

Above and Beyond

A supplement for high-powered superheroics



M&M
SUPERLINK

Requires the Mutants & Masterminds RPG by Green Ronin Publishing for use.

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An M&M Superlink Supplement for High-Powered Superheroics

Requires the Mutants & Masterminds RPG by Green Ronin Publishing for use.

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Introduction

Anyone with courage and initiative has it in themselves to save their hometown. Superheroes have the power to save a city, a state, and maybe even their country. Some few superheroes can even find it in themselves to save the whole world. It is rare indeed, however, to find someone who can save the entire universe.

Above and Beyond is role-playing game supplement dealing with high-powered, superheroic games. Epic, world-shaking powers, missions of cosmic importance, saving not just the world but the universe, and what it means to be more than human — all of these and more are inside.

Using this Book

Players and GMs alike will find useful resources here, for creating cosmic heroes and nihilistic villains, or just for creating someone with unwanted and unbelievable power thrust on them.

Most of what you'll find in this book are essays and discussions about running high-powered games of epic scope. These can be used with any superhero role-playing game (and probably with some that aren't specifically meant for superheroes), though the systems and rules described in this book are designed specifically for use with M&M Superlink™. The authors of this book consider the rules found in M&M to be some of the best superhero RPG rules published to date. If you prefer a different system, you will have to do a little bit of work converting our character and power statistics to your favorite game.

If you're already familiar with the rules in M&M, you won't need anything extra to take advantage of the material in this book. A pencil, some paper, and a d20 are still all you need to play.

What's in Here?

Chapter One is about the lives of exceptionally powerful supers. Who are they? What do they do? Perhaps more important, what *don't* they do? How do they react to ordinary people, and vice versa? Can they afford to wait for someone to make the first move, or do they have to start being more "proactive"? Can they retain their basic sense of humanity? Should they even try?

Chapter Two is about the same issues from a "metagame" point of view. Where could powers like this come from? How high a level is too high? How can the GM allow powers like Mind Control and Time Travel without their breaking the game? What kinds of hooks into characters this strong does the GM have?

Chapter Three describes the "control knobs" of the universe. How deadly will the game be? How realistic? Will it be centered near the Earth, or will it wander across galaxies and dimensions?

Chapter Four is the "crunchy bits" chapter, with a selection of powers that are appropriate to high-powered games, a few new feats, and some suggestions for making interesting custom powers.

Chapter Five has a roster of high-powered heroes, the Oversight Watch, and villains who could actually challenge them without destroying Earth along the way.

Chapter Six has interesting locations for a high-powered game, from an orbital headquarters to a dimension of dread.

What Is Valent Games?

Valent Games is a small, independent game company run by Colin Fredericks. Our website is <http://www.valentgames.com>, and our other products include the science fiction RPG "Valence 592", and an RPG aptly named "Console," which parodies console games,

References and Inspiration

Most superhero comics deal with more down-to-earth levels of power. Most heroes deal more with their own city or country than threats to the whole universe. However, there have been a few comics published in which the characters operated on a higher level. These comics served to inspire this book, and hopefully they can lend a bit of inspiration to your game as well.

Jack Kirby's *New Gods*, published by DC Comics, was probably the first of this genre of comics. The stories of New Genesis and Apokolips took place far from Earth, and the threats they faced were anything but trivial. Some of the New Gods stories can be found in collected form.

Squadron Supreme, a 12-issue series from Marvel Comics in 1985 and 86, is an interesting look at what people might do if they had, not only the ability to change the world, but the drive to do it. Worth reading because at least one of your players will think about playing a hyperintelligent biologist with the potential to cure cancer. It can be found in collected edition.

Crisis on Infinite Earths and the nine-years-later follow-up *Zero Hour*, both miniseries from DC Comics, exemplify the problems that ordinary superheroes have in dealing with the truly cosmic... and also show how very effective they can be when it comes to crunch time. Both can be found in collected form. They're also good examples of why you should keep your cosmology simple — both stories were told for the express purpose of cleaning up the DC universe.

The Spectre, from DC Comics, is the living embodiment of God's wrath, linked to a human soul. It doesn't get much bigger than that...

... unless you're one of the Endless, a character in *Sandman*. Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* was published by Vertigo Comics. Perhaps one of the most acclaimed storylines in all of comics, and winner of several Eisner Awards. It is currently out of print, but can be found in collected form in most bookstores. An excel-

lent example of how to deal with massively powerful, somewhat inhuman characters while still tying them to Earth and ordinary human beings.

Infinity Watch, from Marvel Comics, came out of the aftermath of a major Marvel crossover, the *Infinity Gauntlet* story. While *Infinity Watch* is no longer in print, *Infinity Gauntlet* can be found in collected form. Everyone who's anyone on the cosmic scale of the Marvel Universe can be found here.

The First, from Crossgen Comics, is part godly drama, part soap opera. It has little to lend to the "humans who become gods" standard view of things, but much to contribute to a game in which the characters are gods to begin with. It is still in print at the time of this writing.

JMS' *Rising Stars*, from Top Cow Comics, is another one that doesn't deal with massive power levels, but is very good if your characters want to change the world.

The Authority, from Wildstorm Comics, is the most visible of the recent über-powerful teams. Its short-lived spin-off, *The Monarchy*, was focused on even higher power levels. The first Authority series can be found in collected form, and the second one is still in print at the time of this writing.

Several more mainstream comics, such as DC's *Superman* and *Justice League*, Marvel's *Thor*, *Captain Marvel*, and *Silver Surfer*, and Crossgen's *Negation*, *Lawbringer*, and *Mark of Charon* have had to deal with threats beyond the average supervillain from time to time, and have had to wonder how far removed from humanity they really are. Most of them don't deal with such threats on a daily basis, though.

In more "respectable" literature, the works of Neil Gaiman (*Good Omens* and *American Gods*), Stephen R. Donaldson (the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*), Roger Zelazny (his *Amber* series), Isaac Asimov (*The End of Eternity*) and Michael Moorcock (heck, pick any of his books), among others, all contain characters with power — and often angst — far beyond that of mortal men. Though most of these aren't very "comicy", they can be useful inspiration when creating a game that drifts a bit further from mainstream comics than most.

Chapter One

This chapter deals with the in-character motivations, personalities, and reactions of cosmic PCs.

The Legion of Power

Since role-playing is a group activity, characters will need to have some suitable friends to help them take over — uh, I mean save — the world.

All the players for a high-powered game should talk to each other while creating characters. Not only does this serve the usual purpose of preventing excessive power overlap (“Hey, I made a bruiser!” “Me too.” “Me three.” “Bummer.”), it provides the opportunity to decide where the campaign’s going. If one character wants to change the world and another only wants to preserve it, they’re inevitably going to come to blows at some point.

Like most super-teams, cosmic teams need a reason to be together. The standard justification is that each of them alone could save a world, but together they can save the universe. This works well for teams with interlocking powers and very little overlap (i.e. there’s only one dude with super-strength, only one with teleportation, etc.). Many comics super-teams were formed for this exact reason, “to defend the world from threats that no single hero could handle.”

Companionship is a good answer too. Not many people can really understand what it’s like to fight the Destiny Demon at the Nexus of Space and Time, while simultaneously protecting their girlfriend who doesn’t know the hero’s secret identity. Teams held together by companionship should have at least one scene in each gaming session when the characters just plain hang out somewhere. It could be at a bar or in the middle of the Dark Zone (or in the middle of a fight with totally inferior foes), but the characters are simply there to hang out, talk, and relax.

Some few super-groups are forced together by an outside entity, through mind control, threats, or blackmail. This is *very* rare for cosmic groups, as it would

take an entity of even *more* unimaginable power to bind them all together against their wills.

Some hero groups aren’t really well-organized. They just sort of fall together when things go bad. Mister Amazing notices a problem, calls Chaos Girl, who finds out that it’s even worse than M.A. thought, and suddenly the Universal Defenders are assembled once again.

Once the team’s all together and has a good idea of what they’re going to do (which is a whole separate discussion), they’ll need to find a suitable headquarters. Several suggestions can be found in Chapter Six.

Membership Drives

If your character isn’t one of the founding members of a cosmic super-team, they could join in any number of ways:

Cosmic teams often have huge databases of information gathered on less powerful heroes, and pull recruits from those ranks when someone’s power level becomes sufficient. Who better to recruit than someone who’s been watched for years, especially if it’s someone with a good record?

Teams with a more competitive attitude might even hold tryouts, a sort of “Super Olympics”, with the winners being allowed to join the team. The problem with this method is that power doesn’t always equate to morality, and the team might end up with members who don’t get along. In an ordinary super-

On A Higher Level

The characters in a game of this scope are assumed to be at least 20th level (by M&M standards), though a single team could easily range from 15th to 30th if everyone has their own little niche. Typically the combatants will be a bit higher-level, while the detective or scout types will be lower, simply because they don’t need the raw bludgeoning power.

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team this can spell the end of the team. On a cosmic team it can spell the end of the world, so a bit of caution is called for.

Covert teams might prefer to have less publicly visible members. They might recruit from those who work in the shadows, whose true power has only been hinted at before. Sometimes visibility and friendliness just aren't what 's needed.

Some people can't just sit around and wait to be recruited. They believe that their powers and outlook make them a necessary addition to a cosmic team. Such characters might do incredible deeds to try to convince the team. They might lurk in the background, following the cosmic team, waiting for their moment to jump in and save the heroes, thus proving their worth. They might even track the team to their headquarters and knock on the door... or break in and say, "Ha, I'm here, I'm so cool you *have* to hire me." Such methods work occasionally, but can also end catastrophically.

In the end, a cosmic super-group doesn't *have* to accept *anyone* new into their ranks, but it's a good policy for them to send people away happy one way or another. Anyone who was really powerful enough to join might be a dangerous foe if disgruntled, and who knows when a current member might fall or quit, or turn? Having a "reserve team" or at least a call list can be quite helpful in keeping the team up to full strength and in giving the permanent members much-needed vacations.

"I'm Here to Help!"

The default assumption in a superhero game is that the characters, in addition to having their powers, have some driving need to help people. It might not be right on the surface, and it might not be obvious to the casual observer, but that drive is there.

There must be some reason why the characters haven't gone off and made a fortune with their abilities, right? Even if super-strength is their only power, they can probably get a job with a construction company as a human crane. Why risk their lives fighting crime — or in this case, the Dimension Devourer

Parasite from the Antimatter Universe — if they could just sit back and enjoy the good life?

When you create your characters, think about what they could be doing instead of risking their lives saving the universe. And come up with a good reason why they aren't out doing that right now. For some people the phrase "I'm the only one who can save us" is reason enough. For others, it's not. Some people take the job on sheer ego, believing that they're the only ones capable of doing the job (and loving that idea). Others are out for revenge against even higher powers, and are helping people almost as a side effect. Some are just so insecure that they can't decide what to do with their powers, so they pick the option that everyone's pushing them towards. Even cosmic heroes can cave in to peer pressure.

A Day in the Life

What do people this powerful actually do every day?

My average day goes like this: get up, either go to either sit in a class or teach one. Have some lunch, do some homework, and play or write a game. If I'm lucky, my girlfriend isn't in another state, and we can hang out for a while; otherwise I'll be on the phone with her for a bit. Then it's set the alarm clock, brush my teeth, and go to bed so I can do it all again tomorrow. The best thing I hope for in my life is to get my PhD and go teach physics somewhere, and hopefully make my students' lives a little better.

When Infinite Man gets up in the morning, it's probably to some sort of alarm bell ringing. Before he even has breakfast he's off to settle a territorial dispute that was to be violently settled on Earth between alien empires. Then it's breakfast at *any restaurant he wants*. The morning finds him tracking down a bunch of unwilling time travelers, lunch happens with the delegation from the Blue Faction of Dimension Z, and in the afternoon he accidentally causes the event that sends 20 people spinning through the timestream against their will. His dinner in Tibet is delayed on account of a battle with the Clockmaster, who would much rather have those time travelers out there screwing things up. After three hours (subjective time, of

course) of grueling time travel, he finally returns to the transdimensional fortress he calls home and goes to bed. It's been a good day.

It's no wonder comic-book heroes are more dramatic and emotional than regular people. If your actions had that much impact on the world, you would be too.

"Such things are forbidden, even to me."

What *don't* these characters do? With their own powers, and the powers of their friends, they could accomplish almost anything, given enough time. Some of them don't even need time; they can make their own! What kinds of things do they shy away from?

Traditionally, cosmic heroes don't try to mess around with world politics, regardless of how horrible a particular regime was or is. The only real exception was during World War II, when US heroes routinely got involved in the war. Recently this has begun to change as well. Characters in many recent comics are, for example, not willing to catch muggers while letting human rights offenders go free. They're not willing to stop a shooting while allowing the execution of political prisoners. Which side of these political issues your character stands on will send a message to the whole planet, possibly even to the whole galaxy. There's another section devoted to this later on in this book.

Sometimes the man, woman, or slime monster you love can be a great inspiration for your heroes. Other times he/she/it is just a target for their foes. Therefore, some cosmic heroes try not to fall in love. They inevitably fail, but most at least give misanthropy a try for a few issues.

Cosmic heroes don't stop muggers, bank robbers, scam artists, or other common thieves. The exception is when it's just too easy; if they're flying from Alaska to Mexico City and you just happen to see a bank robber in mid-heist in Denver, of *course* they go stop the crime. However, most such cases get left

to the police and to less powerful heroes. When it's a choice between stopping a mugging and saving the universe, well... "Sorry Mister Fredericks, go call the police. We're off stopping the Masters of Doom from leveling your entire solar system." Many cosmic heroes feel guilty about making such choices, but they know the consequences if those choices aren't made.

Another aspect to consider is that many cosmic heroes believe that humanity should do things for themselves as much as possible, instead of relying on superhero protectors for every last thing. These heroes don't create cures for cancer or hyperfast computers, they don't interfere with what current governments, artists, and scientists are doing, and if they have the ability to do such things, well, they just don't make that common knowledge. The logic such heroes use is, "If I do these things, humanity will feel it's not in charge of its own destiny, and it's important to feel that you're in charge." There's an implied feeling in such statements that humanity doesn't really know what it wants or what's good for it, and unfortunately, that's probably a correct sentiment.

"The Status Quo Can Kiss My..."

For those unfamiliar with the term, "status quo" means "the way things are now." Usually it refers to a social or political situation, but it can also refer to the current state of things like scientific knowledge, religious doctrine, or international trade.

Cosmic heroes who are still deeply interested in Earth will probably want to make a few changes to the status quo. They might not want to get involved in politics, or give the world "technology they're not ready for," but it couldn't hurt to dig the town a swimming pool or build a dam ahead of schedule, right?

Well, sometimes it can. Every construction job done at super-speed takes money away from construction workers. Every miracle cure created puts a pharmaceutical company out of business.

Does this mean that these things shouldn't be done? Of course not! By that logic, every time a life is

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saved, another mouth must continue to be fed. More if they have children later in their lives. That doesn't mean it's wrong to save people. However, characters should be made aware of the consequences of their actions.. Sometimes it doesn't hurt to work inside existing structures. Perhaps a super-genius who cures cancer could make a fortune on it, and use that to hire all the cancer research firms he put out of business and put them to work doing something new. After all, even a super-genius won't be able to think of everything.

Super-charismatic heroes might run for office when they retire, using the experience gained after years of acting as a cosmic defender to benefit humanity. Super-strong heroes might donate their off-duty time to construction companies that are running behind schedule. There are a thousand ways to help the world and improve the status quo without really changing the way the world does things. Most supers games are all about this. Most cosmic stories take things a little bit further, just because they can.

A Higher Authority

Some people don't just want to improve what's already in place, they want to tear some of it down and build something worthwhile. They say to themselves, "I was given these powers for a reason, and I'm not going to waste them watching people do stupid stuff. Too many people in the world are behaving like spoiled children, and I'm here to take their toys away until they learn to play right." This is the track for people who honestly believe that they know better, that their morality is the one that should govern the world, and who want to make things better all around. Many supervillains get started in exactly this way.

The real argument that heroes make in games like these is that ordinary heroes stop muggers, powerful heroes stop bombers, and therefore cosmic heroes should stop the people who *make* muggers and bombers. To them, anyone who's running a country with a horrible human rights record is just as bad as a serial criminal. Both should be stopped.

Frankly, it's hard to argue with this viewpoint.

There are a *lot* of problems in store for a team that adopts such views, and there are probably even more for those ordinary people who are affected by such decisions. It takes a truly responsible team to not only throw a corrupt president out of office, but actually follow through and make sure that the government doesn't totally collapse. It also takes heroes with a lot of political savvy in addition to their brawn, and that's something you don't often see.

Most governments will see this as a bullying tactic, and they're right. Some will get scared and clean up their acts. Some will demand sanctions or military actions against the super-team. Some will try to apply bribes of one kind or another. Any game in which the team sets themselves up as a higher authority than countries should find itself dealing with such issues sooner or later.

"God? I AM A GOD!"

Taking the ideas mentioned above to an extreme, some characters might believe themselves to be gods. Heck, some characters might actually *be* gods! Comics abound with mythological figures running around in tights, from Greek heroes to Norse gods. In some cases, this person is quite literally a god, and may have acted as one long ago, to somewhat more primitive (but no less real) people.

A character might decide that worship of them is a better choice to make than worship of an invisible diety, or at least an option that should be offered.

Let's take an example. Say your character has a particularly nice combination of powers: Super-senses, super-speed, some limited invulnerability, and a good right hook. Let's also say that their speed creates a glowing aura when used at full force, an aura which can be created at will to illuminate or blind. Said character could use these powers quite easily to act as a local god: he or she can hear petitioner's prayers, race to their aid, and stand between them and a bullet. In the time it takes the bullet to travel from the gun to the target, you've already raced across town, caught the bullet, and broken the gun. You can blind unbelievers with a harsh flash of light. You can probably even hear people plotting against you, if your

super-senses are good enough, and stop them before they start.

This doesn't even get into the abilities and responsibilities of characters with massive mental powers. If your character could look into someone's mind and see how good a person they were, and then "fix" them to the hero's idea of good, they could easily become worshipped for that. Super-charisma helps here too, and almost guarantees that your characters will have some followers once they get those powers at high enough levels. It's ridiculously easy for any truly high-powered super to act as a god.

The question is, should they?

Let's look at some pros and cons. We'll take the cons first.

Constant activity. Petitioners lining up at the door (if anyone knows where your hero lives) making requests that the hero may or may not be able to help with. An inability to talk to anyone in the area without them being worshipful, and that makes for lousy conversation. Other heroes will probably not be very happy with the "god", and may try to "dethrone" them for one reason or another. The local authorities (police, government, military) will *definitely* be angry, and the hero will have to deal with them one way or another.

Possibly the worst con is that god-heroes might start believing their own hype — if they even knew it was hype to begin with — and then one day they won't be able to save someone. It's a real ego-crusher, and has thrown ordinary superheroes into depression before. For a cosmic hero, used to being able to do anything, it's even worse, and can send people right over the edge.

The pros are as follows: if your characters like being worshipped, they're happy people. If they need resources, they can get a lot of them by demanding tribute. That's about it. Those are about the only good sides to setting your character up as a god.

Think of it this way: they have to be a personal bodyguard to everyone in the city, at least if they want to keep their reputation for being a "good god." The second they start letting people fall without being

able to save them, people start doubting them. If they go to sleep, bad things happen and they can't stop them. If they take two weeks of vacation, bad things happen. God-heroes are on call *all the time!* In short, it's not very fun for them.

This doesn't even get into theological discussions about whether there is a real God (or a pantheon of them) in your comic universe, and whether your characters encouraging worship of themselves is damning peoples' souls. That's probably something that only your GM knows... but at this level of power a character could really be the Archangel Michael come to Earth.

Still, despite all of the drawbacks, some heroes (and many villains) give the god business a shot. Most pull out of the job, saying "too much for me," but some find that it fits their taste. Many of those end up being supervillains, since inevitably someone is going to disagree with them and try to remove them from power. It's only a matter of time until they're sitting around looking at the police state they've created, wondering where things went wrong.

This Battle is Sponsored by...

Getting a regular source of income can be important for a cosmic team that doesn't have a matter transmuter on staff (or that wants to avoid destroying the world's gold market). Coincidentally, there are any number of corporations who would just love to have the universe saved by a hero with the company logo on their shoulder. There probably isn't a country in the world who wouldn't want a friendly, responsible world-saving hero to wear their flag as a costume.

The up side of sponsorship is that your characters won't have to worry about money unless they're building a moon base, and probably won't have to worry about legal issues. All large corporations have excellent lawyers. The down side is one of reputation. If the team's reputation goes downhill, expect the sponsorship to be pulled. If the company's reputation goes downhill, the team will either have to break ties with the company (possibly breaking a contract in the process) or watch their reputation tank as well.

Corporate sponsorship is often looked down on by more “responsible” heroes because it seems shallow and makes the team look like they’re just in it for the money. Whether your character cares about things like that is up to you.

I Fought the Law and

Dealing with the authorities on Earth (or your planet of choice) can be an important part of any superhero game. For one in which characters both care about average people *and* want to change the status quo, it’s going to be one of the main themes. In a game with an even more active stance, dealing with government and police officials is going to be a full-time job, and most of the job is going to involve listening to people yell at you.

Cosmic heroes will have to decide how much they want to play inside the law, and how much they want to step outside it. Even ordinary heroes break the law every time they run down a crook and knock him out (at least in the U.S.). There are police procedures to worry about, and if the police don’t read the guy his rights he gets to go free! Some games may involve more vigilante-friendly laws, which will make things easier.

Heroes who ignore the law do so at their peril. If it’s just vigilantism, then yeah the police might get annoyed, but they won’t send the National Guard after your character. If the heroes agenda involves things like overthrowing dictators and forcibly disarming nuclear powers, they can expect *major* military force to be brought against them and anyone they associate with.

On some worlds superhumans actually have their own countries, and are represented at the United Nations (or equivalent). Heroes trying to overthrow a dictator in this world will have to contend with other superhumans coming after them, with a legal right to shut off the team’s powers. Some teams thrive on that sort of conflict, but you better make sure your team is one of them before they go around starting a war.

Mask On or Off?

This decision comes to all heroes eventually, but is of deeper importance than it might seem for cosmic heroes. Do they attempt to keep a secret identity, do they let the world know who they are but try to keep a private life, or do they live the life of a superhero at all times?

An open, superheroic life might be quite like that of a rock star. Everyone recognizes the heroes wherever they go. Fans show up at their house (if they don’t move into the moon base permanently), moronic groupies want to have their babies (or sire them), and the tabloids send reporters after the team every minute of the day. Fame does have its drawbacks.

On the other hand, the difficulties of a secret identity can be *very* taxing on a cosmic hero. Jobs with a minimal amount of human interaction are recommended; modern-day telecommuting can be very handy for a cosmic hero trying to maintain a normal life. Previous ages’ heroes had no such excuse for not coming into work. Dating and other relationships can likewise be problematic. This is when being part of a team comes in *very* handy, as other people can cover for the absent hero every Tuesday night so they can go out with that cute but fiery reporter in the next cubicle. Regardless of how many people are covering for them, though, expect to have their date interrupted by The Call of Duty at least once a month.

The most dangerous part of having a secret identity is that it tells opponents that your character is vulnerable at home. Most heroes choose secret identities to protect their loved ones, and villains would absolutely love to be able to hold a hero’s loved ones hostage, or kill them to demoralize. Consider this a warning: either keep away from telepathic villains, or protect your hero’s mind exceptionally well!

The benefit of a secret identity is that your hero can keep tabs on what the “man on the street” (or woman) thinks about things. Watching TV for this is pretty useless, at least in the United States, since about 90% of all media outlets (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) are owned by six companies, all of whom want to appear patriotic. Mass media is not a good source of accurate information on people’s feelings.

In a secret identity your hero can actually go out and talk to people, hear rumors, and get a feel for what the country (or the world) really thinks.

A secret identity also provides something that is very important for some heroes: a connection to humanity.

"We Were All Human Once, Long Ago...."

... well, not necessarily. Some heroes (such as the All-Thing, pictured below) were never human, and never even pretended to be. Comics are full of aliens, androids, godlings, strange branches of humanity, mole-people, Martians, gorillas, and even stranger things. Somehow, though, that's never really the point.



The point is the ephemeral notion of "humanity," of "being human" beyond just genetic structure. Many superhero comic books focus on what it means to be a human being when their heroes seem to have so little in common with one.

Everyone has their own definition of what it means to be human, but most will agree on certain elements: emotion, growth, imperfection, and some amount of empathy for others. Trying to define what "humanity" is in the little space we have in this book is pretty pointless; people have been trying to do that for millennia without significant success. Instead we'll assume that humanity can be defined in much the same way as the U.S. Supreme Court's working definition of pornography: We can't put it in words, but we know it when we see it.

Most cosmic villains have discarded anything that might even resemble humanity. They feel that such sympathies, connections, and emotions make them weaker. For a villain this is probably true. Most villains work alone.

For heroes, especially ones who work in a team, humanity can be an important thing to hold on to. It helps them relate to other people, it makes people think that they're worth talking to (let alone worth trusting with their lives), and it makes other heroes want to be around them.

Many cosmic heroes "experiment" with throwing away their humanity, but are simply unable to do it. They might be able to maintain a facade of uncaring inhumanity, but sooner or later that facade cracks. How your character chooses to act is of course up to you, but remember that those who value humanity will be quite reluctant to work with a monster.

"Look! Up in the sky!"

We've said a little about how cosmic heroes view humanity as a whole. How about the other way around? How would people treat cosmic heroes?

The comics portray three very different ways that humanity deals with those more powerful than themselves: fascination, worship, and fear, and sometimes a combination of all three.

Some people are simply fascinated with incredibly powerful superhumans. These are the people who watch the news and read the papers (and maybe the tabloids) to see what their favorite hero has been up to. They look up into the skies in wonder when the titans of the Modern Age fly past. Fascination is the typical Golden and Silver Age sentiment. Heroes are treated like celebrities, but rarely act like them. In more modern books this sentiment is typically only found in stories in which the heroes *do* act like celebrities. At its worst, fascination can lead to obsession and stalking. At its best, it can lead to someone finding a lead to a case that their favorite hero is working on, and being good enough to tell that hero.

Worship is a bit less common than the other two reactions, but has many more facets to it. Worship of heroes can be encouraged by the team (see notes under “God? I AM A GOD!”) or it can be something they would rather not have. It can be basically benign, with people having little shrines in their house to their chosen messiah/hero, or it can be quite bloody and violent. It can be personal, or cult-based, or even fully organized. Worship is most common in modern-age games. Heroes who are (or claim to be) mythological figures or agents of heaven are the most likely to have a cult surrounding them, whether they want it or not, because they’re already tied into an existing religion. At its best, hero worship can give that hero the help she needs to take down the Fiendish Organization for World Larceny. At worst... well, it can lead to all the worst things that real-world religions have had: ethnic and religious cleansing, crusades, intolerance, ignorance, and possibly even damnation.

