committee member—or members. (Created by Daniel Abraham)

TOADMAN

Buford Calhoun is from the southern United States. He was one of the original *American Hero* contestants who went to fight in Egypt with Fortune. He can turn into a toad the size of a Volkswagen Beetle and has a correspondingly long and sticky tongue he uses to good effect. One of the early members of the Committee, he survives the battle of the Paris Peace Conference. He is good-natured, gentle, and easy-going. (Created by Royce Wideman)

TINKER

This early Committee recruit is a burly Australian ace with a beach-bum tan and weight-lifter muscles. He has gadget-making abilities. (Created by Carrie Vaughn)

THE TRANSLATOR

Barbara Baden, also known as Babel, is from Israel. She has the ability to make people hear spoken foreign languages in their own tongues. Conversely, she can also scramble spoken or written words into gibberish. A plump (but pretty), dark-haired woman, she is more of a diplomat or bureaucrat than a field agent, and can be found mostly at conferences and summits. She becomes the Committee's vice-chairman under Lohengrin (who rumor says she also has a more personal relationship with), and tends to be cautious when it comes to deploying Committee resources. (Created by S.L. Farrell)

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Doing Good: Individual members of the Committee have their own personal motivations, but the purpose of the group as a whole is to provide the U.N. Secretary-General with some muscle to back up his good intentions.

Bureaucracy: Being a U.N. committee has its logistical and legal benefits, but it also means the group can be prevented from acting when geopolitical considerations, international law, and even simple paperwork are allowed to trump moral imperatives.

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