Fear is the most common reaction for Modern Age comics. Ordinary people are terrified of people covered from head to toe in silver, who can vaporize entire buildings without effort. They don’t like the idea of people who can’t be held by jails, can’t be stopped by the military, and who might simply fall victim to stress one day and flip out. Psychologists refer to a “fight or flight” reflex, the idea that frightened humans (and other animals), as a gut reaction, either run away immediately or try to beat up anything that scares them. Modern Age comics apply this logic to government reactions to superhumans — they don’t want to run, and don’t have anywhere to go, so they try to destroy what scares them. Even if they don’t

actively go after someone, they still keep records, track activities, and make preparations for the day they might have to kill Miss Amazing.

Respect is something that hasn’t been touched on much in the comic books. A few of them have alluded to it as a more appropriate reaction than fear, worship, or fascination. The idea is to treat superhumans as equals and hope that they reciprocate. This only works with superhumans who have a healthy respect for Earth and humanity. In this setup superhumans agree to live by human laws, and humans agree not to persecute superhumans, the same way that any other minority has a right to live and seek happiness.

Being treated with respect also requires acknowledging the other three possibilities (worship, fascination, and fear), and working to defuse them: stopping cults, talking calmly to fans, and respecting governments.

For cosmic heroes the first three reactions tend to be more extreme than with normal heroes. Thousands of people become fascinated with the woman who moved a mountain. Dozens of cults spring up around the man who burns as brightly as the sun. The United Nations has contingencies for neutralizing them both. Respect becomes more difficult simply because cosmic heroes are absent from Earth so often. It’s hard to build a relationship of trust and respect with someone you never see. Cosmic teams have an edge in that they can hire public relations managers, and team members can trade off the obligation of standing in the spotlight for a little while.

Interpersonal Life

On the other side of the equation is how heroes see ordinary people. Worship isn’t a likely option, and fear decreases as power level increases. Fascination is typical for robotic or alien heroes, many of whom want to learn more about humanity and become more like a human being. Respect, as mentioned before, is a two-way street, and can take a long time to build.

Cosmic heroes often have a protective feeling (in some cases, an overprotective obsession) about humans. Almost all ordinary heroes feel this way,

and it's all but required for Golden and Silver Age heroes. Protective heroes want to help humanity as a whole survive and "reach its collective destiny." Precognitive heroes might even have some inkling of what that destiny is, so it's not something they say lightly. The ones who get obsessed end up as villains, straightjacketing world governments and trying to do everyone's job for them.

Heroes without a deep respect and love for humanity are common in the Modern Age, and are much more likely to challenge the status quo as described earlier. Some of them downright despise most of humanity, but recognize that there's something worth saving in it.

Most Silver and Golden Age cosmic heroes have at least one person they can talk to who has a better handle on humanity than they do. Typically this is an ordinary person, with a day job and a night life, but highly cosmic heroes might even have a less powerful hero they think of in this way. "Sidekick" isn't quite the right term for these people, but they're more than friends. Such compatriots can keep cosmic heroes grounded and let them remember that not everyone in the world is bent on destroying it. It's nice to have someone decent to talk to when it seems like the whole world is going to hell (or when it really is).

Interaction with other people also helps make stories more interesting, so not every one is "Lunar Lass versus the Villain of the Month!" Some people like creating lives for their characters and seeing how things play out.

"Muhuhahahaha!"

This section is meant for the GM. It's about the motivations of supervillains on the cosmic scale. Players can feel free to read it if they like, especially if they're playing a reformed villain.

One of the standard motivations for a cosmic villain is nihilism. Nihilism is a belief that everything needs to be destroyed. The reason behind it can vary; some people want to end the universe in order to start another karmic cycle, others have fallen in love with the goddess of destruction and wish to impress her,

and still others are simply chemically imbalanced and enjoy breaking things on the largest scale possible.

Nihilistic villains typically care nothing for those around them, though some have sympathetic soft spots for their brothers, mothers, or other favored relatives. Such villains are dangerous foes because there is nothing they will balk at — sometimes not even their own destruction — to reach their goals. Existence itself is their mortal enemy. Nihilists are usually the most personally powerful of all arch villains, since they have no one but themselves to rely on.

Rarely, a nihilistic villain is just someone who wants to be left alone... but they continually draw trouble to themselves. Or maybe they have incredible super-senses that they can't shut off, and can't think of any way to have peace and quiet except by destroying everything they come across. These are typically the dim-witted but powerful variety of supervillain.

Another common cosmic villain is the tyrant, someone who wishes to control as much of creation as possible. Some tyrants are in it for the intoxicating feeling of control. Others think of themselves as imposing needed control over an otherwise chaotic multiverse.

Tyrants generally care a great deal for their empire, since they've taken so much time to put it together. It would be a shame to throw it away in an attempt to stop the heroes. However, tyrants are nothing if not practical. If it takes a legion of troops to stop one hero, well, there's always another planetful of troops elsewhere. Tyrants need some amount of physical superpower just to avoid the inevitable assassination attempts, but tyrants are typically on the low end of the cosmic power scale.

Those tyrants who are more powerful sometimes cross the line into the god-emperor range. God-emperors are those superpowered beings who set themselves up as god of a particular dimension long ago, and have been relatively successful. Not all of these are villains, but many are. It's hard to be a benevolent ruler when the subjects keep acting as if they should have rights.

Above and Beyond

Some god-emperors take the tyrant's route and try to expand their empire into nearby universes. Others are dangerous because they epitomize a particularly dangerous emotion or phenomenon — darkness, murder, destruction, etc. — and they want to spread that as far as possible in order to increase their personal power.

One of the most dangerous types of cosmic villain is the seducer and gamester. Cosmic seducers don't stop at just physical seduction, they want to own their enemy's mind, body, and soul. Most seducers want to control people to use them as pawns in some sort of game. Many of them are immortal and have grown bored with existence, only finding entertainment in pitting more and more powerful beings against each other.

Seducers are so dangerous because they're just plain *likeable*. Almost all of them will have some degree of super-charisma in addition to whatever mind- or emotion-control powers they have. Physically, seducers might be relatively fragile, but then they don't start off by attacking your headquarters and getting into a fight. They start off by stopping by to become a friend, gain your team's confidence, and utterly betray them. Seducers typically aren't dangerous to the universe as a whole, just to the heroes and maybe a soul or two.

Misguided villains are possible too, even at this level of power. Just because heroes can level a mountain with a punch doesn't mean they can't be manipulated into doing horrible things. Ironically, most misguided villains used to be planetary defenders or galactic guardians, much like the PCs. Then someone came along and whispered in their ear... and the next thing you know they're attacking some other planet to "keep their own planet safe." A lot of the actual misguiding is done by seducer-type villains.

Misguided villains are dangerous because they have the conviction that what they're doing is just and right, and it's hard to hate them for that. Ex-heroes who go this way are even more dangerous, because of the sympathy people will have for them and the trust they built up while they were still heroes. Most misguided villains are relatively likeable people when they're not out ruining what they tried to save.

Thrillseeking cosmic villains are the least common. They tend to be off their rockers to some extent, and are also at the lower end of the power spectrum. Their powers typically involve getting away from people: time travel, teleportation, warp gates, resurrection, intangibility — all of those work well for a thrillseeker. They just want to have fun, and their idea of fun is ruining other people's fun (or their planet).

Thrillseekers are dangerous because they simply don't care about morals or rules of engagement. Anything's fair game. They also typically have nothing to lose, unlike god-emperors and tyrants.

Occasionally there are villains who are simple mindless beasts — reality-warping beings from alternate dimensions who consume consciousness to live, killer robots built a million years ago, elemental forces of destruction, you know the kind. Many of these float through space or dimensional byways, looking for the next planet to devour or destroy.

Beasts are dangerous because they can't be tricked, bluffed, or bargained with. Conversation is pointless and, in most cases, impossible. Many beasts aren't even intelligent beyond their killer instincts (or programmed battle strategies). Warlord Thea might be a megalomaniacal psychopathic genius, but at least you can talk to her. The Creature from Beyond just wants to eat your brain, and the whole idea of "intelligent conversation" only makes it hungrier.

Chapter Two

This chapter is intended primarily for the GM, but can be helpful for players as well. It examines high-powered heroics from a game mechanics point of view, and suggests ways to allow godly power while keeping the game under control.

While some of this section is useful regardless of what superhero RPG you prefer, all of the references to game mechanics are for M&M.

Power Levels

In M&M terms, this supplement assumes that characters will be built at around 20th level, possibly as high as 30th. This allows for skill checks to reach into the 70+ range, for powers that can stretch across most of the world, and for characters who can laugh at the combined military might of Earth.

How powerful does that make them in real-world terms? A 30th-level hero with strong defensive powers could survive the explosion of most smaller nuclear bombs without a scratch (see sidebar), and could probably live through some of the larger ones (though it wouldn't be fun, and there's still the radiation to contend with). Those capable of space flight will be able to cross the galaxy in a day at 25th level. These are really heroes who don't care what the world throws at them unless it's backed by super-science.

How high is too high-powered? Well, the truth is that the game is too high-powered if you're not having fun. For that matter, it might also be too low-powered if you're not having fun. Some people enjoy having golden-haired martial artists capable of firing energy blasts that can destroy entire planets on a whim. For others, that power level is somewhat absurd. It's all in what you and your players think is cool.

If you're playing a game other than M&M you'll have to convert the statistics here into stats suitable for your favorite game.

Deep or Broad Heroes?

This section doesn't refer to personality; rather, it refers to heroes who have a larger or smaller number of powers for their power level. This can apply to many different superhero RPGs, several of which have means by which the strength of a power is "capped."

A "deep" hero is one who has a single extremely strong power (maybe two or three related ones), but is otherwise not as flexible as other heroes at his level. Deep heroes can be simulated by giving the player fewer character points to build with than is usual at a particular level, perhaps 50 to 75 percent of the recommended number.

Exactly How Powerful?

One way to measure the power of godlike superheroes is to see what sort of blast they could possibly survive. In M&M game terms, here are a few explosives, and the level of damage they do (and thus the level of Protection required to survive without a scratch). All damage is lethal.

Device	Damage
Grenade	6
"Backpack" Nuke	25
Fat Man / Little Boy	30
Tunguska Event	38
Hydrogen Bomb	40
Mt. St. Helens volcano	44
Krakatau volcano	48

This is based on the equivalent number of tons of TNT in each of these explosions. Other factors may come in, of course, and the damage could be reduced by as much as half by factors such as the size of the explosion (larger blasts, such as volcanic explosions, will spread their energy out over large areas and longer times).

Above and Beyond

“Broad” heroes are just the opposite. Instead of having one strong power, they have a dozen of them, but still don’t go over the “cap” established for their power level. This could be anything from an extra 25 percent (for slightly more flexible heroes) to twice as much (for heroes with dozens of abilities each).

A game with deep heroes will typically require much more teamwork between heroes, as they will almost never duplicate each others’ powers. If a hero has super-strength in a game like this, it’s all they have, and no one else has bought any because they have their own things to concentrate on. Conversely, broad heroes have a lot of overlap between powers, and can more easily split up the team.

Combining deep and broad heroes in the same game usually isn’t a problem. Sometimes it might be better to make the broad heroes slightly lower-level, and the deep heroes slightly higher-level, to make flexibility and power balance properly, but other times it just makes more sense for a particular character to be deep and another to be broad. As long as all the players accept that, there’s no problem.

Power Sources for the Overpowered

Cosmic power often comes from the same sorts of places that most superpowers come from. Some are mystical, some come from super-science, and some are just flukes of nature. Things are just a little more extreme, that’s all.

Sometimes, however, characters get their powers from being some sort of important person to Earth, the galaxy, or the entire universe. For example, one of the pre-generated PCs in this book, the All-Thing, is the living embodiment of the universe itself.

These sorts of powers should have their very own type, to distinguish them from other sources of power. In your own game you could decide that such powers are, by

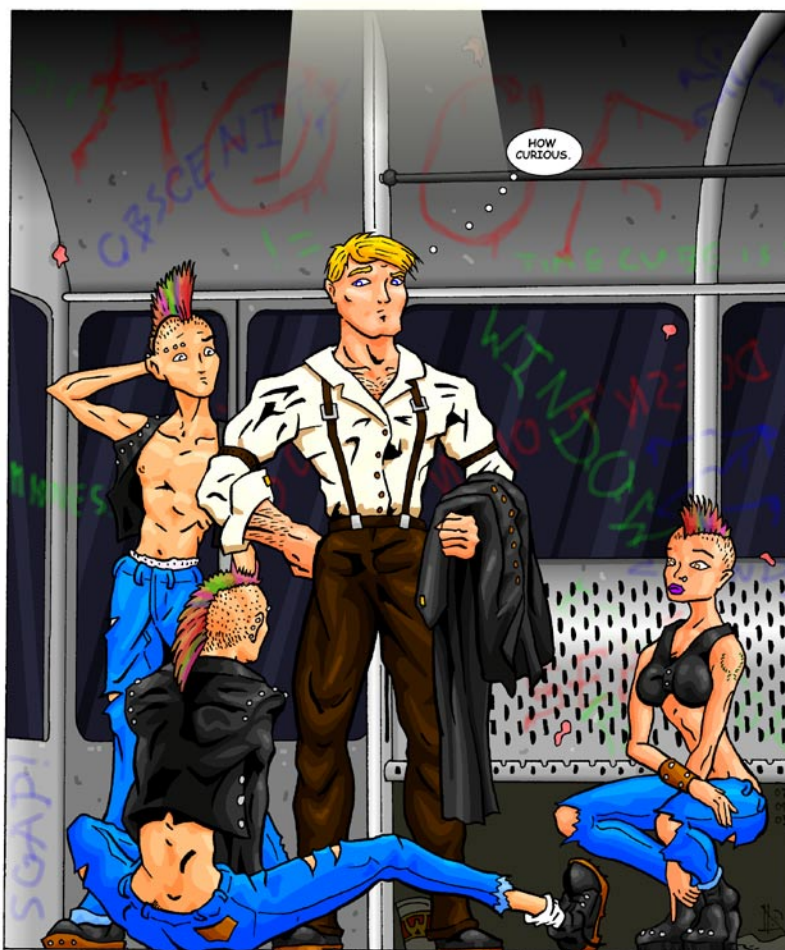
their nature, mystic powers (for example). In this book we’ll refer to such powers as coming from a cosmic source.

Origin Stories

Power of a cosmic nature doesn’t lend itself well to standard origin stories. “I trained really hard” can never explain a super-dex of 30, nor can being bitten by a radioactive wolverine. Where could this power have come from?

The ubiquitous “radiation field” is always a good one for astronaut heroes or scientific researchers. Technological heroes can go a good distance with that concept. Strange cosmically-powered artifacts can also be discovered by researchers in deep space or in ancient ruins. These might empower the characters, or be carried around by them depending on their size (and the level of super-strength imbued).

Sometimes the universe contains even *more* powerful NPCs, who need people to scout, infiltrate,



and battle for them. These could be trusted servants, unfortunate necessities, or mere pawns. Any way you look at it, it makes for an interesting game if all of the characters are the Harbingers of Omnipotus the Great and have to work for him while trying to accomplish their own goals as well.

Cosmic characters in a more religion-oriented game could be angels, imbued with their power by God. Do they reveal their nature to the people, or is faith without proof really important to an omnipotent God? Or the characters could be demons, or demi-gods, or even different aspects of a single god for that matter. It would be interesting to see an entire pantheon of gods fighting for their people in ancient times. Mythology is full of great inspiration for superheroics.

Mystic and psionic heroes at the cosmic level are quite rare. Typically only one person on each world (or maybe only one per dimension) has the strength to stand with the world's titans and survive. Anyone who takes that route will be quite important indeed, and might be the defender of the entire world's mystic energy or the protector of the universal subconscious.

Character Hooks

A character hook is something that pulls a player into the game a bit more, getting them involved in the plots and subplots. They're a GM's best tool and best friends. Some players give their characters extensive backgrounds full of hooks; others prefer to assume that the GM will make life interesting for their characters without help from them. A really good character hook can provide a game with plot for a month.

Character hooks are even more important in cosmic games, where the GM's standard lament is, "I don't know what to do with my PCs! How can I challenge and interest them? In short, how do I run this game?"

Some character hooks are the same for normal heroes and cosmic heroes. Here are a few examples

of the hooks GMs have for normal heroes that will still work for a cosmic game:

- Emotional Hooks: loved ones, hated enemies, children, favorite places and things, emotional appeals from villains and people in need, etc.
- Peer Hooks: subplots with other heroes, friends of a secret identity, hanging out with friends, etc.
- Power Hooks: waxing or waning powers, developing new powers, working to overcome vulnerabilities and weaknesses, the responsibilities of power, etc.
- Psychological Hooks: Any sort of mental weakness or illness on the character's part can provide fodder for an entire issue of a comic book; it can be just as useful in a game.

Most cosmic-powered comic books play up the emotional and psychological hooks. More recently some have started focusing on the peer hooks, presenting a community of superheroes rather than a bunch of people who just happen to work together.

There is one additional type of hook that can be useful in a cosmic game: a motivation-based hook. All heroes have a certain motivation that caused them to go out and become a superhero instead of sitting on the couch. For most, it's something they could never really accomplish, like ridding the whole city of crime, or teaching new heroes about responsibility. However, a cosmic hero who wants to rid the world of war might actually be able to accomplish this! Motivation hooks play off of these goals, baiting the characters with something that might help them realize their fantastic vision. Often it's not whether they can accomplish their goal, it's how they choose to do it that makes the story interesting.

It's really okay to let cosmic characters reach their goals, as long as you don't mind running a somewhat changed campaign. Many issues of cosmic-level comic books deal with the characters having accomplished their ultimate goal, and wondering what to do next!

Excessive Force

Keeping players in-character in a cosmic game can be quite taxing. Most cosmic-level characters have the ability to take down any normal hero you can point your finger at. The bruisers can probably handle a small army by themselves. The temptation to use force on literally every problem is strong. As the saying goes, "If brute force doesn't work, you're not using enough of it."

This becomes especially difficult when combined with the loner, isolationist tendencies of many cosmic heroes. Societal pressures are less effective when a hero doesn't care about being a part of society. How can you as the GM keep your characters from vaporizing everything in their paths?

The most straightforward way is simply to talk to your players before the game even starts. Tell them whether you want basically moral characters, or whether it's okay for their characters to slaughter minor NPCs out of hand. Let them know what sort of in-game consequences there are for using nuke-strength energy blasts against ordinary people instead of the villains who really deserve it. That way the characters will be right for the game, without you having to shoehorn them in.

There are other versions of excessive force as well; however, most of those are what a cosmic game is all about. If a character has the power to link to the minds of all people on Earth, it's pretty worthless if it's never used. There's a time and place for excessive force, and when the universe is in danger, that's usually the time! Some would argue that nothing's excessive when the villains are poised to extinguish the sun... but then again, some highly moral heroes would argue that even then, there's a limit to how far violence should go. With those considerations, we leave that decision in the hands of the PCs and NPCs.

Saving Throw Disparities

A 30th level hero is probably not going to have all of his or her saves at comparable levels. The bruiser will probably have exceptionally high Damage saves, and possibly Fortitude as well, but will be incredibly easy to tag with Reflex or Will based attacks. The mentalist might have a great Will save but could be killed instantly by any villain.

At lower levels these disparities aren't as important because the amount of randomness in a d20 roll is still significant compared to 10th level powers. 30th level powers, on the other hand, have a tendency to overwhelm a d20 roll. How can you allow great

Run, it's Captain Collateral!

Collateral damage is bad enough when a punch can smash a car and throw it across the street. Imagine how deadly it is when you fire energy blasts that level hills!

In four-color games, most cosmic combat takes place in abandoned or uninhabited areas. In more realistic games this isn't always possible. Sometimes the Urth League of Death breaks through the dimensional barrier in downtown Manhattan, and you just have to take them on right then and there.

In Golden Age games, assume no collateral damage. Silver Age games should assume minimum collateral; nothing the heroes couldn't fix up by spending a few minutes to an hour of their time. Whether they choose to or not says a lot about whether the game is in the early or late Silver Age.

GMs running games in the Modern Age or any gritty game should keep in mind that a level 25 energy blast is as powerful as a nuke in the small area it hits, and assign consequences accordingly. Every energy blast that misses has to go somewhere.

power, but still make it possible for some people to resist?

One way is to require a certain amount of the Amazing Save power. To give two examples, you could require one rank for every three levels, or require a number of ranks equal to the character's level minus 15. Whether you want to make characters pay for these levels separately or make them free (a side benefit of high levels) is up to you.

Another way to do things is to *limit* saving throws, and at the same time limit how high saving throw DCs can get. This allows strong-willed but otherwise ordinary people to have some small chance of avoiding Mento the Magnificent's 30-rank Area Effect Mind Control without rolling a natural 20. If you use this method, we suggest allowing a maximum save DC of 25, and a maximum saving throw bonus of +20 (counting attributes, powers, and feats). This method tends to promote characters with more superpowers instead of higher-level powers since it's typically not worth raising a power above 15 ranks. That's not necessarily a bad thing, just something to be aware of.

Both of these methods have the benefit that they can be worked into non-cosmic campaigns as well, without hurting the 10th-level heroes. Some games won't need either of these options, simply using the rationale that characters with this amount of power cannot be withstood... but that sort of feeling gets old very quickly, especially when it's your character that is the target of such irresistible power.

Powers That Break the Game

There are a few powers that are trouble enough in ordinary superhero games. In cosmic games they can threaten to wipe out any semblance of sense at all. Here we'll look at a few of them.

Mind Control

Link Mind Control to ESP, add the Mental Link stunt and some Area extras, and suddenly it's time

to take over the world. Well, probably not the *whole* world at once, but you'd be surprised how large an area you can cover by adding more Area extras. How do you stop the mind-controlling hero from a) just taking over the villain's mind at every chance, and b) taking over innocent bystanders and using them as fodder?

Stopping the second one is a bit easier, actually. Anyone who does that is a villain, not a hero, regardless of why they're doing it. Sooner or later another hero is going to stop them. It's a good idea to talk to players of mind-controllers before they start doing this, and let them know that their character will probably be removed from the game if they do this often. Also remember that mind controllers who control many different people at once have to give each of them orders separately (unless they want them all doing the same thing), which might take a great deal of time. A round is only six seconds long, after all. It is recommended that only one order can be given per round as a free action, two orders as a standard action, and four as a full action. Ordering 20 people to do 20 different things will take five full rounds. Ordering them all to "attack the heroes!" can be done as a free action.

Stopping the first one is more difficult. It stretches credibility to have every single villain, even every archvillain, buy Amazing Save (Will) or similar mind-protecting powers. However, it makes perfect sense that these villains would go out and buy, steal, or create a device that protects them from mental powers once they find out who they're going up against. Mind Control in a cosmic game is best used against unprepared foes or the particularly foolish.

Time Travel

Hoo boy. This power breaks games as if they were toothpicks, and it's cheap too. If you allow unrestricted and highly accurate time travel in your game, you won't be playing a superhero game for very long — you'll be playing a time travel game. There are some excellent ones on the market that we could recommend; however, the assumption here is that you want a supers game instead.

Above and Beyond

Here are a few suggestions to keep Time Travel from flipping your cosmic games head-over-heels, without arbitrarily applying flaws to the power.

1. Make it imprecise. Instead of being able to reach a chosen second in time, make it reach sometime during a chosen week. Instead of traveling to the exact same point in space, make it off by a few miles. This makes more of an adventure out of time travel, as the heroes may have to blend in or lay low until the moment they want.

2. Make time run at the same rate in the past and the future. For every minute the character spends in the past, one passes in the present. You also have to make sure that time travel works only to and from the present, or heroes will say “I travel to 1954, spend a month making money by betting on horses, and then travel forward to a month before the present, arriving just after I left.”

3. Allow power-negating powers to snap travelers back to the present. Other time travelers will start carrying power-negating guns pretty quickly once someone figures this out (and once they do figure it out, every time traveler will know almost instantly... and some will have known since before they were time travelers because they left themselves notes. Isn't time travel fun?).

4. Allow travel only to possible futures, not to something guaranteed to be the *real* future. In a similar vein, have a self-repairing past that tends to keep the present as similar to its current state as possible. If the team kills their own grandfather, it will turn out that he wasn't their grandfather to begin with (“Hey, he looks just like the milkman!”).

5. If all else fails, call in the Time Cops and have them explain (with future tech and futuristic heroes if necessary) exactly what the character can and can't do with time. This is kind of a heavy-handed way to do things, but it works as a last resort.

Some of these suggestions can be combined with others; some work better on their own. These and other possibilities will keep time travel from running rampant all over your game.

Dimension Travel

Not as easy to abuse as Time Travel, Dimension Travel can still allow characters access to almost unlimited resources. It might take a month to find a dimension where diamonds are cheaper than water, but once it's found, they're set for life. The Wealth feat might as well be a power stunt for this power.

Even if there are an infinite number of alternate worlds in your game's cosmology, you are perfectly justified in saying that something doesn't exist anywhere in all the universes. You can have an infinite number of apples without having any oranges. Don't say this too often, though. If you think something should be rare and hard to find, just put it in a very remove dimension, so that it takes a week or so to get there and back. That kind of time delay will deter most cosmic heroes. Think of all the things a cosmic hero can do in a week instead of traveling to get Super Gizmo #239,487.

Precognition and Postcognition

These powers are often accused of ruining mystery-based plots. Remember, any long-running foes that the PCs have will know about these powers and take appropriate precautions, such as:

- Using Time Travel to create many simultaneous pasts and futures, which are difficult to untangle.
- Committing the crime under cover of fog, darkness, or other uses of the Obscure power. If you rule that vision-based powers don't work through Pre- and Postcog, this is quite effective.
- Use the Disguise skill when committing a crime to frame someone else, or use Illusion, Duplication, or a robot double to create an effective alibi.
- The viewing window created by Precog and Postcog can't move, so use masked minions for the actual crime, and equip them with a teleportation device.

Powers in This Book

This book contains a few powers that can be easily abused, most notably Rain of Destruction and Lazarus Field.

Rain of Destruction is just a very high-area Energy Blast with its duration increased and line-of-sight targeting. It can easily destroy cities, and in fact that's exactly what the power is designed to do. The easiest way to avoid abuses of this power is just to talk to your players about what sort of game you want to run, and let them know whether or not destroying cities should be on the agenda. If a character simply wants to be able to rain down destruction on his or her foes from an orbital satellite, adding the Selective extra to Rain of Destruction, and possibly reducing its area, will do that just fine.

The same goes for any other very wide-beam attack power, like a Plant Control power that can tie up everyone in a city. Such powers are typically more effective for villains than they are for heroes, and a moral hero would only use that particular aspect of the power when the whole city had been mind-controlled and needed to be stopped. Talking to your players beforehand is the best solution in these cases.

Lazarus Field is a power that heals, regenerates, and *resurrects* everyone around the character. It works even when the character is unconscious or asleep, and the effect is powerful enough to make combat almost pointless. Villains who know about this power and want to get involved in a slugfest are advised to grab the character with Lazarus Field and teleport him or her far away from the rest of the party. You could also kill that hero outright, but that's not really a good solution if you want to keep players in your game.

Exceptionally High Defense

30th-level speedsters who max out their Dexterity and base Defense can end up with a total Defense score of 75 (10 base + 30 bought + 30 from Super-Speed + 5 from Dexterity). 30th-level bruisers who max out their attack bonus and Strength can end up

with a total bonus of +35. This leaves a 40-point difference between attack and defense, which is a severe problem. Only critical hits will actually connect with a speedster (But man, will they connect! Damage level 40 to the face!). What can you do to have a brawler who is as accurate as he is muscular? For that matter, what can you do to have an energy-controller or mind-blaster who can hit this guy?

1. Get the drop on him. This is not very easy, but it's the "obvious" way to do things. Super-Speed provides a dodge bonus to Defense, and surprise attacks take that away. This isn't really a good solution; typically you're worried about hitting a speedster in combat, not when he's sitting at home watching TV and eating cheezy-pooofs.

2. Allow an extra for Super-Strength or Super-Dexterity that provides an attack bonus to melee or ranged attacks, respectively. Perhaps one for Super-Wisdom that adds to mental attack bonuses as well. Let's call the extra Precision. It should provide an attack bonus equal to the number of ranks in the power *minus ten*. That still leaves a 20-point gap between ordinary heroes and speedsters, but that can be made up with feats without too much difficulty. This also leaves ordinary 10th-level heroes unchanged, and allows for big brutish villains who really *can't* hit anything in the same game as iconic superheroes whose blows never miss their targets. This is the method we recommend.

3. As suggested in M&M, treat Defense and Attack like super-powers so that they won't stack with the effects of other powers. This makes speedsters somewhat less effective, but lets everyone hit everyone else without too much trouble. The problem is that a super-strong hero with Accurate Attack and All-Out Attack will be hitting the speedster every single time. Sure, it won't hurt as much as a full-strength punch, but damage level 25 is still plenty enough to knock someone out (or knock them through a mountain!).

David and Goliath

In most books this sort of section would have the heroes as David and the evils of the world as Goliath. In this book, however, things are a bit different. What kind of tactics can ordinary people use against heroes

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— or more important, villains — of this magnitude? Do the governments and corporations of the world stand any chance at all?

The reason we're including this in this book is primarily to act as background information. It's much more effective to describe how this happened to someone else instead of trying to use it on the PCs. It acts as a deterrent then, reminding them that everyone has their weak points. If the time ever comes to use these tactics on the PCs, remember to change things and personalize the assault so it's not easy for the PCs to predict what's going to happen.

The most important thing to do when attempting to defeat rampaging supervillains, or egotistical heroes, is to know their weaknesses. Hit them with something that capitalizes on their known weak spots, and if you're not sure, make an educated guess. Electrical heroes often have trouble with water, fiery villains can be doused with liquid nitrogen, speedsters and bruisers need a solid and non-skid surface to stand on. Those with super-hearing are typically no more prone to auditory overload than most people, but they can often be distracted with faked tapes of their loved ones. Telepaths and mind controllers have severe problems with androids, or even with remote-controlled tanks.

The second lesson is to go for the obvious and then combo it with something they don't expect. For example, if you drop a giant grease-bomb on a super-strong character so that she can't stand up straight, she'll probably smash the ground into pebbles to provide extra friction. That's when the difficult-to-trigger but powerful contact explosive in the grease goes off. Or perhaps a helicopter airdrops a load of water on a napalm-bodied villain. Napalm burns underwater, so what does he care... but the heat triggers a chemical in the water that turns it sticky and viscous, trapping him temporarily. For a third example, how about wrapping a solar-powered hero in a black coating to keep the sun out. He'll just burn his way out of it... except that only the outer layer is black. The inner layer is mirrored, and he's just fried a bunch of his allies with the reflected power.

The third lesson is to use as many technological toys as you can get your hands on. If the world's geniuses can whip up a suit that makes someone invis-

ible to mental senses, it seems pretty useless on nine days out of ten. That tenth day, however, it lets them sneak up on the telepathic villain and clobber him in the head. Night-vision goggles, body armor, suits of powered armor left over from 1950's weapons research, anything that gives you the tiniest edge. Some villains only spend as much effort as they think they need to, and if they were wrong about how hard that punch needed to be, the little guy just might survive.

The sum of all this experience is one simple phrase: fight dirty. This fight is like a lighter combatant going up against someone who's stronger, faster, and has better reach. Kick for the crotch, stab for the eyes, and take a hit if it lets you fold their elbow backwards so they can't do it again. Fight dirty and don't let up. It's the common person's only chance.

Be Prepared

The best piece of advice we can give to GMs in a cosmic-level game is to be prepared. Read the team's backgrounds and character sheets. Take note of any particularly interesting and useful powers they have (hopefully that will be most of them). Then, plan your adventures around those powers.

You generally can't take a prewritten adventure designed for one level of superheroes and use it on another group just by toughening up the villains. An M&M adventure written for 10th level heroes will assume that, for instance, no one in the party can grow to Colossal size, no one can race across the Earth in a single minute, and no miniaturizers can enter a microverse to escape their assailants. In cosmic games these things could happen easily, and in fact *should* happen. The whole point of a cosmic game is using those incredible powers to their best effect, not hanging back and pretending to be lesser heroes.

So, if there's a speedster on the team, set up a challenge that needs every ounce of his superspeed. Make the bruiser punch her way through the villain's Impervium defense drones and hideout walls. Let the telepath find out what little the goons know of their master's plans, and wonder whether they've been lied to. Don't set up adventures in which the heroes' pow-

ers are useless (well, at least not often), set up games that require full-out use of those amazing abilities.

Also, set up an adventure assuming that the villains have already used their abilities at full strength before things started, *especially* powers like Time Travel, Precognition, and Gadgets (which can mimic all kinds of useful stuff). If I was a precognitive bad guy, I'd be sure to look and see what kind of weapon the heroes were going to use on me, and build defenses against it. Precognition isn't always 100 percent accurate, and can be fooled by the measures mentioned earlier in this chapter, so such villains won't have an overwhelming advantage. But they're going up against the world's most powerful heroes, so they need every edge they can get.

Don't be afraid of situations that could go horribly wrong on a bad roll — these characters have at least ten Hero Points with which to avoid such problems. Some will have more. When it comes time to save the universe, they won't be rolling less than a 10. Don't expect them to use Hero Points at all times, but expect a bunch of them to be spent as soon as they spot the villain. "He's not getting away this time!"

101 Adventure Ideas

The number is traditional, and I couldn't think of 1001. Here are some "seed" ideas that, if given some work, may grow into a plot for your team to face. None of them will work without preparation unless you're a master improviser. Some of them are in a more comedic vein, others are deadly serious, and some will take a good deal of adaptation to use with your group, but hopefully there's something in here for everyone. Here's the list:

1. Aliens with incredible technology invade reveal themselves to the world. Are they an advance force for an invasion, or friendly merchants?

2. The alien invasion happened years ago. They're shapeshifters, and have been living amongst us, planning their takeover.

3. Magic starts disappearing from the universe.

4. Signs point to the end of time approaching. Time travel reveals that this is happening in a literal sense: the future is disappearing, bringing the end closer to the present at an accelerating rate.

5. Alien refugees, fleeing a tremendous battle fleet, ask for asylum on Earth. Are they really refugees, making Earth the next target, or just criminals fleeing justice?

6. A child is born who will be the most powerful superhuman ever born on Earth.

7. The embodiment of war comes to Earth looking for a replacement. The entire planet is plunged into armed conflict because of it.

8. Another dimension is slowly merging with Earth's, one creature at a time. The rate is accelerating; it will take about a year for the whole process.

9. A traditional enemy approaches the heroes and says that they're trying to repent for their misdeeds. Are they telling the truth? Is it more worthwhile just to lock this person up?

10. An insane computer programmer has discovered the mathematical code that underlies all reality, and is subconsciously building it into his products.

11. During another major problem in the Earth's dimension, visitors from the Mirror Universe arrive to ask for help dealing with the same problem there. But it's the Mirror Universe... so who's the bad guy in this case?

12. Jupiter catches on fire. Yes, we know, that's impossible; that's the point.

13. A rogue planet comes into our solar system and wreaks havoc with planetary orbits... and it's clear that it was pushed toward us.

14. The world's monetary situation is reversed — those who were the richest become the poorest, and vice versa.

15. Everyone's shadows come to life and start to attack them. The quick fix is to turn off the lights (no lights, no shadow), but how to handle it in the long

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run? Is this someone's bizarre power, a magical curse, or an invasion from the Shadow Universe?

16. Written communication stops working, and spoken words start failing. If this continues, communication by any means will soon be impossible.

17. The intelligent beings who lived on Earth before humans evolved return. They want their home back.

18. A viral thought escapes from a psionic's mind and starts replicating itself across the world's population, blocking out all other ideas in peoples' heads.

19. Someone kills the incarnation of lies. Now a new incarnation must be found before international war breaks out.

20. All people with superpowers start to lose them, just as an invasion of our dimension starts. Is it something they did, or is there another cause entirely?

21. A figure claiming to be the biblical Satan appears on TV all across the world and claims to be looking for his child, offering immortality to anyone who finds and brings him the Antichrist.

22. Someone the heroes know to be an established mutant superhero starts claiming that he received a message from the goddess Shiva telling him to protect the nation of India. He starts by attacking China.

23. Fires sweep through the forests of Norway and Sweden; fires that prove totally impossible to put out by conventional means.

24. An unbelievably vast crack opens in the Atlantic seafloor, and the world's oceans begin tumbling into it. Within a day all of the seas in the world will be gone!

25. The sun goes out.

26. Every star but the sun disappears as the solar system is wrapped in a dark, nearly impenetrable shell. An alien appears on television all across the world, telling everyone that Earth has been quarantined.

27. War breaks out on earth for normal political reasons, but it threatens to turn into World War Three (or Four, in some settings).

28. The embodiments of the Seven Deadly Sins sweep most of the Western world... but at the same time, the embodiments of sins of other religions sweep through their people. Who's behind it?

29. Someone is creating insane supervillains a dozen at a time and setting them loose on major cities. Is the person doing this a lunatic, or do they have a plan? Is this the end result or a distraction?

30. Another respected cosmic hero snaps under the stress of the job and goes berserk, killing dozens and wounding hundreds, and then disappearing. The team is called on to find this hero and bring her to justice.

31. Someone with the ability to absorb other heroes' powers starts doing it permanently, and starts affecting normal people as well, taking all their strength and brainpower. This super-absorber turns to the team for help.

32. An old classic: A team composed of the evil, mirror-universe duplicates of the team attacks them in a bid to wrest control of our universe.

33. A twist on the previous one: said mirror-duplicates attack when the team is away in space or in a different dimension, and our heroes return to find impostors in their place.

34. The Dimension of Evil starts shrinking, and its denizens start disappearing. Should the heroes care?

35. The world's most powerful governments decide that they're sick of the heroes influencing their populations, and try to destroy or control them, or possibly replace them with a team that will send the message they want people to hear.

36. The Dimension Devourer Parasite from the Antimatter Dimension attacks! It eats the dimension of height! Suddenly everyone and everything in the world becomes two-dimensional! It must be stopped

before the Devourer eats the dimensions of length and width and everyone disappears completely!

37. The Blue Faction of Dimension Z (one of eight color factions) asks for the team's help in a war against the corrupt color octarine and their magical monsters.

38. The Clockmaster starts changing time so that the world is more chaotic and unpredictable. Use rolls of 2d20 — 15 for all rolls instead of 1d20 until he's stopped.

39. A lovable slime monster, who has appeared in many monster movies in Hollywood, has children. About a million children, all of whom like to eat meat and are quite indiscriminate about who they eat. The monster and the authorities both ask the heroes for help, though in slightly different ways...

40. All of the world's major supervillains unite as the Masters of Doom, and make a concerted and coordinated attack on our heroes' headquarters.

41. The heroes meet a refugee from a country formerly thought to be a free and good place, which the refugee says has horrible human rights offenses hidden under their peaceful facade. Who to believe? How to find out what's really going on?

42. The Archangel Gabriel (or someone claiming to be them — who knows the truth?) descends from the sky above Rome and declares Italy to be the new holy land, under his protection.

43. A group of old, washed-up supervillains decide to start the Villain-of-the-Month club for old, washed-up heroes! They'll put on a show of getting "beat up" by the hero, the hero's popularity increases, the villain somehow escapes at the last minute, and no one's the wiser. Oh, the many, many ways this could go wrong...

44. The Fiendish Organization for World Larceny steals the team's headquarters while they aren't looking.

45. The Destiny Demon seeks the Nexus of Space and Time so that it can make Hell a more important

dimension in the multiverse and control the destinies of ordinary people from its home in Hell.

46. The Olympic Committee opens up a set of Super-Olympics with various different classes of power. Will your characters compete? How much foul play will there be? Will countries try to hire or create superhumans to compete?

47. Two alien cultures are at war with each other, and have chosen our solar system to fight their war in. They promise they won't hurt Earth. Really, they promise. Really.

48. In a more extreme version of the above, the inhabitants of two dimensions near Earth's dimension are fighting each other in our dimension, and have been doing so for years. What will the team do when they find out?

49. The ancient Greek gods return to Earth and set up shop on Mount Olympus again, with the intention of ruling Greece.

50. Earth is offered the opportunity to join an intergalactic alliance. The benefits are incredible technology and trade. They don't mention the drawbacks...

51. The Harbingers of Omnipotus come into the solar system to find a suitable planet for their master to devour.

52. Mento the Magnificent, former TV psychic fraud, develops almost irresistible mind-control powers and starts doing everything he ever wanted to do.

53. A baby universe has just exploded into being between our galaxy and Andromeda. If its growth is not slowed, it will "overwrite" both galaxies within a year, and eventually our entire universe.

54. A space empire the characters are allied with hasn't been heard from in quite a while.

55. One of the team goes missing (good for when someone has to take a week off from the game).

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56. The crime rate at night drops to zero all across Earth (and other planets as well), but the rate during the day remains the same.

57. The team awakens to find Earth missing. Whomever was on watch when it vanished was knocked unconscious.

58. Ordinary physics is replaced, over the course of about two days, with Aristotelian physics! All things are now composed of four elements, the planets orbit on crystal spheres, and the primary forces in the universe are gravity and levity.

59. Superheroic power is redistributed. Weak heroes become cosmic, cosmic heroes (such as the team) are reduced to weaklings.

60. During a battle with an old foe, the team is transported into such a distant dimension that it will take a week of travel, through bizarre and unusual universes, to return to Earth.

61. A corporate-sponsored hero starts destroying the holdings of his corporation. That company offers the team millions of dollars to stop him.

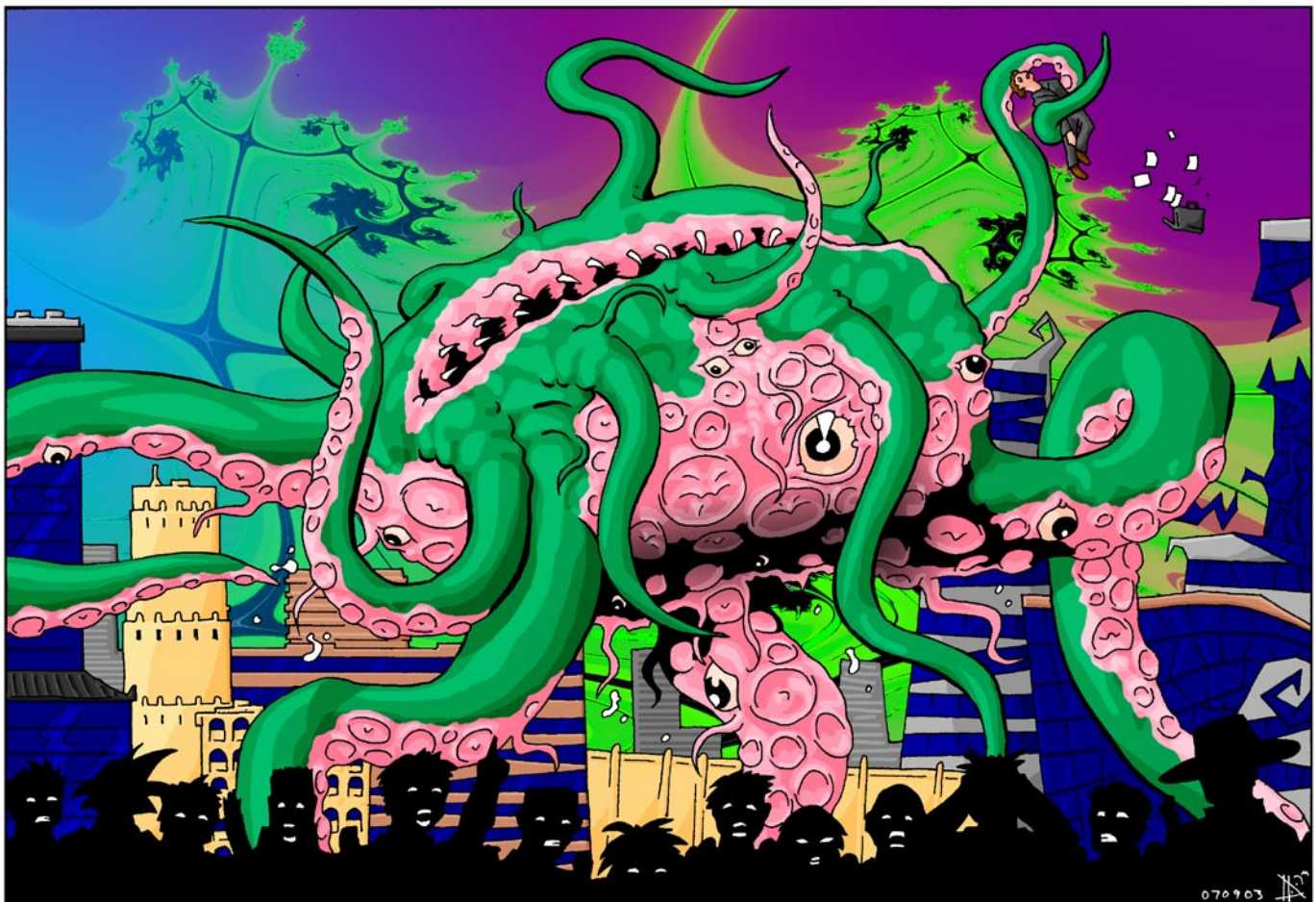
62. Someone wants to join the team. Are they powerful enough? Do they have the right outlook? Is it a trap?

63. One of the team members with a secret identity is being blackmailed with the threat to sell their identity on the "supervillain black market."

64. A biologist discovers the genes for different kinds of superpowers, and how to implant them in people so that their children will have powers. Every time-traveler in the world wants to capture her.

65. Someone tries to break into the team's headquarters — someone they can't identify because of smoke, invisibility, darkness, etc.

66. Cosmic heroes from another planet come just to visit and introduce themselves. Naturally, something bad must come of this.



67. Fairy tales start coming true... but not the Walt Disney versions, the Brothers Grimm versions.

68. The incarnation of death comes for one of the team members who has come back from certain death before. Will things go worse if he loses, or if he wins?

69. For an incarnations game, the incarnation of something really lame (like rectangles) comes to the team to ask them for help to become something more worthwhile. For non-incarnations games, just do the same with a hero with useless powers (like levitating an inch off the ground).

70. A cult rises up around characters who don't want to be treated like gods. The world's media is watching to see how they handle things.

71. The characters wake up. Everything they've done in the past months has been a dream. Yeah, right; someone's behind this illusion or dream or mind control or whatever it is.

72. Another hero's wife dies in a car crash and he will stop at nothing to have her back, even if it means going to Death's realm.

73. Someone has been masquerading as a hero on the team (or maybe the whole team) and ruining their reputation. All kinds of legitimate heroes are after them now.

74. Another up-and-comer asks the team to help them build a decent headquarters, and smooth over relations with other heroes, and pretty much do everything for them.

75. A previously low-powered vigilante hero attains ultimate power, and goes around taking care of nearly every problem in the world. What does the team do with their new-found spare time?

76. Have a "down time" episode, where there's no major threat, just a bunch of people hanging out and interacting. Okay, maybe a minor threat, or something to accomplish, but nothing major.

77. For a characters-as-gods game, the characters worshippers start being "stolen" away by a different religion.

78. One of the world's nations asks the team not to come into their territory. Are they hiding something, or just trying to be independent of superheroic help?

79. Pick another roleplaying game off the shelf at random and run a crossover. What? It's naptime and I'm running low on ideas.

80. A less powerful hero team has recovered a deadly, corrupting artifact from Doctor Aztec, and they ask our heroes to take it off their hands. It makes people turn evil pretty quickly, and it's indestructible.

81. The team discovers the presence of a powerful being that has been watching them for many years, and which has compiled extremely detailed files. They discover this because the being is incapacitated and someone has stolen the files.

82. A new team has formed whose views are nearly opposite those of our heroes (though they *are* still heroes), but whose power is comparable.

83. A villain decides to be the solution to Earth's overpopulation problem. No, that's not just a euphemism for "they go nuts and kills everyone," the villain actually has a detailed plan.

84. The most powerful nation on Earth (or most powerful empire in the stars) is having a major election soon, and metahumans are an important issue... and the person with the worst views is currently winning.

85. A major villain has been murdered. Who did it? Who will they strike next? Should the team care?

86. No one has been able to dream for the past week. People are starting to go nuts and act out their dreams in real life.

87. The characters visit a distant future when they are reviled as the architects of humanity's fall. How can they prevent this future from coming about?

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88. Five alien supervillains attack the world. When killed (they're nasty, but not too terribly powerful), they come back a day later. They keep talking about the Forbidden Ring of Chaos, and how the Ten Thousand Warriors will kill everyone. The five villains *are* the Ten Thousand Warriors; their souls are put into clone bodies when they fall. The ring (when finally found) does nothing but allow the wearer to finally kill the villains... which is what they've wanted all along. They're tired of life as resurrected warriors. Now answer this question: Who started this mess?

89. Someone uses the World-Mind power and leaves it on for a while.

90. A powerful being grows within the Earth's core, planted there millions of years ago. It is beginning to wake up, having strange effects on everyone on Earth. If it fully awakens, it may destroy Earth as it leaves its egg behind.

91. A comet appears in the night sky, but it cannot be found by heroes traveling toward it through space. Freak events happen after its appearance; rains of frogs and the like. The events become more and more dangerous, and the comet is seen by people around the world as a harbinger of doom.

92. Earth is supposed to be getting a shipment of rare elements from an extraterrestrial trading partner. The shipment is weeks late, and the team is asked to help find out what happened.

93. Electricity stops working on Earth, starting with the most powerful discharges (lightning), and working its way down through the failure of power plants, household power, flashlights, and eventually human brains over the course of a week. This is not happening elsewhere in the universe.

94. High-tech visitors from one hundred years in the future visit to give the current world their technology and science, but their knowledge of history is poor at best. Are they frauds? Are they from another timeline? Is this a distraction?

95. One of the team is sick and dying with a mysterious illness. Microscopic vision (or just a microscope if they're boring) reveals a tiny intelligent civilization living within the hero's body. It's time to

use the shrink-ray! The sick hero can join the fight (or relocation effort, or negotiations) through telepathy or projection.

96. It's an all-out slugfest between the heroes! Maybe someone's mind-controlling them. Maybe someone's captured them and forced them to fight to the "death." Maybe they're just really ticked off at each other; who knows? It's good for an evening's entertainment.

97. People begin aging at different rates; some more quickly, others more slowly, some in reverse. Some people age as much as a year in a day. This happens to the heroes, too: some of them begin to regress to childhood while others age into decrepitude.

98. The population of one particular town gains the power of super-intelligence literally overnight, but when they find out how it happened, they deduce that no one else has a chance of stopping whatever will happen next. They contact the team to ask for help.

99. A time-traveling supervillain appears and kidnaps the Queen of England, and then asks for a ransom of ten thousand pounds for the return of Queen Victoria. Is he serious, or just badly confused?

100. The team's major source of funding disappears. If it paid for their headquarters, that gets repossessed and possibly given to another team. They're given a thousand bucks of severance pay each and tossed out on the streets. Now what?

101. And, to top it all off, a multiversal crossover that ends the world and recreates it from the beginning.

Chapter Three

This chapter talks about the “control knobs” of the universe, and how to change the feel of your game.

Humor in Cosmic Games

There’s something about a cosmic-level character or game that can be flat-out funny. Whether it’s the image of a mind-bogglingly powerful alien discovering chocolate-chip cookies for the first time, or the “oops” as someone’s errant energy blast accidentally levels Mount Rushmore, cosmic games have great potential for comedy.

The key to running a comedic game is not to force it. You don’t need to give every town, villain, and minor NPC a silly or funny name. Not every hero needs to crack jokes all the time. Generic names go a long way toward making the game less serious — if every NPC is named Bob or Sarah, especially the alien NPCs (probably named b’Ob or S:Rah), players take the game less seriously, and that’s exactly what you want. As many comedy groups have learned, silly is not the same thing as funny, but it can get you there on a good day.

More important, not all the jokes need to be funny! If you make people groan at your terrible puns, they’ll probably come up with something better next time. Well, hopefully. If not, consign yourself to a lonely existence as a punster GM.

Funny cosmic games don’t deal with serious issues the way other cosmic games do. The issues might come up, but they get put back down just as quickly when someone makes fun of it. Funny games are almost always four-color instead of gritty and modern, and though there is something to be said for dark humor, it usually belongs in movies rather than as a regular feature in a role-playing game.

Color

The “color” of a game refers to a combination of factors. Most of this has been covered in the M&M rulebook, as well as many other fine books. The factors we’re going to concentrate on are the level of reality in the game, the viciousness of the characters and their opponents, and the level of corruption in the world.

Color is a good thing to bring up with your players before they create characters. An antihero who stalks serial killers to their homes and performs their own style of reverse serial killing on them is totally inappropriate for a four-color game, while a brightly-costumed jokester doesn’t fit well in a gritty 90’s-style comic. Telling the players beforehand what sort of game you want to run will make things much easier later.

Reality Level

A game’s reality level shows itself in many ways. A highly realistic game has homeless people living on the streets, *particularly* nasty wounds from gunshots and superpowers, and governments that get very angry when superheroes try to usurp their influence through vigilantism.

Unrealistic games generally ignore the disenfranchised people in the world, have video-game violence (“Oh, I got shot. My health bar is down 50 percent.”), and no one talks about serious social issues.

Immoral “Heroes”

Some people get a kick out of playing an antihero who makes peoples lives miserable by day and saves them by night. Be sure to let your players know how much tolerance you’re going to have for PCs killing their opposition, partying all night, and flying off the handle when angry. In some styles of play it’s perfectly acceptable to take away a Hero Point or two when someone acts immorally. In others it’s not, and your players should know which style they’re playing.

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Reality level is distinguished from viciousness in that a realistic game doesn't necessarily need vindictive heroes and psycho-killer villains. The two are often put together, but there's no law saying they have to be connected.

Cosmic games set in earlier times often keep the reality level pretty low, so that the world's greatest heroes don't get confronted with the fact that they haven't done anything to, for instance, fix world hunger or homelessness. More recent cosmic games are quite realistic indeed, at least those that happen near Earth. Those set farther out in the universe are typically in the middle.

The deadliness of a game is an important aspect to control in a cosmic game. If the unarmored mystic can be shredded in seconds by a typical foe, there's going to be shortage of characters pretty quickly. Probably a shortage of players too, unless that's the kind of game they want. Those interested in toning down the deadliness of a cosmic game might want to look at some of the saving throw options mentioned in the previous chapter.

Viciousness

This measures exactly how nasty your villains are going to get, and how far the heroes are willing to sink to defeat them.

Comics published in the early years of the Comics Code are the epitome of non-vicious stories. Even those that weren't campy and silly had very little violence, and no blood. Ever. The Silver Age was much the same way; villains still got away or were brought to jail, and heroes never killed or even tried to.

Some modern mainstream comics, and many "fringe" comics for years before that, show a great deal of blood and gore, with villains who will stop at nothing to accomplish their goals and heroes (sometimes not so heroic) who are just as happy murdering the bad guy as bringing him to justice.

If the bad guy has been knocked down and your speedster quickly ties him up, that's a pretty non-vicious game. If the bad guy has been knocked down

and your bruiser stomps on and crushes at his throat, that's a vicious game.

Corruption

Corruption measures how easily people are willing to betray their beliefs. A highly corrupt world is full of people who'd sell their mother for a dime. There are typically two types of corruption that are important to comic books: corruption of governments and corporations, and corruption of individuals.

Government corruption is assumed in most modern comics. Back in the Golden Age, and most of the Silver Age, comic-book heroes got along quite well with government officials, and worked easily with them. There was a lot of trust back in those days. Not so much in modern times. In modern comics, finding an honest politician or CEO is like finding a diamond while you walk down the street — theoretically possible, but it's just not going to happen in reality.

Most comics, regardless of what age they were written in, assume that most of the world's people are good, law-abiding, somewhat friendly citizens. People that mind their own business most of the time, but pull together when times get tough. Some comics are set in particularly nasty cities or neighborhoods where this isn't true, but they show one small part of the world. Only comics set in alternate dimensions portray ordinary people as folks who would sell out a hero to the villain for five bucks.

Typically, the higher the corruption dial is set, the worse shape the world is in. Economic, ecological, drug, and crime problems are rampant in a corrupt world. Money is the most important thing you can possibly have in such a place.

Percent Earth

Another thing to talk to your players about is how important Earth will be in your campaign. Here are four options that define a sort of "continuum of importance," from multiversal significance to cosmic insignificance.

Earth as Vital Dimensional Nexus

There is something vitally significant about Earth, something which every interdimensional despot would love to have or destroy. Perhaps it's the lynchpin that holds the whole universe together. Perhaps it's the emotional and spiritual core that runs a transdimensional empire. Maybe it's the only source of true magic in the universe. Whatever it is, Earth is vitally important, and not just to the PCs — to everyone else too. This sort of campaign is focused around defending Earth and everything that makes it special.

Earth as Home (Is Where the Heart Is)

There may be other planets out there, other dimensions and alternate timelines, but the PCs have chosen Earth to defend. In a lot of these games the characters never even consider *why* they're defending Earth — it's just the right thing to do, and couldn't explain it if you asked them. Characters in these games are often the most "human" of all, with all of the virtues and vices that entails. Home-as-heart games, along with the usual dimensional incursions and alien invasions, typically involve saving humanity from itself on a regular basis.

Earth as Home (Is Where Your Toothbrush Is)

Earth holds a special place in the characters' hearts because so many of their friends are there. They were born there, and you always have a special feeling about your hometown. However, there's nothing more to it than that. There are more beautiful places in the universe, more peaceful, more diverse, and they need defenders just as much as Earth. Sometimes more. Earth is more of a place for the heroes to regain their focus, get their center back, and get ready to go back out there and make a difference.

Earth as just another planet

This works best for a game in which the PCs are either alien or completely fed up with Earth. To heck with this mud ball, we're out of here. These games typically roam across space or dimensions, righting wrongs and thwarting evil. Earth might come back into the picture once in a while, but it's not the focus of the game by a long stretch.

All of this could just as easily be applied to another planet, for a game run far from Earth. Sometimes it can be fun to have everyone play a representative from a different species, defending a bizarre intergalactic empire. We (and the comic writers) just use Earth more often because it's something familiar, and it's easier to get into a story when there are familiar elements.

The "Change the World" Meter

We've already talked about this some in the first chapter, where we went over the status quo, authority figures, and hubris. This knob is generally set at the beginning of the game, but it can also get spontaneously turned up after a few sessions.

The classic example is when the heroes have just received and defeated their gift from the Übevillain of the Month Club, and are out celebrating their victory. They are approached by a homeless man who thanks them for all they've done. Then he shows them the shelter he sleeps in, the kitchen he eats at, the disabled veterans and single mothers he knows living on the street... and all of them thank the characters, but none of them are doing any better today than they were yesterday.

Cosmic characters have the capability to change things like this. No one said it would be easy. Sure, someone with super-speed or flight could deliver care packages, but the old saying about teaching someone to fish applies here. Super-intelligent or wealthy characters can start companies to employ those who need jobs. Speedsters, creators and transmuters can build housing. Super-charismatic characters can convince people to come to this new city you've just built, and can keep everyone in the city happy. It's a lot of work, but for a cosmic character, it's *actually possible*.

Think of the change-the-world meter this way: a cosmic-level character with the maximum amount of super-intelligence they can get, and a decent amount of genetics, biology, or botany skill, should be able to create a type of weed that grows in the cracks in city sidewalks and provides all the nutrition that someone

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needs for a day. If they aren't doing that, your change-the-world meter is set low. If they are, it's set high.

Changing the face of worlds other than Earth, however, is a fine comic-book tradition, and heroes usually think little of doing that.

Religion in All Its Forms

It's possible to have a character who is (or thinks he is) the Archangel Michael, or one who's the next Buddha, without changing the tone of the game. After all, there have been Greek, Egyptian, and Norse gods running around comic universes for years without any kind of serious religious discussion.

Both ancient and modern religions have a lot to add to cosmic games. Who could make a better cosmic-powered villain than Lucifer? If the party needs a leader, who better than Odin the All-Father? An army of titans returning from the pit of Tartarus is a severe threat, one that needs to be met by similarly-powered heroes. And again, almost all of this can be done without running a game with a strong religious tone.

Adding a serious element of religion to a cosmic game can change its flavor entirely. If you really want to run a highly religious game, focus on the things that make religion more than just mythology. Focus on stories about faith. Focus on stories about redemption and damnation. Focus on the nature of reality and the cosmos, and of humankind's place in that cosmos.

The first questions to ask yourself when running a religious or spiritual game are the big ones.

First, which religion is right? Which religion is telling its followers the truth about the nature of the universe and the afterlife? Not that the others are lying on purpose. One or two might be, but the rest are just wrong, not malicious. Even the leaders of the religion that's correct might not truly believe in every last teaching — mere humans rarely know the truth about all this.

Is more than one religion correct? Do a few of them have the basics right, while distorting the

details? Does every religion's heaven and hell (or nirvana, or Valhalla...) really exist, with the followers of each religion going to the appropriate destination when they die? Do Hwanin, the Korean emperor of heaven and earth, and Ea, Babylonian god of the sweet waters, exist in the same universe? Can people be "misrouted" to the wrong paradise or hell, and if so, can they be saved from their fate? Can you visit the dead? Can you bring their souls back to the lands of the living, and if so, what does it cost?

How important is faith? Do gods thrive on it, or is it merely an important part of worship? Does proof of a god's existence somehow taint someone's faith in that god?

Most religiously oriented comic books, at least in the United States, focus on Christianity in one form or another. They assume that the basic details of the Bible are correct, and typically draw much more from the New Testament than the Old. If you're going to run a religious game, make sure to know at least the basic tenets of the religion you choose as the "right one." Pick up a copy of the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, the Tao Te Ching, the Diamond Sutra, or whatever you need... and then pick up a book that interprets it from an *outside* viewpoint. Make the themes of that religion the themes of your game. Buddhist games, just to pick an example, should focus on the quest for Nirvana, the eightfold path, and reducing the suffering of the world. If you ignore the themes of the religion you pick, you might as well go back to having a storm god hanging around and smiting the villain of the month.

Alternate Settings

Characters as Gods

Not just one character, all of them (or very nearly all of them). The defining feature of this kind of game is that the players are not playing broken-down, lower-powered versions of ancient gods meeting on a modern Earth (though that could be pretty cool too). The idea is to play a pantheon of gods in their heyday, at the peak of their power and influence. What would

you do with not only the power of a god, but the fame and worship that goes along with it?

As with all games, you'll need to choose a setting. If your players can agree on a particular existing pantheon to play, then you've got a historical setting without too much trouble. There are dozens of good books and web pages on any historical setting you could choose, from ancient Greece to mythic China to Pharonic Egypt. You can — and probably will want to — make some changes to things for the sake of your game instead of sticking to historical accuracy, but hey, if you're a history major who lives for detail, more power to you.

If your players can't agree on a particular pantheon, but still want to play known mythological figures, you'll have to find some reason for them to be together, and more important, for them to stay together. In modern times they could be the remaining members of their pantheon, trying to reawaken faith in the old ways of the world. In ancient times, there might have been some disaster or event that made all the other gods disappear, and the survivors band together in an effort to keep religious energy flowing to them all, and to find out what happened to all their friends.

Your players could also choose to create gods out of whole cloth, taking an inspiration or two from existing sources, but creating basically new deities. This could be set on a vanished land in ancient Earth (Atlantis anyone?), or in the Modern Age with the gods newly “born” and looking to set up shop, but it's probably best run in an alternate universe or different planet. The gods don't even really need anyone to rule over, though it certainly helps if there's at least someone less powerful to interact with.

Ironically, most stories told in a godly game will probably be social stories. Sure, there will be epic battles against the forces of evil, and the occasional foundations-shaking brawl between hotheaded PCs, but most of the story is really in how the PCs interact with each other and with important NPCs. When all the villains are in the team's family, it becomes a lot harder to throw them in prison or kill them.

Characters in this game aren't quite heroes, and aren't quite gods, and aren't anything in between either. They live outside of Earth's dimension while still being deeply involved in it. Often they are personifications or incarnations of the basic facts of reality. One person might play the Lord of Dreams, another one the Mistress of Time, and another might play an undying Eternal Warrior. Each of them is more than a god, for even the gods are defined by the existence of these beings.

Most comics and books in this vein take place in a modern world; some on modern Earth and some in a world where magic and mysticism are still alive and well. Some fantasy novels with this bent take place in their own worlds, of course, but most focus on humanity as we see it around us, even if half of the action takes place in the Realm of Pure Thought.

Games run on this level should be of a higher power level than even most cosmic games, to give the characters total dominion over their chosen area. The incarnation of fate should be able to read someone's lifeline by sight and know everything they ever did and will ever do. If you're running a M&M game, 30th level is recommended.

There are more dangers to these characters than one might imagine. There are wars with other concepts that might want to make themselves more important than the characters. There are the minions of nonexistence, who want to erase the characters permanently from reality. There are devious people who want the powers of an incarnation for themselves. There are friends and relatives galore, who are probably not threats, but make good story elements. This kind of game should have no shortage of challenges.

Such a game makes character death either totally irrelevant or something to be avoided at all costs. Some such characters simply cannot be killed. Even if wounded terribly, they either recover or are replaced by an incarnation-in-waiting. Other such characters truly *are* the thing that they represent, and their death would remove it from the world forever. You should decide which of these routes you want to take before the game starts, and make sure that the players know.

Secret Rulers of the World

In this game the characters are the true rulers of the world. They hold influence over all aspects of human culture, from art to business to technology.

This is a game that doesn't lend itself well to slug-fests, but it is certainly a high-powered game. Powers like Datalink, Telepathy, Mind Control, and ESP will be significantly more important than Super-Strength or Energy Blast. Any character who doesn't have minions would almost have to be a pawn or lackey for the other characters, at least at the start of the game.

Standard supervillains will likewise be rare in this game. The characters would simply send someone else to take care of the mess — why risk your own lives? — and probably aren't equipped to handle mountain-lifting bruisers anyway. No, the threats that characters in this game will face are of a more insidious variety. Besides the other secret rulers of the world, they'll have to face contagious ideological viruses, apocalyptic, demon-summoning cults, and invasions of subtle, shape-shifting aliens. The threats are less obvious, but no less dangerous.

This kind of game isn't for every GM or every group of players, but it can be entertaining if you're looking for a change of pace.

Chapter Four

This chapter introduces some cosmic-level super-feats, powers that work best in cosmic-level games, and uses for skills that have transcended the limits of mortal ability. There are also a few optional rules included for situations that arise more often in cosmic-powered games.

Incredible Skill

Once a character's skill value exceeds 20 (counting both ranks and bonuses), his or her ability with that skill has transcended anything that even an exceptional human being could do. Skills at that level almost seem like powers on their own. For the ordinary 10th level M&M characters such levels of skill *do* in fact depend on power — there's no way to get a +25 skill without some sort of superpower. For cosmic heroes, however, that +25 could come just from ranks of skill, without even taking bonuses into account.

This section describes uses for skills that have exceeded the bounds of mortal ability.

Acrobatics (Dex)

One common use of Acrobatics is to reduce the effective height of a fall. Characters in M&M reach terminal velocity after a fall of 200 feet, so an

Cosmic Synergy Bonus

Ordinary synergy bonuses give +2 to one skill for having 5 ranks in a related skill. Those who learn the in-depth secrets of a skill can see even more links to other skills.

For every 10 additional ranks in a skill (so at 15 ranks, 25 ranks, 35 ranks, etc.) the synergy bonus increases by +2. So, for instance, a character with 25 ranks in Acrobatics would receive a +6 synergy bonus on Balance checks.

Acrobatics check result of 200 would allow you to jump out of a plane without a parachute and not even have a *chance* of being damaged. Check results this high are unlikely even in cosmic-level games, but a combination of this skill, Jump, and a little bit of Amazing Save or Protection should allow the same effect.

At 20 ranks or more in Acrobatics the dodge bonuses increase to +5 (for fighting defensively) and +8 (for full defense) instead of the usual numbers.

Balance (Dex)

This skill is used more or less as described. The following DCs may be appropriate for cosmic heroes with high Balance:

DC	Situation
30	Balance on another character's head without their permission
+5	Eyes closed, total darkness, or other situations with no visual cues.
+5	Surface is swaying erratically (like a tightrope in heavy wind)

Bluff (Cha)

Ordinarily this skill is ineffective against opponents who can't hear you, don't understand your language, or just plain don't care (such as most constructs). Use the following DC modifiers for such foes:

DC	Foe
+10	Can't hear you (you must bluff in gesture).
+10	Doesn't understand your language (you must bluff in gesture).
+20	Constructs and objects animated with the Animate power

In some of these cases you can't get across any kind of important information in the bluff — you'll have to settle for using the skill to feint and create distractions.

Climb (Str)

At 20 ranks in Climb you can use your Jump skill while climbing any surface, which may help you reach handholds you couldn't before.

Non-stick surfaces (such as polished steel, Teflon, or certain super-science coatings) add +15 to the Climb DC.

Computers (Int)

You can make a Computers check to taunt constructs and other machines, as per the Taunt skill. You roll your Computer skill against theirs (or their Sense Motive, if they have it), with a -10 penalty. Success allows you to choose one of the options for Taunt. Failure means that the computer has successfully taunted you instead, typically choosing to enrage and frustrate you.

Writing an artificially intelligent computer program is a DC 50 task. You may specify some basic personality traits you wish the AI to have, but it will mostly develop on its own, learning from its surroundings.

A DC 35 Computers check will let you read binary (or other computer code) faster than you read regular written text.

Concentration (Wis)

Exceptional levels of Concentration can help to counteract the effects of mind control. With a DC 50 Concentration check you can get another Will save against Possession, Mind Control, and similar powers. You can only try this once for each instance of control, *not* once per command.

Craft (Int)

Your work is good enough to sway people's emotions. Craft can be used with a -10 penalty in place of Perform or Diplomacy as long as people have the

time to admire your artwork, taste your cooking, drive your cars, or wield your weapons (for example). Craft can only substitute for Diplomacy if someone knows that you are in fact the person who created this work of art.

Demolitions (Int)

A DC 50 Demolitions check will let you plant explosives in certain important locations (such as a place where ley lines meet, or a very ancient graveyard) to blast a hole into another dimension. The surrounding area will not be harmed; all the force of the explosives goes into breaching the dimensional barrier. How long the portal remains open, and which dimension it opens into, is a matter for the GM to decide.

The explosives used for such an act of demolition must be particularly powerful, and made from exotic ingredients (preferably ingredients from whatever dimension the bomb is blowing its way into). Your character must also have at least 5 ranks in Science (Dimensional) or Knowledge (Dimensions) to attempt this task, or be guided by someone who does.

Demolitions experts can also use their knowledge of a structure's weak points to hit it more accurately and effectively. See the Search skill for more info.

Diplomacy (Cha)

Heroes with extremely high Charisma and Diplomacy skills should look at the interaction table in M&M. Notice that a Diplomacy check of 50 will take someone straight from Hostile to Helpful. Typically this can be opposed by an appropriate skill check (Sense Motive or Diplomacy) or a Will save. It's not mind control, but it's a great way to make someone your friend.

Negotiating with someone with a completely different moral system imposes a -5 penalty on the Diplomacy rolls of *both* parties. For instance, if you want the alien delegation to be content living in an island in the Bahamas, and they'd prefer to eat all humans because they think you're food, both of you will have trouble coming to a resolution.

Taunting Constructs

High levels of Computers, Bluff, and Taunt skills allow you to fake out or enrage computer opponents, constructs, and animated objects. Here are a few good taunts for them, mostly for computers.

“Silicon will always be inferior!”

“Cram it in your I/O port!”

“Your mother was a 286!”

“Hey, big monitor. Looks like someone’s compensating for something...”

“10001011010111000101, you loser!”

“Did you get your processor from the bottom of a cereal box?”

“Ooh, a golem. Bring it on, schist-face.”

“I could out-compute you with my frontal lobe tied behind my back.”

Disable Device (Int)

By increasing your Disable Device DC by +10 you can reduce the time for a simple device to a half action, and the time for a complex device to one round or more. By increasing the DC by +20 you can disable simple devices with a free action, and complex devices with a half action.

Disguise (Cha)

Add the following modifiers to your effective Disguise skill when trying to impersonate the very weird:

Modifier	Thing Impersonated
-10	Mostly Humanoid Alien
-15	Bizarre Alien
-20	Extradimensional Creature
-30	Slime Monsters, etc.

Drive (Dex)

A Drive check of 30 or more will allow you to drive a car or truck at its normal speed and maneuverability while having it up on two wheels. Drive doesn’t come in handy in cosmic games very often, but Pilot does.

Escape Artist (Dex)

A DC 50 Escape Artist check will allow you to slip out of a locked safe.

Adding +10 to the difficulty of an Escape Artist check moves the time required down by one category: from a minute to a full-round action, from a full action to a half action, and from a half action to a free action.

Forgery (Int)

By taking a -20 penalty to your Forgery check, your character can attempt to forge documents that he or she hasn’t even seen before. This ability comes from the forger’s knowledge of what official documents look like in general. This does not allow the forger to forge someone’s signature without seeing it, only to create official-looking documents with a vague scribble that might or might not be someone’s signature. Sometimes that’s all you need.

The Comprehend power is suggested for those who want to forge the order to stop an alien armada.

Gather Information (Cha)

Apply the following modifiers to the DC for your Gather Information check. Some of these modifiers assume that, in the process of attaining higher Gather Information ranks, your character has run into some decidedly strange people who “aren’t from around here.”

DC	Situation
+5	Information outside local area
+10	Information from a different country

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+15	Info from different planet
+20	Info from different dimension
+10	Get info in half an hour instead of a few hours as listed in M&M
+20	Get info within a minute

Handle Animal (Cha)

Your experience with all kinds of creatures lets you deal even with those who are thoroughly hostile and alien. With a DC 30 Handle Animal check you can tame creatures such as sharks and spiders. With a DC 50 check you can befriend (if not tame) even vicious slime-dripping alien animals who are trained to eat all they see.

Hide (Dex)

The modifiers from the M&M rules are included below, along with some new ones. These modifiers are applied to your skill roll, not the DC.

Modifier	Situation
-10	Hide after distraction from Bluff
-20	Sprinting or charging
-20	You hit someone with a non-Obvious ranged attack
-30	You hit someone with a non-Obvious melee attack

The Obvious flaw on a power negates any chance of remaining hidden while using it. Attention is automatically drawn to the character.

Innuendo (Cha)

By using Innuendo and Taunt together you can insult someone in a way they won't figure out for at least a few minutes. Make a normal Taunt check, rolling for resistance as usual. Then make an Innuendo check with DC 10 + your opponent's Innuendo skill (or Charisma modifier if he or she has no Innuendo skill). Success means that you can decide when your opponent figures out the insult: sometime in the next few minutes (good for encouraging pursuit), some-

Who Has Skills This High?

Those of you used to other d20 games might consider these Difficulty Classes to be quite obscenely high, even for cosmic-powered characters. Remember that powers like Super-Attributes and Super-Skills can allow even ordinary, 10th-level heroes to have a skill check of +20 after bonuses. A 25th-level hero who considers a particular skill important can easily have a +40 to +50 in that skill.

For those looking to really max out their skill ranks, use the Skill Focus and Talented feats. It's more expensive than buying ranks in the skill, but it's a way around the rank cap. Remember also that the Super-Skill bonus *doesn't* stack with the bonus from a Super Attribute.

time in the next day, or sometime this week. You can't choose an exact time.

You can also use a DC 30 Innuendo check to send two different messages to two different people in a single sentence. Both people may make Innuendo or Sense Motive checks, with a DC equal to your check result, to attempt to catch both parts of the message.

For example, you could speak a sentence which means "We come in peace" to your enemies, but "Shoot to kill" to your friends. If your Innuendo check is 35, your enemies can attempt an Innuendo or Sense Motive check, DC 35, to understand both parts of the message.

Intimidate (Cha)

Ordinarily this skill is ineffective against opponents who can't hear you, don't understand your language, or just plain don't care (such as most constructs). Use the following DC modifiers for such foes:

DC	Foe
+10	Can't hear you (you must intimidate in gesture).
+10	Doesn't understand your language

+20 (you must intimidate in gesture).
Constructs and objects animated
with the Animate power

Detailed messages are impossible for the first two cases, but usually detailed messages aren't the point of Intimidation anyway. You just want them to get out of your way or take you to their leader.

Jump (Str)

Jump doesn't have much use in a cosmic game. Anyone who wants to jump exceptionally long distances should use the Leaping power. Those who just want to be all ninja should consider the Jump Over The Moon feat later in this book.

Knowledge (Int)

Knowledge of things which are in your area of expertise, but not exactly "local," are made with +10 to +20 to your DC. For instance, if your Earth-born character has Knowledge: Archaeology and is asking a question about ancient Martian civilization, a +15 to the DC would not be inappropriate.

Language (n/a)

There are no real cosmic uses of the Language skill. Those who are really interested in speaking and understanding strange languages should use the Comprehend power.

Some alien languages may require more than two ranks of the Language skill to understand and use, such as those based on color, pheromones, ultrasonics, or sounds that humans simply can't make. A language based exclusively on color might cost twice as much to learn, and require special aids to "speak."

Listen (Wis)

Exceptionally keen hearing can pick up things that most people don't even think about. Remember

to add +1 to the DC for every 10 feet away the sound is, not counting doors, walls and such.

<u>DC</u>	<u>Sound</u>
35	Clothing rubbing together
40	You can determine that ultrasonic or subsonic sounds are present. You still need the Ultra-Hearing feat to actually <i>hear</i> the sounds.
50	Human heartbeat
70	Hair growing

Medicine (Wis)

Cosmic doctors often need to deal with alien characters and even androids. Use the following chart to determine the DC for giving first aid or long-term care to such characters.

<u>DC</u>	<u>Patient</u>
20	Very human-like alien
25	Other carbon-based aliens
25	Android of human appearance
30	Other aliens from our universe
40	Creature from a dimension with different physical laws
50	Hyperintelligent shade of blue (or other totally bizarre creatures)

Move Silently (Dex)

As mentioned in M&M, those who are sprinting or charging take a -20 to their Move Silently checks. Very skilled characters can make a DC 40 Move Silently check to attempt to quiet their heartbeats, so that even those with super-hearing cannot detect it.

Open Lock (Dex)

Taking a -20 penalty on your Open Locks check will allow you to make a lockpick attempt as a half action. Taking a -40 penalty will allow you to attempt to pick a lock as a free action. Failing either roll means wasting a whole round on it, so "taking 20" will still take 20 rounds.

Perform (Cha)

A DC 50 Perform check will influence audiences to the point of riot or total depression. Individuals in the audience may make DC 20 Will saves to attempt to avoid this effect. Riots incited this way will last at least an hour, but not much longer if the police arrive. The depression could last for days.

Pilot (Dex)

Piloting a spaceship you haven't seen before, built by aliens who are relatively humanoid, would be a DC 30 Pilot check. Piloting a dimension-faring ship made by totally alien creatures would require a DC 50 Pilot check.

Profession (Wis)

With a DC 60 Profession check you can totally revolutionize the way your profession works, improving both the efficiency and the happiness of people who do things your way. All tasks performed by people in that profession have their DC reduced by 1. If you try to do this more than once for any particular profession the DC of your check increases by 5 each time (to 65, then 70, etc.).

Read Lips (Int)

By making a DC 30 Read Lips check you can interpret someone's body language to get a rough idea of what they're saying without being able to hear them or see their lips move. Using this skill to interpret body language can also substitute for the Sense Motive skill at -15.

Repair (Int)

Modifiers for alien technology are already included in the M&M version of Repair. Here we will add a way to do things more quickly.

By increasing the DC by 20 you can cut the time by one category: from weeks to days, from days to hours, from hours to minutes, and from minutes to half-actions. Thus, repairing damage to a car that would normally take a week to fix (call it a DC 15 check) could be done in only minutes by increasing the DC to 85.

Ride (Dex)

Add +5 to all DCs when riding a flying mount. Add another +5 if the beast is alien but trained. Untrained beasts require a DC 30 Ride check to ride at all, let alone get them to do tricks or stop trying to eat the rider.

Science (Int)

With a DC 60 Science check you can totally revolutionize the way your field of study works, improving both the efficiency and the happiness of people who do things your way. All tasks performed in your field of science have their DC reduced by 1. If you try to do this more than once for any particular profession the DC of your check increases by 5 each time (to 65, then 70, etc.).

Understanding the physical laws of another universe is a DC 40 check, which normally takes a day of experience or a few hours of experiments. If you take a week to do experiments you can reduce the DC to 20. Your understanding may be imperfect, but it'll get you by.

Bioscience deserves a special mention because of the impact it can have on the world. Creating a cure for a particular type of cancer, or for a disease as tenacious as AIDS, would be a DC 35 check. Creating a cure for all types of cancer would be a DC 60 check.

Search (Int)

A hero with cosmic levels of Search can find weak points and microscopic cracks in objects, buildings, and vehicles — places where a punch or energy blast will do the most good. A DC 35 Search check

will allow your character to find such a place with a full-round action. The Demolitions skill may also be used in this manner, with the same DC. Some super-alloys are harder to find cracks in, adding +5 or +10 to the DC.

If your character (or another one guided by you) strikes that object, structure, or vehicle, you may ignore its Hardness when dealing damage. The object takes an extra +5 damage from your attack, and its Break DC decreases by 5.

With a DC 40 Search check you can find weak points in the Protection or Armor powers, Force Fields, and other energy barriers. Reduce the protection or save bonus provided by this barrier by 5 points for anyone who knows the weak point. This use also requires a full-round action.

Invisible barriers add 5 to this DC. Any barrier, structure, object, or vehicle which is immune to the Penetrating Attack feat is also immune to this use of Search.

Sense Motive (Wis)

Sense Motive can substitute for Read Lips at a -15 penalty, as your character reads someone's body language well enough to figure out what they're saying. This is more difficult for non-human species (the penalty increases to -20 or -25), but not for human beings with different languages!

You may use Sense Motive at a -10 penalty to sense the motives — such as they are — of constructs, computers, robots, and animated objects, but you must have the Computers skill at a rank equal to your Sense Motive or you will take a penalty to the roll equal to the difference between the two skills. For instance, if your Computer skill is 23 ranks, and your Sense Motive skill is 25 ranks, then you will make your Sense Motive check at a total penalty of -12 (-10 for the attempt, -2 for the difference in skill levels).

Sleight of Hand (Dex)

Use the following table to determine the DC for palming objects larger than a coin, or hiding them

effectively on your body. As usual, this check is opposed by the observer's Spot.

DC	Size
10	Coin
15	Poker card
20	Handgun
25	Hardcover book
30	Rifle
35	Katana
40	Battleaxe

Spot (Wis)

Remember that a Spot check of 20 allows you to become aware of the presence of an invisible character. With a Spot check of 30 you can narrow down the direction to your target to a 90-degree arc: in front of you, to the left, to the right, or behind you. A DC 30 Spot check will also allow you to become aware of an Astrally Projecting presence in your line of sight.

Survival (Wis)

Surviving in another universe or on an alien planet is a DC 20 to 30 feat, depending on how threatening the region is and how many resources are available. Surviving in deep space, with only your spacesuit and a basic toolkit, is a DC 50 check.

Survival is also used in conjunction with the Track feat. Attempting to track a flying or incorporeal creature adds +30 to the DC. Tracking a hero with the Shrinking power into a microverse is a DC 30 task.

Obsolete Powers and Feats?

Some very high ranks of skill allow characters to do amazing things that mimic the effects of powers or feats. We tried to keep this to a minimum, since the Diplomacy skill shouldn't be a substitute for Mind Control. These effects are typically minor, and kick in around 20 ranks in the skill. No power or feat should be made obsolete in this book.

Swim (Str)

At 20 ranks in this skill your swim speed is no longer limited to half or quarter — you are treated as if having the Amphibious super-feat for the purposes of movement speed (but not for the purpose of breathing under water or surviving intense oceanic pressure).

At 15 ranks in this skill, and again every 10 ranks above that, the time a you may hold your breath doubles. A character with 25 ranks in Swim can hold his or her breath for four times the usual amount of time. See M&M for suffocation rules.

Taunt (Cha)

Ordinarily this skill is ineffective against opponents who can't hear you, don't understand your language, or just plain don't care (such as most constructs). Use the following DC modifiers for such foes:

DC	Foe
+10	Can't hear you (you must taunt in gesture).
+10	Doesn't understand your language (you must taunt in gesture).
+20	One of the two above <i>and</i> has non-human anatomy. Includes previous modifier (don't add the +10 to this).
+20	Constructs and objects animated with the Animate power

Cosmic Feats

Not all of these feats are exclusive to high-powered games; some of them are just useful or nice to have in general. Some, however, have requirements that make them exclusively the realm of cosmic characters.

20 Punches

Your tremendous speed or mastery of time allows you to hit an opponent a score of times in the time it takes most people to throw a single punch.

Prerequisite: 20+ ranks of Super-Speed or Time Travel (or any power that includes the effects of these, such as Time Control)

Benefit: You may “take 20” on an attack roll, automatically getting a critical hit on your opponent. You are considered to have made only one attack this round. Use of this feat cannot be combined with abilities such as the Mach One Punch extra or the Multiattack feat.

Normal: Characters with Super-Speed cannot normally hit anyone any faster than normal. No one may normally take 20 on attack rolls.

Antipode Strike

You put a greater strain on your opponent by attacking with two elements or energies at once.

Prerequisite: Ability to fire two conceptually opposed energy or elemental blasts (fire and ice, light and darkness, air and stone, etc.). You do not need the ability to fire them in the same turn; this feat supplies that.

Benefit: You may blast simultaneously with both attacks. Treat this as a single attack with +3 damage. If the two elemental powers are not at the same level for some reason, the lower-powered one is enhanced.

Special: Often you can use a feat or extra to gain access to a new type of energy or element blast if you already possess one type. The effects of this feat stack with those of Penetrating Attack. Unlike that feat, this one cannot be taken more than once.

Authority Figure

You are solely responsible for the wellbeing of a large group of people. You might be a mayor, a

dictator, or an alien emperor, but you can call on the powers of your office occasionally.

Prerequisite: If your game uses the optional Wealth feats, the Wealth feat is a prerequisite. Fame is not a prerequisite, but if you do not have it yet it must be the next feat you select.

Benefit: You can use your special authority to run background checks on individuals, giving you an idea of what their personality is like and what sorts of powers they have displayed. You may do this once per game. If the region you control is small, the information you can gather can be found very quickly, but may not be very detailed and may not include that individual at all. Larger regions will take longer to gather the necessary information, but the data will be more complete and detailed.

Battle Analyst

You can assess a combat situation quickly by virtue of your superior mind.

Prerequisite: Leadership, Int 20+ or 5+ ranks in Super-Intelligence

Benefit: You may use a free action each turn to give your allies +1 to Defense by shouting directions (such as “She has a weak left, dodge to your right!”). You can affect a number of allies equal to your Intelligence bonus. If you or someone else is using the Leadership feat, the bonuses provided stack.

Brachiator

It’s like you’re some kind of monkey or something. Heck, maybe your character *is* a monkey.

Prerequisite: 10+ ranks in Climb, or 5+ ranks of the Clinging superpower.

Benefit: You move at your normal speed while climbing or clinging. You also suffer no penalties if you fight while climbing.

Normal: Climbing speed is typically one half or one quarter of a character’s normal speed, and there are penalties for fighting while climbing (see the M&M rulebook for details).

Counterblast

You can hit someone else’s energy blast with your own in an attempt to deflect or overpower it.

Prerequisite: A damaging attack power such as Disintegrate, Energy Blast or Element Control.

Benefit: You may use a readied action to counter another character’s blast with your own. Make a power level check with DC equal to 10 + your opponent’s blast’s power. If you succeed, your opponent’s blast is reduced in power by the level of your own blast. Blasts reduced to 0 ranks have no effect. If you have more ranks in your power than your opponent, you may make an attack on your opponent with a damage level equal to your remaining ranks. For instance, if you use your 18-rank Fire Blast to melt away a 15-rank Earth Control blast, and you succeed on the power level check, you can then roll a normal attack with a 3-rank Fire Blast.

Dying for Power

You can attain exceptional heights of power, but at tremendous cost to your own body.

Prerequisite: none

Benefit: You can take two lethal or three stun hits in exchange for an additional rank of power on your next power use. You cannot gain a number of ranks more than half your level in this way. You can also take an Unconscious or Disabled condition in order to add +2 ranks on your next power use. The condition takes effect after the power use. A “power use” could be (for instance) an energy blast, a rounds’ worth of defensive power, or running or flying to a particular destination. The conditions inflicted through use of this feat cannot be healed with any power; they must heal naturally, though First Aid can still help.

Special: This bonus to your power rating can take you above the normal limits for your level. This feat can be combined with the Extra Effort rules and the use of Hero Points, though Hero Points cannot be used to avoid conditions or damage “paid” as the cost of using this feat.

Even More Minions

You have a pyramid scheme going where some of your minions have minions themselves, who go out to recruit more...

Prerequisite: Minions, Loyalty score of 40+

Benefit: For each point of Loyalty above 40 you receive 50 1st-level minions, and one minion from 2nd and 3rd level. For every 2 points above 40 you receive another 4th, 5th, and 6th level minion. You

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have half as many 7th level minions as 6th level (round up), half as many 8th level as 7th level, and so forth until the number drops below 1.

Normal: The Minions chart in M&M stops at the 40+ row.

Evolving Powers

You are near a transition point in your life, where your powers will become something entirely new.

Prerequisite: any superpowers

Benefit: You may give up this feat at any time. When you do, your character falls into a coma, enters a cocoon, or otherwise becomes incapacitated for the better part of a game session. During this time the player should help out the GM by taking the role of random goons, NPC sidekicks, the President, etc. When the character emerges from this state, he or she will be completely changed. The current number of pp invested in superpowers, attributes, and feats (but not skills) must be used to create a new set of abilities. Any rearrangement is possible. Typically this new form is one that is more suitable to what the group has been doing recently, or is an indicator of what will soon be threatening the world.

Special: This feat should normally be chosen at character generation, and not gained later unless there is a very good reason for it.

Go for Distance

You can use a powerful melee attack to send your opponent flying.

Prerequisite: at least one rank of Super-Strength

Benefit: You may make a normal melee attack as full-round action. If you stun your target, he or she is knocked back five feet for each point by which the damage save is failed, multiplied by your Super-Strength Lifting Multiplier (see M&M page 105).

Normal: See the Knockback Option, M&M page 129

Special: Characters who are the target of this feat may spend a Hero Point to nullify the stun and knockback effects in a suitably cinematic way (flip around a convenient lamppost to fly back at the hero for an attack next round, grab the hand of a super-strong companion, fly all the way around the earth and land near their previous location, etc.). Characters who do so still take a stun or lethal hit, as appropriate.

Headquarters Feature

You spent some time building, digging, or buying an add-on to your team's headquarters.

Prerequisite: Headquarters (either through team membership or the feat).

Benefit: Your headquarters has one additional feature, with a number of power ranks equal to your level.

Normal: Headquarters normally have a number of features equal to the power level of the most powerful inhabitant.

Incomprehensible

Your thought process is so alien, or just so well-hidden, that no one can truly understand you.

Prerequisite: none

Benefit: Sense Motive checks against you have their DCs raised by 2. The same penalty applies to characters using the Telepathy power who are trying to read your thoughts or emotions.

Inhuman

By throwing away what others value in human nature you have become ruthless and uncaring.

Prerequisite: the Disturbing weakness

Benefit: You have a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks, and a +1 bonus on Will saves. These bonuses do not apply to your interactions with anyone with the More Human Than Human feat.

Special: Those with the More Human Than Human feat may not take this one. Aliens, androids, and other nonhuman characters may take this feat.

Inspiring Arrival

Your presence alone inspires other heroes to fight to their fullest.

Prerequisite: Inspire feat, 6+ ranks in any motion power (flight, teleport, swinging, etc.)

Benefit: On the turn you enter a fight you can use your Inspire feat as a free action. You can affect a number of allies equal to three times your Charisma bonus. You must still spend the Hero Point.

Normal: Inspire normally uses a half-action, and affects only a number of allies equal to your Charisma bonus.

Jump Over the Moon

"I've never seen a martial arts movie with such good special effects! You can't even see the wires!"

Prerequisite: 13+ ranks in Jump

Benefit: You can ignore the maximum distances listed for Jump checks.

Normal: Jump checks are normally limited by the character's height.

More Human Than Human

You epitomize everything worth fighting for in humanity, and understand people well.

Prerequisite: none

Benefit: You receive +1 to your Loyalty score and a +2 on any roll made to get someone to trust you or believe in you. These bonuses do not apply to your interactions with anyone with the Inhuman feat.

Normal: Those with the Inhuman feat may not take this one. Aliens, androids, and other nonhuman characters may take this feat.

Nosy Minions

"Boys, go check and see what Tony the Tuna is up to this week." "Right away, boss!"

Prerequisite: Minions (at least 20 of them total), 5+ ranks of Gather Information

Benefit: By placing 20 minions in a particular area you may have them effectively take 20 on a Gather Information check for you. Use the Gather Information score of the highest-quality minion assigned (assume one rank per level unless your minions are trained spies or interrogators; if so add +3), and then add 20 to get your "check result." The whole process takes only a few hours.

Special: This Gather Information check cannot be made without drawing attention to the fact that *someone* is looking into the matter. It might not point back to you, but suspicions will be aroused.

Normal: Taking 20 on a Gather Information check can take days if you work by yourself.

Redundant Organs

Your body has a built-in backup system.

Prerequisite: Con 13+

Benefit: If you fail your saving throw to resist a power that directly affects your body, such as Fatigue or Suffocate, you get another Fortitude save one round later. If this save is successful you shrug off the effects completely. You only get this one extra chance to overcome the power.



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Reflexive Phasing

You have the knack for phasing in or out of solidity at just the right time.

Prerequisite: 5+ ranks of Incorporeal

Benefit: If you fail your saving throw to resist a power that relies on your ability to nimbly escape, such as Slick or Snare, you get another Reflex save one round later. If this save is successful you escape the effects completely. You only get this one extra chance to overcome the power. Powers with the Ghost Touch extra negate this feat.

Remember the Trashcan

“If I were me, and I stole my dad’s keys, where would I put them?”

Prerequisite: 5+ ranks of Time Travel or Time Control (or any other power that has Time Travel as an extra)

Benefit: Once per game you may pull any one relatively small item out of a nearby crevice (alleyway, behind a sign, hidden in the ceiling tiles, etc.), where you will earlier conceal it after the current problems are done with. This item could be they key to a well-locked door, a coil of rope, a handgun, or any number of useful items. It is assumed that the placement of this item will happen in a future (?) adventure, off-screen, but it can be played out if the GM and player would enjoy it.

Responsible Hero

World leaders believe you to be a well-meaning individual with a strong conscience.

Prerequisite: Fame, Cha 13+, at least 4 years of successful experience as a worldwide hero.

Benefit: When matters involve superhuman interference or strange occurrences, you can usually place a phone call or two and get temporary security clearance to hear about or examine said phenomena. For instance, the government might cover up an alien spaceship crash so that the media doesn’t find out, but your friendship with the President means that you can get in to examine it for a little while. This feat doesn’t always work, but GMs should allow it to work more times than not.

Sentient Powers

One of your powers has a mind of its own.

Prerequisite: any superpower

Benefit: Your superpower has a mind of its own.

It can activate in emergencies without you doing anything to turn it on, and will do so if it would save your life. It also has its own feelings, and possibly its own agenda, and there may be some targets it refuses to affect. GMs should remember that this is meant to be a beneficial feat, not a weakness. Good examples would be intelligent viruses (for the Drain power), symbiotic Armor, or a band of living energy that gives its host Energy Control.

Total Competence

You’ve practiced your skills under situations so stressful that you will never doubt your ability to perform under pressure.

Prerequisite: 13+ ranks in the chosen skills.

Benefit: Pick three skills, or all the skills that fall under one wide grouping (such as Knowledge or Science). For instance, you could choose Repair, Science: Engineering, and Disable Device, or you could choose all Science skills. You may take 10 on checks involving these skills at any time, regardless of stress or time pressure.

Special: You may take this feat more than once. Each time you do, it applies to a different set of skills.

World-Breaking Powers

"I Talk to Fish Really, Really Well!"

Some powers just don't cut it in a cosmic game. No matter how high you jack up a PC's Possess Insects power or Swinging movement, it's just not going to be impressive next to someone with Time Travel or Cosmic Power. Be aware of things like this when creating an epic hero who's going to face threats from beyond space and time.

Here are a few interesting powers that can be useful for cosmic-level games. Some of them have very high costs, but are useful with only a few ranks. Others are most useful when maxed out.

New Power Effect: Extradimensional

This is a new basic type of power (such as an attack power, a defense power, a movement power, etc.). It is used to create extradimensional spaces (or "pocket dimensions") that the character and others can access.

The space provided is roughly spherical, with a radius of up to five feet per rank. The space lasts as long as the character creating it can use a free action to sustain it, and must be "anchored" to something the character is touching, such as a doorway, a backpack, or even the character's mouth. Anyone passing through the object's opening is transported to the sub-dimension within. Extradimensional powers normally have a range of Touch, a duration of Sustained, and require a full-round action to create the space. Accessing the space is a half action.

An extradimensional space created this way can be either pitch black or lit by a light barely bright enough to read by, as the character desires. It is filled with nothing more than breathable air, unless powers such as Object Creation are purchased as extras. Time passes normally in this space. Dimension Travel can reach this space, but such zones are typically considered unknown to the traveler, raising the DC to reach them.

Spaces created by this power must have at least one obvious entrance. Spaces created by this power can be accessed by anyone. This power can also add

its volume to existing spaces, making houses bigger on the inside than on the outside.

There are a few Extras which apply specifically to extradimensional powers.

Greater Control: This allows you a finer touch when creating your pocket dimension, giving you control over gravity, lighting, weather, temperature, and other conditions inside. None of these qualities may be such that a normal person would be harmed or impaired while inside your extradimensional space.

Restricted Access: You can decide, when creating your pocket dimension, who has access to it. Those without access cannot enter without the Dimension Travel power.

Hidden Access: The portal to your extradimensional space is invisible or hard to find. Only you know how to find it, though you can tell others. This space need not be attached to an existing object; you can simply reach into it from wherever you are and pull out the last thing that went in. You can also enter it from any place and effectively disappear from Earth's dimension, though you must come out at the same location you went in.

Accumulated Knowledge

Cost: 7

Action: None

Range: Personal

Duration: Continuous

The job you hold in the cosmic hierarchy was once held by another, and by others before them. You can draw on their knowledge to aid you. Or, for an alternate explanation, your character just has a "knack" for everything, and picks up every kind of talent easily. For every rank you have in this power, add a +1 power bonus to every skill you have. Remember that this bonus cannot stack to more than your level with Super-Skill or any Super-Attributes.

This is an super-ability-type power that gives one particular type of attribute use (specifically, the skill bonus) for five out of the six ability scores (Constitution is excluded because there are no Constitution-based skills). Each ability score you leave off this list — for instance, if your Accumulated

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Knowledge tells you nothing about Strength-related skills — counts as one Flaw. This power also includes the Comprehend power, so your hero can understand many languages.

Alternate Form: Psionic

Cost: 5

Action: Free

Range: Personal

Duration: Sustained

You can transform yourself into a being of pure psychic energy. In this form you are Incorporeal at your power rank, and can only be harmed by other mental attacks and energy blasts. You may choose one Immunity feat per power rank, use the Flight power at your power rank, and may use the Mental Blast power on someone by passing your incorporeal form through them. Unlike Astral forms, you are not invisible.

This power was created with the Alternate Form powers as a base, but primarily just by using the power creation system in M&M. It is a superpower which grants the effects of Flight, Incorporeal, Immunity, and a touch-ranged Mental Blast.

The Super Flight extra is highly recommended, so that your character can move at the “speed of thought.” Permanent should be considered a flaw for this power, rather than an extra, as it makes you permanently incorporeal. Telepathy makes a good extra, as it will allow you to communicate more easily.

Apotheosis

Cost: 8

Action: Free

Range: Personal

Duration: Sustained

A character with this power is capable of transforming into a god or goddess from Earth mythology, gaining its powers. You may distribute bonuses to attribute checks equal to half your ranks in this power, gain a number of feats equal to half your ranks in the power, use one power of cost no more than 6 at your full power rank, and use another power of cost no more than 2 at your full power rank. You may change into a different god or goddess as a free action. When

unconscious or asleep, you revert to your ordinary form.

For instance, if a character with 20 ranks in this power were to become Coyote, a Native American trickster god, you might add +5 to Charisma checks, +5 to Intelligence checks, pick 10 appropriate feats, take 20 ranks of Super-Charisma, and 20 ranks of Super-Dexterity. All of this is in addition to any other powers the character might normally have. It is recommended that players whose characters have this power create a “roster” of gods they can become, so the other players don’t have to sit around and wait as you figure out the powers.

This power is an example of specialized shape-shifting, with a bunch of extras and flaws. The exact way to build this power is as follows: start with Shapeshifting, add the Mimic extra *twice*, and the flaw Obvious (glowing aura in all forms). Add the flaw Limited, limiting the power to the forms of mythological figures and gods only. Now that Mimic has been bought as an extra, add some of its extras: buy Expanded Powers four times for one of the Mimic extras, and buy a half-extra of Mimic Feats, and a half-extra of Mimic Skills (both work based on half the number of ranks your character has).

Add the “Affects Others” extra and watch things *really* get nuts. Take the “Tainted Mimicry” flaw to have your character take on the personalities and problems of these gods as well as their powers.

Devouring Void

Cost: 7

Action: Half

Range: Touch

Duration: Continuous

Within you lies a hungry void; possibly a whirling maelstrom gate to hell, or a miniature black hole contained by your power. When you unleash this power, people are sucked inside you, possibly never to be seen again!

When you activate this power all objects within five feet per power rank are sucked towards you. The maximum weight you can pull in is 100 pounds at rank 1, and doubles for each additional rank you have in this power (200 lbs at rank 2, 400 at rank 3, 25.6

tons at rank 10, etc.). Unattended objects which weigh less than this are automatically pulled in. For living targets and items they are holding, use the number of ranks you have in this power as a Strength bonus, and make an opposed roll with the target's Strength. Those who fail are sucked in. You can hold one person (or person-sized object) inside you at power rank 1, and can double this for each additional rank (2 at rank two, 4 at rank three, 512 at rank ten, etc.).

Once inside you, characters are held as if grappled with a Strength bonus equal to your power rank. Those who manage to escape this grapple can literally crawl back out of you. Those who do not escape are trapped inside until you are killed or let the power lapse. They may eventually die of dehydration and starvation, but will not suffocate. Those inside can do anything they could normally do when grappled, but cannot harm you in any way — they are technically in another dimension.

You cannot selectively remove things from this pocket dimension! For instance, if you “swallow” a car, which takes up as much room as a dozen or more people, you cannot put it back out without emptying the space completely.

This is an Extradimensional power, with Telekinesis as an extra, and TK's Grapple extra. It also has increased Duration and the Area extra twice (once to make the telekinesis affect the void inside you, and once more to affect those outside). If you buy the Protection power as an Extra you can pull projectiles and energy attacks harmlessly into yourself, effectively giving you Protection at your power rank. The Selective extra can represent tentacles or beams of force which come out of you and pull only those you wish to target into yourself. Switching the power from an Extradimensional base to a Dimension Travel base will let you pull people directly into an alternate dimension... and keep them there.

Hammerspace

Cost: 3

Action: Half

Range: Personal

Duration: Continuous

This power allows you to reach behind your back, or simply gesture in the air, and pull forth your favor-

ite object. When you're done with the object you can simply have it disappear. No one else can access the space you keep this item in, and no amount of searching will find it. The item can be no more than five feet long per rank in this power, and must be something that your character can carry. You can swap an item in your hands for the item in Hammerspace, destroy the Hammerspace (ejecting the item at your feet), or create it again as a full-round action.

This is an Extradimensional power with Hidden Access and Restricted Access. It has a reduced Range, an increased Duration, and is Limited to holding what you can carry. Adding the Gadgets power as an extra allows you to effectively have access to an extradimensional source of weapons and gizmos, creating what you need seemingly out of nowhere. Removing the Limited flaw allows you to hide heavy objects such as cars, boats, or helicopters in hammerspace.

Lazarus Field

Cost: 9

Action: Half

Range: Touch

Duration: Continuous

Saving Throw: Will (harmless)

People around you miraculously appear uninjured after even the most severe attacks, and damage to them heals almost immediately. Even those who should be killed instantly (for instance, by a gunshot wound to the head) might survive.

All characters (friend and foe) within 5 feet per rank you have in this power benefit from the Healing power as described in M&M. A number of stun and lethal hits are removed, and characters are more likely to recover from stunned, unconscious, disabled, and nauseated conditions. Lost limbs and organs are repaired with a DC 20 power check. Most amazing is that any character who dies within this radius (or characters who died within the past [power rank] minutes and are brought into the area) may be immediately returned to life if you succeed on a DC 30 power check. Those returned to life are disabled but stabilized, and may recover further in later rounds. All of this miraculous effect takes no effort on your part. It heals you as well, and even works if you are rendered unconscious or fall asleep. You may use a

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half action to turn this power off if you want its effects to cease.

This power is based on Healing, with the Resurrection extra, three Duration extras, Area, and Regrowth. The Others Only flaw would be quite appropriate for this power. The Shapeable extra would be somewhat abusive. Empathic Healing should only be taken by the exceptionally foolish.

Mutagenic Touch

Cost: 3

Action: Half

Range: Touch

Duration: Continuous

Saving Throw: Reflex

You can give another being superpowers of your choosing. For every rank you have in this power, you may give the target one rank of any power with a cost no higher than two pp per rank. You cannot use this power on yourself.

As an example, a team leader facing a long climb up a mountain could touch everyone in his or her group and give them all the Flight power, bypassing the climb. Alternately, a supervillain could transform his or her goons with the Protection power, so that bullets bounce off them.

This power was based on Transformation, with the extras Continuous, and Mimic, and the Limited (no change of shape), and Range flaws. It is recommended that this power be limited to affecting no more people at once than the character has ranks in this power (so someone with ten ranks in Mutagenic Touch could only transform ten people at once). Adding the Expanded Powers extra (from Mimic) a few times would be very appropriate indeed, since it would allow the creation of supers who can grow or use super-speed. The Shapeshifting extra would allow you to use this power on yourself.

Pocket Universe

Cost: 21

Action: Full

Range: Touch

Duration: Continuous

You can create a relatively tiny universe which touches our own at some points. You can determine the contents of this universe, within certain limits, and can set the access points to it. If you want, you can also destroy a universe you have created with a full-round action.

The pocket universe must have at least one entrance/exit, which is quite noticeable when you get near it. Glowing doors, swirling whirlpools, and strange cloud formations are all good examples. Anyone may pass through this portal to enter or leave your dimension. The interior has a radius of roughly 30 miles per rank of power, and can contain any materials you desire with hardness no greater than your power rank. You cannot create higher life forms or intelligent life, but plants and simple animals like bacteria, snails and insects are acceptable. Natural forces inside this pocket universe are at your discretion, but cannot be strong enough to cause damage. For instance, you could cause it to always be rainy, but not for lightning bolts to strike invaders. Or you could create a hollow sphere of matter with gravity pulling toward the outside, but not gravity strong enough to crush or impair a normal person.

Objects created inside the universe can be brought outside of it, as long as they don't rely on strange physical laws that only operate inside the pocket. Sophisticated objects, such as guns, computers, and watches, will require Craft checks to create. You cannot change the contents of your universe without destroying it and recreating it. Anything inside which was not of your creation will tumble out the portal when you destroy the universe, and any items removed from it will evaporate and disappear.

This is an Extradimensional power with Greater Control, with Create Object bought as an extra, and the Shapeable and Realistic extras from that power. It also has an increased Duration and fifteen Area extras. This power is Slow. If you want a smaller universe with tougher materials inside, get rid of some of the Area extras and buy more ranks.

Rain of Destruction**Cost:** 10**Action:** Half**Range:** Sight**Duration:** Concentration**Saving Throw:** Reflex

You rain deadly energy (pick a type from Energy Control in M&M) down on a large area, harming living beings and destroying inanimate objects. The radius of the area you can affect is 320 feet per power rank, so a hero or villain with ten ranks in this power can affect an area over one mile in diameter.

The type of materials that can be affected depend on how many ranks of this power the hero has. At least one rank will harm ice, paper, glass, and rope. Five or more ranks will erode wooden buildings, while eight will tear down stone or concrete dwellings, and ten ranks will even damage iron foundations. At 15 ranks of power, even the steel construction beams will begin to melt away (or otherwise be destroyed).

This power was built using Energy Blast, with the extras Concentration, Range, and six extras worth of Area. Adding the Shapeable extra will allow you and your teammates to walk unscathed through your own destruction.

Reality Flux**Cost:** 17**Action:** Full**Range:** Sight**Duration:** Continuous**Saving Throw:** Reflex

Your will bends and warps reality around you. You can transmute one thing to another with a bit of effort, changing materials from one element to another and altering their shapes. For each rank you possess in this power you can affect one one-mile cube as per the Transmutation power in M&M, with several enhancements. You could turn an airplane into thin air, turn the ground under your foes into quicksand, or even (with extensive enough Science and Craft skills) create a clean and shiny robot servitor from a pile of raw sewage. You can also use this as an attack, by changing the air around a target into acid or chlorine. This does damage equal to your power rank (the damage does *not* have continuous duration).

Changed matter lasts until you allow it to change back, or someone else negates your power. To create or destroy a particular type of matter you must make a power check, with the DC equal to the hardness of the matter you're attempting to affect. You cannot affect living matter, though the side effects of creating a giant mass of sand above your foes would certainly affect them. Each time you use this power it becomes more difficult to twist reality, until you must rest and allow the natural processes of the universe to restore the potential for change. Each time you use this power, reduce your number of power ranks by 1 until you reach 0 ranks. Lost ranks return at the rate of one per hour.

This power is based on Transmutation, with the Sight, Continuous, Destruction, Creation, Shapeable, and Suffocation extras, and the Area extra 11 times. It Degrades, and is Slow. Any character with this power will be rich beyond the dreams of avarice even if they *can't* turn things into precious metals, because they can purify an entire landfill by themselves. Add Transformation as a power stunt, and various of its extras as extras on this power, if you want to affect living beings as well.

Shroud the World in Darkness**Cost:** 17**Action:** Full**Range:** Touch**Duration:** Sustained

Once per day a character with at least five ranks in this power may spend a Hero Point (who are we kidding, anyone using this power is spending a Villain Point) to shroud the entire Earth in darkness. The darkness remains until the character falls unconscious, goes to sleep, or voluntarily lifts the veil of shadow from the planet. Characters with fewer ranks won't cover the whole planet, and they may decide to cover a lesser area if so desired, but the darkness must be centered on the character.

This power is based off Obscure, with the flaws Range, Slow, Heroic Effort, and Uses four times. It has the Area extra 22 times. The darkness is treated exactly as per the Obscure power in the M&M rulebook. The darkness will be easy to penetrate with

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powers such as ESP, but ordinary people will be in a total panic (and in the, uh, dark).

It is recommended that characters with powers such as Neutralize be allowed to clear small patches around their characters, with a radius of five feet per power rank. Characters who can find the person using Shroud the World can, of course, attempt to use their Neutralize power directly on him or her as usual and remove all of the darkness.

World-Mind

Cost: 21

Action: Half

Range: Touch

Duration: Sustained

Saving Throw: Will

Five ranks of this power allows you to unite the minds of all people on Earth in a symbiotic relationship. Everyone will be able to sense each other's thoughts and experience the world through each other's senses with the slightest effort. A successful power check will allow deeper readings, as per the Telepathy power in M&M. Those who are unwilling to be in this mental bond can add their Will saves to the power check DCs, and make an immediate Will save when this power is used to remove themselves from the link.

No one joined in the link can be surprised by anyone else without a successful Bluff check while this power is active. All Bluff and Disguise checks (including the one just mentioned) are made at -10 penalty, and Diplomacy checks are made at a -5 penalty. Sense Motive checks are made at +5, and are simply unnecessary in most cases.

No one in the world will be unaware of this power's effects unless they have sufficient ranks in Mental Protection to be immune to it. The exact aftereffects are left up to the GM, but the experience should be hard to forget.

This power is based on Telepathy, with the extras Affects Others, Group Link, and Area 23 times. It has the flaw Heroic Effort, the flaw Range twice, and the flaw Uses three times. Adding any mental powers as extras will let you use them against everyone in the world, though it is important to note that Mind

Control would require you to issue the same command to everyone simultaneously. Adding Mind Control with the Emotion Control flaw is much more effective, allowing you to calm or incite the whole world.

One Against Many

There are many times when superheroes find themselves facing dozens, if not hundreds, of opponents simultaneously. This section has guidelines for allowing your hero to fight off hordes of less powerful villains, inspire people worldwide to defend themselves against alien invaders, or mind-control thousands of innocent bystanders without requiring a million rolls of the die.

The procedures below all assume that there is a substantial force attacking the character (or vice versa), not just three or four people. This system works best with numbers above 30. This is also explicitly *not* a tactical combat resolution system! There is little in here about maneuvering, the use of miniatures, and pitting large opposing forces against each other. There are other fine OGL products that cover tactical combat; this section is for quick resolution of combats that might otherwise take forever.

The term “force” here is used to refer to a large group of armed individuals, whereas “unit” or “combatant” refers to a single person.

Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines

When characters confront large armed forces, the GM should split the opposition into groups of similar forces. A character confronted by the Russian military will have to deal with artillery, tanks, infantry, fighter jets, bombers, and in some settings powered armor divisions. Each of these can be treated as a single character for the purpose of attacks on the PC.

The relevant attributes for a combat situation are typically a character’s initiative bonus, movement rate, attack bonus, defense score, damage rating, and damage save. Many of these depend on a force’s Size Modifier.

Size Modifier: This value depends on the number of units a particular force has *engaged in the battle*. Units kept in reserve don’t matter here; they aren’t contributing anything. Likewise for forces whose attacks cannot reach the character. This section assumes that at least four units are engaging the character at

once. For each doubling of the number of troops, add +2 to the size modifier. If there are at least eight troops, the size modifier is +2. For 16, it’s +4, For 32, it’s +6, and so on. If a thousand troops can all fire on the character at once, the size modifier is +16.

Round Length: The amount of time a combat “round” takes can change quite a bit using these rules. If the character in question has super-speed or massive area attacks, the rounds will take about the usual amount of time (six seconds). However, if all the hero has is two good fists, each round of combat could take up to an hour. The GM should choose the time that one “round” takes based on how quickly the character can down foes.

Initiative Bonus: Start at +0. Add the force’s size modifier.

Movement Rate: As per the average unit in the force. If the average unit is one normal human, the movement rate is 30. If it’s a tank or plane, it will likely be much higher.

The movement rate of unorganized ground troops (such as woad-covered berserkers in ancient Scotland) is halved due to their inability to follow orders.

Attack Bonus: Start at the standard attack bonus for the units in question (+3 for most trained human soldiers), and add *twice* the size modifier. Fifty trained soldiers firing on a superhuman will have a +15 to hit.

Defense Score: Start at the standard defense score for the units in question, and *subtract* the size modifier. Large groups of people are easier to hit. The same 50 soldiers, who normally have a Defense score of 14, are quickly reduced to a Defense of 8.

Damage Rating: Start at the standard damage rating for the units in question, and add the size modifier. If those 50 soldiers are firing assault rifles (damage +5L), they have an effective Damage Rating of +11L.

Troops using weapons capable of autofire may add +2 to damage in exchange for taking a -2 penalty to hit. Units with a high rate of fire compared to the

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length of a round can receive a +2 bonus to damage (for example, artillery firing on a walking hero).

It is important to note that, regardless of numbers, some forces simply won't be able to scratch their opponent. If a hero's Protection value is five higher than the opposing force's base Damage rating, don't even bother calculating anything. They couldn't hurt the hero even on a critical hit; he or she could literally just stand there laughing at a hail of gunfire and come out unharmed. Likewise, powers like Insubstantial (preferably with the Ghost Touch extra) have devastating effects in battle against normal troops.

Damage Save: Start at the standard protection for the units in question and add *twice* their size modifier. 100 soldiers in the equivalent of riot gear (Armor value 7) would have a damage save of +23. It's important to remember that this is a damage save bonus, *not* protection, regardless of what the force's protection was to begin it.

Other saving throws are not affected by size modifier. If a character has a wide-area poison gas attack, he or she can use it without penalty on the entire force.

Resolution: Treat the force as a single character fighting against the hero. Damage done to the hero is recorded normally. Damage done to the force is a little different. Any hit that would normally deal no damage inflicts one stun or lethal hit on the force, making further saves more difficult. Each "bruised" result knocks out one tenth of the force. Each "Injured" result disables one tenth of the force. Each "Stunned" result knocks out or disables one fifth of the force. Each "Unconscious" result knocks out all but a few units from the force, and each "Disabled" result disables all but a few individuals in the force. These last two results effectively end the battle. Forces as a whole cannot be stunned except by very wide-area Stun powers.

Some forces will have access to Hero Points, and almost all organized militaries will be able to benefit from the Leadership and Inspire feats at all times.

Example: Johnny Tesla, the Electrical Man, is trying to disarm all nuclear weapons worldwide. He's starting with Russia. Johnny has strong electrical

powers and a limited amount of superspeed, so the GM decides that combat rounds will be about one minute each.

The GM breaks the Russian military up into five separate forces that will try to stop him when he gets near the silos: air force, artillery, tanks, infantry, and special forces.

Taking the air force as an example, each MiG has the following statistics:

Initiative +1

Movement rate around Mach 1

Attack Bonus of +5

Defense score of 14, if your attacks can reach it

Damage Rating of +15L from missiles

A Hardness of +12

Taken as a group, the 35 MiGs dispatched to stop Johnny Tesla can all fire on him simultaneously, so they are treated as a single force. Use the following statistics as if the force were a single character:

Initiative +7

Movement rate as before

Attack Bonus of +17

Defense score of 8

Damage Rating of +21L from missiles

A Damage Save of +24

Each "Bruised" result Johnny inflicts on the MIGs with his electrical blasts will force three pilots to eject. Even if they make their damage save his lightning bolts will confuse and disorient the MIG pilots, reducing future damage saves. He, on the other hand, will have to deal with six to ten missiles hitting him at once, which wouldn't be fun for anyone.

Superhuman Strike Forces

Superhuman forces typically come in two varieties: the "clone army" version, in which almost all of the force has the exact same powers and capabilities, and the "smorgasbord" variety, in which the force is made up of dozens of unique and different superhumans.

The first version is much easier to deal with; just use the preceding rules as if they were an armed force. An organized force of speedster clones is quite

a terror. A group of clones that all have the Duplicate power is worse, because suddenly their size modifier goes up dramatically.

A mixed group of heroes or villains is particularly difficult to model. Trying to take the average of their damage ratings, movement rates, etc. ignores the effect that extreme variation has on combat. The way we suggest dealing with this is to have the force choose one member, typically the heaviest hitter, to actually dish out damage. The rest of the force is given the Drain ability, with a number of ranks equal to *four times* its Size modifier. This Drain power can affect any attribute — an ability score, power, feat, or skill — and it can be used on a different attribute each round. This represents various superhumans countering the hero's abilities with their own powers. This reduces the number of rolls somewhat, and allows large forces of relatively inferior superhumans to take down exceptionally powerful individuals.

For instance, if the Evil Agglomerate (28 bad guys assembled to wreck everyone's day) is attacking New York, and only The Jupiter Kid and his Gravity Gun are there to defend it, the Kid has to deal with a PL 16 Drain power each round. The Agglomerate chooses Cyanus the Poison Man to fight against the Kid while the rest of them aid in neutralizing his powers. If the Kid defeats Cyanus, he has to take on the next person in the Agglomerate.

Force Maneuvers

Multiple forces working in the same combat can take many of the same actions that characters can take, including binding wounds through first aid, fighting defensively, charging, taking cover, bull rushing, and combining fire.

Any force that attempts to help another unit, through first aid or combined fire, must be at least half the size of the other force, or the attempt will be ineffective.

Forces cannot typically grapple a single opponent unless that opponent has the Growth power. Some combatants (usually two to eight) must split off from the force to grapple on their own, and will then have an excellent chance of being hit by friendly fire.

Innocent Bystanders

If all your hero wants to do is use Emotion Control to calm down a bunch of people in a mob (or if your villain wants to vaporize a few dozen innocents), that's a little easier to handle. Assuming a reasonably thick crowd of people (as on a city street or in a restaurant), every five foot square catches one person. If you square the number of ranks you have in your Area power you'll find the number of people you could affect with it.

Each Area extra quadruples the number of people, though if your area is larger than the concentration of people (e.g. the restaurant is 50 feet across and your area stretches for 200 feet), you're out of luck — there's no additional effect. A packed subway car, rock concert, or city bus will have two to four times this number. A shopping mall or grocery store might have only a quarter as many people.

Chapter Five

This chapter contains pre-generated PCs and villains for use in cosmic-level games. They can be useful for GMs who don't have the time to create their own bad guys, or for a competing team of cosmic heroes to act as the PCs' foil.

We could try to discourage players from reading this chapter, but that would only make people want to do it more. Instead, a warning: your GM can change any detail of these characters, so don't assume their listed weakness will be the same one they have when you run into them!

This chapter assumes a three-to-one skill cost as suggested in the M&M errata instead of the one-to-one skill cost listed in M&M.

The Oversight Watch

The PCs in this chapter are part of an organization they call the "Oversight Watch." Originally founded by Infinite Man, Chessboard, and She, the Watch was established to deal with threats to the universe as a whole. These days it is held together more by camaraderie than anything else, but its original mission remains: to safeguard everything within their power against the forces of destruction and entropy.

The Watch's headquarters is described in Chapter Six; it is a transdimensional fortress that exists in a high orbit above the Earth, and which simultaneously exists in all universes.

For GMs wishing to use the Watch in non-cosmic games, remember that they do deal with Earth and its heroes, but somewhat sparingly. They'll be glad to take dangerous artifacts, maniacal super-villains, and lost extradimensional visitors off the hands of those who can't deal with them. They'll be glad to help out when they have the time. However, they don't always have the time, and even they can't be everywhere at once. There are police to deal with bank robbers, there are superheroes to deal with threats to the world, and

the Watch deals with threats to the entire universe. Nothing less, unless time allows.

Feats such as Fame, Infamy, Responsible Hero, and Headquarters have been left off these heroes; it's up to the GM as to whether or not they're well-known or well-liked in your game.

Infinite Man

Origin Story

As he grew up, Joseph Myriad became aware of his other selves through dreams and hallucinations, and finally grew to see the world through an infinite number of eyes. Infinite Man is a statistical miracle, a person who exists in every dimension in the multiverse. He has a certain amount of control over this phenomenon, being able to shift his awareness from one dimension to another and pull strength from his alternate selves. His true power, however, is in his personality: his understanding of the human condition lets him turn enemies into friends with just a few words.

When one of his selves died in the collapse of Universe Xenor 7, Joe dedicated his life to insuring that no more worlds would disappear. He founded the Oversight Watch with Chessboard, gathering together the most powerful heroes the universe had to offer.

Personality

Infinite Man is literally the nicest guy one could ever meet. Nobody comes away disappointed from a conversation with him. Despite his great power, he considers his friends to be his greatest asset,

"Swing" Characters

Some characters (such as Negation and The Champion) aren't really villains or heroes, but have a little bit of each in them. Or maybe they just have their own agenda, and whoever helps them accomplish it is whose side they're on today. In this book such characters are listed under the Villain section, regardless of how the GM chooses to use them.

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and treats them as such. A born leader, IM takes everyone's opinions into account before making any decisions, but acts quickly when he must. The rest of the team trusts him implicitly, and not just because of his powers.

Appearance

Infinite Man is about 30 years old, 5'11" (180 cm) tall, with brown hair and blue eyes. His costume is a shimmering dark blue, with the symbol for infinity on his back in silver. The costume covers his hands and feet but leaves his head free. His illustration can be seen to the right.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 10

Dex: 10

Con: 13

Int: 12

Wis: 16

Cha: 20

Attack Bonus: +18

Defense: 25 (40 when Boosted)

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +16

Reflex: +16

Will: +18

Damage: +16

Skills

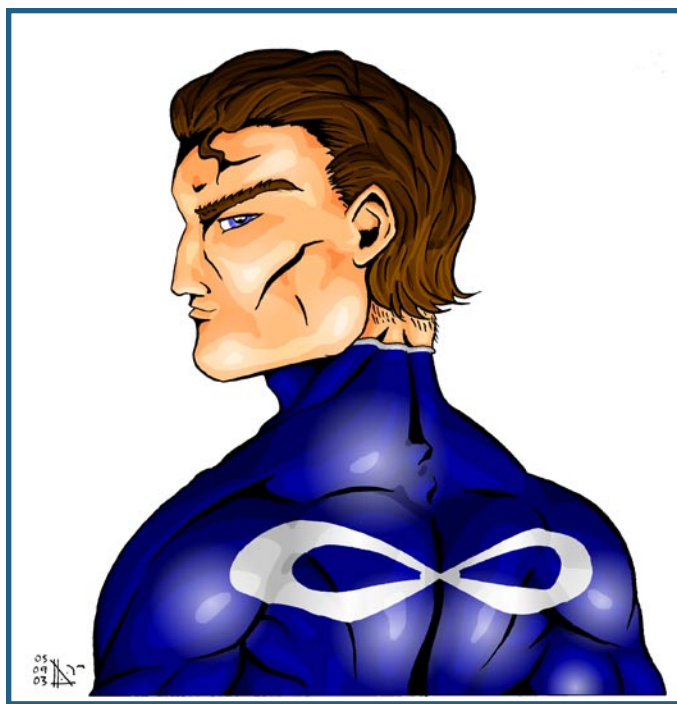
Bluff +50 (20 ranks), Diplomacy +61 (28 ranks), Gather Information +45 (15 ranks), Sense Motive +31 (28 ranks), Spot +18 (15 ranks), Taunt +50 (20 ranks)

Feats

Assessment, Connected, Fame, Indomitable Will, Inspire, Inspiring Arrival, Leadership, More Human Than Human, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)

Powers

Collapse Alternate Selves +15: Infinite Man can "collapse" multiple selves together to increase his power in one dimension. His physical attribute



bonuses rise by 15 points when he uses this power, and his saving throws are all increased by 15 points permanently. (Built from Amazing Save 15, with all four saving throws, and the Boost (all physical attributes) power as an extra. Power Source: Cosmic; Cost: 90 pp)

Comprehend +15: At least one of his selves has probably run into whatever language people are using. (Power Source: Training; Cost 30 pp)

Dimension Travel +20: Infinite Man does not so much travel from world to world as shift his mental focus from one dimension to another. He already exists in all of them. He can take one willing person per round through to another dimension. (Power Source: Cosmic; Cost: 40 pp)

Super-Charisma +25: His understanding of the human condition (and the alien condition, for that matter) is second to none, thanks to his unique viewpoint. (Power Source: Training; Cost : 50 pp)

Using This Character as a Villain

Infinite Man would make an exceptionally dangerous villain, because he wouldn't start trouble directly with a hero: he'd start with the character's allies, quickly befriend them and turning them to his side. Only when his target was alone would he finally strike. His goals would probably involve finding a way to permanently unite his alternate selves and thus gain ultimate power.

Chessboard

Origin Story

Walter Burns was born speaking full sentences. He had listened to conversations his parents had while he was in the womb. He had mastered calculus by the end of his first year, and understood genetic engineering by two. His parents joked that he not only used 100 percent of his own brain, he used half of everyone else's too (though he proved this incorrect at age five). Chessboard never went to college; he simply sold ideas to large companies to make money. At the age of 18 he realized that most of what he had sold was never going to reach the market because of greedy and uncaring people. Dejected, he created a dimension-traveling device and wandered the alternate worlds for a few years, stopping back every so often to visit home.

Finally, at the age of 35, he derived the existence of Infinite Man, sought him out, and brought him and She together to create the Oversight Watch. Not only would it keep the world safe from without, but it would let him do things from outside the system that kept him and other super-intelligent people from reaching their potential. He has cured five forms of cancer, released plans for a hyperefficient electric car on the Internet, and revolutionized the field of biotechnology, and he's just getting started.

Personality

Chessboard is exceptionally driven. He also feels a deep and important connection to the human race. He feels certain that they are destined for some sort of importance in the universe's future, though this is an intuitive leap of thought that he can't support with logic. He can most often be found in the Watchtower, watching the monitors or working on some major innovation.

Appearance

Chessboard is a "plainclothes" superhero, never wearing a costume. He is about 36 years old, 5'9" (175 cm) tall, with black hair and grey eyes, and is typically wearing a white, button-down shirt, brown pants, and glasses. When he needs to scare people, he puts on a white lab coat with various unidentifiable stains.

Level: 23

PP: 345

Attributes

Str: 10

Dex: 10

Con: 10

Int: 20

Wis: 16

Cha: 12

Attack Bonus: +22

Defense: 31

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +0

Reflex: +0

Will: +8

Damage: +0

Skills

Computers +54 (25 ranks), Concentration +30 (22 ranks), Disable Device +54 (25 ranks), Knowledge (culture, geography, history, occult, religion, and trivia) +50 (23 ranks each) each, Medicine +54 (25 ranks), Repair +52 (25 ranks), Science (dimensional science, math, biology, chemistry, and physics) +52 (25 ranks each) each, Search +52 (25 ranks)

Feats

Accurate Attack, Battle Analyst, Expertise, Headquarters, Photographic Memory, Skill Focus (Repair), Talented (medicine & biology), Talented (computers & disable device)

Powers

Super-Intelligence +23: Chessboard is among the most advanced minds in the universe. While there are some who are more intelligent, most of them have lost any humanity they may once have had. (Extras: five levels of Super-Wisdom; Power Source: Mutation; Cost: 56 pp)

Using This Character as a Villain

Swap out his Accurate Attack and Talented feats for minion-related abilities. Swap the Super-Wisdom extra for Super-Charisma. Bingo — a mad genius and his cadre of loyal followers, bent on world domina-

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tion. He'll show those idiots who rejected his ideas... he'll show them all!!!

She

Origin Story

She was originally born Elena Chang, the fourth child of a Chinese family that emigrated to Vladivostok, Russia. Her mother was a deeply spiritual and confident person who took her family out of China to escape taxation and discrimination against her children, all four of whom were girls. When Elena became old enough her mother performed a ritual that should have let Elena cope with becoming a woman more easily, and given her a bit of luck. Somewhere, some mystical entity saw this ritual, and added power to it. It succeeded beyond all possible imagination. Elena was granted a percentage of the physical abilities of all women living on Earth. Since then Elena has done many things. She was a social worker in Russia for a time, before her powers fully matured. She traveled to Britain and America, acting as a heroine, but found it somehow disappointing. She felt that she was meant for something greater. When Infinite

Man and Chessboard contacted her, asking her to be a founding member of the Watch, she jumped at the chance, and has never been happier.

Personality

She is a cheerful and friendly person, who gets very angry at the idea that people would try to conquer or destroy the universe. She has trained extensively to master the arts of fighting, with nearly every martial arts master Timepiece could find her, so that she will be more than just the team's brute. She also serves as the "anchor" for the team, reminding them of what's important and what they're fighting for.

Appearance

She is an attractive Chinese woman, about 5'6" (167 cm) tall with short black hair and brown eyes. Her costume is a single-piece red-and-black outfit with a short cape, leaving her hands and head free. While She appears to be about 28 years old, her time studying with martial artists with Timepiece's aid gives her about 50 additional years of experience. She and Negation can be seen facing off in the illustration below.



Level: 25PP: 375Attributes

Str: 20

Dex: 18

Con: 14

Int: 10

Wis: 10

Cha: 12

Attack Bonus: +26

Defense: 32

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +2

Reflex: +4

Will: +0

Damage: +2

Skills

Intimidate +43 (18 ranks), Language (English), Profession (social worker) +15 (15 ranks), Sense Motive +15 (15 ranks), Spot +10 (10 ranks)

Feats

Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Attack Focus (unarmed), Attractive, Blind-Fight, Chokehold, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Critical (unarmed), Improved Disarm, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Pin, Improved Trip, Move-by Attack, Power Attack, Rapid Strike, Rapid Takedown, Startle, Takedown Attack, Toughness, Whirlwind Attack

Powers

Super-Strength 25: She possesses one percent of the sum physical abilities of all women on Earth. As Earth's population grows, so do her abilities. (Extras: Super-Constitution, 5 ranks of Super-Dexterity, Protection; Flaws: Limited: no bonus to Damage Save from Super-Constitution; Source: Mystic; Cost: 195 pp)

Using This Character as a Villain

Swapping She's personality with Negation's (see later on) makes for an interesting story. She would

probably be the kind of villain who wants to kill off every man on Earth.

OmnisciaOrigin Story

It started so simply... a stranger stopped by one day and asked for a drink of water. Alice MacDuff gave him the water, he thanked her, and gave her a business card, and that was that. Except that from then on, stranger and stranger people kept stopping by... Every so often they'd drop off a report on what was going on in this world, and sometimes in others. Eventually Alice started having these people look for the original stranger, and found out that he had left her in charge of an interdimensional network of informants and intelligence analysts. The "first stranger" was never found; Omniscia believes him either dead or in hiding and respects his need for privacy. With his network at her fingertips, Alice quickly found out about Chessboard, She, and Infinite Man, and that their cause was one she agreed with. She started sending them regular reports on the activities of supervillains and nihilistic gods, and before long found herself having dinner at the Fortress. Omniscia has been instrumental in keeping the Watch informed and recruiting new members ever since.

Personality

Imagine a stereotypical cookie-baking grandma running an interplanetary spy ring instead of a bridge club, and you have Omniscia.

Appearance

Omniscia is about 65 years old and has no intentions of slowing down. She is 5'1" (155 cm) tall, with grey hair and blue eyes. She never wears a costume, and on those rare occasions that she accompanies the Watch into dangerous situations, she wears tough clothing and a bulletproof vest. When at home she is typically baking something, and wears an apron. Her illustration can be seen on pg. 45.

Level: 25PP: 375

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Attributes

Str: 10
Dex: 14
Con: 12
Int: 12
Wis: 18
Cha: 20

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +1
Reflex: +2
Will: +4
Damage: +1

Attack Bonus: +10
Defense: 26

Skills

Bluff 28, Diplomacy 21, Gather Information 28,
Knowledge (Politics) 28

Feats

Connected, Fame, Inspire, Leadership, Minions,
Skill Focus (Gather Information), Talented (Gather
Information & Knowledge)

Powers

Comprehend +25: The business card the first stranger left imbued Omniscia with the ability to understand any language, even those she can barely perceive (such as ones based on scent or color). (Source: Psionic; Cost: 50 pp)

Dimension Travel +10: Alice has learned the secrets of slipping through worlds. Though her method of travel is somewhat inefficient, it is still effective for worlds close to Earth. (Source: Psionic, Cost: 20 pp)

Information Management +24: This power represents Omniscia's uncanny access to her spy network. She might not be precognitive, but it certainly seems like it sometimes! Her spies live everywhere, and give her reports on a regular basis. (This power is Precognition with Postcognition as an extra; Source: Training; Cost: 120 pp)

Super-Skill: Gather Information +25: Omniscia has learned many things from having professional spies drop by her house for 30 years, and one of those things is how to gather intelligence herself when the need arises. (Source: Training; Cost: 25 pp)

Loyal Minions +25: Omniscia draws people to herself easily. This power is just Super-Charisma with only the Loyalty score effect. (Source: Training; Cost: 25 pp)

Minions Notes

Omniscia's Loyalty score is a 60. She has 1450 1st-level minions, 53 2nd-level minions, 42 3rd-level minions, 22 4th-level minions, 20 5th-level minions, 20 6th-level minions, 10 7th-level minions, 5 8th-level minions, 3 9th level minions, 2 10th-level minions, and one 11th-level minion. This is a trained spy network; all of her followers have Gather Information maxed out, with Skill Focus or Talented.

Using This Character as a Villain

Turn Omniscia from a kind old lady to a bitter old witch and suddenly that spy network seems a lot more dangerous. Blackmail and extortion would be her tools of choice, and her almost precognitive knowledge would keep her away from those who would try to stop her. Her goal might be to control an empire of the stars through blackmail.

Timepiece

Origin Story

Through a particularly strange mix of hallucinogenic drugs, Wendell DuMonde went on the weirdest trip of his life... to the year 74,309. In this time, he met the Chronal Lords, rulers of the 744th century (and environs), and awakened his own latent time travel powers. Enhanced by the Lords, he returned to our own time to do pretty much what he had before: smoke some weed and drink some beer. He knew about the Oversight Watch, but only contacted them to ask them to leave him alone. Only once Infinite Man literally kicked him in the butt and got him moving did he realize that he actually *didn't* have all the time in the world: other time travelers were already chewing away at his past bit by bit. After safeguarding his own time, he traveled back and forth across the entirety of time and space, and the hero he is now is primarily pieces of his own past, which we see as our present.

Personality

Laid-back, cool dude, at least when he's not asleep or getting the munchies. He's unofficially in charge of the Watch's less vital briefings, because everyone else gets to bring popcorn and enjoy the show. Wendell believes in generally letting people do what they want and leaving them alone as long as they don't hurt anyone else.

Appearance

Timepiece carefully cultivates the appearance of a doped-up hippie slob. Or perhaps he's not so careful about it... He wears a tie-dye T-shirt and jeans, occasionally with small colored glasses. He's 5'8" tall (173 cm), with longish brown hair and green eyes. His illustration can be seen below.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 10

Dex: 16

Con: 10

Int: 10

Wis: 16

Cha: 14

Attack Bonus: +15

Defense: 23 (45 when in superspeed)

Skills

Disguise +17 (15 ranks), Knowledge (History) +28 (28 ranks), Taunt +19 (17 ranks)

Feats

Detect (Temporal Anomalies), Immunity (Aging), Instant Stand, Move-by Attack, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Rapid Strike, Remember the Trash Can, Surprise Strike, Time Freeze, Time Travel

Powers

Time Control +22: Timepiece was granted control over the entirety of time by the Chronal Lords, beings who want to insure the sanctity of the timeline so that

millions of years from now they may come into existence. (Extras: Temporal Fugue, Passengers; Source: Cosmic; Cost: 242 pp)

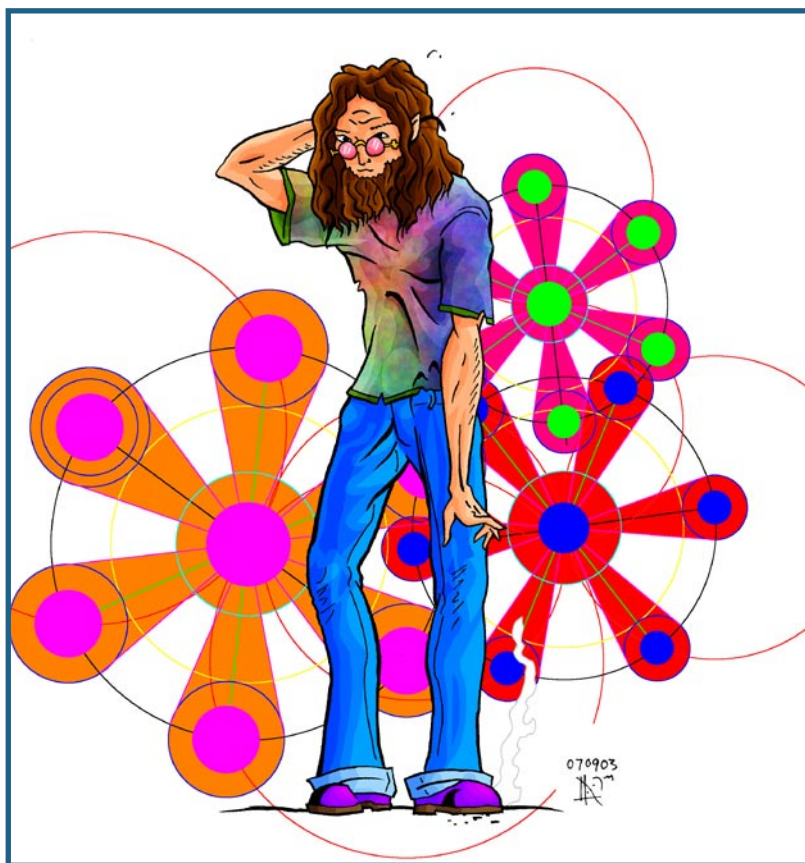
Comprehend +10: Timepiece has spent a few hundred years studying all earthly languages, and has little trouble understanding them, though he is occasionally younger than usual and hasn't learned a particular one yet. (Source: Training; Cost: 10 pp)

Weakness

Disturbing: Timepiece is basically a nice guy but has trouble remembering when he is, and keeps getting his past, present, and future confused. He has a tendency to ask people how things that haven't happened yet turned out.

Using This Character as a Villain

... is only appropriate in a time-travel game, when the characters can have some small chance of thwarting his schemes. Timepiece as a villain — especially if he were made into a more competent villain than he is a hero — would be a holy terror. Kiss the entire timeline goodbye, he just killed the hero's mother, father, and the milkman. The other option is to have the world keep changing around the characters as Evil Timepiece tries to set things up the way he wants



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them, and give the characters some means of stopping him in the present.

Creator

Origin Story

Creator, originally named Has'i, is another dimensional anomaly; he was the last sentient being left alive in his universe before it died. It is a metaphysical fact of the multiverse that the last being alive is granted amazing power so as to create their universe anew. Has'i knew little of this, being trapped in a stasis field until the end of time for his crimes, which he prefers not to talk about. When his universe died instead of being reborn, the stasis field collapsed and deposited him in South Carolina on Earth. His alien appearance almost got him killed before the fledgling Watch rescued him and Chessboard taught him about his powers. He has been glad to work with them ever since.

Personality

Creator is an outsider in our dimension, and is still confused by things like directional gravity and breathable water. Nonetheless, he has adapted amazingly well. He tends to stay in the Fortress most of the time, but spends the majority of his time there learning about humanity and various other alien species.

Appearance

Creator is a red alien, somewhat humanoid in appearance, with black ram's horns growing from his head and two rows of thin, needle-like teeth. He was originally mistaken for a demon. He wears a yellow costume with a white starburst on the front. His illustration can be seen below.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 10

Dex: 16

Con: 13

Int: 20

Wis: 14

Cha: 12

Attack Bonus: +20

Defense: 25

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +3

Reflex: +3

Will: +2

Damage: +3

Skills

Craft (Sculpture) +33 (28 ranks), Craft (Electronics) +33 (28 ranks), Knowledge (Psychology) +14 (9 ranks), Science (Engineering) +33 (28 ranks)

Feats

Amphibious, Great Fortitude, Incomprehensible, Redundant Organs, Toughness, Ultra-Hearing



Powers

Reality Flux +13: Creator was given the power to recreate his own universe when it ended. While his power is less effective here than there, it is still rather impressive. Creator can affect 13 one-mile cubes of matter. (Stunts: Transformation; Source: Cosmic; Cost: 223 pp)

Telescopic Sense +4: Creator's hearing is much better than the human norm, extending 16 times farther and allowing him to hear frequencies above and below normal hearing. (Source: Alien; Cost: 4 pp)

Weakness

Unlucky: This guy just can't catch a break. He gets powers, then has them reduced. He escapes from a dying universe, then almost gets lynched. It's a lucky thing he's a good sport, because every time something good happens for Creator, something bad is right on its heels.

Using This Character as a Villain

Oh, he'll talk to you about the crimes he committed all right... about the strange dreams he had while he was supposedly in stasis... about how different the Earth is going to look when he gets done with it. And not just the Earth, no, why stop there... In short, Creator would probably start with creating his own island nation and work his way up to crushing the universe one planet at a time.

The All-Thing

Origin Story

The All-Thing is the living embodiment of the universe itself, a sentient force empowered to protect the sanctity of all reality. It was born as a baby during the Big Bang, has grown steadily into an adult, and will age and eventually die as the universe grows cold. That, however, is not for billions of years. It simply appeared in humanoid form one day in the Fortress, offering its aid in a coming catastrophe that threatened to destroy the entire universe. The Watch accepted, and the All-Thing has been a reliable member ever since then.

Personality

The All-Thing says very little, and is an enigmatic presence on the Watch. Chessboard has told IM that he trusts it, and that's enough for the rest of the watch... at least most days. In combat the All-Thing is at its most disturbing, striking at people as if they were objects and literally tearing them apart. When not handling some sort of disaster, the All-Thing tends to disappear or spend time with his counterpart, Ansible.

Appearance

The All-Thing is a wide, roughly humanoid shape, about seven feet (213 cm) tall, swirling with every kind of matter imaginable. Its duplicates look similar, but are composed of only one kind of matter. Its illustration can be seen on page 11.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 14

Dex: 10

Con: 20

Int: 10

Wis: 10

Cha: 10

Base Attack Bonus: +15

Base Defense: 15

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +7

Reflex: +0

Will: +2

Damage: +7 (up to +32 in various forms)

Skills

Listen +28 (28 ranks), Spot +28 (28 ranks), Craft (only using its own body) +28 (28 ranks)

Feats

Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Darkvision

Powers

Above and Beyond

Duplication +25: The All-Thing is the living embodiment of the universe itself, and can appear nearly anywhere in it. It can also create up to four hundred duplicates of itself, made out of nearly any kind of matter, from rock to air to dwarf star cores. (Extras: 20 ranks of Alternate Form, 25 ranks of Teleport, Extended Teleport, Survival, Continuous, Horde x6; Flaws: Limited: only extended teleports, Limited: can only teleport new duplicates, Obvious (the real All-Thing can be discerned from its duplicates); Power Stunts: all types of Alternate Form except Psionic; Power Source: Cosmic; Cost: 280 pp)

Weakness

Disturbing: The All-Thing looks quite unusual indeed, and doesn't talk very much. It doesn't really understand mortal cultures. It likes to mold its bodies into new structures. In brief, most people would consider it a weirdo and a freak.

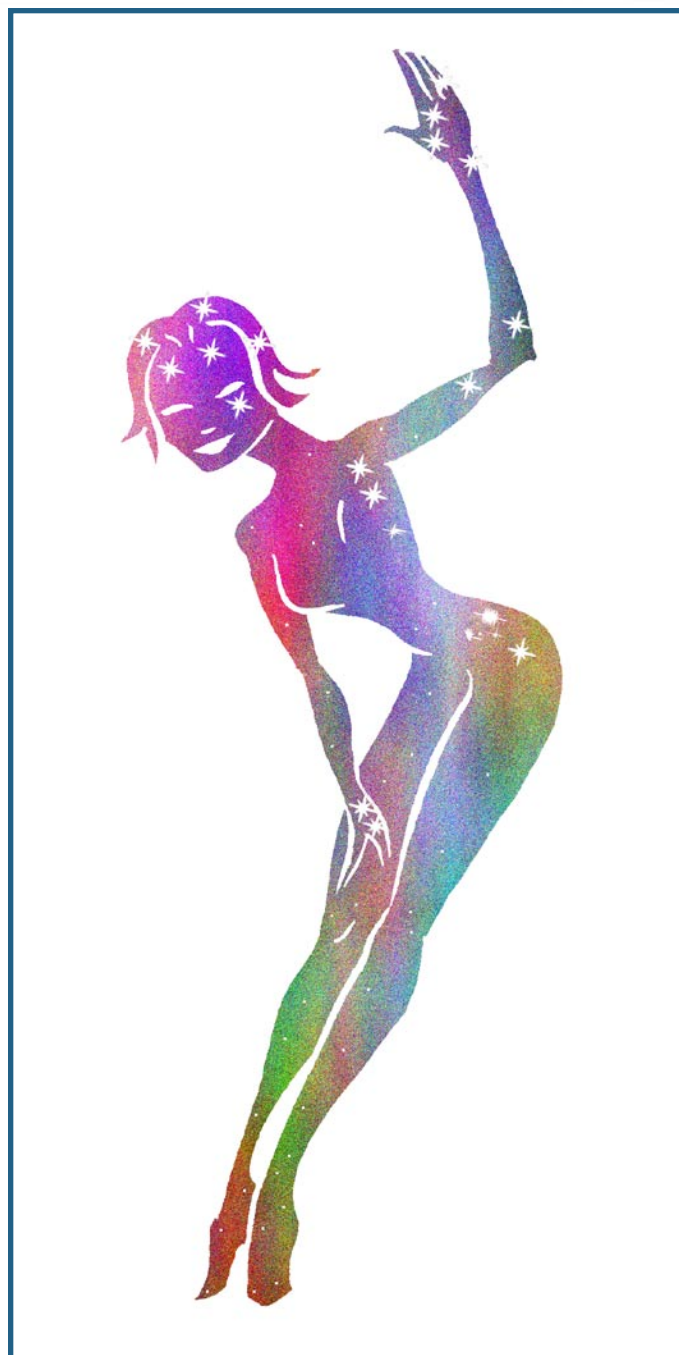
Using This Character as a Villain

When the universe is against you, you might as well give up. The All-Thing from this universe has little motivation to be a villain, but one from another dimension might come into this dimension with the intent of killing its All-Thing and taking over its job, thus ruling two universes at once.

Ansible

Origin Story

Ansible is the psychic manifestation of all of the sentient minds on the planet Earth. She awoke when Earth's population reached the magic number 4,294,967,296 — thirty-two doublings of population from the first two people to walk upright. Her being also includes some amount of thought from dolphins, whales, chimpanzees, octopi, and other intelligent beings. Chessboard inferred her existence from a worldwide increase in the number of psychic events, and contacted her to ask her to join the Watch. Ansible is the "operator" for the Oversight Watch, carrying telepathic messages back and forth and scouting into dangerous places.



Personality

Ansible is the goody-two-shoes of the team, using almost all of her time to help humanity. Since she doesn't need to eat or sleep, and is sustained by humanity's thoughts, she tries to make those thoughts happy in any way she can. Her speed and telepathy allow her to keep the Watch in constant communication, and she also keeps tabs on other superhumans who might need the Watch's help. She's the most likely to get over-involved in something.

Appearance

To those few who can see her, Ansible is a human girl made out of a cluster of bright sparkles of light,

of all different colors. Her illustration can be seen above.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 10

Dex: 10

Con: 10

Int: 16

Wis: 18

Cha: 11

Attack Bonus: +15

Defense: 24

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +0

Reflex: +0

Will: +4

Damage: +0

Skills

Diplomacy +10 (10 ranks), Sense Motive +14 (10 ranks), Search +13 (10 ranks)

Feats

All Immunity feats (free from Alternate Form), Darkvision, Indomitable Will, Iron Will, See Invisibility, True Sight

Powers

World-Mind +5: As the manifestation of all Earth's sentient thought, Ansible has the power to unite the entire world in a single mind. (Source: Psionic; Cost: 105 pp)

Alternate Form: Psionic +20: Ansible is pure psychic energy, and has no true body. Only certain gifted individuals can see where she is focusing her attention at any time. (Stunt: Super Flight; Extras: Telepathy, Group Link, Invisibility; Flaws: Permanent; Source: Psionic; Cost: 142 pp)

Mental Protection +25: Ansible can distribute any mental attacks against her to every human mind in the world, nullifying the attack and making it almost impossible to mentally damage or control her. (Source: Psionic; Cost: 50 pp)

Weakness

Naive: Despite her connection to humanity, Ansible is a cosmic entity and matures very slowly. She always assumes the best of someone, and will not think to enter their mind and check on the truth of what they're saying.

Using This Character as a Villain

The villainous version of Ansible would be the manifestation of all of humanity's fears and hatreds, and would probably include some sort of wisdom-draining attack.

Cosmic Villains

We've included a good spread of possible villains, from all the categories mentioned in Chapter One. If you're going to be running a more violent game, you'll probably want to add a few ranks of Amazing Save or Protection to these villains, or be prepared to make some more up later on.

The villains in here are generally of a higher power level than the heroes, so as to provide a challenge to an entire team instead of just to one member of it.

Anansi

Origin Story

Anansi is an Ashanti trickster god, who first appeared in ancient Africa. He is the son of the sky god Nyambe and the fertility goddess Asase Ya. His place as his father's representative was usurped long ago by the chameleon god, and rather than bringing things like the sun and moon, and agriculture to humanity, he has been bringing bad fortune instead, in the hopes that his parents will take him back.

Personality

Anansi wants to be entertained. He enjoys spreading rumors about his trustworthiness, and then proving them wrong by fooling everyone he can find. Everything is a game for Anansi, one in which no one else understands the rules. One of his favorite

Above and Beyond

pastimes is pitting heroes against each other and watching them fight. He often extensively researches his targets before starting his games, spending days or even weeks observing them in spider form and using his Assessment feat.. The more mischief the better, and the deadlier the game is, the better.

Appearance

Dark skin and black hair, with a roguish smile and perfectly white teeth. Anansi is equally likely to wear traditional African garb or modern "business casual" clothing with slacks and a button-down shirt. Anansi can also assume the shape of any spider in the world.

Level: 30

PP: 450

Attributes

Str: 14

Dex: 18

Con: 16

Int: 16

Wis: 6

Cha: 20

Attack Bonus: +24 (+40 as miniscule spider)

Defense: 36 (52 as miniscule spider)

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +15

Reflex: +16

Will: +10

Damage: +15

Skills

Bluff +63 (33 ranks), Hide +37 (33 ranks), Move Silently +37 (33 ranks), Sleight of Hand +37 (33 ranks), Taunt +63 (33 ranks)

Feats

Assessment, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Surprise Strike, Darkvision, Immunity (Aging, Poison, Pressure, Starvation, Suffocation)

Powers

Shapeshifting +15: Anansi is, after all, the spider god, and can take the form of any spider, from a tiny web-spinner to a big hairy tarantula. Many of the spiders are poisonous. (Extras: Exact, Shrinking, Drain

(ability scores), Slow Recovery; Flaws: Spider form only; Source: Cosmic; Cost: 75 pp)

Sorcery +10: Anansi is a talented but not particularly powerful sorcerer. He has much magical potential, but wastes the gift by not training it. All he wants to do is use it to play tricks, anyway. His standard spells are Illusion, Snare, Mind Control, Immunity, ESP, Incorporeal, and Dimension Travel. (Source: Mystic; Cost: 70 pp)

Super-Charisma +25: Anansi relies on his natural charm and guile above all else. (Source: Cosmic; Cost: 50 pp)

Godly Fortitude +12: Anansi has supernatural stamina, reflexes, toughness, and willpower. All part of being a god. (This power combines Amazing Save (all four) and Regeneration. Source: Cosmic; Cost: 60 pp)

Weaknesses

Quirk (Never Turn Down a Bet): Anansi is highly egotistical, and can't stand to have people tell him he can't do something. If you make a reasonable bet or dare, Anansi will take it.

Using This Character as a Hero

Give Anansi his old job back (as his father's emissary) and he basically turns into a good guy, using his powers to benefit mankind and only playing harmless jokes.

The Champion

Origin Story

The Champion is an American superhero from the 1920's, who flew off into space and left Earth in the hands of the heroes of the time in 1928. His spaceflight powers, as it turned out, had the side effect of time dilation: in the year it took him to reach Rigel 4, defeat an invasion from the Triangle Galaxy, and return to Earth, over seventy years had passed on Earth. He returned to a world of immorality, satanic music, economic depression, and widespread disrespect for authority. The morals of his youth were dead and gone, not to mention everyone he ever knew. Something snapped in the Champion's head. Stopped in his assault on Los Angeles (he was attempting to destroy Hollywood), the Champion currently rests in

a a minimum-security prison (as no maximum-security prison could hold him), quietly serving out his ten consecutive life terms. He knows he could break out. The government knows he could break out. But he hasn't.... yet.

Personality

Before his disappearance, The Champion was one of the most responsible heroes the world had ever known. Even back then he was very traditional. After his return, discounting the brief psychotic episode, he has been melancholy and withdrawn. He's confused with the modern world, and there's a question as to whether he will ever really adapt to it. His prison psychologist is trying to help him come to terms with the modern world and his changed circumstances.

Appearance

Broad-shouldered, square-jawed, fair-haired and blue-eyed, The Champion is the very image of a hero. His costume is not as skintight and colorful as modern hero costumes are, though; he wears more traditional clothing (circa 1910). His illustration can be seen on page 16.

Level: 30

PP: 450

Attributes

Str: 13

Dex: 18

Con: 16

Int: 13

Wis: 16

Cha: 16

Attack Bonus: +21

Base Defense: 30

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +23

Reflex: +24

Will: +23

Damage: +3

Skills

Diplomacy 12, Profession (financier) 12, Sense Motive 24

Feats

Aerial Combat, Instant Change, Improved Initiative, Inspire, Leadership

Powers

Cosmic Power +30: The Champion has a whole range of powers, which came from being struck by lightning while hiking through the Rockies in 1918. Back in the old days he was quite inventive in their use. (Source: Cosmic; Cost: 240 pp)

Amazing Save +20: Constant exposure to cosmic power has enhanced The Champion's reflexes, fortitude, and willpower. (Source: Cosmic; Cost: 60 pp)

Weaknesses

Quirk (Old-fashioned): The Champion has exceptionally traditional views on just about everything. He refuses to hit women (until far too late in the battle), dresses in a standard 1910 top hat and coat, and believes that everything about the modern world needs to go back to the way it was in about 1915. Preferably earlier.

Using This Character as a Hero

The Champion is sort of a "swing character" anyway, so making him a hero is just a matter of having him adapt better to the Modern Age.

The Creature from Beyond

Origin Story

The Creature has always existed. It will always exist. It is older than our universe, and will endure until the last black hole evaporates in the heat-death of all time and space. The Creature was first brought into our universe by the Sumerian sorceress Ishtar (later considered a goddess) in her rage over losing her lover, Tammuz. The myths of the continent of Atlantis sinking beneath the sea come from this event. Since then, many people have tried to summon The Creature, but few have succeeded, luckily for the world. The ritual to summon The Creature requires very little mystical skill, but it does require some very specific and rare ingredients, and about one week to complete.

Above and Beyond

Personality

The Creature from Beyond is a thought-devouring, flesh-eating mindless beast. It has no real personality.

Appearance

Thirty feet tall, forty feet long, covered in green tentacles, with a giant sucking maw in the center of its bulbous body. Its illustration can be seen on page 26.

Level: 30

PP: 450

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +3

Reflex: +2

Will: -1

Damage: +3

Attributes

Str: 14

Dex: 14

Con: 16

Int: 9

Wis: 9

Cha: 1

Attack Bonus: +27

Defense: 12

Skills

None to speak of.

Feats

Attack Focus (tentacles), Detect (sentient life), Extra Limb, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Rapid Takedown, Takedown Attack, Toughness

Powers

Growth +8: The Creature is roughly 30 feet tall. It weighs 15 tons. (Flaws: Permanent, no Protection; Source: Mystic; Cost: 32 pp)

Flight +10: The Creature naturally hovers above the ground. (Source: Mystic; Cost: 20 pp)

Dimension Travel +10: the Creature comes to feed on sentient beings in Earth's dimension when

Connections

Some of these characters naturally go together in pairs, or match up with some of the headquarters and locations mentioned later.

Specifically, Omnivron and its creators match up with the "The Moon" base in the next chapter, The Champion and Empress Metaxa have faced each other before, and Negation and She are Mirror Universe duplicates.

called, and returns whence it came when it has eaten its fill. (Flaws: only from its home to Earth and back, only to Earth when summoned; Cost: 10 pp)

Drain +20 : The very presence of The Creature drives people insane as it devours their thoughts. Even unaffected characters will hear the faint sounds of bells and screaming in their ears. Anyone within 100 feet must make a Will save (DC 30) or lose 20 points of Wisdom. Start with ranks in Super-Wisdom if any are available. Lost points or ranks are regained at the rate of one per round once the affected characters are more than 100 feet away from The Creature. Those who are affected by this power once, whether they make their save or not, cannot be affected again for one day. Characters reduced to a Wisdom score of zero are mindless vegetables, who rock back and forth on their knees and spout blasphemies and nursery rhymes. (Extras: Area; Flaws: Wisdom only, Permanently On; Source: Mystic; Cost: 20 pp)

Devouring Void +25 : The creature's body sports many tendrils, all for the purpose of pulling in living beings. It uses the tentacles constantly until sated — if not stopped, it will devour one million human beings before returning to its home dimension. Its funnel-like mouth can also suck in projectiles, energy weapons, and the kinetic impacts. (Extras: Selective, Protection; Flaws: Permanent; Source: Mystic; Cost: 200 pp)

Reincarnate +20: The Creature cannot be truly killed. If even the least piece of it survives, it eventually regrows its body if the summoning ritual is performed. (Extras: Never Say Die; Flaws: Serial Reincarnation; Source: Mystic; Cost: 80 pp)

Weaknesses

Quirk (Devour All Sentient Life): Yeah, we could have given this villain a weakness like Disturbing, but that pretty much applies to social skills, and TCfB wouldn't know a social skill if one walked up and bit it. Communicating with The Creature, which must be done through Telepathy, reveals only a hunger for thoughts, memories, and cognition. No meaningful communication is possible.

Using This Character as a Hero

Uh.... perhaps not.

Empress Metaxa

Origin Story

Empress Metaxa was raised from girlhood to be the ruler of a star-spanning empire in the galaxy we know as Triangulum. She has her eyes set on the Milky Way as the next conquest. While she is an excellent leader and ruler, she has a strong desire to do things for herself (for once in her life), and is scouting Earth's solar system for use as a military staging platform. The Triangle Empire already has a secret base on Titan (one of Saturn's moons), but Metaxa is considering changing Earth's atmosphere to methane to make her job easier, but those pesky superhumans will have to go first.

Personality

Overbearing, to say the least. It's her way or the highway. She also has a strong independent streak, and would love to do things for herself, but her advisors are always telling her that she should delegate chores more often instead of flying off to the Milky Way by herself. She enjoys the privileges of power, but tries to shirk the responsibilities whenever she can.

Appearance

An utterly gorgeous woman with jet-black hair and pearly white skin. Her lips are habitually curled into an expression of distaste and disdain. Her bulky battlesuit hides most of this, and is built of a gleaming white metal with red lights and an opaque (from the outside) blue faceplate.

Level: 25

PP: 375

Attributes

Str: 19

Dex: 14

Con: 18

Int: 16

Wis: 14

Cha: 18

Attack Bonus: +24

Defense: 32

Saving Throws

Fortitude: +4

Reflex: +2

Will: +2

Damage: +4

Skills

Diplomacy +32 (28 ranks), Gather Information +17 (15 ranks), Intimidate +53 (28 ranks), Profession (Empress) +30 (28 ranks), Sense Motive +17 (15 ranks), Spot +17 (15 ranks)

Feats

Authority Figure, Attractive, Connected, Headquarters, Heroic Surge, Inspire, Leadership, Minions, More Minions, Rapid Strike, Startle, Toughness

Powers

Power Armor 25: The Empress wears a suit of power armor constructed by the best scientists in her galaxy. She then had them killed, so that the secret of its construction could never be used against her. (Includes the effects of the following powers: Armor, Energy Blast, Flight, Super-Strength, and Mental Protection. It also includes the Feats Amphibious, Super Flight, and Immunity to Pressure and Suffocation. Source: Super-Science; Cost: 179 pp)

Weaknesses

Susceptibility: Metaxa is a methane-breather. If her armor is pierced or lost she will be incapable of breathing in a normal oxygen atmosphere.

Above and Beyond

Using This Character as a Hero

Even as a hero, Metaxa might not be a very nice person... but perhaps the Triangle Empire has struck some sort of treaty with Earth, and she stays to defend it while Earth sends a hero to her homeworld.

Negation

Origin Story

Negation was originally born Elena Chang, the fourth child of a Chinese family that emigrated to Vladivostok, Russia.

Personality

There's no way around it; Negation is a bitch. She has trouble making friends because of her personality switches, and has little experience keeping them around. When she's in her psychotic personality, there's little point in trying to reason with her; she does things however she wants and obliterates those who get in the way. In her more reasonable persona she has occasionally been an ally of the Oversight Watch, and Infinite Man believes in her deeply.

Appearance

Negation is the spitting image of She (see the Oversight Watch section earlier), but wears an all black costume without a cape. Her illustration can be seen on page 58, facing off against She.

Level: 25

PP: 615

Attributes

Str: 12

Dex: 12

Con: 18

Int: 14

Wis: 10

Cha: 18

Attack Bonus: +26

Defense: 21

Skills

Demolitions +29 (27 ranks), Intimidate +48 (28 ranks), Profession (dimensional ruler) +28 (28 ranks), Spot +28 (28 ranks)

Feats

Authority Figure, Indomitable Will, Infamy, Leadership, Power Attack, Rapid Takedown, Takedown Attack

Powers

Dimension Travel +10: As part of her duties as dictator of the Mirror Dimension, Negation can travel to Earth's dimension and back. (Flaws: mirror dimension to Earth and back only; Source: Cosmic; Cost: 10 pp)

Drain Powers +25: Negation has the ability to create a mirror duplicate of someone's powers and merge them with their existing powers, canceling the two out and removing the target's powers permanently. She must merge the mirror powers or the energy explodes as per her Energy Blast, harming her. (Extras: All Powers, Duration x2, Ranged, Slow Recovery x4; Cost: 250 pp)

Energy Blast +25: Negation can bring matter across the dimensional barrier without spin-flipping it along the way. This creates antimatter, which explodes with incredible force and power. (Extras: Area; Source: Cosmic; Cost: 75 pp)

Super-Strength +20: Negation has been granted incredible strength and stamina by her universe's All-Thing to assist her in her duties as protector of the Mirror Universe. (Extras: Protection; Cost: 100 pp)

Weaknesses

Transformation: Negation has two personalities, one of which is brutal and curt, but essentially good, and the other of which is brutal and all but psychotic, almost impossible to deal with. Her Hero Points switch to Villain Points during this transformation. This change is triggered at GM fiat (see the Unlucky flaw below).

Berserker: When in her psychotic personality Negation is a Berserker.

Unlucky: Life just plain sucks for Negation. She switches personality at all the wrong times, the Mirror Dimension is constantly under attack, and nobody really understands her.

Special Notes

Negation is the mirror-universe duplicate of She (see the Heroes section), and looks almost completely identical except for her costume. Negation is also a very “broad” character, with significantly more power than usual for her level.

Using This Character as a Hero

Negation is another “swing character,” and has actually fought alongside the Oversight Watch in the past. If her personality switches could be cured or suppressed, she would be quite a powerful heroine.

OmnivronOrigin Story

Omnivron is a robotic force of devastation created by the ancient Krikkit in their attempt to destroy all sentient life in the universe. It has existed for a thousand millennia, roaming intergalactic space, and it has finally reached a galaxy full of life to destroy: our own.

Personality

Omnivron has become quite introspective and philosophical in his million years between the stars, and has developed a detailed philosophy of why non-existence is superior to existence. It would appreciate the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, and hopes to bring everyone it finds to Nirvana as quickly as possible.

Appearance

A large metal spheroid, almost half a mile across. Omnivron was once polished and gleaming, with a white paint job, but a million years of asteroid impacts and cosmic radiation have scarred that away, and now most of its surface is pitted and black. Its illustration can be seen on the following page.

Level: 32

PP: 480

Attributes

Str: 20

Dex: 2

Con: —

Int: 14

Wis: 10

Cha: 8

Attack Bonus: +26

Defense: 10

Saving Throws

Fortitude: Omnivron is a Construct

Reflex: -4

Will: +0

Damage: +0

Skills

Knowledge (astronomy) +32 (30 ranks)

Feats

Accurate Attack, Penetrating Attack x3 (for Rain of Destruction)

Powers

Growth +32: By extending the Growth power table in M&M, we can see that Omnivron is three size categories above Awesome (perhaps Ginormous?), making it almost a half-mile in diameter. It weighs half a million tons, and has 32 ranks of Protection. This is a permanent effect, which is neither an extra nor a flaw in this case. (Flaws: No Super-Strength; Source: Super-Technology; Cost: 96 pp)

Flight +10: Omnivron can attain speeds of 50 feet per second on a tactical scale, and could once accelerate past the speed of light in space. However, his stardrive has been disabled for a long time (Stunt: Super-Flight; Source: Super-Technology; Cost: 22 pp)

Rain of Destruction +25: Omnivron’s standard weapon is a blast that turns off the strong nuclear force, causing atoms to fling themselves apart in a tremendous blast. His blasts can hit an area up to three miles across, or can be narrowed to lance a single individual. (Source: Super-Technology; Cost: 250 pp)

Weaknesses

Quirk (Kill All Humans): Not easy to get along with, this guy.

Using This Character as a Hero

Not without a significant personality change. Perhaps if it were reprogrammed...



Chapter Six

This chapter details interesting locations for a cosmic-powered game. Naturally, any place on Earth can be just as interesting for cosmic heroes as for more “mundane” supers (yeah, like lighting yourself on fire and flying across the city is mundane...), but the locations in this chapter are places that most ordinary heroes will never see.

This chapter also details a few headquarters that cosmic superteams might be interested in, from a moon base to a dimension of pure thought.

Places to Visit

A Ringworld

A ringworld is a thick, incredibly strong structure built around a star. It is approximately as wide as the entire Earth, and is over 180 million miles across. It has over forty thousand times the surface area of Earth. It circles its star once per year. A separate checkerboard-like structure, closer in to the star, circles at a much more rapid pace to give the illusion of night and day. The surface area of such a ring is *immense*, with space for millions of different intelligent species.

A ringworld is incredibly expensive and difficult to build, especially if you want to make it inhabitable. It needs dozens of internal mechanisms to keep it safe and working properly. If you were the person in charge of building a ringworld, you’d want to keep it as safe as possible, right? What better way to do that than with a team of experienced superheroes?

A ringworld makes an interesting place to visit because of its sheer size and its diversity of population. If the builders aren’t around any more, there will be a lot of speculation on who they are and where they went. If they are around, the question will be, “Why build such a thing?”

For a game run from the outside perspective, the characters could be galactic explorers who stumble

across the structure. They could be representatives of a star-spanning empire come to check on the world’s progress (or find out why they haven’t paid their taxes). They could be emissaries from a dying race, come to see if the ringworld could support their people. They could be prospectors, come to see if the material making up the ring could be mined or recreated.

For a game run from the inside, characters could be the superpowered defense team of the world, protecting it from outside forces. They could be the peacekeepers, making sure that wars don’t rage across the entirety of the band at once. They could be the mechanics and troubleshooters, keeping the internal mechanisms of the ring working properly.

Naturally enough, the Ringworld series of books written by Larry Niven will be rather helpful for a game set on one.

An Alien Empire

Aliens always seem to figure out interstellar travel well before humanity does. Poor humans.

Alien empires make interesting places to visit because of the bizarre sights around every corner. Strange-looking aliens, odd customs, unusual devices, rare elements, and more are all things that one might expect to find. The possibility of strange political practices raises its head as well: what use would a hive-mind species have for representative democracy?

Heroes could come in from the outside to infiltrate the empire and find out why they’re invading... or to plan an invasion of their own. They could simply be visiting and cataloging new things when they get caught up in a civil war. They could be emissaries from Earth sent to negotiate a treaty.

A game run from the inside almost *requires* that the heroes be protectors of the Empire, defending it against cosmic threats from beyond the void... unless, of course, the characters are working for the rebellion, trying to beat back the empire’s decadent and corrupt defenders and overthrow it once and for all.

Monolithic Alien Cultures

Many comic books have a tradition of presenting alien species as single monolithic blocks. All Koozbanians think more or less the same way and share the same culture. This is totally unrealistic, of course. Everyone knows Koozbanians can't even talk. Um, no, wait. What I meant to say is, take a look at Earth. One species with thousands of cultures and beliefs. Nonetheless, most alien cultures are presented as being quite homogeneous in the comic books. Maybe there's the occasional rebel group, but there's still only one thing to rebel against! Making your aliens more like this will make your series more "comicy," while making the aliens have more personality and differentiation will be a bit more realistic.

The Mirror Universe

Ahh, the mirror dimension. A favorite of many comic books for years, and the multiverse's foremost exporter of goatees. When bringing the mirror universe into your game, the big questions you have to ask yourself are, "How much of our universe is mirrored? How much is distorted?"

Most mirror universes are a moral reflection (as well as a right-left reflection), turning heroes into villains and vice versa. For the United States, most-wanted villains become its President and Congress, and... wait, perhaps there's too much realism in that mirror universe.... Let's try again. For the United States most-wanted villains become heroes and public defenders, and its most righteous heroes become slaving fiends and maniacal masterminds. Sometimes the mirror also "reflects" powers, turning fire controllers into ice controllers and other similar uses, but this only works if your team has easily reversible powers.

Traditionally the mirror universe is doing a bit worse than our own in terms of human rights and basic kindness, but that doesn't necessarily have to be true.

Running a mirror-universe game from the inside only makes sense after you've run a game from the outside perspective. Trying to do the mirror first probably won't work, depending on your answer to the next paragraph. The mirror universe typically comes into a game when someone from that universe crosses over and takes the place of someone in this universe. They can sometimes be distinguished by the sudden growth of a goatee, but more reliable is that left-handed people become righties and vice versa. If you begin to suspect your comrades, it's something to watch out for. Likewise, if a villain has a sudden change of heart, perhaps the people in the mirror universe are having trouble right now, and need some help from you.

The final question: Which universe is the mirror, and which is the reflection? Which is more real?

The Null Point

The Null Point is a unique place in all of space and time... or perhaps one should say, outside of all space and time. It is the time before the beginning and after the end. It is the place beyond the borderless universe. It is from Null Point that true and lasting changes can be made to the universe and its timeline.

Null Point is typically very well protected, by strong dimensional barriers and automated defense systems. That won't stop someone who's filled with ultimate power and thinks they know what's best for the universe, and that's where the heroes come into the picture.

Null Point is a traditional place to have world-shattering battles without actually breaking the world. Year-long multi-comic crossovers often end up here, with the villain trying to alter all of space and time and the heroes arriving just in time to stop things... or just too late, and having the job of putting things back the way they were after stopping the villain.

Other than that, there's not much real "setting" here. Null Point is typically described as either a featureless white void or a psychedelic rainbow of colors without much meaning to them.

Places to Call Home

An Orbital Transdimensional Fortress

This is the headquarters used by the Oversight Watch, described in Chapter Five of this book. You can feel free to use it in your own game; just change some of the details below to reflect your team of heroes instead of the Watch. The Fortress is a miles-long satellite in a polar orbit over Earth. It was designed by Chessboard, and built in a day by Creator. Various touches have been added by other members of the team since then.

The interior contains a combat simulator with holographic opponents, a heavy-weight gym, and a pool a mile deep. The laboratory has a computerized library, an engineering workshop, and a liquid-nitrogen-cooled computer core that can translate any language spoken on Earth, and most of the ones spoken elsewhere. The teleporters, capable of reaching anywhere on Earth, are located directly next to the infirmary, so that injured heroes and bystanders can receive immediate medical care. Also next to the infirmary are the holding cells, made of reinforced diamond alloy and equipped with the finest in power dampeners.

The exterior is coated with antennae and communication dishes. The fortress does the work of four commercial communications satellites, relaying many different kinds of data. There are several different kinds of powerful telescopes, defensive lasers (at rank 12), a pressurized starship hangar, and reinforced walls.

The Fortress also has a staff of over one hundred well-trained and well-paid individuals, all of whom take their job very seriously. They take care of the housekeeping for individual apartments, security monitors, protoclature power supply, fire-prevention system, topiary, and various other duties.

Most importantly, the Fortress exists simultaneously in any number of dimensions. It can shift its "focus" from one to another without significant effort, allowing the Watch to collect data from dozens of universes at once.

The Fortress is a 25th-level headquarters suitable for standard superheroic games in which Earth is important. More mystical or far-ranging games will probably not get much use out of it unless they tack some engines on the side.

A Moon Base

It's a classic. A big domed-in moon base with all sorts of spires, antennae, and satellite dishes sprouting from it. How could *anyone* pass up a domed-in moon base? It keeps the door-to-door salesmen away, keeps the paparazzi away, heck it keeps pretty much everyone away. If you need solitude in your fortress, this is the base for you.

The spires, antennae, and satellite dishes aren't just for show; they allow communication to just about anywhere on Earth via television, radio, and other frequencies. The base's computer gladly translates all earthly languages, and those of major alien species. The computer also monitors all earthly news outlets, and uses the powerful telescopes in the base to zoom in on trouble spots. Teleport pads allow heroes to reach any location on Earth's surface immediately.

For the technologically oriented hero, the base contains a laboratory, workshop, and complete technical and historical library. For those who prefer combat, a holographic danger room is available, which can challenge almost any hero. A pool and gymnasium complete with 200,000-ton weight room round out the exercise area. Those who overtax themselves can find succor in the world-class infirmary.

To keep problems down to a minimum, robot drones patrol the corridors and detain visitors. Fire prevention and backup power systems are both tested on a regular basis. The starship hangar has a double airlock to help retain as much air as possible.

One thing that makes this headquarters unique is the trophy room. Filled with things taken from despots and conquerors who would have been Emperor of Earth (or simply destroyed it), the trophy room contains some of the most dangerous weapons in the universe. It can sometimes come in handy when invaders breach the base's reinforced Impervium walls. In game terms, heroes can spend one Hero

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Point while in the trophy room to create a 20th level Gadget as per the Gadget power in M&M.

This base is a 20th-level headquarters, suitable for any game based around Earth. It can easily be scaled up in power by the addition of some holding cells, exterior defenses, and other small features.

A "The Moon" Base

Yeah, that's it, a moon base. But not your ordinary moon base... It's the whole moon, hollowed out and turned into a base. Spacious, to say the least.

Almost a million years ago Earth's moon was colonized by a race of giant, industrious, burrowing aliens who intended to use it as a giant ark to carry their species across the stars. Some unknown disaster wiped out or drove off their species before they could use it, and now the vast vehicle waits calmly for a new pilot and crew.

The ark is equipped with dozens of horrendously effective plasma cannons, which fire energy blasts equivalent to some nuclear weapons (PL 30, area effect) to a range of up to 20 million miles (for reference, the Earth is about 93 million miles from the sun). The interior is not so well protected, but all doors and locks and the fire-control system are still working, and are controlled by the massive quantronic computer core. The computer is actually a sentient being and should be treated as a separate character for many purposes (such as its desire to find out what happened to its builders), but it will be happy to perform calculations, use radio and tachyon communications, and plot courses for the characters as soon as they figure out how to speak Ancient Bug-Eyed Monster.

The computer also monitors the exterior sensors, and has been ramping everything up to working order ever since the Russian Luna-2 probe crashed into the moon in 1959. Its successor, Luna-9, was the first man-made object to land softly on the moon, three years before Apollo 11.

Equidistant from each other, on the outer rim of the ark, are three workshops, one for mechanical devices, one for psionic research, and the third for magi-

cal studies. There is a fourth lab, which contained the biological experimentation section, but the supplies have long since passed their prime and it needs to be rebuilt completely. The mechanical lab is also home to the ship's self-repair systems, which have been working overtime for the past 30+ years bringing everything back up to working order.

At the center of what we used to think was our natural moon is the dual power core, which taps into almost unlimited reserves of energy in an uninhabited alternate dimension. Half of this energy is used to fuel the ark's Higgs Drive, a faster-than-light drive capable of traveling to the Andromeda galaxy in just over a day, or crossing our galaxy in less than two hours. The rest is used for computing power, life support, and keeping the interior of the ENTIRE MOON at a reasonable temperature and pressure.

There are places inside the ark that are built for human-size occupants rather than BEM-size occupants (for instance, there is one area which could function well as a gym, and another which looks like an unfilled swimming pool), which begs the question of whether the aliens ever had contact with early humanity, or were allied with a humanoid species elsewhere.

This base is a 30th-level headquarters, suitable for a space travel game or one based around Earth (but not for time-hopping or dimension-travel games). Moving the base will result in problems on Earth.

The Realm of Pure Thought

Though few know it, the thoughts that pass through the minds of living beings are not merely ephemeral and fleeting, dying once the thought is through. No, they live on in another world, another dimension: the Realm of Pure Thought. It is here that dreams and nightmares, reason and emotion, and thoughts both deep and shallow live. Passing thoughts come from here and return to it with ease, and once in a great while one of the greater thoughts comes to Earth and makes itself known.

Anyone attuned to the Realm may use it to communicate to any living being, through their dreams,

though many will not recognize the dream as such. It can also be used to send an astral form scouting across the world, invisible to anyone who cannot perceive the thoughts of others. The Realm of Pure Thought touches more than just the Earth dimension, and can reach anywhere in any dimension where there is a living, thinking being.

Within the realm many things are possible. Realistic objects can be created, and with a bit of effort (and a Hero Point) fantastic devices and gadgets can be fabricated from nothing. Living beings can be created, but they will be only nonsentient bodies until some strong thought possesses them.

Though there are no books in the Realm of Thought, a universal memory can be examined that often takes the form of a library. At the heart of the Realm is an Imagination Workshop, where strange thoughts can be grafted together and made into new concoctions, and psionic powers and artifacts can be shaped anew. Understanding others within the Realm becomes second nature as their thoughts enter your mind in your own native language.

Those who try to invade the Realm of Pure Thought will find their voyage difficult. If they are not seen by the staff of servant-thoughts, they may be discovered by roaming nightmares and angry thoughts who act to keep unwanted visitors out. Those who are caught are put into mental loops, reliving the same five words of a song until they go insane, or are put into hallucinatory frames of mind far from the Realm's center, where they are unlikely to harm anyone important.

It is possible to set up living quarters near the center of the Realm, where things are more stable, but few would choose to live here. Things are just too strange. If a team is composed of big enough weirdoes to fit in, more power to them.

The Realm of Pure Thought is a 20th-level headquarters, though it would be suitable for higher levels. It makes an excellent headquarters for a game using the "Incarnations and Personifications" alternate setting mentioned in Chapter Three, or for any *really* trippy game.

The Eternal City

There is a kind of magic in which "sympathies" and connections between objects and people are exploited. Voodoo dolls work on this principle, making a connection between a doll and a living person. The Eternal City works on the same principle — it is a realm outside of space and time that draws its existence from a similarity to every city ever built.

The Eternal City has uncountable doors, which can reach into any city in our dimension. Every window sees a view of another place and time. Those who know the city's secrets can make the windows look out onto almost any scene they desire, throughout all of time and space.

Unfortunately for those who would seek to live there, every door and archway in the city is such a portal, and just walking into the shower in the morning would put you on an unknown planet. There are a few buildings for which this is not true, but living there would be a mistake — the original builders of the City seem to want certain areas kept clean for themselves. Any damage done to the city is miraculously repaired overnight unless someone is watching the damaged part.

The city does have a library which is free from portals, containing all the books and scrolls that were ever in any city library. Its usefulness is limited by its extreme size, of course, but there is still much that can be learned by walking its halls. It also receives newspapers, and has telephone, telegraph, Internet and starweb connections that allow communication to almost any time and place. The library's computer translates all such communications into the user's native language.

Another building that is free from portals is the Hall of Technology (so says the sign out front), which has a fully stocked laboratory and workshop. The city hospital is also well-stocked, even though there is no staff to run it.

The Eternal City is lit by a soft glow from above during its daytime (no sun is visible), and becomes quite dark at night. Only the Library, Workshop, and

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Hospital have power. There must be a power center for the city somewhere, but no one has found it yet.

The Eternal City is a 20th-level headquarters, best suited to time-travel games with a lot of mystery involved. For a more straightforward game, take out references to the city's builders (or make them friendly folks) and turn the power back on.

Lifehome

All living creatures possess an energy that cannot be defined by science (well, at least in this game they do), one that stems from an extradimensional source. That source is Lifehome.

Lifehome is a limitless dimension filled with the essence of life itself. Like many such dimensions, its appearance is somewhat subjective. Some see it as an old-growth forest, others as a beautiful coral reef — anything that supports an incredible variety of life. Most people see it as a lush, tropical rain forest, so dense as to make walking through it almost impossible. For those attuned to the dimension, however, the vines part easily and a waterfall at the center can be found.

The pool underneath the waterfall can be used to view various scenes, anywhere that a living plant exists (whether in Earth's dimension or elsewhere). Jumping into the pool at these times takes the viewer to that location. When not used for viewing, the pool is still a nice place to relax, and has useful regenerative properties. Those missing an arm may go for a swim and find it restored! Those who want other exercise will find the jungle's trees and vines quite conducive to an athletic workout.

Wild animals abound in Lifehome, from giant insects to miniature gibbons. All of them can sense invaders and will move to stop them. Captured invaders are placed in a mesh made of vines that are almost unbreakably hard, and that also drain away superpowers. When fire breaks out in Lifehome, rain appears immediately to stop it. Damage done to the trees and vines heals almost as quickly as it is inflicted.

Lifehome is a 20th-level headquarters, suitable for use by any ecologically-inclined team of heroes.

A Ringworld Control Room

For the game run on a ringworld (see "Places to Visit" earlier), there's no better place to have the base than the ringworld's control center. From here you can monitor what goes on all across the ring, watch one of the oceans, and have a great view of space, too.

The command center is built out of a titanicly strong super-alloy, capable of withstanding nuclear blasts without a scratch. The command center also penetrates all the way through the ring's thick outer hull to provide a launch and landing bay for starships. On the inner surface the control room is based on the coastline of a major ocean, so vehicles can be launched to land, sea, or air.

The exterior supports many communication towers and satellite dishes, which can send signals to any other place along the ring or to incoming spaceships. The control center's computer can translate any language found on the ring, and any others that it hears a sufficient amount of. Lasers defend the hangar from hostile vehicles. On the inside of the ring, the base is surrounded by electrified fences and a remote-controlled minefield (which can be turned off when necessary).

The interior of the base is well-stocked, containing a backup power supply, scientific laboratory, engineering workshop, infirmary, computer-controlled doors, and fire-prevention systems. Living space is provided for up to 20 individuals. A combat simulator with battledroids exists for those who wish to practice their martial skills. Holding cells are provided, made of the same material as the base's nuke-proof exterior, and equipped with slow-time fields.

Most useful to a team of ringworld protectors is the extensive array of self-repairing cameras found along the rim of the ring. These cameras can focus on literally any part of the giant ring, allowing the heroes to find trouble spots and analyze the situation before they arrive.

This is a 20th-level headquarters, suitable for any team based on a ringworld.

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Designation of OGL Content

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